

In Nomine Iesu

The Second Sunday in Advent 2025 Trust God and build your ark – Genesis 6:9-22

“These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, ‘I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them.’ Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.”

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for whose sake we have God’s favor. Dear fellow redeemed in Christ:

Many of your neighbors see you drive away from your house on a Sunday morning and wonder why you do so. They don’t wonder where you are going. They know that. No, they simply wonder why, when you could stay home and sleep late. Others who know you and where you go on a Sunday may even laugh at you, maybe even some of your own family. Oh, they don’t do so to your face, of course. That would be considered impolite. They do it behind your back. You could try to explain. In fact, you probably have tried.

I

Noah no doubt faced the same problem as he built the ark God had commanded him to build. His neighbors wondered why he was doing it. No doubt he tried to explain to his neighbors. But most probably went away shaking their heads in disbelief and others simply laughed at the naiveté and misplaced priorities of this odd man named Noah, whose name means ‘comfort.’ The world was going to end ... how silly!

So, dear friends, you left your homes this morning to come here and sit in the nave, the ark, if you will, of Parkland Lutheran Church. For that is what the word ‘nave’ means, ship or ark. Like the ark of Noah, this nave too was built by men. They did so because they were compelled by the command of Christ our Lord to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the same God, Father,

Son, and Holy Spirit,” who saved Noah and those with him. They built this that we might gather here to observe those things our Lord commanded us to, that is, the preaching of His word of forgiveness and the receiving of His life-giving body and blood. In other words, this ark too saves lives. Let us consider these things today.

In the verses before our text Moses tells us: “The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that **every intention** of the thoughts of his heart **only evil continually**.” (Genesis 6:5) As we hear those words we likely are amazed at our text: “Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.” Hearing this, we ask ourselves, was Noah not like the rest of humanity? Were the intentions of the thoughts of his heart not evil continually like other men? Was he not corrupted like the rest of humanity around him? And what of his wife, his sons, and his sons’ wives? What set them apart from the rest of humanity that God had determined to destroy from the face of the earth? What set Noah apart?

Moses tells us, plainly. “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.”

In the days after the conclusion of the flood, after Noah and his family survived all that privation and hardship in the ark, we find Noah still beset by all the weakness and sins of flesh, and his sons too. In other words, he was not different than the rest of humanity. He was made of the same fallen substance of man. So, what separated him from them, before, during, and after the flood?

The Epistle to the Hebrews helps us here, telling us, “By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.” (Hebrews 11:7)

II

Consider who you are before God. Are you better, morally, ethically, actually, than your neighbors? Do you deserve the favor of God more than they? I think that, if you go and look at yourself honestly in the mirror, you would answer, ‘No, I do not deserve such favor.’ Yet God, in His mercy, says in no uncertain terms that that is His will toward us, as it was toward Noah. The apostle Paul explained it this way, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

What we have here is the mystery of God’s grace in Christ Jesus. We Christians know that we are not better than others. Our conscience makes that clear. For we too have sinned and come short of the glory of glory of God. We are not worthy of God’s love or favor. Yet God, in His mercy, showed favor to Noah, and so enabled him to do all that He commanded. That is fact. That is the truth. Moses recorded it for us to remember and to believe. Ours is not to figure out why. Ours is not to seek a reason. Ours is to believe what God our Father says. Ours is to trust that God, the

Father who created and sustains all things, the Son who took the entire world's sins upon Himself and paid the price of our redemption Himself, the Spirit who speaks in sincerity and truth to each individual that God who so loved the world did indeed give His only Son to be the Substitute for us, to redeem us, so that we might have not the death we deserve, but the life His Son suffered and died to give to us. We are not better than our neighbors, but God has given us the gift of faith to believe in Him, to trust Him. That is why this ark in which we sit was built. It is why we continue to maintain it, to build upon it, to sustain the ministry of reconciliation through it so that still others may hear and believe.

That, dear friends, is the holy, Christian faith that Noah believed before the Christ, the promised Savior, ever came into the world. It is the holy Christian faith that Joseph and Mary believed when they were told that Mary would bear the promised Savior. It is the reason we gather in this nave, this ark, to hear again the promise God gives to us also for the sake of His beloved Son.

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As we day by day draw nearer and nearer to Christmas, and the celebration once more of the birth of our Savior, we see more clearly the nature of the gift God, who so loved the world, gave to all on Christmas morning. He gave to us His own Son, wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger, so that we could be wrapped in His righteousness and stand before Him without fear on the last day. Let us rejoice in Him whose righteousness is given us so freely and fully week after week, Sunday after Sunday. Let us trust God and continue to build our ark. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria