



Pause. Listen. Act. be You.

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MONDAY 8.1.22

Godly and Blameless

Scripture: Genesis 6:9-14

Noah was a godly man. It is the kind of sentence which makes you picture a monk in a habit with the weird shaved head but with a circle of hair look (which is called a tonsure). But the next sentence tells us he was without blame amongst his own people – what a relief! He wasn't perfect or without sin, just someone who lived a life true to God which was respected by his friends and family. This seems more reachable.

- I wonder how Noah felt when God said the earth needed destroyed. What do you wonder?
- Is being “without blame” amongst your friends a reasonable expectation?

Prayer: God, we know sin is a serious thing because it causes us to fail to live up to the person you made us to be. We're glad you care enough to respond to the harm we cause each other and your world. Amen.

TUESDAY 8.2.22

Flash Flooding

Scripture: Genesis 6:17-22; 7:11-12

This flood which swept over the Middle East must have been truly devastating. Every culture which survived its wrath has a version of this story – a massive flood caused by (a) God, with only a few righteous people surviving. And yet, the story is full of symbolism (40 exact days and nights?), which brings deeper meaning. No matter how bad, how full of sin the world got, God did not and could not destroy everything. God redeemed the creation and made sure it would persevere.

- What does this story show us about God?
- If God find something to redeem even when the whole world is full of sin, what might God find in you today which is worth saving?

Prayer: Rescuing God, the truth of rumbling storm clouds of judgment scares us. We're glad you provide us a safe place to run when the sky darkens. Noah ran to the ark. We run to the cross. Thank you for saving us, Jesus. Amen.

WEDNESDAY 8.3.22

Anger and its aftermath

Scripture: Genesis 7:24-8:2, 15-17

Ever done something in the rush of anger you later regretted? It feels like this is what happens to God. After the first wave of destruction, God looked again with compassion and allowed the waters to recede so Noah and his family could go back to dry land. But God had never left them alone, even in the heat of the moment.

- Noah and his family had an enforced quarantine and social distancing from the world. How do you think they felt when they finally could leave the ark?
- When was the last time your anger led you to do something you regret? How could you make it right?

Prayer: God of all creation, thank you for the world and the special care you take of it. Forgive us for our sin which keeps us from seeing value in it. Help us to show the same kind of concern for creation you do. Amen.

THURSDAY 8.4.22*Consequences***Scripture: Genesis 9:8-17**

The flood is over, but its consequences remain with us today. If we are not careful, we are prone to treat the rainbow as a happy ending to the flood while paying no attention to the horrible historical consequences that have come out of how people read the verses that actually end Genesis 9 which have consistently served as a crucial theological support for all kinds of oppression including, but not limited to, Christians persecuting Jews, Muslims enslaving non-Muslims, Christians enslaving people of African descent, and Hutu massacring Tutsi.

- How have you seen humans take a beautiful promise from God and turn into a way to condemn others?
- Why do you think it matters that God establishes a covenant with all animals as well as humans?

Prayer: Lord, have mercy on us sinners. Forgive us for believing the lie you can't be trusted. Grow our trust in you and in your goodness and help us not to seek happiness apart from you. Amen.

FRIDAY 8.5.22*Bland Sameness***Scripture: Genesis 11:1-9**

The Tower of Babel story—found in our lesson from Genesis 11—is often read in contrast to the Pentecost story in Acts 2. In many interpretations, the story of Pentecost reverses (and thereby resolves) the “problem” of the Genesis story. But this interpretation misunderstands Pentecost – they don't speak one language, but each person hears others speak in their own native language (Acts 2:8). We can see Genesis 11 as a narrative that makes the opposite point: humanity's desire for uniformity and God's yearning for diversity. The Babel story places us on the side of uniformity and sameness and God on the side of diversity. – from Tyler Mayfield's commentary on Genesis 11:1-9 at workingpreacher.org

- Is diversity the result of divine punishment and humanity's great pride? How might this interpretation lead to more division and strife?
- The people want to remain in the same place together, but God calls them toward variety and diversity. Where do find yourself on this spectrum today?

Prayer: Lord, have mercy on us. God, when we do wrong things, it's easy to try to hide from you and other people instead of admitting what we've done and saying we're sorry. Forgive us for doing wrong and for hiding. Amen.

SATURDAY 8.6.22*Two Mansions, please?***Scripture: 1 Peter 5:1-14**

First Peter cultivates Christian identity defined by mutuality and kinship across cultural, social, and geographical differences. The letter writer wants the reader to understand our sufferings are a shared pain. Even if you try to hide it and act like everything is fine – your interactions and choices will be shaped by this hidden pain. All of the many Christians through the world share in Christ's suffering, and in one another's pain. These relationships require trust and vulnerability.

- How have you helped share someone else's suffering this week?

Prayer: Lord, help us to open our doors to others, creating a place where all feel welcome and know God's presence in their lives. Give us courage. Amen.