



NOAH: A FAITH THAT PLEASES GOD

THE POINT: Living by faith begins with a righteous relationship with God.

THE PASSAGE: Genesis 6:5-9, 17-22; 8:20-22 (CSB)

DATE: August 16, 2026

GETTING STARTED

Give a brief overview of this new series “RISK TAKERS” and the session titles to know who you will be studying:

Noah: A Faith that Pleases God

Joshua: A Faith Rooted in God’s Word

Rahab: A faith not Held Back by Fear

David: A Faith that Meets Adversity Head-On

John the Baptist: A Faith that Challenges Others

Stephen: A Faith that Advances God’s Kingdom

Today we are going to study the faith of Noah.

What’s the biggest “I must be crazy to be doing this” risk you’ve ever taken?

One of the craziest risks taken in the Bible was by Noah when he build the ark even though they had never seen rain. He obeyed and trusted God. God knew to pick Noah for this task because God sees our actions, reads our thoughts, and knows our intentions. In the same way, God knew everything about Noah. Let’s lean in and learn more about Noah’s relationship with God.

Life Connection

The foundation and strength of one’s faith rests in the object of one’s faith. In what are you trusting? In whom are you trusting? The only One we can trust unwaveringly is God, but that trust is based on who He is, not on who we think He is or how we want Him to act. That trust leads us to want to please God and live in right relationship with Him.

Background

In fulfillment of God’s promise to Noah, the flood waters destroyed everything on the face of the earth. All humans, animals, and birds that were not on the ark were killed by the flood waters. The Bible also tells us that water burst forth from under the ocean floor (Genesis 7:11). The rain pounded the earth for forty days and forty nights, and “the water surged on the earth 150 days” (v. 24).

Genesis 8:1 says, *"God remembered Noah, as well as the wildlife and all the livestock that were with him in the ark."* This phrase does not imply, of course, that God had forgotten something only to recall it later. Instead, we are being told that God keeps His promises. He promised to save Noah and his family, as well as the animals, from the flood, and He fulfilled His promise. God miraculously provided an end to the flood waters, and Noah and his family were able to safely exit the ark along with all the animals God sent to Noah to care for while they were on the ark.

GUIDE: Direct attention to **The Point** of this lesson: **Living by faith begins with a righteous relationship with God.**

Give Biblical Context: The world Noah found himself in was full of wickedness. People were engaged in every kind of sinful behavior known to man. What was God's reaction? He regretted creating the human race. But in Genesis 6, we see the tender side of God's nature. He desires to have a close relationship with His creation.

READ: GENESIS 6:5-9

⁵ 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, ⁶ the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and he was deeply grieved. ⁷ Then the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I created, off the face of the earth, together with the animals, creatures that crawl, and birds of the sky—for I regret that I made them." ⁸ Noah, however, found favor with the LORD. ⁹ These are the family records of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among his contemporaries; Noah walked with God.

GUIDE: Use the commentary for verse 5 to talk more about what is to be understood about "human wickedness" as referenced here.

STATEMENT #1 *To live by faith means living in a right relationship with God.*

Discuss: In what areas of our culture are believers pressured to follow the crowd?

RECAP: *Noah walked with God and trusted Him. His actions stood out because all of humanity was running in the opposite direction, yet Noah was a man who lived in right relationship with God. Hebrews 11:7 tells us, "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." Noah was used by God to create a faith legacy for his family and for the world.*

ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): Use this optional activity to make the point that righteousness with God doesn't mean living a perfect, sinless life, and discuss as a group what it does mean.

In advance, secure a bar of Ivory® soap in the wrapper (or a picture of a bar of Ivory soap in the wrapper). *Display the bar of soap and point out the claim printed on the wrapper that the soap is 99.44% pure. Discuss that although this claim shows a high level of purity, it still contains a slight amount of impurities. Use this example to establish the truth that righteousness with God doesn't mean living a perfect, sinless life, and then discuss what a righteous relationship with God looks like.*

What does it look like to walk with God?

What do we learn about God's character from these verses?

TRANSITION: In the next verses, we see that living by faith calls for obedience.

READ: GENESIS 6:17-22

¹⁷ "Understand that I am bringing a flood—floodwaters on the earth to destroy every creature under heaven with the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark with your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives. ¹⁹ You are also to bring into the ark two of all the living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. ²⁰ Two of everything—from the birds according to their kinds, from the livestock according to their kinds, and from the animals that crawl on the ground according to their kinds—will come to you so that you can keep them alive. ²¹ Take with you every kind of food that is eaten; gather it as food for you and for them." ²² And Noah did this. He did everything that God had commanded him.

STATEMENT #2: To live by faith calls for obedience.

GUIDE: Use the commentary for verse 18 to talk more about the faith Noah displayed by building the ark.

RECAP: Obedience demanded that Noah step outside his comfort zone and accomplish two enormous projects: building the ark and bringing the animals into it. With his growing faith came an increasing confidence that with God all things are possible. When God called Noah to do something outside the ordinary, Noah walked in obedience and faith. Obedience requires that we be willing to lay down our will and way for God's will and way.

When has God asked you to do something that didn't make sense to you in the moment?

When have you seen someone in your life obey God despite great cost?

From this point forward, Noah's living faith would be on public display. There would no longer be any question about it. When have you felt a significant clash between obeying God and fitting in with your culture?

TRANSITION: In the next verses, we see that living by faith means honoring and worshiping God.

READ: GENESIS 8:20-22

²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to the LORD. He took some of every kind of clean animal and every kind of clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹ When the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, he said to himself, "I will never again curse the ground because of human beings, even though the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth onward. And I will never again strike down every living thing as I have done. ²² As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night will not cease."

GUIDE: Use the commentary to talk more about God's promise in verses 21-22.

STATEMENT #3: To live by faith is to honor and worship God.

RECAP: Noah saw that God was faithful in doing precisely what He said He would do. In light of all God did and who God is, Noah worshiped Him through sacrifice and surrendered what was valuable to him to the One who is worthy. Noah's worship was a clear sign of his obedience to God's commands and his willingness to be used by God to continue His plan.

DISCUSS: What are some practical ways believers can honor and worship God daily?

When has a blessing from God led to a significant time of worship in your life?

RESPONSE

Ask: What actions will you take in response to today's study?

Guide your group through the three statements below. Call on volunteers to share (1) which of these statements is something they want to pursue further, or (2) ways this study will transform their relationship with God this week.

Confess. Romans 10:9 says, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in you heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Do you want a living faith in God?

Step. Is there a situation in your life where God is asking you to do something that's hard or doesn't make sense? Spend some time in prayer, asking God to help you embrace the situation and obey even without understanding.

Share. Noah's faithful obedience was a testimony to those around him that he knew and listened to God. Take time this week to share with someone about your faith in God.

WRAP IT UP

Read or restate: *We have an opportunity and invitation to put our trust in the One who has proven trustworthy. God reminded Noah of what was happening in the world and then called him to do the opposite. Noah did everything God asked him to do, and God did exactly what He said He would do.*

Pray: Close your group time with prayer, thanking God that we can put our trust in Him because we know He will keep His promises to us.

COMMENTARY

Genesis 6:5-9

Connection to The Point: Noah lived in a right relationship with God.

Human wickedness (v. 5). As he was writing about the time before the great flood, Moses

wrote that the wickedness of humankind was not limited to their evil actions. Moses wrote that every **mind** was corrupted, as well. Theologians call this concept the noetic effects of sin. The noetic effect of sin is the idea that, as a result of the fall in Genesis 3, even the way people think is impacted by sin. Humans do not merely do wrong things or make mistakes. The human mind outside of the work of Christ is sinful. Without the regenerating work of God in our minds, we will not only commit sin, but we will also think sinfully. Thinking sinfully includes the kind of sin Jesus discussed in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus taught that thinking inappropriate lustful thoughts about a woman is adultery (Matthew 5:27-28). In Romans 1:21-23, Paul taught that human minds become so wicked they begin to worship the creation rather than the Creator. The noetic effect of sin includes the fact that fallen human beings will not see the beauty, power, and benefits of the gospel unless the Spirit of God gives us new hearts and minds.

The wonderful news of the gospel as prophesied by Jeremiah is that God promises to do just that: “Instead, this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days’—the LORD’S declaration. ‘I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts’” (Jeremiah 31:33). The prophet Ezekiel prophesied that God would give His people hearts of flesh and remove their hearts of stone (Ezekiel 36:26). It is only through God’s initiating activity that the noetic effect of sin can be overcome.

The LORD regretted (v. 6). To understand God’s emotional response to the sinfulness of humankind, we should let Scripture interpret Scripture. Other Scriptures make it clear that God does not change His mind (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Psalm 110:4). The word translated “regretted” here is connected to the previous verse in which we see that the people had hearts full of wickedness. While the people had hearts and minds that had been marred by sin, God had a heart full of grief. When the text tells us God regretted that He had made man, we should *not* conclude that God regrets in the same way human’s regret. Just as God’s thought life is different from the thought life of humans, so His emotional life is different from the emotions of humankind. Humans have regrets due to sin; God never sins. As a result, we must conclude that God’s regret in this verse reflects His deep grief over the sin of the apex of His creation—humankind. Just as the Bible speaks about God being joyful over His creation, we see here that God is grieved by our sin. God’s emotional life is not like ours. Our emotions are often a mix of sin, selfishness, and righteous anger against the sin of others; God’s emotions are always perfect.

While humans may regret something by saying, “If I had known . . . then I would not have . . .,” we should also remember that God is not like us. While God was not surprised by the evil behavior of humankind nor unaware that their wicked behavior was coming, He was displeased by it. This idea is confirmed by the second half of the verse where God is said to be **deeply grieved**.

Found favor (v. 8). This phrase also appears later in Genesis, before the story of Sodom and Gomorrah (18:3). It also shows up in Exodus 33, as Moses pleaded with God for His presence to go with the people of Israel (vv. 12,13,16,17). Finally, the same phrase shows up in the book of Esther, when Esther found favor with the king (5:8). In each of these cases, God’s initiative and love are highlighted. These individuals did not earn God’s favor. This interpretation is consistent with the New Testament understanding of grace. In Luke 1:28, Mary is said to have found favor with God. In both the Old and New Testaments, redeemed humans work *from* a position of grace and not to earn grace.

GENESIS 6:17-22

Connection to The Point: God gave Noah an unusual command and instructions, and Noah obeyed.

"A flood" (v. 17). Different scholars have sought to explain the Genesis flood in various ways. Some contend the flood was limited to Noah's immediate area. However, there are both Scriptural and scientific reasons to believe the flood described in Genesis occurred on a global scale, not restricted to the local area. The Bible says the flood was to destroy sinful humanity, as well as **"every creature."** Only a flood on a worldwide scale would have ensured all people and animals would die. Scientifically, rock layers around the world, including those at the Grand Canyon, point to the reality of a flood that stretched from North Africa and the Middle East to North America.

"Everything on earth will perish" (v. 17). God declared the ground was cursed because of Adam and Eve's sin (3:17). This is rightly understood to be a curse for humankind. Genesis 3:18-19 says the ground would produce thorns and thistles and mankind would have to work harder following their sin. We should also note that the rest of creation suffers because of the sinfulness of mankind. In Romans, Paul wrote that "the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of him who subjected it . . . the whole creation has been groaning together" (8:20-22). The man and woman had been placed in the garden to watch over and care for all creation. Their sin cascaded down into the rest of creation—even the animals and birds would die as a result of mankind's rebellion.

"Establish my covenant" (v. 18). The Hebrew phrase is common throughout the Old Testament. It frequently confirms that a covenant partner is still devoted to an earlier covenant (Genesis 17:7). In this case, the covenant is a continuation of the covenant God made with Adam. As such, Noah is pictured as a new Adam. This interpretation is confirmed by the covenantal language in Genesis 9:1, when Noah and his sons were instructed to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." The covenant God established with Noah was not limited to just Noah and his immediate family. Instead, the covenant had ramifications for the rest of creation. Ultimately, God would not find a faithful covenant partner. Instead, God Himself would become man in order to fulfill every covenant God made with mankind.

"The ark" (v. 18). The instructions for how to build the ark are given in verses 14-16. It is unclear what the phrase "gopher wood" (v. 14) refers to. It may refer to a specific type of wood—possibly cypress or pine. Some suggest the phrase could identify a process of preparing wood to make it watertight. Noah took an incredible risk by building an ark. Not only had the flood not begun, but some biblical scholars believe rain had never before fallen on the earth until that time. Hebrews reflected on the nature of Noah's faith: "Now without faith it is impossible to please God. . . . 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" (Hebrews 11:6-7).

"Two of everything" (v. 20). Noah was instructed to take two of every animal for repopulation of the earth. Noah was instructed to take seven pairs of all of the animals that were considered ritually clean (7:2). There are a few observations we should take from this instruction. First, God's people had some idea of ritual cleanliness before it was revealed to them in the Old Testament Law delivered to Moses at Sinai. Second, God cared for His people. In addition to the sacrifice we see in chapter 8, God also wanted them to have plenty

of food to eat, even though He could have sustained their bodies supernaturally during their time on the ark. Third, the number seven is repeated three times in the first four verses of chapter 7. The number seven is a literary signal of completeness and perfection in the Bible—Moses was signaling to readers that God’s plan is perfect.

GENESIS 8:20-22

Connection to The Point: Noah’s faith in God led him to worship.

Altar (v. 20). Noah is the first person in the book of Genesis, and therefore in the Bible, said to have built an altar. He built an altar to make a sacrifice to God who had just demonstrated both unlimited power and loving compassion. In the verses immediately before verse 20, God instructed Noah to exit the ark—taking his wife, sons, and daughters-in-law with him. The text does not record that God gave Noah any specific instruction to build an altar or offer any specified form of worship after he exited the ark with his family and the animals God had preserved. However, Noah did just that. This spontaneous act of worship was pleasing to God (v. 21) and indicates that Noah truly understood his life and the lives of his family and all the animals on the ark had been preserved by God’s lovingkindness and compassion. Noah built an altar and offered a burnt sacrifice of some of the clean animals. The sacrifice of clean animals would have been at least part of the motivation for having more clean animals than unclean animals. To have enough clean animals to offer a sacrifice, Noah was instructed to bring seven pairs of clean animals as opposed to just two of every kind of unclean animal.

Every kind of clean animal (v. 20). The Law of Moses would not be delivered until many hundreds of years later—after the time of the patriarchs and the exodus from Egypt. This designation of clean animals indicates that God’s people were given some understanding of clean and unclean animals even before that time. It is not yet clear at this point in the storyline of Genesis why some animals and birds were designated as unclean, but Noah’s actions indicate a desire to be specifically and precisely obedient to what the Lord revealed to him. While later events would demonstrate that Noah was not a perfect man and he too was a sinner, the story of Noah teaches us that God desires for His creation to love, adore, and worship Him. In doing so, we fulfill our original purpose. As a result, God’s glory is put on display, and we walk in joy.

God’s promise. God is sovereign over everything that happens in the world, so in one sense, God is the author of all events in history. In another sense, while God never authors evil, the Bible sometimes speaks of Him allowing some events while not being directly involved. For instance, in the story of Job, God allowed Satan to strike Job, but God Himself did not strike Job. In the account of the flood, verse 21 makes it clear that God was the author of the flood and the death of His creation. God declared that He was the direct cause of these events. In the midst of this declaration, God made a promise. This promise put an end to His declaration in 6:5. Now, instead of bringing death to His creation, God promised to **“never again strike down every living thing as I have done”** (v. 21). Later in chapter 9, God would place a “bow in the clouds” (v. 13) as a sign of His promise. This is a subtle hint of the gospel each time we see a rainbow. The Person who would ultimately bear the penalty for the sinfulness of mankind would be God Himself—the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth.