

Perseverance.

New House- so many projects,

Neglecting the inside to focus on outside.

Monday I focused on clearing out a rock garden – rock after rock after rock. Every time my shovel went into the dirt it hit a big rock.

And as my puny muscles ached and dirty sweat poured down my forehead I thought of whose fault it was.

Adams! When he sinned in the garden, God told him this:

Genesis 3:17

**“Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat food from it
all the days of your life.**

landscaping and life are hard, but the writer of Hebrews reminds us to persevere;

Hebrews 10:39 But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.

Over the summer we’re going to look at the OT men and women mentioned in Hebrews 11 who did not shrink back...

“They were tortured, faced jeers and mockers, they were enchained and imprisoned...destitute, persecuted and mistreated—”

But they pushed thru their fears and doubts and personal struggles and:

Hebrews 11:39-40

“These were all commended for their faith...”

In the midst of life and its troubles they trusted and obeyed God. They persevered.

Turn to Hebrews 11 and we’ll jump right in.

PRAY

Hebrews 11

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. 2 This is what the ancients were commended for. 3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

4 By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.” For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes

to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Hebrews 11:7

By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

If I were to ask you what you know about Noah, you would probably mention the ark, the animals that came 2x2, maybe some of you would know about his vineyard issues.

But the most important part of Noah's story for me, is found in this verse from Genesis

Genesis 6:8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

There's so much behind that simple verse and today we're going to unpack it.

His story begins in chapter 5

Genesis 5:28 When Lamech lived 182 years, he had a son. 29 He named him Noah and said, "He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed.

NOACH (Comfort/Rest) - settle down; But there was no NOACH **no comfort and no rest** in the world Noah was born into; a world without the Bible, without prophets, without the 10 commandment, no government, no police, no laws,

no courts and because of that he lived in a world without restraint.

Can you imagine?

Men and women doing exactly as they pleased without a thought of how it might affect others.

it wasn't good.

Gen 6: 6 The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. 7 So the Lord said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them."

8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

HOW?

V9 Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God

When preparing for a funeral I often interview the family and ask them some questions that are designed to help them remember their loved one and enable me to tell their story in a way that honors their memory.

One of the questions – what would _____ want people to know about him?

He was a Purdue fan, he built model railroads, he loved his children and grandchildren.

All good things.

But can I just tell you know, that if I were to die to tomorrow, I'd want people to remember me

Not just- He liked to travel

Not just- He sunburned easily

He walked faithfully with God.

Noah found favor because he lived looking for it. He sought to live in a way that pleased God.

So when God spoke his plan, Noah heard

And more than heard – he obeyed.

Make no mistake, that obedience and perseverance was tested over 120 years.

From the time God gave the command and the time he shut the doors to the ark, over 120 years will pass. And in all that time, Noah will stay at it.

That's a long time.

1 Peter tells us that it was GOD's patience that prompted that. In that time Noah would preach to anyone who would listen about God's command to him and his commitment to be obedient.

So when God commanded...

Build an ark — yes Lord

Take your family in with you – it may take a bit to convince them but take them anyway – Yes Lord

Take enough animals to feed your family and to repopulate the earth. Yes Lord

Don't stress about – just do what I ask and I'll do the rest—yes Lord

Genesis 6:22 So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

this attention to obedience is what Hebrews means when it says Noah demonstrated a holy fear of God.

He didn't do SOME of what God asked, he did exactly what God asked.

Obedience is the path to NOACH rest and comfort

NOACH rest

+ means you can ignore the stream of culture and live differently – walk faithfully and confidently with God.

+ rest as the storms are raging and the rains come down and floods come up and you are at perfect peace inside the place of comfort and security.

+ what you feel when you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God is in charge of protecting you and your family

Gen 8:4 The ark came to rest (settled down) (NOACH) on the firm foundation of a mountain under the firm promise of a of a rainbow.

We think of mountains as unshakable but God says his love is even more firm.

Isaiah 54:10 Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

God’s covenant – persevering love - is a NOACH comfort and rest for us.

And that rainbow – that covenant of peace.

Last Tuesday we had a double rainbow. I was at a shelter board meeting and someone came in yelling about a double rainbow. Then I got a text from the ballfield of that same double rainbow, **PHOTO** my facebook feed was filled with pictures of that rainbow. Each time we see and rainbow, it’s like it’s the very first time.

Genesis 9:15 I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. 16 Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.”

There will always be those who want to explain the rainbow in terms of light refraction, and prisms through water droplets, but for those of us who have experienced the grace and favor and goodness of God, the rainbow – that bridge between heaven and earth – is and always be a reminder of:

NOACH COMFORT

God’s justice - he cannot ignore sin

God’s love – he is patient wanting none to perish

God’s provision – if he asks me to do something, he will provide a way to make it happen

God’s promises – he will never judge the earth in the same way again

That brings me NOACH – comfort and rest.

And gives me strength to persevere

If Noah had given up, You and I wouldn’t be here. So be ready and stay ready – when God speaks, listen and obey

That's the path to NOACH - God's Comfort and rest.

Trust and obey – there's no other way- to be happy in Jesus.

The world we live in is increasingly chaotic and people are looking for comfort and rest anyway they can, a new spouse, a focus on their own pleasure, some are even undergoing surgery to make them new people – all to find a measure of rest and peace. I sympathize, but I'm here to remind you that comfort and rest – God's favor – is only found when we trust our life to his.

Noah found favor with God because he looked and lived for it. How about you? Have you found favor in the eyes of the Lord?

The favor with God is found only in Jesus. Through his obedience to the cross he became our NOACH our comfort and rest.

How do you get it?

When our sin is addressed and confessed and washed away in Jesus, we can then have a relationship with God. We can "walk" with God and experience that same comfort and rest.

If you want this kind of relationship, please talk to someone at the back or with me after the service.