

The Ark

Genesis 8

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

We are studying the Old Testament these Sunday evenings because many of us, I think, have begun to sense that what we have called "faith" and what we say we are living in is not really the faith that is outlined in this dear book. That is, many of us feel that faith is a bundle of notions about Jesus and about God, and then we kind of move tentatively through each day keeping a look out for something that may happen to reassure us that our faith is real, and I think lot of us move that way. A lot of us live through each day with certainly a feeling that God is real, and a belief that Jesus has died for us, and even in some sense that we're risen with him, and we do have our telescope out looking for any incidents that may come about to reassure us that that's the case. And then as soon as we see one of those popping up, like whalers looking for the whale to start spouting; as soon as we see it, we are going to get out our weapons and we are going to go for it. But that isn't faith as this dear book outlines it.

In the Old Testament, we begin to see that faith is not just an attitude of your thoughts or an attitude of your heart or your mind, but that it produces actions that are based on the absolute certainty that the whole world of heaven is at your back and ready to manifest itself the moment you act. So faith in the Old Testament and in the New Testament is action. It's a whole life of attitudes and words and deeds that are based on the fact that God has destroyed everything evil in Jesus, has made it all new, and we are to go in and treat everything as if that is so, and as we do that, it will be so. So that's why we are studying the Old Testament, loved ones; to begin to allow God's Spirit to bring that faith into us and to build us up in that faith. And then, of course, I would pray that you would act that way through the week, otherwise what we do here just becomes knowledge again.

So we've reached Genesis 18:1 and you will see that it is the account of the ending of the flood, "But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark." Now that doesn't mean that God was walking around heaven and he said, "Ah, that Noah and his three sons and all those animals; now where did I leave them?" It doesn't mean that; God remembered, "Oh yeah, I left them out there near Ararat."

Yet I think often we kind of feel that; we often think of it like a cook in the restaurant with lots of different orders and she is kind of looking around and saying 'Oh, that's a cheese omelet; oh, that's the steak, oh, I forgot that...that's the fried egg.'" And at times we think "Now, he has a lot to look out for; I wonder could I have slipped his mind?" It isn't possible. It means God "remembered" in the sense that he remembered that we are dust. God kept Noah in his mind; he had him in his mind all time, and so he has us. There is no moment when he doesn't know where you are exactly. There is no moment when he has to say "Oh, I forgot Jim. Oh, I forgot John -- he's looking for a wife -- that's it." There is not a moment like that.

God remembers all of us every moment, and he sees everything at all times. You get that you remember in some dear words of Jesus in Matthew 10:29, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?" Jesus is saying "Sparrows are nothing -- you get two of them for a penny today, and not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will." So Jesus says not even a little sparrow falls to the

ground without your Father's will. That is; not one sparrow falls dead without God looking at it and saying "All right, that's enough now, I'll take it to myself." Verse 30, "But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."

So, loved ones, God doesn't forget us. He keeps us in his mind every moment. You remember that great verse in Corinthians, "There is no trial come upon you beyond what you are able to bear and with that trial God will make a way of deliverance." So whatever you are involved in, it is good to realize that God is with you every moment and he knows exactly what you are in. Now I think that's where we trip up because we kind of believe in Satan's lie, "Maybe he has forgotten you" and that's where we begin to worry. That's when you cease to exercise faith and that's when you cease to have your connection with heaven, and that's when you cease to see the resources God has manifested. So loved ones it is very important not to get caught up in the shadows that are shuddering on the little room of the ark in which you are.

That was the situation with Noah: he has been in this ark a long, long time. He had been in it, if you look back at Genesis 8, about five months. And it is vital when you are in the midst of a situation that is not exactly what you would like to project your eyes outside that, and to see what God had promised. That is what Noah did; he looked back to Genesis 6:17 and after five months, Noah's eyes were not on those shadows that were projected by the candlelight on the walls of his little cabin in the ark; but Genesis 6:17, "For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life from under the 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."

That's what Noah remembered.

So when you are in a tough spot it is vital to look out to what God has said, "I'll never leave nor forsake you. I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. There is no trial come upon you beyond what you are able to bear and with the trial I will make a way of deliverance." And that's why we need to fill our minds and fill our thoughts, not with the stuff that comes through the eye-gate and the ear-gate, not with the situation in the office, not with the situation that our parents have described to us, not with the situation that the newspapers and the TV is blazing in upon us, but to fill our minds with what God has said. "You who are dead in your trespasses, I've raised up and I've made you sit with me in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and dominion and power, that I may show forth the riches of my glory through you."

So loved ones, that's it: to remember that God has us every moment in his mind. Now if you say, "Ah, brother, big deal -- what's the importance of that?" That's faith, and it is going to be unto you according to your faith, you see. So you may say, 'Oh well, couldn't God bless me?' No. He's a dear Father, but he will not take over our free wills. If you're determined to fix your eyes on that miserable boss that you work for, if you're determined to fix your eyes on the fact that you're not married yet and look at the age you are, if you're determined to fix your eyes on that car -- it's miserable -- and the money is running out and the house is a mess; then that's where you'll get your life; straight from the pit of Satan. It will be according to your faith.

So that's the importance of actually exercising faith, of seeing it the way it really is and that's what Noah did if you look at Genesis 8, "But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the water

subsided." So often we think of the powers of nature as inanimate powers that operate by a preset rule or law. But obviously, if you think of Elijah praying that it wouldn't rain, and you think of all the other incidents when God moved the mighty waters of the Jordan, and then brought a wind here to dry up the sea; obviously God can use the powers of nature even in response to our faith through Jesus. Some of us have a tendency to say, "Oh, well, I know that, but it's just this timing thing is a bit off at times."

Well, really, that's the way he uses nature and the whole world of events; through timing. What was the changing of the water into wine but an acceleration of a process that took place anyway ... fermentation? It's simply that God accelerated the timing of it. That's why it's important to see in that chapter in Ecclesiastes; there's a time to sow and a time to reap. There's a time to rejoice and a time to weep. God's answers to all our problems are completely involved with timing -- that's what he specializes in, and the moment he knows that we need a thing, his remembering us and his action are one in the same. So in a way, this was a natural wind that dried up the waters, but it was God that controlled it so that it blew strong enough and the work was done in a very short time; just the way the work was done in a very short time when the jars of water were turned into jars of wine.

So really, there is no place for us saying, "But I just think his timing is off." His timing is exactly right. His last moment is always a moment after our last moment -- that's true; his last moment is always a moment after our last moment, but it's always exactly right. I remember that [Smith] Wigglesworth tells of a woman who was deaf who came up and he prayed for her. He said -- it's funny the way he tells it in his book because the whole certainty and solidity of faith and a real man of faith comes over, because he says "The woman came up and she was as deaf as anything. She couldn't hear a thing; she couldn't hear a hammer, she couldn't hear a loud noise -- she was just stone deaf. And after I prayed for her, she was still as stone deaf. She went home that night and she came back another night" and he doesn't wink an eyelid, he just tells it straight on; "She came back the next night and I prayed for her and she can hear as well as any of us."

But there's that confidence that the work has been done in Jesus and the timing is up to God and just because it doesn't come on the second we demand it, it doesn't mean that God has failed, but you know -- we get caught that way. We believe God for something, but it doesn't happen at our last moment so we cast away our faith and our confidence, cut ourselves off from the power of heaven and Satan whips right in and destroys us with depression and disappointment. So the timing of God is always right. We need to see that God has done the thing in Jesus and he will do the thing in his good time; our place is to accept his timing. That's what he did with Noah in verse 2, "the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed." Not all the fountains of the deep, you remember, all the fountains of the deep were opened, it says, that's what produced the flood. Now some of the fountains of the deep remained open so that there would continue to be water and so that some of the water could drain away, so it doesn't say "all the fountains of the deep" but "some of the fountains of the deep and some of the windows of heaven were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, and the waters receded from the earth continually." So it rained for about 40 days, and probably continued to rain for awhile after that during the next 150 days. So about five months later, this is the way God began to turn back the flood at the end of 150 days, the waters had abated.

Then in Verse 4, "and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat." Now if you look back at Genesis 7:11, you can see when the flood began; "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day

of the month.” And now you see in Verse 4 of this chapter, “and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month,” roughly about five months later, about 150 days later, the Ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat. Ararat, loved ones, is on the borders of present day Turkey now Armenia. And I don't know if you can see it on this map, but it is an amazing position that God designated for the coming to rest of the ark. Ararat is just a little west of the Caspian Sea and it's just a little east of the Mediterranean Sea and it's interesting to see that the then known world was in line with the main line of these inland waters, you see, so it's in that line of communication. Some people pointed out that it is also almost directly in line with the longest land bridge of the then known world, right up from the Bering Straits up here (indicating on a map), right down to the Cape of Good Hope at the tip of Africa.

So in a real sense, Ararat was right in the middle of the ancient world of that day, it wasn't chance that God brought the ark to rest there and that that is the cradle of civilization, as all the historians will attest to. It is interesting too, some of us know the account in Genesis of the landing of the ark on Mount Ararat, but we don't realize that in all history books there are references to this miracle. This is an old commentary [holding up a book] by a man called John Gill and the beauty of these old commentaries is they quote the ancient authors outside the Bible and so he says this, "Berosis, the Chaldean" not a Biblical author at all "says, it is reported that in Armenia, on a mountain of the Cárdenas, there is a part of a ship, the pitch of which some take off and carry about with them and use it as an amulet to avert evils. And Nicholas of Damascus, another ancient writer, relates that 'In Minyas, in Armenia, is an huge mountain called Baris to which is the report is many fled at the flood and were saved and that a certain person, carried in an ark or chest, struck upon the top of it and that the remains of the timber were preserved a long time after. And adds perhaps he indeed might be the man about whom Moses the legislator of the Jews wrote. Now this mountain seems plainly to have its name from the ark of Noah, for a boat or ship is with the Egyptians called Baris. So it's interesting that it's written into the history of the world that, in fact, the ark did come to rest on this Mount Ararat that is found on the borders of our present Turkey. And maybe it is good for us to see that; that this isn't a myth or it isn't something that we just sing about in gospel hymns, but that this is historical, that it actually took place.

Now loved ones, then it would be good to look at verse 5, “And the waters continued to abate unto the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.” That was about another seventy-three days. Now in verse 6, I can see there is a phrase that is good for you and me to see the implications of. “At the end of 40 days Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made.” Actually that was at the end of eight months. Do you see what happened? After five months the waters began to go down, but it wasn't until eight months later that Noah opened the window of the ark long enough for the impatience of counterfeit faith to show itself -- isn't that right? I mean if you think of ourselves, we probably would have had a rope over the side at the end of the five months and we'd be kind of dangling our feet in the water or at least throwing something in to see how long it took to hit the bottom. But Noah knew that God was faithful, and he believed it and even though the thing seemed to be coming to an end, this trial, yet he stayed there and waited for God's word and God's command because he was settled in his mind, "Lord, if you want me in this ark forever, I'll stay here." Lord, if you want me single forever, I'll stay here. Lord, if you want me in this job forever, I'll stay here. Even though it looks, Lord, as if you're opening another opportunity for me, I'm not going to get antsy. I'm not going to start heaving something over the side to see if the waters are abating or to see if I can get out of this tight spot I've been in for so many months. No Lord, I'm content; I'll stay here as long as you want me to.” Loved ones, that's pretty important with faith. That's actually what distinguishes

faith from a kind of impatience with God. It is. Do you remember Ananias and Saphira? Was that not what was wrong with them? They said, "Since everybody is giving everything to God, boy, we'll give everything to God -- but we'll provide for ourselves as well. I mean we'll trust him -- we'll trust him, we'll put our faith in him, but we'll provide for ourselves as well." There was a lack of rest in their faith, a lack of readiness to accept what God had given them for as long as he should want.

And loved ones, often it's near the end of the little trials that God graciously allows us to undergo, that you and I blow it. I don't know how many of you have been through trials where you've almost pulled it off; it's almost been a wonderful trial -- almost! It's just that the end ... it kind of didn't go out with a bang, but kind of a whimper. So it was almost a mighty triumph and a mighty deliverance, but not quite because you began to see the glimmer at the end of the tunnel and you began to run a little instead of resting in faith. So God uses Satan in that way; to expose to us when we're pretending to have faith, and when we really have faith.

So if you think of the things that you're believing God for, is it the kind of attitude that [Smith] Wigglesworth has: "This woman's deafness has been healed in Jesus: she was destroyed utterly in Christ, and she was raised up with him and she has new eardrums in Christ; I know that. When you want to manifest that, Lord, that's up to you, but I know that has happened, and my faith is solid; irrespective of your timing or when you want to do it." Now that's the faith that gets an answer, loved ones.

It can't be this kind of faith, "Yeah, I think ... I think God's ... I think God's gonna do it. Yeah, oh, it looks more like it." No. Because you see, you're changing the ground of your faith; you're changing it from God's promises and from what you know he has done in Jesus, to the human side; the appearance that you can see in the world's circumstances, and that's what Satan wants you do to. As soon as Satan can get you, Peter, to look down at the water and to see, "Boy, it looks pretty solid. Oh, I'm walking on it. It's not frozen, but it does look kind of solid and here I am on top of it." As soon as you begin to look at the waters under your feet, as soon as you begin to look at circumstances and think maybe this is going to pull off, you cease to exercise faith in God and what he has done in Jesus, and you begun to put it in what you see and touch. That leads you into counterfeit faith, into faith in appearances, into the things that are seen instead of the things that are unseen. Satan comes along and takes the legs from under you and you're finished. So it's good to see that Noah kept on keeping on with the faith.

"Verse 6: "At the end of 40 days Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made" and then in verse 7, "and sent forth a raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth." A raven is really a carrion bird, a kind of a vulture; it will land on carcasses of animals, and that's why it was sent out first -- because it will land on dead animals. Some people have said it's like the law; it discovers what is dead and what is decaying and that's why it was sent out first. And that's what the law does; it discovers and exposes what is decaying, but not so with a dove. So after the raven ceased to come back Noah knew, "Ah, there is something on which that raven has landed" but he realized it can be something dead that the flood came to destroy. So really, it's not the time yet, and then in verse 8, "Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground" because a dove won't land on anything like a dead carcass or anything unclean or filled with decay, a dove will only land on something that is absolutely clean and living. So Noah knew that until the dove came back, things were not really clean, and there was still poison, and there was still disease.

In verse 9, "but the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put forth his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him." You need to be willing to wait for the dove of the Holy Spirit to signify that all is clean in your heart. Some of us go too fast; some of us are trying to pray through to the fullness of the Holy Spirit, or to a clean heart, or sanctification, or crucifixion of Christ, or full surrender, and we won't stay long enough. We're kind of impatient; if we can get the raven out and it doesn't come back, we feel that everything has been destroyed; "Everything has died, so I must be in; I must be filled with the Holy Spirit." No, the Holy Spirit will witness when you are fully consecrated to God. The Holy Spirit will only land on a heart that is clean and pure, and we need to be willing to trust God for that, loved ones.

I don't know how many of you have tried to pray through to the fullness of the Holy Spirit or a clean heart or sanctification, but I think we can often be impatient about it or we can tackle it as if it's a kind of technique or a form or a formula. You need to trust God. You need to trust God's Holy Spirit. He's going to let you know; the Spirit of God will witness with your spirit when you're a child of God. The Holy Spirit will witness when you're fully consecrated. The Holy Spirit will witness when your heart is clean. You don't need to keep looking in and saying, "Is my heart clean? Is my heart clean?" The Holy Spirit will witness cleanliness and the victory of cleanliness when you're there, and part of faith is trusting him to do that. I think many of us miss it, because we grow a little impatient, or a little antsy, or a little fearful, and we think to ourselves, "Oh, surely it's over, it must be; these floods have been over me; I've been crucified with Christ, I'm ready to do anything Lord, you know I am. I must be filled with the Holy Spirit." And we get up from our knees, and we go off and we "grab by faith" as we say, but really the Holy Spirit has not witnessed to us that all is clean and pure. So there is something here for us; to be content with that and content that the Holy Spirit will come. The raven is the law. The Holy Spirit is represented by the dove and to wait for the Holy Spirit to come.

And you see that's what Noah did in verse 10; he waited another seven days -- very patient really. Having been in the Ark already for five, eight months and yet "He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came back to him in the evening, and lo, in her mouth, a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth." And he knew that there was life beginning to spring up.

Now this dear man, Gill [holding up a book] gives us some of the illustrations of the old preachers I think he was 18th century. He says "For the waters were on the face of the whole earth, there was no place dry and so neither food nor footing for this creature and which was an emblem of a sensible sinner who finds no rest in anything short of Christ, not in worldly enjoyments nor in external duties, not in hearing, reading, praying, fasting, nor an external humiliation and tears, nor in the law and in the works of it, nor in the natural descent, nor in education principals, nor in a profession of religion and subjection to ordinances, only in Christ where it finds rest from the burden and guilt of sin and the tyrannical power of it; from the bondage, curse, and condemnation of the law and from a sense of divine wrath and fear of it and though not from afflictions, yet it finds rest in Christ amidst them." Hold on for Jesus. Hold on through for Jesus Christ. Hold on in prayer until Christ comes and don't be satisfied with anything less than him and in him, everything -- life and peace come.

Loved ones, let's go just a little further in Genesis 8. "In the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth; and Noah

removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry.”

If you compare that with Genesis 7:11, you see that Noah was in the ark, by that time, about 10 months. “In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth.” The flood came back in 7:11 in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month. So Noah had been in that old ark about ten months, and yet still he was patient and waited for God. Verse 14, “In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.” And not before then; 57 days, actually, after what we've just read when Noah left the ark.

So that's God's word to us: “Don't go on your own judgment. Don't go on your own guesstimate about this; wait for me, I'll tell you. I think a lot of us here would get further in our own life with Jesus if we would stop looking at everybody else and saw what they're doing with their ark. “Oh, so and so got out of his ark in the third month; ah, that guy has an outboard motor on his; I must get one on mine. If we stop looking at other people's ark, loved ones, there's a flood that you need that none of the rest of us need. There's a flood that is exactly right for you. There's a flooding out of all that is evil in you that took place in Jesus' death that has not taken place for the rest of us; it's different. There's a place in Jesus' heart on Calvary that you filled that none of the rest of us filled. There's a death that you have to die with Jesus that none of the rest of us have to die. There's a special Calvary that you have with Christ that only you have. And why I encourage you to see that is, our society is so preoccupied with what the other fellow is doing, and we are so preoccupied with being saved enmass; we will not go into heaven together. It's nice to be together here on earth, but we won't go into heaven together. We go into heaven separately and alone, singly; then we'll all meet inside in heaven. But, loved ones, it's you and Jesus individually together and there's a place you have to come into and a place you have to be patient for. So it's good to read the books, I think, and it's good to read other men and women's experiences; but really it is vital to see that the Jesus in whom you were delivered from the flood is the Jesus that only you will know in the particular way that he has known you.

One of the old saints said, "There's a place in God's heart that is made for you and there's a place in God's heart that only you can fill." And that's right; there's a place in God's heart that only you can fill and there's a sense in which each of us have to come to Jesus and say, "Lord, what you did for him was great, but Lord Jesus, what did you do for me?" Will you show me? I want to come in, Lord. I want to see what you bore for me on Calvary. I want to see all that you allowed to be destroyed in your own heart on Calvary. Lord Jesus, I want that because I want to be free of it. I want the dove of the Holy Spirit to discover only cleanness and purity in me.” So there is something in coming, eventually, into God.

Now, loved ones, if you look then at verse 15, “Then God said to Noah’ that's the first we read of God's voice speaking to Noah for just about a year. Thomas A`kempas said, "God graciously grants us, at times, the grace of devotion." That is he, at times, grants us the grace of being able to feel devotion for God. Isn't that interesting; whereas we kind of take it as our right – “I don't feel any devotion to God; I should feel it. I'm going to work it out” and we get into the flesh and we work up a feeling of love for God. That's not faith; that's shakiness; that's uncertainty. That's basing our salvation on what we feel. Be content. If God keeps quiet and doesn't speak in your heart for some time, even a year, go on with your worship and your duties and be obedient and faithful and trust God. That's what Noah did; for a long year, he heard nothing from God but he kept on doing the things that God had directed him to do and to remain faithful.

So, loved ones, that's faith. Do you see what God is after; he's after faith in us. He's after a group of children who will walk after him whether he's handing candy to them or not. But too often we're not that; we're saying, "Oh, dad, give me a sweet. Give me a piece of chocolate. Give me a candy. Give me something. Pat me on the head. Oh, do you love me? Tell me you love me. Oh, do something for me." And it's so wearisome.

God sees, "Oh, my child, have you no faith in me? Do you not believe me? Will you never believe me, however much I do for you?" God is looking for men and women who will believe him; believe that he is what he said he is; and that's what Noah did. You see it in Verse 15, "Then God said to Noah, 'Go forth from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your son's wives, with you.'" It was from them that the whole earth was peopled -- from those eight people -- and obviously because in those days there was no such thing as incest, in those days they were not in that close blood relationship. That has been bred into the race over the years. So there was no such thing as incest because they didn't have that closeness of relationship with each other at that time even though they were related. So the whole earth was peopled from them and this is the renewal of the original commission when God said, "Fill the earth." "Go forth from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your son's wives with you. Bring forth with you every living that is with you of all flesh -- birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth -- that they made breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth. So Noah went forth, and his sons and his wife and his son's wives with him."

And that's how the whole earth was peopled; from that little mountaintop the whole earth was peopled. Nothing remarkable, in a way, in the light of things like the Kontiki expedition, nothing remarkable when you read of the way a little Tern can fly a hundred miles a day, for twenty days, or in the way animals can swim amazing distances who actually aren't used to swimming. I don't know if you read about some dear old cow that ... oh, the guy was fed up with it; it loved citrus fruit and he couldn't keep it out of his orchard, so he decided he'd get rid of it and so he sold it for \$350 to a guy a hundred miles away. Two days later, the cow was back in its pasture. It had traveled a hundred miles and was back!

So when you see the amazing things that animals and birds have done it's not a mystery that the earth was populated both with animals and birds and with people from that one spot which is known, really, as the cradle of civilization. Verse 19, "And every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves upon the earth, went forth by families out of the ark." Of course, they had begun to breed in the ark. And then Verse 20, "Then Noah built an alter to the Lord." Why? For the same reason as Able offered a sacrifice; they knew -- did they know Jesus' name; we won't know until we get to heaven -- but they knew God had done a mighty work that had cost him his own heart, had done a mighty work in eternity whereby somehow part of him had died and had destroyed all of us in him so that we were made new and whole. And Noah knew that; he knew that that's why flood waters could be removed. He knew that's why God was able to allow anybody to live; because he had actually destroyed us all in the lamb was slain from before the foundation of the world. That's why Noah built an alter; he didn't build an alter just in memory of the flood or all the things that had died in the flood, he built an alter in memory of the flood that took place in eternity from before the foundation of the world when Jesus was destroyed, and all of us were destroyed with him.

"Then Noah built an alter to the Lord," and made a sacrifice to express his belief in that, "and took of every clean animal and every clean bird," because he had believed they had been made clean in Jesus, "and offered burnt offerings on the alter. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odor," actually it's interesting, the Hebrew means not "pleasing odor", but it means "rest", a savor of

rest. When God smelled a savor of rest, "the Lord said in his heart," and that's what happens; every time one person here senses, "I was crucified with Christ; I was changed in Jesus; these things that are getting me down -- the habits, this bad temper that I have, this resentfulness, this self of mine that is intractable, this was crucified with Christ, this was destroyed by God in Jesus. I know it. I believe it." There is a savor of rest that rises up to God. There's kind of "Oh I'm glad." There's a coming home that takes place in God's heart, a realization in us "You see what I've done, oh, good." And he says "Come, my child." There's a savor of rest that comes when that takes place.

Oh, that's what you feel when you and I come into the fullness of the Holy Spirit, that's what we feel. That's why we feel at rest, you know. We feel, "Ah, I'm home, home at last." That's what it is; it's God's heart witnessing rest and peace to your heart. "And then the Lord said in his heart, 'I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done.'" And that requires a little care in analyzing, loved ones, you see the way it runs; "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Well that doesn't make sense -- that's God kind of saying, "Well I'll never curse the ground because of man, because man's heart is evil from his youth, and it's because his heart is evil from its youth, that I will never again curse the ground." That's not what it means. God is saying man has inherited tendencies that Adam begat; he has inherited, now an impaired mind, unbalanced emotions, and a weakened body. He has been born into a world that is infested with evil spirits and it is pro-self and anti-Christ. He has been born without the fullness of the Holy Spirit, so from his very youth, he is evil. And actually all I can do is destroy the earth and every generation because this man has an intimate mystical connection with the world.

That's why world fell along with us. That's why the world began to bear weeds and thorns, and why earthquakes began to take place; because there was a mystical connection between you and me and the earth, itself and so when we fell out of God's fellowship, the earth itself fell, so God was faced with that. He said, "Look, man is now evil from the moment he is born. He has evil tendencies, he has a desire to stand up for himself and to be independent of me, and if I'm going to face this, I'll have to destroy the earth every generation. So he said, "Because of this, I'm not going to do that anymore. I am going to build into the world certain signs of the disharmony that is between me and humanity, but I am not any longer going to connect the state of the world with human beings; I'm going to cut those apart and separate them. Yet I'm going to leave some signs like earthquakes and some signs like thunderstorms and natural disasters that will continue to signify to men and women that there is something wrong. And yet in order to preserve the world, I am going to establish certain things, out of the grace that I have shown in Jesus' death on Calvary that will enable it to continue. So on the one side, I will allow certain signs of disharmony to be there as a witness to man that all is not right, but at the other end, I'll actually preserve the world by certain things that I will continue to do, irrespective of whether man obeys or not."

And that's what it means, you see. "I will never again curse the ground because of man though the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, though that is what I have to do, but I'm never going to do it. Neither will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done because I have destroyed them all in my son, Jesus. Verse 22, "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." And that's part of the covenant with Noah, a covenant of common grace. [Gods says] "I will give certain things to men and women irrespective of whether they obey me or not. I have destroyed them in my son, Jesus, and that's the only thing that will change them. And because I have done that, I am now in a position where I can

allow the earth to continue, and I will allow it to continue by certain gifts of common grace that I will give, irrespective of man's attitude to me. So I will allow summer and winter to continue, the seasons, I'll let the harvest continue, I'll let day and night; they will never cease from the earth. I'll let the happiness of family life to continue. I'll let the business laws continue, and the economic laws. I'll let certain things continue in the earth that will enable it to exist, while men and women have the opportunity to discover the real deliverance that is in my son's death."

And of course you know the great danger in our world is to misinterpret that and to say, "Everything is right; summer and winter continues, harvest continues, the rain rains on the righteous and the unrighteous; everything is right." We can have happiness in our families. We can have a certain amount of satisfaction in this life, and Satan is always getting in and trying to take those gifts of common grace -- they not gifts of redeeming grace; they don't redeem you -- but he's always trying to get mankind in the world to think, "Everything is okay; there are lots of nice things in this world, lots of good things. You don't need to be changed." And of course God's Holy Spirit is always coming and saying, "Look, this is only for a while; this is only part of God's graciousness to us. He hasn't flooded us out again because he has done this work in Christ, but you have only these seventy years or so to come into that deliverance in Christ, but after that, then comes the judgment.

So loved ones, in a way we live on borrowed time, and in a way we live in a respite. We have been given respite and there will come a day when the world will not be flooded, but it will be burned up with fire. And we have until that day, or until the day of your death or mine, to come into the real flood that took place in Jesus; where everything dead and dying and decaying was destroyed in Christ, and the Holy Spirit is able to come down as the dove and make you whole and clean.

So I pray that you will hold on right through for the complete baptism of the Holy Spirit and settle for nothing less, and see that there is no need to settle for anything less, and just pursue it until you come through. Be with Noah; patient until you're absolutely sure that everything is new inside you.

Let's pray.

Dear Father, we thank you for the reality and the fact of the flood and the ending of the flood. And we thank you, Lord, for the fact that it has power simply because it is an expression in nature of what you did to each one of us in Jesus, and that there is not one of here tonight who has not been completely remade in Christ. And Lord that all we have to do is believe that. All we have to do is accept that and live in accordance with that and suddenly the power and the victory of it is ours. Oh, Father, thank you for showing us that faith is not believing what we know not to be true, but faith is simply accepting reality, seeing reality, and living in accordance with it.

So Lord we thank you that everything that is petty and selfishness, everything that is low and cunning, everything that is manipulating and resentful is crucified with Christ and we're new people and we can live like that now. Lord, we would set our wills to that for your glory.