

A Faith That Believes, Behaves and Builds II Peter 2:5

Following Army boot camp my Dad was shipped over to S. Korea at the end of the Korean conflict. He traveled via ship courtesy of the Navy. They arrived in the Sea of Japan to a violent storm. Dad said the ship listed to within several degrees of capsizing. A lot of soldiers got sea sick. Dad was feeling quite sick himself. The cook he worked for sat him down with a box of saltine crackers and told him to eat as many as he could along with drinking coffee. The old sailor was right.

I've never been on the sea or lake with such a severe storm. Solid ground is good enough for this land lubber. I do remember when I was 8 or 9 out with Dad fishing in his row boat during a rainstorm. It seemed like a flood. The propeller broke when it hit a stump that was below the surface of the water and he had to row back.

The message today will be about another boat and its crew led by the family patriarch Noah. Last week we considered from II Peter 2:5 the retribution of God in Noah's day as He poured out His wrath on those who were ungodly. We considered the scope of the deluge that it was global in nature. We discussed the seriousness of the depravity that led to the destruction of the entire world population except for eight people and we concluded by considering the senselessness of the destruction. Had people been obedient to follow God I believe the flood would not have occurred. But it did because they were described as wicked giving in to every inclination of the imagination of his heart. Their thoughts were evil all the time.

When you follow the Lord, there is always hope in the middle of the storm.

Sometimes when the storm seems overwhelming, we can forget that. That's what the disciples experienced one day when they got caught in the middle of a storm. They were frantically and fearfully

rowing to make shore. Jesus was asleep in the stern of the boat. They woke Him and asked if He didn't care that they were all about to die. They wanted Him to man an oar to help row or grab a bucket and help bail out water. Jesus asked why they were afraid and then spoke to the storm to stop.

Paul was well aware of God's presence and safety in the middle of the storm when after 14 days of struggling to survive all hope was abandoned even by seasoned sailors. Yet Paul remained confident in the Lord and assured the entire ship that everyone would be spared.

Noah learned centuries early what David wrote in the Psalms: "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God." Psalm 20:7

Today we will look at II Peter 2:5 again to consider the rescue by God. It started with faith. Faith was followed by action. You see, true faith always results in doing something. Faith causes us to believe and to behave and to build.

I'm going to ask you this now but will come back to it again. It's important to the whole tenor of the message. Miss this and you miss the point of the message.

Noah's faith in God led him to build an ark. Now, listen carefully. Every one of us has an ark to build. We may not be asked to build a big boat or even to save humanity. In the grand scheme of things it may seem rather insignificant compared to the one we're asked to build. But it's an ark none the less. God is asking each one of us to walk by faith and build an ark. So what's your ark? What's God asking you to do that will require faith?

Let's take a look at Noah's rescue. But don't forget that his rescue is in the middle of God's retribution. In the same way your faith will save you from God's wrath, while others will perish. It all boils

down to a matter of choice.

There are eight things I would like to discuss today about Noah's faith, each which has application for us today. The first thing I want us to see is that Noah had a singular faith.

I. NOAH HAD A SINGULAR FAITH – Hebrews 11:7

Simply put Noah trusted God. And based on what we read about what Noah did we could say that he trusted God implicitly.
"By faith Noah"

Vine's Bible Dictionary defines faith as firm persuasion, a conviction based on hearing. Another term that is sometimes used interchangeably is the word trust or believe.

Proverbs 3:5-6

John 1:12 (But as many as received...)

Even though we may not know the path or the way or the plans of God, we wholly trust the one who is leading. That's faith, walking when we don't see the path.

We sometimes say that the opposite of fear is peace, but I think that the opposite of fear is trust, because when you trust the person completely there is no reason to fear. And I'm paraphrasing here:

Isaiah 41:10 "Don't be afraid, I am with you, trust Me."

Isaiah 26:3 "God will give peace to the person who trusts in Him."

That's faith.

Lewis Sperry Chafer says that the simplest conception of faith is a personal confidence in God. He further adds that the individual has come to know God to some degree of real experience.

Remember that last week I gave you the lineage of

Noah. Noah was the 10th generation when you begin with Adam. Adam lived to the time of Methuselah. Methuselah was the son of Enoch of whom it was said he walked with God. Noah's father was Lamech. Adam lived long enough to pass on what it was like to walk with God into the eighth generation. Noah's father heard first hand and could relate to his son how important it was to walk with God, to have faith in God. At some point though faith needs to become more than stories, it needs to become personal. It needs to be experiential. It's a choice we must each make individually. No one else can make it for us.

Charles Ryrie says that faith is confidence, trust, holding something as true. He then says that faith must have content, something or someone in which to place that trust. Look at Hebrews 11:6, a verse we looked at briefly last week.

At the beginning of this chapter we read that "faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."

At some point Noah's faith had to become his own. He had seen the experience of his father and grandfather and great grandfather and so on live out faith, trusting God. He had to come to a point where faith was real to him, where he learned to trust in the living God, a God he had not seen, but a God he knew existed, a God He was certain was there. As we considered last week we found that such faith is what pleases God. So the determining factor in faith is knowing God.

When I say that Noah's faith was singular I mean that he had come to a place in his life at whatever age it was that he had to place all his faith, all his trust, all his hope in God. He wasn't looking at anything else. He didn't have faith in anyone else.

James tells us that a double minded man is unstable in all his ways. It is easy to trust in the things we can see. But when faith enters into the picture we

can become unstable because we can't see the thin we're asked to have faith in

God wants us to have a singular faith in Him, not in other things or other people, a bank account or some position.

People will let us down.

An emergency can wipe out our bank account.

Our job isn't as secure as we think it might be.

Lamentations 3:23 says that God's faithfulness is great and like Him it is never failing.

Again from Proverbs 3:5-6, this time from the Good News Translation "Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the LORD in everything you do, and he will show you the right way."

Noah had a singular faith that trusted God. When we think about what he was asked to do he had a submissive faith.

II. NOAH HAD A SUBMISSIVE FAITH –

Genesis 6:9-22

Noah was asked to build an ark in a scale never before seen. Many scholars believe that Noah lived in the Mesopotamian Valley somewhere between the Tigris and Euphrates river. It was a long way from any significant body of water on which this ship would be able to float. But Noah was obedient. We see it not once, but four times.

6:22 "Noah did everything just as God commanded him."

7:5 "Noah did all that the Lord commanded him."

7:9 "As God had commanded Noah."

7:16 "As God had commanded Noah."

Can that be said of us?

He built the ark to the specifications that God outlined.

He went into the ark with his family as God had commanded.

He brought in all the animals God had commanded.

He didn't question God.

He didn't delay.

He didn't waver.

He didn't complain that the task was too big or too hard. He knew God was bigger than His task.

He obeyed.

Faith doesn't stand still. Faith acts. Faith moves.

Faith is motivated to obey even when it seems insurmountable. But then it wouldn't be faith.

But here's the thing about faith – it's hard. It's difficult to trust in what you don't see or don't understand.

Abraham, leave your land and family and go to a place I will show you and I will make you a great nation from whom all the nations will be blessed. Moses, lead My people out of Egypt, a place they have lived for 400 years.

Moses, cross the Red Sea.

Joshua, go over the Jordan River.

Joshua, march around Jericho each day for seven days.

David, take down that giant.

Elijah, stand against the false prophets of Baal.

Daniel, don't compromise your convictions.

Paul, go to Jerusalem.

Noah, build an ark.

Faith is hard, but then if it wasn't difficult would it be faith?

God is asking each of us to trust Him without wavering, without excuse, without exception.

In the early 1950's God moved a pastor from the Lansing area to start a camp. Uncle Johnnie didn't have hardly a nickel to his name. By faith he raised \$20,000 to purchase 300 acres. Everything you see at Barakel was built by faith, every board, every stone, every window, every building.

In 1969 God moved a mechanic and his wife to step out in faith and move their family to Barakel. My folks trusted God with all their heart.

Faith leaves the visible and trusts the invisible.
 Faith believes there is more security in what is not seen than in what is seen. Faith trusts God in the impossible things because faith believes that through God all things are possible because it believes He will do it.

Faith is the Petri dish, the incubator of greater faith.

So let me come back to my earlier statement and pose it in a question. What is your ark? What is that one thing that God is asking you to do or build that can only be accomplished by Him through you? What is it that He is asking of you to trust Him in? What is holding you back? What is keeping you from stepping out? Is it the uncertainty? Is it the risk of failure? Is it the risk of ridicule? I'm sure to the unbeliever, faith looks foolish. But the faith of the believer moves to act.

Noah was obedient in all the Lord told him to do. Faith was initiated when he took his axe out and chopped down that very first gopher tree. Acting on what he believed God would do because it was God who said was an indication that he believed and trusted God. Every tree he chopped down, every board he sawed and hammered into place, every day he got up and went down to the work site was a day of solidifying his convictions about faith in God. And that day in which he entered the ark and God closed the door was an act of faith.

What kind of ark is God asking you to build?
 It may not be a boat.
 It may be teaching a class.
 It may be sharing your faith.
 It may be going back to school.
 It may be volunteering to do something outside your skill set.
 It may be starting a ministry of some kind in your neighborhood.
 What is your ark?

Yes, it will be difficult.
 Yes, it will take you out of your comfort zone. But then who are you putting your trust in?
 Yes, it will take time, it may be inconvenient.
 Yes, others may ridicule or mock you for doing it.
 They may call you crazy.
 They may ignore you.
 They may question your motivation.
 And yes, sometimes faith is solitary.

III. NOAH HAD A SOLITARY FAITH – Genesis 6:7

Faith can sometimes even mean you walk alone. Faith can be a lonely journey when no one else joins. II Peter 2:5 says Noah was a preacher of righteousness. He not only preached through his actions, I believe it means he gave sermons while he worked. Preaching is hard work and you can wonder after pouring your week into a message and then delivery if it's had any impact. Noah preached for 120 years and the only converts were his family. Faith keeps going even when you feel alone.

If Noah was to build the ark today, it would be covered by all the news stations and papers. He would be the brunt of jokes on late night TV. Protesters would be camped outside the work area demanding an end to the destruction of all the gopher wood or the displacement of owls losing their nesting grounds or the extinction of tree frogs.

When you step out to build your ark, it may be solitary. You may find yourself alone.

But that's where Noah's faith kicked into high gear. That's where Noah remembered that "Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." He probably couldn't fathom what God meant about destroying the world. But Noah forged ahead through the solitary days because he had a strong faith.

IV. NOAH HAD A STRONG FAITH –

Hebrews 11:7

“By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family.”

Faith acts, faith acts out of reverence. Strong faith acts right away out of reverence for God.

Noah wasn't a spring chicken. He was 500 years old when God told him to build an ark. So just because you think you're past prime, God still has work for you to do. Faith keeps going until the Lord says it's time to rest. By the way, that's the meaning of Noah's name – rest. With him the land would have rest from all the wickedness.

How strong is your faith?

Do you trust Him with all your heart?

Do you have absolute assurance in God's promises trusting solely in Him?

Have you found that God is utterly dependable?

And I would think that faith would have to be strong when everyone else is against you.

Psalm 9:10 “Those who know Your name will trust in You, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek You.”

Read through the Psalms and note the many times the Psalmist puts his trust in the Lord, especially when his enemies are all around. The NIV will at times translate the word trust with refuge. He took refuge on the Rock of his salvation knowing it was a secure place, a place or person to cling to.

Psalm 18:1-2 “I love you, O Lord, my strength.

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliver; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”

Like the Psalmist, Noah could say “In God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?” Psalm 56:11

When we trust in the never changing, all powerful, all knowing, ever present God we can have

unshakeable, undeniable faith, faith that is strong. Noah had a strong faith. It was a strong faith that not only acted it announced, it proclaimed. Noah had a sermonizing faith.

V. NOAH HAD A SERMONIZING FAITH – II Peter 2:5

I want to suggest that strong faith can't keep quiet. I said earlier that it wasn't just his actions that preached, but I believe that he was outspoken in his faith calling for people to repent, talking about the pending judgment of God through a flood. And it's most likely that no one had ever heard of or seen a flood of any kind. They had no clue what Noah was talking about, so to them it was just crazy talk. And every day it didn't happen was one more day, one more reason not to believe him.

Our text says that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. He preached about what it would take to get right with God. In Hebrews 11:7 it says that his actions condemned the world.

When you live by faith people are going to take notice. When you live by faith people aren't going to understand. They may not listen, they may not respond but they can't help but notice that you're living, acting and talking differently.

Even though no one except his family believed his message, Noah was faithful to continue to proclaim it. We might consider him a failure because everyone rejected his message, but he was faithful none the less.

Is your faith strong enough to proclaim God's truth, His Word and His grace?

And when you have a strong faith, you have a secure faith.

VI. NOAH HAD A SECURE FAITH – Genesis 7:5-10

I hope you caught the end. After entering the ark, they waited for seven days before the rain came. There may be times when God asks us to step out in faith to do something and then He makes us wait. We can begin to wonder if we heard God right, if we got the message straight. I wonder what their conversation was like inside the ark after it was all sealed tight. I'd like to think that faith sustained them, that it didn't leave them wondering, panicking, pacing. Remember faith is absolute confidence. I'd even like to think I would be like them, secure in the promise and protection of God. But they waited and then when the violence of the storm outside with the earthquakes that shook the very core of the planet, they rested secure in God by faith.

So in the storms of life you face are you secure in God? Does your faith allow you to rest in the arms of a faithful God knowing all the while that He works all things out for good to those who love Him who are called according to His purpose? Does your faith keep you secure in knowing that if God brings you too it He will bring you through it? It is such faith that pleases God and is rewarded by God.

But all this faith is pointless if and unless it begins with a saving faith.

VII. NOAH HAD A SAVING FAITH –

Genesis 6:9

Passed on from Adam to each succeeding generation was the promise of a coming redeemer. For Noah that was still future, but in time would arrive through the incarnation of God becoming man, not just to be born among man, but to die for him. Noah's ark stands as a symbol of salvation alone in Christ.

Mankind in Noah's day couldn't depend on their own works, their own efforts to save them. They couldn't swim far enough or float or tread water

long enough. They couldn't grab hold of something to float on. They couldn't even try to build another boat. There was only one way to be saved and that was to enter the means of their salvation by one door, into one boat – the ark.

The ark serves as a picture of salvation. Christ is the only way by which we can be saved and just as it was by faith Noah and his family entered into the ark to be saved from God's wrath, so we must by faith believe that Christ is the ark that we enter to be saved.

Noah was declared righteous or right with God not by anything he had done, but by His faith in God. Building the ark didn't save him, His faith did. Building the ark was an evidence of his faith.

Paul writes in Romans 5:1 that we have been justified, made righteous through faith.

To the Corinthians he wrote "God made Him [Christ] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." II Corinthians 5:21

That we are made righteous is a gift from God as a result of our faith.

Acts 16:31 "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."

Romans 10:9-10 "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

That's faith. Noah's faith had to be the same as ours. He had to look forward to the coming of the Messiah and His sacrifice and we have to look back. It intersects at the foot of the cross where Christ died for us so that by faith we can receive His righteousness.

That Noah was blameless doesn't mean that he was sinless. It means that in his conduct before men they couldn't bring an accusation against him. It's the same word used to speak of the Old Testament sacrifice offered to the Lord. It was the same kind of conduct that Daniel exhibited and the same kind of conduct that we are to exhibit to the ungodly around us. It means having a character of integrity.

Warren Wiersbe says "The person who is right before God through faith in Christ ought to lead a life that is right before people."

That was Noah. It stemmed from a saving faith. Is your conduct an evidence of the saving faith you have in Christ?

Let me make one final point about Noah's faith.

VIII. NOAH'S FAITH IS A STANDARD – Genesis 6:9

"Noah walked with God."

His faith is an excellent example to follow. Allow me to draw the same conclusions this week about Noah's walk with God as I did last week regarding Enoch because they are the same. That Enoch was taken without seeing death and Noah was left to go through the flood doesn't mean that Enoch had greater faith, it just means that God had different purposes for each of them as they journeyed by faith. Like Enoch Noah had...

Noah had a conduct that was godly. It was a conduct that was distinctly different from that of everyone else. It included obedience to God's will and God's ways.

Noah had communion with God. It involves regular time spent with Him.

Noah had a conformity to God not to the world.

Noah had a continuation in each of these areas of his walk with God that implies progress. Walking with God suggests that each day he grew closer to Him than the day before.

Noah serves as our standard of how to walk with God in the middle of a world that is strongly opposed to everything we hold by faith. Are you following his example? Let me come back once more and ask about your faith. Are you ready to build your ark?

John MacArthur provides some insight to ponder as we close. "The Lord has arks for every believer to build... Ours may not be as big or as awesome or as time-consuming as Noah's, but it is the only one we can build that will please God. And, like Noah's, when we build it in faith, according to God's plan and by His power, it will accomplish what God wants it to accomplish. Also like Noah's, our work for the Lord may look foolish and purposeless in the world's eyes, but if it is His work, it will please Him, the only One a believer needs to be concerned about pleasing."

Noah worked, Noah warned, Noah went – all by faith.

What kind of faith do you have today?
What kind of ark is the Lord asking you to build?
God uses the faith of ordinary people in extraordinary ways.

Faith believes.
Faith behaves.
Faith builds.