

## **We are all in the same boat (part 1)**

In this period of lockdown, I wonder which part of the Bible you have been dwelling upon.

As we have remembered and celebrated the death and resurrection of Jesus this has obviously been on my thoughts. However, I keep being drawn to Noah too.

How did Noah survive on the Ark? He was in lockdown with his family and all those animals. How did he cope when the world that he knew vanished under water? How was his emotional and mental health when everyone but his family died?

Did he and/or his family argue? Did they have times of fun? Did they suffer emotionally? Did they go through a period of depression? It would have been understandable.

Have you ever realised that Noah was on the Ark a lot longer than the 40 days and 40 nights it rained? By my calculations I believe Noah was on the Ark for over a year.

We have been in lockdown for just one month, would you survive another 11?

Now put yourself in a boat with your family and 100s of animals for 12 months. Would you be able to survive? NNNNNNOOOOOoooooooooooo I hear you cry...

So how did Noah survive? Honestly, the Bible is not clear. However, we can draw upon certain aspects within the story that may aid to build a picture and aid us through our own period of lockdown.

### **1. Noah was in relationship with God**

Genesis 6:9 "Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God."

Genesis 6:22 "Noah did everything just as God commanded him." See 7:5

Genesis 8:1 "God remembered Noah..."

Genesis 8:20-21 "Then Noah built an altar to the LORD ... he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma..."

Noah walked with God, he talked, listened, obeyed, and worshipped (burnt offerings) God. I hope when I die that people will say Amanda walked with God. Though I am painfully aware of my failures. However, that statement is looking at myself through human eyes. Noah was declared righteous, but he certainly was not perfect (Genesis 9:21). And honestly, we are not perfect either, however, when God looks at us He sees our heart and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He sees the blood that was shed so that we can have forgiveness of sins. He sees, He loves and declares us forgiven, clean, holy, righteous.

1 Samuel 16:7 "The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

1 John 1:7, 9 "...the blood of Jesus, His son, purifies us from all sin... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Romans 5:8 "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

God declares us righteous therefore we can walk with Him. 1 Peter 3:12 brings great comfort to the righteous "For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer,..."

How is your relationship with God today? Hear God's heart of love for you:

1 John 4:8-10 "...God is love. This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loves us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

### **Let us pray:**

Lord, thank you for Your sacrifice that has made it possible for me to be made righteous. Lord, search me and know me. See if there are any offensive ways within me and make me clean. I declare my faults to You... ..

I seek your grace of forgiveness... .. Thank you.

As you cleanse me with love and forgiveness, I choose to forgive myself. Please help me.

Father, I need you. Please, aid me to draw closer to you where I can honestly speak with you and hear your voice. Lord God Almighty, aid me today to walk closely with you in love.

Amen

## **2. God did not rescue Noah from the storm**

Genesis 6:13-18; 7:13,16b-18

"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. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. This is how you are to build it: the ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. 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. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark...

...On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. ... Then the Lord shut him in.

For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water."

God spoke so clearly and specifically about what was about to happen, the reason why and with commands to follow. I wonder what Noah thought when He heard that God was going to destroy the earth and everyone within it. How did he feel knowing that he and his family will be rescued?

Knowing the terrible and traumatic events that were before him, with the reassurance that God would keep him safe, he was set the mighty task of building the ark. Once the work was accomplished Noah witnessed horrendous destruction and death. Noah was not rescued from going through the flood with all the emotional and mental trauma it must have brought but he was saved from death. God was faithful to His promise.

Today, we face the horrendous and traumatic destruction of Covid-19. God has chosen us to go through it. However, we Christians go through it knowing that we have been rescued by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We could say that Jesus is our Ark. We do not know what we will encounter on this journey but if Covid-19 overcomes us we can trust upon the promise that we are saved. God is faithful to His promises. He is preparing a room for us in Heaven (John 14:3), a place that is without destruction, death, and trauma (Revelations 21:4).

### **Let us pray:**

Lord God Almighty, I thank you for the picture of Jesus being our ark, our safety, our security, our passage through this storm. Jesus you are our Saviour, our Rescuer, and our Refuge. We praise and worship you.

### **3. Noah obeyed God with faith and trust (Hebrews 11:7)**

If Noah had not listened and followed God's clear commands the ark may have been too small, or it could have sunk. Yet, having seen no rain (it did not rain until Noah stopped building) and being in a landlock country where a flood would have been inconceivable, Noah got to work. He probably had never seen a vast expanse of water before, or a boat, let alone an enormous ark that was to hold two of every living creature. Yet, revealing great faith and trust Noah set to work.

Do you believe that God can call you to do anything? Are you willing? Is there a voice in your head telling you, "God will not call me to build an ark because I do not have the skills!" Noah did not have the skills either. I read this in preparing these notes:

"The ark was built by amateurs. Titanic was built by professionals."

We may not know much about what was going through Noah's mind at this time or how he dealt with the situation, but, what we do know was that he was consistent throughout. Consistent in his relationship with God, continually listening, hearing, and obeying with faith and trust.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work."

As Noah stepped out God equipped him. As we step out in obedience to God He will equip us too. Sometimes we have to say "yes" first.

### Let us pray:

Lord, thank you for the amazing example that Noah is to us. As we ponder upon the mighty task You asked him to do we are struck by his willingness to hear you, his faith and trust to do what You were asking of him even though he was unskilled.

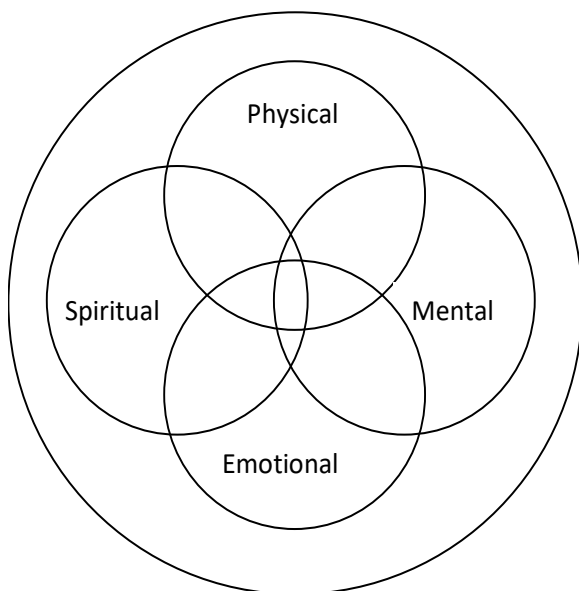
Lord, thank you for the gifts and abilities that we have through the distribution of the Holy Spirit. Help me to put my faith and trust in you to believe that if you call me to service, like building an ark, you will equip me with all that I need to do the task.

I am willing; I invite you to be at work in my life. Amen

## 4. Noah was extremely fit

Noah became a builder without modern day technology, and a zookeeper needing skills of great physical, mental, and emotional strength. Yet, he was 600 years old.

We have been created as one with physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of our being. Jesus points to this in Luke 10:27 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart (emotions), with all your soul (spiritual), with all your strength (physical), and with all your mind (mental).



Our body is one whole, like the one large circle in this image. Within the large circle are 4 other circles which relate to the different aspects of our being. Each aspect interlinks, thus showing they are mutually dependent upon each other. Thus, if there is a problem in one aspect of your life, for example your emotional life, this could be reflected through our physical life.<sup>1</sup>

Medical science now recognises the importance of care for the whole person where different components of a person interlink and affect each other. If your aspiration is for good physical health, but neglect your mental, emotional, and spiritual health then true well-being will not be accomplished. Therefore, it is important to care for

each component of our God given bodies to attain optimum benefit.<sup>2</sup> For example, helping others can aid feelings of contentment and good health; in addition, laughing can aid us to de-stress. This is why while in lockdown we are being encouraged to take a walk each day, use technology to speak to people, and to take care of the whole self which includes healthy eating, drinking, exercise, relaxation, positive thinking, sleeping, routine, talking, and friendships.<sup>3</sup>

Jesus shows concern for wholeness of the body. One example is recorded in John 5:1-15. Jesus asks, "Do you want to get well?" (v6). The Greek word used here is ὑγιής. It refers to fulfilment,

<sup>1</sup> Denis Duncan, 'Health And Healing: A Ministry To Wholeness' 43

<sup>2</sup> J. Wilkinson, 'The Bible And Healing: A Medical And Theology Commentary' 17

<sup>3</sup> British Holistic Medical Association, 'Coping With Anxiety'

[http://www.bhma.org/new\\_site/dpp/Health\\_Bulletins/Copingwithanxiety.pdf](http://www.bhma.org/new_site/dpp/Health_Bulletins/Copingwithanxiety.pdf)

completeness, and wholeness in all components of our being. This implies that Jesus was not only referring to the man's physical health, but also to his mental, emotional, and spiritual health.

I encourage you to find regular times with God through His word and prayer in order to learn to see ourselves, and life, through God's eye. I pray that we will learn to appreciate and understand that being a Christian is not only about our spiritual life but recognising that we are created beings with physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs. We have a responsibility to care for the whole of our bodies, it is His creation (Psalm 139), so that we can aid wholeness in our lives.

As we come to God to find healing and renewed strength, plus, as we seek to care for the whole body that God has given us, I wonder could God ask you to build an ark when you are 100 years old? With Him all things are possible, we just need to be ready and willing.

**Let us pray:**

God, we praise you so much for knitting us together in our mother's womb. I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Lord, I look to You for complete and full healing in my life. Please, make me whole in You.

It amazes me that you know me completely. You know me better than I know myself all the different aspects of me - my physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. You know when I sit and when I rise. You know my thoughts from afar. Teach me your ways Lord. Aid me to care for this beautiful body you have created. I pray for wisdom, that you will speak into my inner most being, that will enable me to care for all the different aspects of me. With you, enable me to be fit/whole so that I can accomplish all that you ask of me.

In the name of Jesus, Amen