



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

November 27, 2022

Pastor James Enderle

1st Sunday in Advent

First Lesson/Sermon Text: [Genesis 6:9-22, 7:11-23](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 18

Second Lesson: [Romans 13:11-14](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Matthew 24:36-44](#)

God Prepares His People

1. _____ not _____
2. Prepared for the _____
3. _____ by _____ through _____
4. Awaiting _____ through _____

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

This is definitely the season of preparing. How did your Thanksgiving preparations go? Getting all the food, getting everyone together, that's almost the precursor or warm up for Christmas where there are usually more things involved—the buying of presents and the longer vacation and often more people coming together. There are lots of preparations to do for the holidays.

I'd like to think about other things that we prepare for and try to be ready for. Maybe it's preparing for a vacation and packing everything and getting your plans all set. I think about preparing for a flight and all you have to do to get your luggage ready and make sure you are at the airport at the right time. Sometimes it's pretty easy to be ready, to be prepared, but sometimes there are things that are unexpected.

When my wife and I lived in China, we took public transportation and traveled a lot. We took planes and subways and busses and trains. Once we started having kids and having more luggage and having a little baby to get around, we may have missed a train or two because when you live in a city of nine million people and you're using busses or subways and there is a little bit more traffic, especially on a holiday, you can be as prepared as you think you are but you maybe aren't quite prepared enough. When you know what is coming, when you know what you need to be prepared for and what you are going to face, it is easier to be ready.

For Christ's second coming God really does prepare us. What we're going to look at today though is the Old Testament reading and the account of the Flood and see how God prepares us, how God prepares His people for His second coming even by looking at the Flood. We're going to see a lot of connections with how God treated Noah and talked with Him and prepared Him and how He prepares us, and the things that he faced and the outcomes that came and what we face and what is ahead for us.

When we look at Noah, we know that circumstances weren't really great. When we look at how the world was, we read in our section of Scripture in Verse 11: ***Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.*** A few verses before this in Chapter 6, it says this in [Verse 5](#): ***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.*** It doesn't paint a very good picture. A world filled with evil and with sin—does that sound a little bit familiar? A world that has a lot of violence and turmoil and corruption and where it just seems like people are doing all sorts of crazy things—looking out for themselves, not caring about God—that sounds pretty familiar. So what do God's people at this time look like? What did Noah look like?

When it talks about the account of Noah and his family, it says: ***Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.*** Notice some of the words it uses. It says he was "righteous," "blameless among the people," and "he walked faithfully with God." Sometimes I think we can misunderstand this a little bit when it says that he was righteous and blameless. Of course he is not perfect because we heard what the whole world was like, that EVERY inclination, EVERY person was filled with sin, so even Noah himself was filled with sin. So what we might want to describe him as is *faithful but not perfect*. This is what we want to be and to understand who we are.

We are not perfect, but God wants us to be righteous and blameless and faithful, especially when it comes to how we look amongst the world. This was a testimony to the people there of how to live and who God was, by living faithfully, by doing what God commanded. It says later as God prepares Noah that ***Noah did everything just as God commanded him.***

So what makes us faithful? It's not being perfect, so I think it's listening to God. This is what Noah did. He heard God's commands. He trusted Him. And He believed. We need to hear God's Word but then also we believe and trust what He says is true and good and what He says is right and better than what my heart says or what the rest of the world says is good—to not be selfish and look after our own ways. But to also understand that it's not us who makes us righteous or faithful. It's God. It's God

through His Word. It's God through His work that makes us faithful. We find that it's **Noah** who **found favor in the eyes of the Lord.** [\(Genesis 6:8\)](#) This is right before our text which talks about the account. It says: **But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.** [\(Genesis 6:8\)](#) This is again all by grace. We do want to be faithful. We do want to listen to God and to trust Him but know that this is done and worked in us by God.

As we want to be faithful, it is important we are because of the things that we're going to face. What is Noah going to face? We're not going to read everything here again but what does God tell him is going to come? This great disaster—a giant flood. It's going to rain for 40 days and 40 nights and all of the people not in the ark are going to be destroyed. This is bad. Noah is faithful and it's important that he is faithful and leaning on God because he is facing probably one of the worst situations.

When we're faithful and God is working in us, we can be *prepared for the worst.* We know that whatever we face, God is with us and is helping us. Faithful means that it's not just when we need to be in God's Word. When it's hard, we are and when we reach problems. Faithful is all the time. If I'm in God's Word, if I'm focused on Him and I am prepared, then I can handle the difficult times much better than if I'm not being faithful, if I'm not in God's Word, if I'm not trusting in Him to guide me. Being faithful and having God to help us to be faithful prepares us for the worst of things.

If we look at the world again today, should we be prepared for the worst of things? What sort of things should we expect? In the Partnering in the Gospel gatherings and when I'm teaching for two weeks at Manitowoc Lutheran High School and I share this book called The Lies We Believe, one of the lies we believe is that people are good or that life should be easy. People are just shocked when bad things happen or when life is hard. We have these high expectations that "Oh, my life is going to be easy," or "Everyone is going to treat me nicely," or "Everyone is going to get along." What is the reality? Way down here (very low). People don't really understand who people are. This is exactly what Genesis tells us—that we all, at the core, are rotten. It's not that THEY are the problem; it's each and every one of us because we all struggle with sin. So we should understand that we are going to have difficulties, that people are going to hurt us and sin against us and that this broken world is going to have dangers and disasters and struggles. Yet we expect everything to be so easy. What we kind of like to say is if you put your expectations here (high) and your reality is down here (low), you know what this space in the middle is? That's how great your disappointment is, your struggle is. If you put your expectations and your reality about the same, then your struggle or your dissatisfaction is a lot less. If we have real expectations that the world is going to be hard and we are prepared for the worst in this world, maybe it's a little bit easier when people do let us down or disasters do strike.

This is exactly what Noah was facing, the worst of disasters. What was hard for him is many people within his family didn't trust. They rejected and said "This isn't going to

happen.” They probably mocked him. There is a small theory about this too, because notice when the Flood starts that it talks about the springs bursting open. There is a little theory that maybe it didn’t rain before the Flood and the earth was watered just from springs so even when they are talking about “It’s going to rain and this giant flood is going to come” they are like, “What are you talking about? It hasn’t rained.” The reason this kind of makes sense is God places the rainbow in the sky after the Flood. Maybe it wasn’t there before because it hadn’t rained. It’s just a theory but it’s interesting.

This was harder for Noah too because people weren’t on his side. We have to understand many people are not going to follow God’s ways and they are not going to support us in following God either. We need to be prepared for the worst.

But what is interesting about the worst is God can bring something good through it. This great Flood is a great picture of deliverance as well. We see that even though God would destroy many people and all these animals, He doesn’t just start over. He doesn’t just wipe out His Creation. Instead He saves. He gives Noah these plans and prepares him and tells him what to do so that they can be saved. How are they saved? They are *rescued by God through water*. Through this Flood that brings destruction, it also brings salvation.

What is neat about that you can see pretty clearly, right? When we think about how we are saved, we are saved also through water. We are rescued by God through water. In [1 Peter 3](#), Peter writes this: In the ark ***only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ...*** You are saved by water that connects you to Jesus and His Word.

We know that we struggle understanding the evil in this world and we are a part of that evil but God rescues us from it. He cleanses us and helps us to lean on that salvation every day. It’s a finished action that God has washed you and redeemed you in the waters of Baptism. You are His child. He has washed those sins away. How important it is for us to remember that and to know that God has rescued us. We know that we run into many dangers and our conscience and our sins will cause us to question ourselves and say, “Can God save someone like me?” Through water and the work of Christ that connects the work of Baptism, that connects us to Jesus, who died for every one of our sins, who died for the sins of the whole world—stretching all the way back to Creation—that’s what God does. That’s how God rescues us and prepares us because He knows we know that it’s already finished.

But we are also waiting. When we look at the world that Noah was in, it was not a pretty picture. We have said that about our world. Anyone who says our world is heaven on

earth, I think they haven't really lived a lot. So what do we have to look forward to? What is neat about this is even though there was a great destruction and many people were going on with their life not prepared, God is preparing His people for something great. For Noah, He was bringing this new creation. It was starting over and making things anew.

For us, we are *awaiting restoration through destruction*. It might sound weird, but that is the exact picture of the Flood. This Flood, this destruction, came but through it came salvation and restoration. How is that true for us?

We know that Jesus is going to return. Many people don't agree. Many people don't want to think about it. They don't want to think about their end. They don't want to think that this world will end even though we hear about it all the time—that we have to do everything to save the world. We should take care of the world but we know that the world is ending. God will call us home to be with Him and when He returns, we will be in heaven. But when Jesus returns, there is something special that will happen as well.

He talks about how the world will be destroyed, not by water this time but by fire. It will be a new creation, a new heaven and a new earth. Even though we know Jesus is coming and He is going to come as a Judge and bring destruction to this world, it is necessary, much like many things in nature. Things need to die for the new creation to come. This is what we are waiting for.

We might say we know that. "I know that is coming. I know heaven is ahead." But I want you to think about what comfort that brings us. This is not heaven. We are going to have struggles. Have your expectations knowing restoration is coming. Jesus is bringing restoration for you and for me and for all who believe. Many are going to say that they don't want anything to do with God. But we need to be prepared and prepare others, to be like Noah, to be (as it talks about) a preacher of righteousness. A good question to ask is how are we doing that?

How are you known for sharing about Jesus' coming? Are we speaking too much Law and saying "This sin and this sin..." which is good to talk about in the way people live but do people know Jesus? Do they know the grace and forgiveness and love of Jesus? Be a minister of the Gospel. Preach the good news that Jesus died for them and is coming to save them; that He has washed us clean through the waters of Baptism and even though this world has lots of pain and difficulties, God has defeated this world. Jesus has overcome this world to bring us peace, to bring true restoration.

God prepares us. He prepares us just like He did Noah—showing us how to live but most of all, showing us that God has rescued us. It's about Him and His works and He will watch over and help us even in the darkest of times. Share that good news knowing

that Jesus is returning, returning to bring us home to a beautiful place—a beautiful place of restoration and perfection. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.