

Devotion: June 23, 2020

Genesis 8 New International Version (NIV)

8 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded. ² Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky. ³ The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, ⁴ and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵ The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible.

⁶ After forty days Noah opened a window he had made in the ark ⁷ and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. ⁸ Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. ⁹ But the dove could find nowhere to perch because there was water over all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark. ¹⁰ He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. ¹¹ When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. ¹² He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.

¹³ By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. ¹⁴ By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry.

¹⁵ Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶ "Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷ Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number on it."

¹⁸ So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. ¹⁹ All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds—everything that moves on land—came out of the ark, one kind after another.

Chapter 8 of Genesis provides a fearsome image of Noah's ark, as huge a vessel as it is, bobbing helplessly on turbulent waters, chased by howling winds. God is off wreaking destruction upon the planet, and seems to have given no further thought to Noah, his little family and their animal cargo.

But then come words of grace: just three little words. The Bible says, "*God remembered Noah*" (v. 1). The Lord does not abandon him to the ocean waves, after all. God closes "*the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens.*" And then, a full year after the flood began, the earth is dry once again: dry enough to bear the weight of human feet.

The wonder of it all is this: the great Creator God, the one who fashioned space and time out of nothing, is yet able to remember individuals. That's a remarkable claim. Noah and his family are not alone. *We* are not alone.

There may come times, in our lives, when storms and floods descend. In our turbulent times, we may feel as though we're bobbing on the waves, floating on chaos itself. God's solution, in such a dark hour, is not what we're typically inclined to ask for. God offers those who are "at sea" not so much a spectacular rescue, but rather a slow and steady process of the waters' subsiding.

Through it all, God remembers us. And with that remembering comes the promise of new life. That's our faith.

Let us pray:

Creating God, in love you moved over the waters of chaos and separated sea from dry land. And yet, we cling tightly to rigid boundaries of our own making. You claim us in the waters of baptism and declare us dead to sin and alive in Christ. But too often we deny that call, conforming ourselves to the whims of culture. At Pentecost you released your wild and transforming Spirit to flow through church and world. But we want to tame that wildness, channeling your Spirit through banks of ordered safety. Transform us, we pray. Soften the unyielding edges of our hearts. Loosen our grip on “the way it’s always been” and prepare us for the joy of “the way it still can be,” through Jesus Christ. Amen