

Grace, mercy and peace are yours in abundance through faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

¹ When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. ³ Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.”

⁵ The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. ⁶ The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. ⁷ So the LORD said, “I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them.” ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

⁹ This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. ¹⁰ Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. ¹² God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. ¹³ So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. ¹⁴ So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. ¹⁷ I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.

¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁹ You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you.

²⁰ Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹ You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them.” ²² Noah did everything just as God commanded him. **This is God’s Word.**

Dear Friends,

Last week we decorated our church for Advent and Christmas. We want everything to be ready as we prepare to celebrate our Savior’s birth. I am sure you are making preparations in your homes as well and maybe even at work. There are gifts to buy and parties to go to and decorations to be put up and Christmas trees to be decorated. The choir and the children are practicing for the special worship services that go along with the season. Will you be ready? That’s a good question not only for our earthly preparations but also for our spiritual preparations.

As we think about that question, **“Will You Be Ready?”** we want to be prepared because, **“God is Coming in Judgment,”** but thankfully, **“God Has Already Come in Grace.”**

I. Will you be ready? The obvious answer would be yes and yet at the time of Noah the people were not ready. After Adam and Eve there were two major line of descendants – the line of Cain and the line of Seth. The descendants of Cain continued in his unbelief and focused on

themselves and the pleasures of the world while Seth was in the line of the Savior and his descendants were believers. But as time went on, the influence of the world got between the believers and God. It happened gradually with believers marrying unbelievers. Instead of asking, “will this person be faithful to God and follow his Word?” when seeking a spouse, they looked at more outward things like physical beauty to measure whether the person was worth pursuing. In these marriages you would hope the faithful would lead the unfaithful to faith, but just the opposite happened. Anytime we set aside the standards of God for the standards of the world you are going to get into trouble – and they did.

God is patient but he will put up with unbelief only so long. The response of a righteous God to the unbelieving acts of the people was predictable. When God and his Word is continuously rejected and rebuffed, God can’t let it continue and must act. Makes you wonder whether we are getting to that point in our present time. Consider what Jesus told his disciples using examples from the Old Testament:

**“Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man.
²⁷ People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.**

²⁸ “It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. ²⁹ But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

³⁰ “It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹ On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. ³² Remember Lot’s wife!
 (Luke 17:26-32)

Are we acting like the people in the day of Noah or like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah? It seems that the influence of the world is greater than the influence of God. People don’t have time for church, life is all about pleasure (we see that in all the sexual misconduct accusations and the prominence of pornography in so many areas) and we are encouraged to be tolerant of so many sinful lifestyles and ideas. **“The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.”** Does that describe our times too?

When God looked at the world he saw that, **“The earth was corrupt... and was full of violence.”** Violence is an indication of a person’s power to enforce their will on others. We see signs of this same kind of violence today as babies are aborted, as children are abused, as spouses are abused, as countries are committing genocide by trying to wipe out a particular section of the human race and with the mass shootings where there is no regard for the victims.

It was so bad at the time of Noah that God announced the verdict: The complete destruction of the human race. The people didn’t want God in their lives and so God, as he brought their time of grace to an end, was going to give them their wish. He was going to send them to everlasting destruction and everlasting separation from God.

So where is our hope? To consider this story in the light of our current world is somewhat sobering. Where do we find some hope – some peace – some comfort? We find it in Noah. Noah and his family were faithful to God and even though God was going to bring judgment on the unbelievers of the world, God was faithful to those who trusted in and believed in him. That is our hope and our comfort as well. As we trust and believe in God he will be faithful to us just like he was faithful to Noah. We know that because, **“God has already come in grace.”**

II. Looking at the situation at the time of Noah, in grace God gave mankind 120 years to repent and turn back to him. Peter referred to God’s patience in our 2nd lesson when he wrote, **“God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.”** (1 Peter 3:20). Not everyone had rejected God. **“Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.”**

I love the word **“righteous,”** because it means that we have been made right with God. It doesn’t mean perfect but rather “right” and it is Jesus Christ who made us right with God. Christ met God’s demand of perfection in our place and paid for all the times we fall short of perfection. Noah believed in the promised Savior and the promise of forgiveness and salvation and it was his faith that made him right with God.

Noah was also **“blameless”** among the people. That means that he lived a life of faith. He wasn’t perfect but he was forgiven because of his faith and that moved him to live for God and not for man. This made him quite different from the people of the time who only lived for themselves.

And Noah also **“walked with God.”** This meant that his life was centered on God and God’s will for Noah. As Noah built the ark he was probably made fun of and as he continued to proclaim God’s Word he was rejected, but he was walking the path that God had laid out for him. Up to this time Scripture tells us of only one other man who “walked with God” and that man was Enoch. (Genesis 5:20-24). Enoch did not merely live his life but he lived his life for God – he had a special relationship that we want to strive for as we seek to walk with God throughout our lives too.

And so God had a plan to preserve his people and his promise of a Savior. Sometimes we get confused and think God exists for us but it is the other way around – we exist for God. He created us and redeemed us to praise him and to serve him. When people reject God (his creator) then God has no use for them and this brings God’s judgment. But we see God’s grace as he directs Noah to make an ark. This will be the means God uses to preserve his people and his promise of a Savior.

It is interesting to note that the ark did not have a rudder to steer it or a sail to propel it. More than likely it was flat bottomed. It had only one purpose and that was to rescue God’s faithful people and preserve the animals God had created. Its purpose was not to transport but simply to float and preserve life.

Noah faithfully listened and did everything as God commanded. He trusted God and his promises and so he built that ark. He let God shape his days and guide him and He rejoiced when God gave him 3 sons and as these sons found wives and believed as Noah believed.

God has been gracious to us as well. He didn't save us with an ark but he did save us through the waters of baptism and the work of the Holy Spirit. He continues to preserve us through his Word and guides and shapes our lives just as he guided and shaped Noah's life. During the next few weeks we will prepare to celebrate God's grace as seen in baby Jesus in Bethlehem. But because of God's grace 2000 years ago, we can look forward to Christ's 2nd coming and the glorious celebration for all believers that will take place in heaven. **Will You Be Ready?** Make no mistake – God is coming in judgment, but because of God's grace in our lives we can answer, **“Yes, Come Lord Jesus, for I am ready.”** Amen.