



FIRST LIGHT CHURCH

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Date: 8/27/23

Series: Genesis: 5-11

Text: Genesis 8:1-19

BIG IDEA: God saves us to send us.

ICEBREAKER: Noah and his family were on the ark for over a year. How do you think you would have reacted if you had been on the ark with your family that long?

CONTEXT: The final verses of Genesis 7 soberly describe the extent of the flood and its devastating effects. "Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. He (God) blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens." And just when all hope seems lost, God remembers His promise. He begins to carry out His re-creation plan, and it starts when He sends out the remnant He saved on the ark.

PASSAGE: Have volunteers read Genesis 8:1-19.

DISCUSSION:

1. What does the phrase "But God remembered Noah" teach us about God and His character?
2. Noah and his family waited a long time for God to tell them what to do next. What are you waiting for in your life? In what area of your life are you praying for God to act?
3. After the flood waters began to recede, Noah sent out some birds to "see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground" (verse 8). Why do you think Noah took the initiative to send out the birds?
4. Noah patiently stayed on the ark until God told him to leave. What might have happened if Noah had left the ark before God told him to? What in your life is making you impatient?
5. What did God command Noah to do in verses 15-17? What was Noah's response?
6. By faith, Noah obeyed God in all that he was told to do. What is the connection between faith and obedience? When has God asked you to do something, and you were unsure of the complete picture? How did you respond?
7. How have you wrestled with the connection between faith and obedience? How is faith expressed?

APPLICATION: Our big idea this week is that God saves us to send us. Where is God sending you? How are you doing at obeying Him?

K4 CONNECTION: If you are a follower of Christ, you are called to go out into the world and share the hope of the Gospel to those who are far from God. Whether it's in your neighborhood, your workplace, your school, or another country, God wants you to partner with Him in His re-creation plan: to help others be restored to a right relationship with Him. And by the way, you don't have to do it alone. You have the Holy Spirit in you to strengthen and guide you and a faith family around you to support and encourage you!

CARE AND PRAY:

- Share any prayer requests.

COMMENTARY

[v.1] God remembered Noah. This marks the turning point in the flood story. When the Bible says that God “remembers” someone or His covenant with someone, it indicates that He is about to take action for that person’s welfare (cf. 9:15; 19:29; 30:22; Ex. 2:24; 32:13; Ps. 25:6–7; 74:2). All life on the land having been destroyed, God now proceeds to renew everything, echoing what He did in Genesis 1. God made a wind blow over the earth. The Hebrew word for wind, ruakh, is also sometimes translated “Spirit” (e.g., 1:2; 6:3). While the context normally enables the reader to distinguish ruakh meaning “wind” from ruakh meaning “Spirit,” the present verse intentionally echoes 1:2.

[v.2-4] In v. 2 God puts into reverse the process started in 7:11. The waters both rose and abated during the period of 150 days (see note on 7:17–24). Mountains of Ararat indicates a range of mountains of which Mount Ararat (in modern Turkey) is the highest. The text does not name the specific mountain on which the ark came to rest.

[v.6-14] The whole scene is dominated by Noah’s concern to discover whether the waters have retreated. The raven episode is then essentially an unsuccessful experiment: it brings back no evidence of any change in the situation. The dove does bring back some evidence, the fresh olive leaves, so that Noah concludes that the waters had lessened. But only when he removes the cover of the ark does he himself see that the surface of the soil is dry (8:13). Finally on the 27th day of the second month the earth has dried out. Thus the whole scene progressively builds to a climax. At the end there seems no further reason for Noah to remain in the ark.

The central section dealing with the dove is a fine example of an episode told in three parts (vv 8–9, 10–11, 12), a favorite format with Hebrew storytellers. Jacob observes that the story suggests the dove was Noah’s pet, and Strus (Nomen-Omen, 160–62) has pointed to the phonetic affinity between Noah (nōāh) and the dove (hayyônāh). Clearly the dove represents Noah. When the dove leaves the ark, it is time for Noah to do so as well.

Gordon J. Wenham, Genesis 1–15, vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1987), 185–186.

[v.18-19] Both scenes tell of Noah’s obedience to the divine command just given, this time to disembark. As in v 17, “wild animals” head the disembarkation list. The animals are pictured leaving in large groups of similar types “by their clans.” In human society “the clan,” משפחה, is a sub-unit of a tribe and consists of a number of extended families, “father’s houses” (e.g., Josh 7:14–17).

Gordon J. Wenham, Genesis 1–15, vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1987), 188.

WHERE’S THE GOSPEL

Prior to the flood, Noah walked with the Lord, trusting in Him at all cost. Divine grace kept Noah close to the Lord, so he walked with God and lived a life of wisdom (6:9). Noah is thus one of the great examples of what it means to live by faith (Heb. 11:7). Noah executed the mission of building the ark with integrity (cf. Matt. 24:37–42).

The story of the flood is a sober reminder that God's final judgment will echo the events surrounding Noah. This time, however, the earth will not be cleansed by water but will be purified as by fire (2 Pet. 3:6-7; cf. Matt. 24:37-42). Peter employs the analogy of the water of the flood to represent salvation from any further judgment (1 Pet. 3:21-22). God showed His favor to Noah by calling him to be His instrument of salvation. In full obedience to the Lord (Gen. 6:22; 7:5, 9, 16), Noah constructed an ark and led his family and the clean and unclean animals into it. He received the promise of preservation through covenant (6:18), waited patiently for the flood to be over, and upon leaving the ark, he sacrificed an offering of thanksgiving (8:20).

Commentary taken from the ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible