

## INTRODUCTION

There are many halls of fame around the world. We Texans are proud of our sports heroes. We were the first state to start a sports hall of fame. If you visit Waco to see something other than visit the Fixer Upper folks or to watch Baylor play football, you can check out the Texas Sports Hall of Fame. Some of the inductees include Babe Didrikson Zaharias, Tom Landry, Emmitt Smith, and Tyler's own Earl Campbell and Floyd Wagstaff.

Speaking of being a Texan, someone sent me a list of ten signs that let you know you're a Texan. You're a Texan if:

1. You've switched your AC from "heat" to "cool" and back to "heat" on the same day.
2. The value of a parking space is by the availability of shade.
3. You or someone you know has a belt buckle bigger than your fist.
4. You know someone who consulted a college football schedule to plan their wedding date.
5. You say you're going to stop for a coke and get a Dr Pepper.
6. Your grandmother's car is a "dually."
7. You can properly pronounce Mexia, Bexar, Gruene, Boerne, and Burnet.
8. You know cowpies aren't made of beef.
9. You know what someone means when they say, "I'm fixin' to go."
10. You've ever gotten a Whataburger at 2 a.m. and knew five other people there.

Speaking of Halls of Fame and lists, we are taking the next couple of months to talk about God's Faith Hall of Fame list found in Hebrews 11. In the last message we examined the lives of Abel and Enoch. Abel taught us about worshiping by faith. Enoch was an example of walking by faith. And Noah is an example of working by faith. In the book of James we read that faith without works is dead being alone. True faith always results in obedience and activity.

Let's read about Noah's unsinkable faith in Hebrews 11:6-7 (CSB). "Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. BY FAITH Noah, after he was warned about what was not yet seen and motivated by godly fear, built an ark to deliver his family. BY FAITH he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes BY FAITH."

In 1982, Carman wrote a song about several Bible characters. I want to quote one of the verses, but to understand it you've got to know who E.F. Hutton was. In the 1970s, the E.F. Hutton stock brokerage became famous with their slogan on commercials that said, "When E.F. Hutton talks, everyone listens." Oh, and by the way, the reason they're not around anymore is that the SEC and Justice Department WERE listening and convicted E.F. Hutton of fraud. But, just hang on to the idea of that slogan, "When E.F. Hutton talks, people listen."

Here's the song: "Well, Noah was sittin' on his front porch; he was eatin' lasagna that he'd cooked with a torch; he was halfway through a meatball when the Lord spoke. He said, 'Noah,

you're gonna' be busy for awhile; building an ark from a huge woodpile.' And Noah's eyes got as big as baseballs and he almost choked. He told his family what was going down and they listened intently to him; and nobody fought, or fussed or fumed because nobody knew how to swim. When the rains came, they's all safe inside; they didn't get wet or nuttin'. Noah obeyed 'cause when God speaks, everybody listens, even E.F. Hutton."

Then the chorus said: "God don't care—what the circumstance. Or even if the future's looking dim. God don't want some big old song and dance; He just wants your faith in trust in him."

So with that introduction, let's dig into the faith of Noah. Do you have an unsinkable faith? Noah did. The phrase "BY FAITH" appears three times, and there is a lesson in each occurrence. In addition we'll cover some life lessons that apply to us.

## **1. NOAH DEMONSTRATED UNCONDITIONAL OBEDIENCE.**

"By faith Noah...built an ark to deliver his family." Most of us who grew up in church have heard the story of Noah's Ark since we were kids. There have been movies made about it. And today, outside Williamstown, Kentucky you can see a replica of the ark built to the exact specifications that God gave to Noah.

We all know people in the Houston area who have been affected by the flooding as a result of Hurricane Harvey. We're told it will be the costliest natural disaster in American history. That may be a short record as we wait to see what Irma does.

But Texans are resilient. As of yesterday, there were seventy confirmed deaths from the storm. And we grieve with every family who lost a loved one. But there were many miracles performed in Houston. Some are calling it the American Dunkirk as thousands of volunteers took their boats to the streets to rescue those trapped in the flood. Seventy fatalities is tragic, but as a point of comparison, the great hurricane that leveled Galveston in 1900 killed an estimated 10,000 people and just twelve years ago over 1,800 people died in Katrina.

Harvey dumped about fifty inches of rain in the Houston area. Can you imagine a global flood during Noah's time where there was fifty FEET of rain? So what was this first flood all about?

Let's go back to Genesis 6 to read what happened. "When the Lord saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time, the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and he was deeply grieved...Noah, however found favor with the Lord." (Genesis 6:5-6, 8 CSB) Notice it doesn't say God was angry. He regretted what He had done and the wickedness of his creatures caused Him grief. His heart was broken. But Noah found favor, that's grace, with the Lord.

"Then God said to Noah, 'I have decided to put an end to every creature, for the earth is filled with wickedness because of them; therefore I am going to destroy them along with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood...' And he did everything God commanded him." (Genesis 6:13-14, 22 CSB)

Notice Noah just didn't decide to build a big boat by himself. He heard from God. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Now if we had been in Noah's sandals, we probably would have wanted to know more of the details. If it had been one of us I imagine we would have said, "You want me to build an ark? What's an ark?" And God said, "An ark is a big boat to float you through the flood when the rain comes." And then we would have asked, "What's rain?"

Because the scripture makes it clear that until this time, there hadn't been any rain. Genesis 2 tells us a mist that arose from the ground watered the land. But Noah didn't argue or reason. He simply obeyed God; that's faith.

So here's our first Life Lesson: It requires faith to obey God when we don't fully understand why. Noah started building an ark by faith. He had never seen an ark, or a drop of rain, or a flood. But he obeyed. Sometimes God tells us to do something in His word and we don't understand why. That's when you have to follow the words of *Proverbs 3* and trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. God treasures obedience. The Bible says to obey is better than sacrifice.

My favorite story about obeying God comes from my friend and mentor Jim Henry who was the long time pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando. He told me about a sharp young couple that came to Christ. They were very successful in their careers, but they were looking for a reason to live. They heard the Gospel and turned to Christ and started growing as young believers. In one message not long after they were saved, Jim just mentioned in a sermon that God's Word commands all Christians to tithe. He didn't elaborate; he just mentioned it.

After the service this couple came up to him and said, "Pastor, we heard what you said about all Christians should tithe. So we have decided to tithe." Jim said, "That's great!" Then the husband said, "The only trouble is, we don't have a clue what that word 'tithe' means. We just know we want to do it." Jim explained to them that it meant giving the first ten percent of their income to the Lord. He said, "They were still excited and said, 'Cool. We'll do it.'" He said he was humbled by their willingness to obey God even without knowing all the details of what it meant!

God may be telling you to do something, and you are hesitating because you don't understand all the ins and outs and you don't have all your questions answered. Just obey. And once you start obeying, then God will give you more information.

## **2. NOAH WARNED PEOPLE OF THE COMING JUDGMENT.**

"By faith he condemned the world." That doesn't mean Noah went around condemning people personally. It means that by his faith and obedience, he was giving a warning to the people that judgment was coming.

We don't know exactly how long it took Noah to build the ark. Earlier in Genesis 6 God mentions He will warn people for 120 years, so some take that as the time it took Noah to build

the ark. That means for over 100 years, Noah was warning the people of the flood. Did you know that in addition to being a boat-builder, Noah was a preacher, too?

In the New Testament Simon Peter mentions that Noah was a preacher. He wrote, "If he didn't spare the ancient world, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others, when he brought the flood on the world of the ungodly...then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment." (2 Peter 2:5, 9 CSB)

So Noah was a preacher of righteousness. For over a century as he built his massive boat, I imagine people came up and said, "What's that?" Noah said, "An ark." They said, "What's it for?" Noah said, "God is grieved at the wickedness of humanity, so He's going to send a flood one day, and only the people and animals on this ark will escape His judgment. Will you repent and start living right so you can ride through the flood with me?" And everyone who heard his message laughed at him.

I can imagine a little boy coming up to his dad during Noah's time and saying, "Daddy, can I talk to you for a minute?" And the dad said, "Sure, son, what's on your mind?"

"Well, Daddy, you know Mr. Noah, the man who's building the big thing that he calls an ark?"

"Yes, I know him."

"Well, Daddy, some of us boys were over there playing today and Mr. Noah took a break and sat on a saw horse and started talking to us. He said that God was sad that He had created people because we are all so evil, and that God is going to send a great flood to destroy the world. He said the only people who would be saved from the flood would be the ones who put their trust in God and came aboard that Ark! And, dad, I was frightened. What do you think about all that?"

The father throws his head back and starts laughing. "Oh, Son, forgive me for laughing. I'm not laughing at you. Son, I just think it's funny you should talk to me about that because when I was your age I used to play around that area. He's been building that ark for a long time. He came out and told me the same story he told you and I was scared too. So I went to your granddad, and he laughed at me and said that Old Noah had been telling the same story since HE was a boy! So, son, don't pay any attention to that old religious fanatic! He's been talking about a flood for years! Where is it? Don't worry yourself about it; just go out and play."

And that is the same attitude of people today who are told that Jesus is going to return to bring judgment against sin. They scoff and say, "Those crazy Christians have been saying that for many centuries. Don't pay any attention."

Here's the second Life Lesson: We must warn people while God's patience is in effect. God has placed us in a wicked and corrupt culture and we are to do what Noah did. We don't need to build an ark, because we already have one. Jesus is our ark who will carry us safely through the waters of God's final judgment. So our job is to warn the people around us that there is going to be a final judgment against sin. And don't be surprised if people mock you the same way they mocked Noah.

Some people read the story of Noah and object to the idea of a God who would destroy the world with a flood. But when you know the full story you realize God is full of mercy and patience. He could have sent a fireball to instantly destroy humanity, but the Bible says God is loving and patient and very slow to anger. The proof of this is in some of the characters from the Bible.

Methuselah proves that God warned the people for 969 years! (Genesis 5:27) Methuselah was the oldest person in the Bible. He lived to a ripe old age of 969 years. Methuselah's father was Enoch, the first prophet in the Bible. He must have known God was going to send judgment, because he gave his son an unusual name, Methuselah, which means, "When he is gone, IT will come." History proves that IT was the flood God sent. Noah was the grandson of Methuselah, and when you add up the ages of Methuselah, his son, Lamech, and the age Noah was when the flood came, you find that Methuselah died the very year the flood came. Numbers don't lie. Just add these three numbers from Genesis. Write down 187, that's how old Methuselah was when Lamech was born. Write down 182, because that's how old Lamech was when Noah was born. Then write down 600, because Noah was 600 years old the flood came. Those three numbers give us the age of Methuselah when the flood came—969—the same age he died. In other words, the reason God allowed a man to live longer than any other human, 969 years was so that every time someone called his name they were reminded that something big was going to happen when he died. In a sense God spent 969 years warning humanity to repent.

But Methuselah represents the second longest time God has shown patience for people to repent. We are currently living in the Time of God's Longest Warning. Christians have been preaching that Jesus is going to return for over 2,000 years. Why has He delayed? It's not a delay; it's a testimony to the patience of God. The Bible says, "The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9 CSB) Like Noah we should be warning people while God's patience is still in effect because one day, the door of the ark was shut. And one day, the opportunity for salvation through grace will expire.

### **3. NOAH RECEIVED THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

The Bible says, "He became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith." Have you ever inherited anything? If you did, it wasn't something you worked to get. A family member loved you enough to leave you a part of their estate as a gift. Because Noah was a man of faith, he received an inheritance. That inheritance was the gift of being declared righteous. That means to have a right standing before God.

We know that Abel, Enoch, and Noah are in heaven because God gave them the gift of righteousness based upon their faith. If you want to join them in heaven, you've got to understand that righteousness is not some standing you attain by doing right things. When you place your absolute faith in God, He gives you the gift of righteousness.

Paul explains this gift in Romans 5: "Since by the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man [Adam], how much more will those who receive the overflow of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:17 CSB)

I love that term, "overflow of grace." Have you ever filled up a glass with water, and you kept filling it until it overflowed? God's grace isn't just barely enough; there's MORE than enough—it's overflowing. With God the glass isn't half-full or half-empty; it's overflowing! And part of the overflow of grace is the GIFT of righteousness.

Here's the final Life Lesson: Even righteous people occasionally make foolish choices. After Noah landed, he planted a vineyard and after a few years he picked some grapes, made some wine and got drunk and he was found in his tent naked and drunk by one of his sons. If I had been writing the story, I would have ended it after the flood, not with Noah's embarrassing incident. But it's in the Bible to teach us an important lesson: To be righteous doesn't mean you are perfect.

We know from the New Testament that Noah didn't lose his salvation. He still was accounted righteous, because of his faith and obedience. It just shows you sometimes even God's heroes experience failures in their lives. In fact, someone said Hebrews 11 could well be called, "The Roll Call of Failures." instead of "The Roll Call of Faith." Abraham was a liar; Moses was a murderer with a temper problem; Samson was a he-man with a she-problem. Even people of faith aren't perfect. One of my seminary professors used to say, "God can strike a mighty lick with a crooked stick!"

But what we see in stark contrast beside Noah's failure is God's faithfulness. Our salvation isn't dependent on our ability to live perfect lives; if it was, we'd all be in deep trouble. Our salvation is a gift and the character and duration of that gift is dependent on the faithfulness of God.

## **CONCLUSION**

How's your faith today? How many of you can raise your hand and say, "I can remember a certain time when God spoke to me." That's good. Here's the next question. How many of you have ever seen a rainbow? Oh. Well, let me remind you that whenever you see a rainbow it is God speaking to you.

That's the part of the story where God's faithfulness overcomes Noah's flaws. God made a promise in Genesis 9. He said, "Whenever I form clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you...water will never again become a flood to destroy every creature." (Genesis 9:14-15 CSB)

And even though some groups have tried to hijack the rainbow, God owns the copyright on it. No matter how many times we see a rainbow it almost always makes us want to stop and gaze at it. Whenever you see one, remember that God is saying, "I gave my word to Noah. And this promise is to you. Don't be afraid. I'm in charge. The water may get deep, but it will never get

deep enough to cover the earth again." So smile when you see that rainbow because it is God's reminder that you can have an unsinkable faith!

## OUTLINE

### 1. NOAH DEMONSTRATED UNCONDITIONAL OBEDIENCE.

"When the Lord saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time, the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and he was deeply grieved...Noah, however found favor with the Lord." *Genesis 6:5-6, 8 CSB*

"Then God said to Noah, 'I have decided to put an end to every creature, for the earth is filled with wickedness because of them; therefore I am going to destroy them along with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood...' And he did everything God commanded him." *Genesis 6:13-14, 22 CSB*

Life Lesson: It requires faith to obey God when we don't fully understand why.

### 2. NOAH WARNED PEOPLE OF THE COMING JUDGMENT.

"If he didn't spare the ancient world, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others, when he brought the flood on the world of the ungodly...then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment." *2 Peter 2:5, 9 CSB*

Life Lesson: We must warn people while God's patience is in effect.

Historical Note: Methuselah proves that God warned the people for 969 years!

### 3. NOAH RECEIVED THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

"Since by the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man [Adam], how much more will those who receive the overflow of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ." *Romans 5:17 CSB*

Life Lesson: Even righteous people occasionally make foolish choices.



— MESSAGE DISCLAIMER —

These messages are offered for your personal edification and enrichment. I have used many sources, and I have always attempted to cite any exact quotations and/or use material that is not under copyright. Any failure to cite a quote is simply an oversight on my part.

If you are a preacher or teacher, I encourage you to use this material stimulate your own Spirit-driven preparation—*it is never intended as a substitute for your own study of Scripture.*

If you borrow the majority of a message or outline, it is good scholarship (not to mention the right thing to do) to cite the source. If you are teaching, you may simply preface your remarks by saying something like: **“Some (or “much” as the case may be) of the ideas I’m sharing in this message came from a message by Pastor David Dykes in Texas.”** This simple citation also applies to any work you may publish, too, as I routinely publish my material in books that are protected by copyright.

This careful effort on your part may prevent any criticism that may be directed toward you. I trust you will find that additional study beyond this material will benefit both you and your listeners.

For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes



*David O. Dykes, Pastor  
Green Acres Baptist Church  
Tyler, Texas*

---