

## **We are all in the same boat (part 2)**

I hope you enjoyed part 1 of 'We are all in the same boat,' I certainly did and have gleaned a lot from it. Here is the part 2. I hope God will bless you, as He has me through the preparation and writing of this material.

### **5. Noah was a prophetic evangelist**

2 Peter 2:5 "He did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others;"

The account of Noah in Genesis 6-9 does not call Noah a preacher, therefore, Peter's statement is surprising. Or is it?

Noah walked closely with God and because of this we can assume that He knew God's heart.

- What do we know about God's heart for Mankind? Which pieces of scripture support your answers?

I hope somewhere in your answer you have thought/written that God's heart is for all to know Him...Jesus prays:

John 17:20b-21 "I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

One of the desires for Mankind found in God's heart is unity. Unity with Him and as a result unity with each other. We were not created to live separately from each other in isolation. Social distancing, whilst absolutely necessary at this moment, goes against God's desire for us. He made us for society, relationship, companionship, to be together with each other and with God. The result of this unity with God and each other is that the world will see the evidence and believe that the Father sent the Son into the world.

As Noah walked with God in unity he would have inevitably revealed the truth about God to those around him. Plus, knowing God's heart for Mankind I do not think Noah could stay quiet. He knew God. He knew His heart. He was a faithful servant. Therefore, he preached to all. The Greek word used for preached is herald, someone who announces a message, a sign. The message was that all are to come to know God, walk with Him, and be saved from the flood. I believe Noah was a faithful evangelist. And knowing what was about to happen a prophetic evangelist, pointing to God, giving the call to believe, in the light of the destruction that was about to befall them all.

Here is a call to examine our own responses as we spend time with God. As we walk with Him, dwelling in His heart, are we being a herald? You may not have the gift of Preacher or Evangelist, yet we are all called to be a witness for Him. With a small 'e' we are all evangelists.

1 Peter 3:15 "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

Colossians 4:5-6 "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

2 Timothy 1:7-8 "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God."

Luke 12:12 "For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."

There is a warning. We will probably suffer ridicule. Noah almost certainly did, for everyone did not understand and just wanted to get on with their lives, as Jesus pointed out:

Matthew 24:38-39 "For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."

And yet that did not stop Noah. He faithfully continued building the ark. He loyally continued to walk closely with God and listened to the power of God's voice over the ridicule. He faithfully was a witness to God's greatness.

The world around us just wants to get on with their lives. They need someone to warn them and point them to Jesus. Let us deepen our walk with God, hear His voice over the dissent and become more and more like Noah so that we can be a witness to the world as God requires.

### **Let us pray:**

Lord, as we are struggling with the pain in our world will you help us to draw closer to you. Aid us to fight the temptation to waste time doing other things rather than be with you. However, we can be 'doing' with you, as Noah built the ark with you, so Lord God will you come with me through my day. Be in every activity and aid me to be in discussion with you throughout. As I draw closer to you, God, I pray Holy Spirit that your goodness will shine through me for all to see. I desire to be the witness you called me to be, but I need your help for on my own I am nothing. Amen

## **6. God's promises and blessings**

We do not have many storms in the UK but in Italy I experienced some amazing storms. Every summer the thunderstorms would be a welcome break. Ours in the UK are so wimpy in comparison. I was caught outside during one Italian storm having a picnic with a friend in the middle of a wooded garden about a mile from shelter. It was too hot to do anything but lie under a tree for shade. The storm came without warning. It was quite alarming as we ran from tree to tree hearing the thunder overhead, lightning and hail stones like small marbles (not too much of an exaggeration, they certainly felt like marbles as they hit you!). By the time I reached the house I was wetter than if I had been standing in a shower. Eventually the storm passed, and everyone gathered outside again. What a wonderful blessing! We could breathe in clean fresh air. The humidity had gone, the air was breathable, and just for a moment there was a welcome coolness to the air.

As acknowledged last week, God did not save Noah from going through the storm. Unfortunately, we will go through storms in life; Covid-19 is one such storm.. However, Noah received the promise that He will be saved. What is God's promise to you/us as we go through Covid-19? One verse that is being quoted regularly within the community of BHBC since the beginning of lockdown is:

Psalm 46:10 "be still and know that I am God"

"Know that I am God." Who is God?

If we KNOW who God is then we can "Be still," an inner still peace, for HE is GOD.

What is the promise in this verse? It is He Himself

- He is Healer therefore we can be still knowing that He is healing the broken-hearted, the mourners, the sick,
- He is Saviour, Deliverer and Rescuer therefore we can be still knowing that He is saving and rescuing the hurting, the lost and destitute. Those of us who are saved can rest assured that He will save us through this storm either in this world or the next.
- He is the All-Powerful one in the storm of Covid-19 so we can rest in the knowledge that He is Mighty.
- We know very little, lacking full understanding and wisdom, but God is the All-Knowing and All-Seeing One within this storm, thus, we can have peace of mind for He knows and Sees everything, from the beginning to the end. He is wisdom.
- He is the Almighty God. We rest in peace knowing that our Mighty, Supreme God is on the Throne. He is LORD overall. Why worry?
- He is Father so we can run into His embrace and be comforted and find peace
- He is Shepherd so we go to Him to guide and protect us through this storm.
- He is Potter and Creator so we can believe He is moulding/doing something new out of this destruction.

As we reflect on who God is we can also see the blessings. What an amazing blessing God is to us.

We may not clearly see God at work but with FAITH we choose to believe. Though I do pray that we will see God at work, that He will open our eyes to see Him in this world, in the pain and suffering, in BHBC, in our daily lives.

I hope you can add to this list above and be able to hold to the truths of who God is and KNOW. There in that place of knowledge I pray you will see the amazing blessings we have in Him, find inner peace, rest of mind, and stillness.

Is God giving you a personal promise and/or blessing during this time?

Is God saying anything else to BHBC? Another promise with a blessing?

What a wonderful blessing the Rainbow must have been to Noah. Having seen the whole world before him destroyed, everyone killed, everything gone, he basically hears God say, "never again!" I often saw rainbows in Italy, they always remind me of the promise that all of Mankind received after the flood (Genesis 9:12-17). I wonder what blessings God has for the world after this is all over?

## Let us pray:

Lord God almighty open my eyes to see you at work within the storm of Covid-19. And while we wait for this storm to pass, and we pray it will quickly, will you aid me to hold to the promises and blessings you have given me. Amen

## 7. Noah gave the glory to God

Genesis 8:20-21a "Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma."

Noah was human therefore I am sure Noah and his family were praying to God everyday they were on the ark - "Get us out of here!" Though I am sure as they saw all the suffering around them they understood that the ark was the safest place to be just as we know that our homes are the safest place to be at this present time. Probably, like us, Noah and his family made the best of it, perhaps playing games, having fun with the animals etc. But I am sure there were lots of days of struggle, stress and the boredom of the monotonous work of all the feeding and cleaning. I am sure they were mightily pleased when God told them they could all leave the ark.

KNOW this: Storms do not last forever!

It is amazing that the very first thing Noah did after disembarking from the ark was to build an altar to the Lord. The land he was standing on would have been different than before. It had been under water for so long. The ark had probably drifted over time, so he quite possibly did not know where he was. I do not think we would blame Noah if he had first explored his new surroundings, collected supplies, food, wood, water, and found protection, build his family a shelter, a home, a place of safety. Only once the day of fervent activity was finished and everyone was comfortable, would we expect him to turn to God. Isn't that what we do when a busy filled day is ahead of us? Our heads filled with all that we must do. God will be on the 'to do list' but first we must ensure all our tasks are accomplished, our families, and ourselves are provided for and safe.

Yet, Noah goes from building an ark (work in response to obedience to God's will) to building an altar (work in response to a desire to worship the God who saves for the new adventure ahead). Noah models to us the importance of putting God first in our new beginnings. What a great example, witness and teacher he was to his family and us today.

First, Noah teaches that before we consider starting a new beginning, and each new day is a new beginning for it stretches unknown before us, we should turn to God in gratitude for all He has done. He is our Saviour and Rescuer.

Have you seen Him at work in your yesterday? Are you thanking Him for it today?

Second, rather than rushing ahead, being in control of our own day, Noah reveals the importance of looking to God first in worship, surrendering/sacrificing our will, our day and giving the control to the LORD our Saviour.

Eventually, the worst of Covid-19 will end, and we can disembark from our homes. Life may not look the same as it did before. There may be a new world to explore. The temptation maybe to re-establish our lives so we feel secure within it, seeking employment, ensuring we are financially safe, protected etc before we consider God. Let us not forget the witness that Noah is to us, and before we rush ahead let us stop and build an altar of worship to the Lord not because we must

but because we desire too. And let us surrender/sacrifice our need to control, asking Him to continue being in control of our new beginning.

Unfortunately, there may be another storm ahead, the good news is that God is with us in every storm. He is consistent and His love for us is constant.

**Let us pray:**

Lord, there is so much to praise you for today.

I praise you for my yesterday - for Jesus Christ's sacrifice, for His resurrection, for saving me... ..

I praise you for this brand-new day - for the hope of something new ... ..

I praise you for my future – for the knowledge that you are the same God, yesterday, today and tomorrow... ..

I Worship you, almighty God.

I surrender my all before you and invite you to be in control of this new day, and the future ahead of me... ..

Amen

## **8. Building your relationship with God**

One last thought as I close on our journey with Noah. How do we walk closely with God?

It is like building a relationship with a friend.

- ❖ Take time,
  - reading God's Word to see who He is and what He expects of us
  - acknowledging Him in prayer,
  - thanking, praising and worshipping Him for yesterday, today and tomorrow.
- ❖ Invite Him to spend time with you as you would spend time with a friend. Enjoy being in His presence.
  - Talk with Him. Open your heart to Him. Chat with Him revealing your desires, be honest and ask those questions on your heart.
  - Listen to His response. A good relationship includes two-way communication. Expect to hear from God, just as you would from a trusted friend. He wants to offer support and guidance to you. God wants you to know how much He loves you. If you do not take the time to listen, how will you hear His still small voice. God may communicate directly to you audibly or through a visual picture in your mind. He may shout at you through His Word in the Bible, through others, or sometimes through circumstances.
- ❖ Invite Him to be with you throughout the day. If you spent the day with a friend you would be in constant communication. Even in the silence you are with each other, appreciating each other's presence. Likewise, be aware of God's presence throughout the day. Ask for His help in each new situation that you will face during the day. Ask Him to be in control, guiding your decisions, filling you with wisdom, peace and strength.
- ❖ When you hear God's voice, Obey. He may only give you the first step, but when you have obeyed, He will give you the next step. Know that if God asks you to build an ark He does so because it is for your own good. It may well save your life!
- ❖ God is your Lord, Saviour, and closest friend. As you walk in relationship with Him and see Him at work do not forget to return to the altar, to the place of thanksgiving, praise and worship. Do not be tempted to walk into tomorrow taking control of your life without God.

The more you seek Him and expect Him to be with you in your day, the more you will learn to recognise His voice, see Him at work and trust Him in obedience. Eventually your relationship with Him will grow and flourish.

Intimate fellowship with the Lord is the foundation of our spiritual growth and extremely important if we want to be in the middle of His will.

**Let us pray:**

Loving God, we thank you for hearing our prayers,  
feeding us with your word,  
and challenging us through these notes.

Guide us to walk closely with you.  
Use us to love and serve You,  
and each other and our community.

We pray in the power of your Spirit  
and in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.