

West View Methodist Church

DAILY DEVOTIONS: LENT WEEK 1



NOAH

GOD'S COVENANT WITH CREATION

Much of this week's devotions' content was sourced from a book by Robb, Susan. *Remember*. Cokesbury, United Methodist Publishing House - CoreSource Plus, 2023.

MONDAY

GOD'S COVENANT WITH CREATION



Genesis 9: 8,11 (NIV) ⁸Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: ... ¹¹"I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

We who come from the Western Cape know what violent winter storms, rain and even flooding look like – often linked with damage and even some fear. However, it is nothing compared to the Great Flood we learn of in Genesis. Our focus, from a Godly perspective, will be on why the flood happened and why God relented by establishing His abovementioned covenant.

"In this biblical flood story, God basically 'un-creates' the Eden-like world that God established in Creation in order to re-establish a new creation." (Susan Robb) Humanity created in God's own image had become corrupt. Human wickedness, violence and corruption were the order of the day. "Note that this Scripture doesn't say that God seeks vengeance or is wrathful in

response to what has happened. God surveys what has become of God's beautiful creation and of those who were tenderly entrusted with its care and is grieved to the heart. Faith and trust are broken." (Susan Robb) Humanity becomes less civilised and more evil. Doesn't that sound very familiar in current times, too?

But, instead of justifiably wiping out His creation, God in his great love decides on another way.

Reflection:

Amidst all the harsh and hateful words from all sides in the current Hamas/Israel/Palestine conflict, how do you think the small Christian minorities in both Palestine and Israel feel? As if they, too, may be engulfed by a flood - of violence?



Prayer: Lord, how amazing is Your love and grace! AMEN

TUESDAY

GOD CREATED AND GOVERNED THE WORLD WITH A BENEVOLENT PURPOSE



Psalm 86: 15 *But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.*

God decides to send “a torrent of rain, a flood that will wash away all the evil from the world and make way for a renewed creation”. (Susan Robb) However, instead of total elimination of His original creation, God decides to preserve and start anew with a small part of it who ‘walked with God’ (Genesis 6: 9) – Noah and his family.

Let’s pause for a moment to realise how justified such drastic action by God will be today as well, for us both individually and collectively. We often do not display our ‘created in God’s image’ attributes to others anymore. We become impatient, unkind, unforgiving and unloving. “We need to be re-created. We need to die to that which does not look like the love of the Creator in us.” (Susan Robb)

As societies and nations, the media tells us every day of the rampant moral degeneration of nations and the world. Violence, corruption, greed and environmental abuses should make us realise that we as the ‘modern’ human race deserve the same destruction as the people of Noah’s time did.

Miraculously, “It is also in God’s nature to save and seek reconciliation with those who wander from the intention of their original design and blessedness. So, instead of destroying all of creation, God reboots it”. (Susan Robb) God instructs Noah on what to do and he does it. This is the beginning of God establishing the first covenant in the Bible.



Prayer: Dear Lord, we can only stand before You in humility and awe because You are a God of ‘second chances’. AMEN

WEDNESDAY

THE RAINBOW AS A REMINDER THAT GOD REMEMBERS



Genesis 9: 12 & 13 *And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between Me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set My rainbow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth."*

Our faith and worship should always remind us of God's saving grace that continues to carry you and me to safety through all of life's turbulent waters, and storms. "We are to remember what God has done in the past, and continues doing, to save us, shelter us, and lead us to live." (Susan Robb)

God remembers Noah and makes a wind blow over the earth. The Hebrew word for wind is 'ruach', which can also mean 'breath' or 'spirit'. Remember how the risen Jesus breathed onto the disciples and told them, "Receive the Holy Spirit". (John 20: 22)

However, surely God must realise that the Flood on its own will not

prevent humanity's constant inclination towards destruction? We sense from this Bible story that God's grief continues, thus He makes binding promises to Noah and his family. In His great love, God limits His own power. "This covenant actually extends to all humanity, all living creatures, and all of creation." God does not need the rainbow as a reminder of this covenant, but it reminds **us** "that God prefers to bind Himself to us ... rather than not live with us. It reminds us of our undeserved blessings and God's abundant compassion". (Susan Robb)

Reflection: How does this covenant extend to the coming of Jesus?



Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for Your enduring reminder, which I, too, so often need in my life. AMEN

THURSDAY

THE CROSS BECOMES OUR RAINBOW



Isaiah 54: 9 & 10 *To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again. 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.*

“Through Noah’s story we can better understand not only the love and compassion of the Word made flesh who dwelt among us in Jesus but especially the God who sent Him. We can better know the God who became one of us (to) yet again make us see that we are remembered as God’s creation, and not for our transgressions. We are reminded of the deep, eternal love of our Creator, who will never stop seeking to be reconciled with us and who will suffer death on a cross in proving His love for us.” (Susan Robb)

Our pathway to salvation is proof of God being faithful to His

covenant with humankind, of reaching out to us in new ways. His promise in the Isaiah text above is fulfilled on the cross – it becomes our rainbow, the sign of God’s promise to us. The empty cross is not the end – it’s a new covenant and beginning.

We must remember the signs of the covenants we make with God, e.g. “When we receive Communion, we remember in the cup that it is the sign of Jesus’s blood poured out for us for the forgiveness of sins”. (Susan Robb)



Prayer: Dear Lord, I surrender my life to You as my response to Your covenant with me. AMEN

FRIDAY

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US DURING LENT?



Matthew 6: 12 & 13 *Forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*

The following extracts from Susan Robb can hardly be improved upon:

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, when we remember our mortality as we hear the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return".

Lent is also a call to spend forty days in the wilderness with Jesus as He overcomes the temptations we all face – the temptations to choose chaos over God – and begins His journey to the cross. It's a time for us to return to the One who remembers us so that we can live in the image of the One who created us. We are called to remember the cost of the covenants God makes on our behalf.

God's willingness to self-limit God's power and to sacrifice

divine freedom in the story of Noah comes to a climax in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, who consummates God's relationship with us by embracing all of our life experiences, even death.

Lent calls us to journey with God and one another in a new way. A way that brings order out of the chaos in the world. If we 'give up' something for Lent, the things we sacrifice should make a difference in the world, not necessarily giving up something beneficial to us. It means following Jesus toward a more profound richness in our lives and the lives of those we touch.

REFLECTION: Am I following in trust the way that Noah did?



PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, I embrace the renewed covenant that You brought to us. AMEN