

LESSON #1 - SAFETY IN THE FLOOD - GENESIS 8:16-9:16

COMING TO THE WATERS - World news is filled with catastrophic stories. Scripture tells us the worst disaster the world has ever experienced is that of THE flood. Yet, when we look past the destruction, we know that God is with us, offering a "Rainbow of Promise."

THE PRAYER - Dear Lord, as we look at our lives and this world, we sometimes feel things can't get any worse. Inflation, deflation, crime, drugs, immorality, prejudice, hatred, illness, death and a myriad of fears can lead to a sizable case of depression. Because of all tragedies, we need to be reminded that You are with us. We give thanks that everyday, You invite Your followers to come to the waters and drink of the peace that You alone can give. Be with us, dear Lord. Allow us to see Your rainbow of promises. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

PARCHED HEARTS - It was a number of years ago, after the flooding and winds of hurricane Andrew, a south-Florida resident by the name of Patricia Christy, was waiting in line to receive food. Frustrated at the devastation all around her, and impatient with the breakdown of society, she made a promise that she was going to get on the first plane out of the state. Her hope was to get as far away from the horror of the hurricane as she possibly could and get a restful vacation. Unlike many of us who make promises and don't keep them, she followed up on her dream. She got on a plane and went to Hawaii. When her friends heard from her, she was on the Island of Kauai, standing in line, waiting for fresh water. Her plane managed to get her there just in time to be clobbered by hurricane Iniki!

THOUGHT: Most of us can identify with that lady. Life wears us down with one problem after another. It's impossible for me to tell you how many times I've shoveled out my Minnesota driveway, only to have the snow plows come by, burying us deeper than before. We go to the dentist for a checkup and he tells us we have cavities AND gum disease. Our TV breaks down and the repairman tells us that it will cost \$100 to fix -- and then calls the next day saying "Parts are unavailable." Murphy said it best, "When things can't possibly get any worse, they do."

FIRST APPLICATION

Take a few moments and write down (or talk about) those frustrating times when you are ready to shake your fist at the heaven. Tell about how it couldn't get worse, and then it did:

I thought it couldn't get worse when:

Then it did get worse when:

I thought it couldn't get worse when:

Then it did get worse when:

We could probably spend the rest of the lesson talking about how bad life can be. Instead, let's spend a little time with a fellow who can top all our stories. Look at and answer the following questions which come from the story of Noah, found in Genesis 6.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH - HUMANKIND'S THIRST

Gen 6: 5 - When God looked at man, what did he see? Great wickedness.

- What was the inclination of men's hearts? Evil.

- How often was humankind's heart inclined to evil? All the time.

Gen 6: 13 What filled the earth? Violence.

Gen 6: 8 - Was there anybody who stood out from evil humanity? Noah

- How would Noah have felt having the only good family around?

1. Lonely 2. Depressed 3. Angry 4. Fearful 5. Frustrated

Just when it seemed that things couldn't get much worse for Noah, they did. According to.....

Gen 6: 6 - What did God decide to do? Wipe humankind from the face of the earth.

Gen 6: 13 - Who was going to die? All people (Including some of Noah's family!)

Faced with the end of civilization as he knew it, Noah had to go to work. What did he have to do?

Gen 6: 15..... Work hard building an ark. (Dimensions would be at least 75 feet wide; 45 tall; 450 long)

How would your family have reacted to leaving everything behind?

**ISAIAH 55:1 "COME, ALL YOU WHO ARE THIRSTY, COME TO THE WATERS
GROUP BIBLE STUDIES - TEACHER'S PACKET - LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES**

- A. "What, no shopping?" B. "What will I wear?" C. "Leftovers again?"
D. "It's going to smell." E. "Do I have to take care of the leeches?"

Could things get worse? What was the world like when Noah got off the ark?

Gen 8: 7 What would the raven have eaten?..... This bird eats carrion. There was a lot around.

Gen 8: 11..... Things would have been greening up.

Would your heart have been (check) ___ depressed ___ indifferent ___ thankful

Noah disembarks the Ark and looks around. There is no animal life on land other than which was in the ark. With only two of every kind of animal and seven of the clean ones, what would you have done?

1. Would you have depleted your stock of animals by making a sacrifice?..... ___ YES ___ NO

2. What would your family say about your decision?

2. SCRIPTURE SEARCH - DEEP DRINKING

THIRST FOR AN ANSWER: Things kept getting worse all around Noah. Nevertheless, he was a man who had found favor with God (v. 8) and did everything God had commanded (v. 22). Look at the passages which follow and see what may have sustained Noah.

1. Gen 6: 18..... God was in control and Noah would live in the Lord's covenant.

2. Gen 8: 1..... They knew God "remembered" them. (This means God was faithful to His promises.)

3. Gen 9: 1..... Noah knew he had the blessing of God.

4. Gen 9: 13..... God's RAINBOW of PROMISE never to let such a flood happen again

Because of the Lord Jesus Christ, all of us have a great many blessings. Because Jesus has found favor with God, we know that our sins are forgiven and our lives can be changed. We have the peace which passes human understanding **IF** the Lord is leading our lives. Jesus gives a RAINBOW OF PROMISES for us.

THOUGHT & ILLUSTRATION: - Several years ago a submarine was being tested and had to remain submerged for many hours. When it returned to its home port, the commander was asked, "Did any of the men get seasick in the storm?" The officer replied in surprise "Sir, you should understand, sailors in subs don't even know there is a storm." His vessel had been so far beneath the surface that it had reached the area known as "the cushion of the sea." The ocean above may be whipped to a froth, but the waters below remain unstirred. That is equally true for people who are empowered by God. Those who drink deeply, as Noah did, from the Lord's limitless well of love find they are protected from the distracting waves of worry. Sheltered by God's grace and encouraged by His Holy Spirit, the believer can find the perfect tranquility that only Christ can provide. Since that is so, see how God might be able to change your perspective on your original discussion questions:

I thought it couldn't get worse when:

Then it did get worse when:

God gave me a rainbow when:

I thought it couldn't get worse when:

Then it did get worse when:

God sent a rainbow when:

THANKS FOR THE WATERS - Dear Lord, at the end of the flood story, it says mens' hearts continued to be evil. (9:21) We see that evil all around us. Today we ask that you will turn our eyes from the floods, the evil and the storms of life that are around us. Instead, allow us to see that You are in control, and that we are safe. Allow us to drink deeply from the well of peace and forgiveness which never runs dry. Empower us to possess the knowledge that we are in Your hands. We ask it in Jesus' Name. Amen.