

“The Good News of a Savior Who Gives Us a New Beginning”

Pr Jim Sprengle – Lent Midweek 3 – March 19, 2025

- I. **Genesis 6** – previously read
- II. **Hitting bottom is miserable, but it prepares us for change.**
 - a. Many people are addicted to alcohol and drugs, which is usually a long process of going from bad to worse.
 - i. The brokenness of addiction doesn't just crush the person who can't stop, it's like a tornado of troubles that catches up entire families, workplaces, and even churches.
 - ii. When someone hits bottom, they get to a point that change becomes possible because things get so bad there is nowhere else to turn...
 - iii. The end of the line becomes a new beginning.
 - b. In the same way, the world and everyone in it had hit rock bottom.
 - i. Our story from Genesis in the past couple of weeks helped us to see the beginnings of sin and evil... and God's gracious forgiveness in covering Adam and Eve and promising a Savior.
 - ii. As time went on, the offspring of Eve were not the Savior that she was looking for, and as I mentioned, the firstborn of their union, Cain killed his own brother, Abel.
 - iii. After that, the evil had become so rampant that the Lord began to grieve that He had created humanity.
 - c. Sin was so bad that it seems everyone had forgotten or turned away from the knowledge of God.
 - i. Without getting too off track, a lot has been made of verse 4 and the Nephilim, or the giants (mighty men of old).
 1. This seems to be a group of people who were larger in stature but were also fallen and had rejected God... so they were not what some believe were angels or something.
 2. The problem was people who believed in God were marrying and having children back and forth...
 3. This is still a problem today as people choose to marry unbelievers... and it causes all kinds of trouble.
 - ii. In the end, the people were so self-centered – so full of evil and rebellion that God was grieved that He had made humans and was ready to blot them out... except we read a three letter word that changes everything... “but”
 1. “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord” (v 8)
 2. You see, Noah was a sinner just like all the rest of us – so he was not righteous by his own good works, but instead, Noah had faith that believed God which was counted to him as righteousness... Noah and his family were saved by grace through faith.

- d. The world had hit bottom, but God's grace came to Noah and through a miracle, humanity and life would be saved through a select few.
 - i. What once seemed impossible – to start over – was now going to be a possibility...
 - ii. What seemed like a lost cause because of the violence, corruption, and utter depravity of humankind.... would become a new beginning because God was steadfast in His lovingkindness.
- e. Noah and his wife, their three sons and daughters-in-law would be a part of the new beginning... as Noah followed God's instructions to build an ark.

III. **The ark was God's chosen way to start over.**

- a. So, God gave Noah the instructions to build a massive ark and fill it with a male and female of every living thing.... Along with every kind of food... and Noah believed and obeyed God.
- b. It's interesting, but 2 Peter 2:5 calls Noah a "herald of righteousness"... or it implies that Noah was speaking God's Word to the people around him as he prepared the ark, but they would not listen... so after 120 years of preaching and building, the day had come.
 - i. God's command was to enter the ark, and He would close it up... and anything outside the ark would perish.
 - ii. Then, not only did it begin to rain, it says that the "fountains of water of the great deep burst forth and the windows of heaven opened." (Genesis 7:11)... and by the end of forty days the highest mountain was under roughly 50 feet of water.
 - iii. God blotted out life on the earth as judgment, but life was in the ark.
 - iv. After 150 days the water receded enough to park the giant ship on Mt Ararat... and another 220 days went by before the earth was dry enough to leave the ark and enter their new beginning.
- c. From hitting bottom to a new beginning, God makes all things possible.

IV. **People never again sank as low** as before the flood, but sin kept going.

- a. In one way or another, many of the same struggles took place, as the pride of people got in the way of following the Creator and Redeemer.
 - i. The people banded together, instead of spreading throughout the earth and multiplying like God commanded, and they settled in one place while trying build the tower of Babel.
 - ii. Places like Sodom and Gomorrah would be destroyed for their sin and depravity as Abraham and Lot would barely escape.
 - iii. Sin would keep going for thousands of years until a different deliverance would come.
- b. In the fullness of time, God provided the only deliverance that could win the battle against sin – once and for all.
 - i. This new deliverance would have many similarities to the new beginning of Noah and the ark.

- ii. You see, evil doesn't get a free pass when it comes to a righteous and just God – so sin and evil had to be dealt with once and for all.
 - 1. God gave people one way to be saved in Noah's ark, and in the same way, He would provide one way to be rescued from sin.
 - 2. God would give us a way out starting with His grace... which seems strange when it came through Jesus dying on a cross.
 - a. In a sense, the righteous anger of God was thrown upon Jesus on the cross, just as His judgment was thrown upon the earth in the flood.
 - b. The judgment for all those sins committed before and after the flood – the sins of all time... including yours and mine... poured onto Jesus.
 - c. All the times we failed our Lord in thought, word, and deed – the water slammed into Jesus on the cross.
 - d. For all the evil that we chose over the love that God offers... Jesus was drowned in those waters.
 - e. The Savior promised to Eve paid the ultimate price for her (and Adam's) sin and all those who came after.
 - c. The Good News is that Jesus delivered us from the power of sin... its power to drown us in its waters... but instead went through that Himself.
- V. **The story of the Noah and the ark** remind us of new beginnings and grace.
 - a. Some of you have heard the saying, "there but for the grace of God go I."
 - i. I know this saying well, having hit a bottom in my life in my early 20's.
 - ii. I was rescued by the grace of God, so I have personal experience with new beginnings.
 - iii. One of the places that I began to go was to the ark... or to church.
 - 1. A few weeks ago, I mentioned that people sitting in the pews are in the nave, as in navy... because a sanctuary is like a giant ship turned upside down.... Well, the church is an ark of safety and grace for all who enter from the broken world.
 - 2. At church I began to see the importance of what took place in my baptismal grace – as our 1 Peter reading says that I was brought safely through the water... and my faith clung to the promise of His forgiveness and that He had called me His own.
 - 3. Again, my faith believed God when He said, "I forgive you."
 - 4. My faith believed God when He said that change, and forgiveness, and a totally different life were possible... and it was absolutely true.
 - iv. God is able to take the impossible and make it possible... to take something that is broken beyond repair and give a new beginning.
 - b. I invite you to believe God as well... He is in business of delivering people like us out of the hands of sin and brokenness and into the kingdom of His beloved Son, Jesus.

c. All glory, honor, and praise be to Christ Jesus our Savior, who makes all things new. Amen¹

¹ Sermon based on Concordia Pulpit Resources sermon series, *Good News from the Beginning: The Gospel in Genesis*, Copyright © 2025 Concordia Publishing House 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis