**Noah, a man of righteousness and faith**

Genesis 6-7

Key Verse: 6:9 “This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.”

Hello, this morning I want to talk about what it means to have faith and look at an example of a man who understood by faith about God’s sovereignty. During clubs day this year, I went around King’s College Circle handing out questionnaires. One of the most popular response I got from students was that Christianity was not for them. I was discouraged. I saw that many students did not think twice before giving me an answer. It is too common that people equate faith as an absence of understanding. They think that faith is relative and they say what is important to you, may not be important to me. Even if people give time to think about Christianity, they think it does not make sense because they cannot see how it is possible. Therefore their faith is dead. We may think that this society is a result of a progressive culture but as we digest Genesis 6, we see that the culture in Noah’s time was almost identical to our culture.

Part 1: Genesis 6:1-7 : A Godless society

God created Humans Beings in his image and blessed them. Despite their sin, humans were prosperous on earth. There were massive leaps in technological advancements. We learn about the beginnings of music, tools and farming. As humans begin to rely on their own knowledge, they started to live based on what they see. They became numb to the gift that God gave them. The world was very materialistic. When God is left out of our reasoning, we gradually distort the order of things. Let us look at verse 2, “the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.” We see here that the covenant of marriage that God created between one man and one woman is distorted. These men, who were descendants of Seth started to look for physical fulfilment as the motivation of their marriage. They prioritized the outward characteristics instead of looking at the heart. Today, we can see that this did not change. Social networking apps like tinder are used by many young people to fill their relationship void. However we know that these apps are a way of self pleasure and do not glorify God. Similarly the Intermarriage between nominal believers and unbelievers caused further corruption on earth. Men and women no longer look to help each other grow in the knowledge of their creator. In order to please their hearts, humans suppressed their conscience until they could not hear it any longer.

Today as students we are tempted to not consider God in our relationships. When we do that, many kinds of distortions continue to appear in our life. One concrete example is missionary dating. This happens when young Christians decide to pursue a relationship with non believers in the hope of converting them in the course of the relationship. If we were deep in a relationship with God, we would know that it is definitely not right. But what if we leave God out of the equation? We start to imagine that they can be saved because of our love and example. Do you see the distortion? We take on the responsibility of saving them and it will only end badly. It is written very clearly in the Bible that we should deeply consider our relationships with non believers and not be in situations that we share the same lifestyle as them. 2 Corinthians 6:14 says, “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? Paul was not specifically talking about marriage but when we meditate and think on God’s word we understand why it also applies to marriage. There is a drastic difference in the mindset between an unbeliever and a Christian. They cannot be yoked together because they are not heading in the same direction. Even if we are the best Christian, we cannot be sure that non believers can be saved through us (1 Corinthians 7:16). In fact it is highly unlikely that that person will be saved because we want to please ourselves and disobey God.

In short, the people who lived during Noah lifetime believed in relativism. They lived based on what they could see. They did not see a God. They did not think about him or asked important questions about His existence. Their lives can be described as Godless. Without God. Their intelligence and power paved a path for their destruction. Look as verse 5-6, “ The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. ” When I think about that verse, I do not picture a safe environment. Can you imagine what it’s like when everyone you know has only evil desires in their heart. They want to harm you and you can’t really go out and enjoy life due to fear of others. A world where man claims to be their own God and create their own laws. God saw that they did not give him even a single thought, any means for their salvation was cut off by themselves because of sin. With pain, God decreed a judgement for the godless, their sin was on their head and their punishment was justified. Look at verse 3, “Then the Lord said, “My Spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal; their days will be a hundred and twenty years.”” God did not desire to destroy the evil people. In fact he wanted to save them because he loved them. He stretched out his hand as a life saver but no one answered except Noah.

Part 2: Noah Genesis 6:8-22

Look at verses 8-9 : “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.”

Now Noah was also a descendant of Seth, but he was not a nominal believer. Noah knew that this world had an origin and that origin was the creator God. In contrast with the people of his time, Noah lived before God. Noah displayed his faith through his actions. We see that he was righteous and blameless among the people. Noah was by no means without sin for all men have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Actually during his time being blameless may not be a great compliment. He was probably just like you and me. The main point is that Noah was right with God. He acknowledged God’s authority and also his actions displayed what he believed. We are on the same boat. Think about God. Have faith that comes from understanding who God is. Consider Him in your life everyday and He will speak to you through His word. You will be able to see his intentions in your life. You will be able to cut the things in your life that are based on self-worship and live life to the full. Let us look at verse 13, “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.” The cancer of sin which started of with a small act of disobedience in the garden spread so much that God needed to perform a radical surgery. Man himself could not fix it, they could not see that their lifestyle was self-destructive.

The key to Noah’s faith was his obedience. The apostle Paul writes that we live by faith and not by sight. How can we tie this verse with Noah’s actions? We can see that Noah, just like us could not picture a worldwide flood, Noah also could not picture himself building a massive ark and hosting a variety of animals for 1 year. The ark was 450 × 75 × 45 ft. It is the dimensions of a modern day battle ship. There were three levels and partitions for the animals. There were no instructions for rudders and sails. It was more like a big box really. Built for stability. By sight, building the ark is impossible. Does that mean that Noah blindly followed God. Absolutely not. Hebrews 11:2 says “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.” You can see that by faith we are able to understand the creator God. By faith we consider Him in our thinking. The creator God who separated the water and land in the first place can indeed cause a worldwide flood. The creator God who created the animals can indeed tame them during the course of the year. Noah did not blindly follow, he understood by faith and not by sight.

Noah probably hired men to build the ark. He probably spent his life's savings on the project. He put his whole weight upon what God said. He was probably ridiculed and persecuted for building a big big boat in the middle of the desert. That did not stop Noah from exercising his faith. Noah preached for the remaining 120 years about the impending judgement. Noah had a much more hard time than us. He had zero responses in 120 years yet he persevered. When the time came, Noah and his family got in the ark with the animals and shut the door. The whole of humanity perished. Nothing could escape God’s judgement except by His own intervention.

By faith, we can see that the ark is a foreshadow of Jesus Christ. Only through God’s own intervention are we saved from our impending judgement. Jesus calls himself the gate and that whoever enters through him will be saved. In order to have eternal life we consider God and what he did for us. We understand that there is no other way for our sins to be washed as white as snow unless God takes it away. We understand that Jesus died as a substitute for us so that we can live after death. We understand that because Jesus is God, he conquered death through his resurrection. Noah was not able to see what we see, yet he understood that although Noah himself could not solve his sin problem, God would provide a way for him to be reconciled. We are so fortunate to read about God’s master plan to save us now we must use every opportunity we have to stimulate the minds of the students so that they can think about who God is. So that they can realize that they have a sin problem. So that they can look for the only one who can solve their sin problem and reconcile with them. Jesus Christ. There is a person behind this universe who cares about how we live. If we don’t let our thinking take us to Jesus then we will live in despair.

By reading God’s word, we know, by faith that Jesus will come again as a righteous judge. We know by faith that the whole world will witness this. He is coming soon. Jesus says “But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” By sight we cannot accept this and it is very evident in our Christian life. All of us live as though Jesus will never come in our lifetime. We set our priorities to be our worldly goals and achievements.

For me, I am guilty of this sin. If Jesus were to come today, I would be guilty of wanting to tell him to wait so that I could get married and have a fulfilled career on this earth. This is because I am guilty of not considering Jesus in my work and family matters. I am also nervous about telling people about the second coming because of my own disbelief. I sometimes fear the backlash that I would receive. I repent from my sin and pray that I can boldly preach about the gospel and the second coming to anyone. The truth is that we can only do God’s work when it is day time. Night time is coming when we cannot do his work. Even though we cannot see the second coming with our sight let us think and understand that we are living in the last days. Let us work shrewdly and faithfully so that the students of UofT and Ryerson can think about Him and learn about Him. When we feel like we need a small vacation from ministry work, Let us think about Noah and how he worked diligently for 120 years on the task God gave him. Because of his faith, he was able to save mankind from extinction.

I want to end with 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.