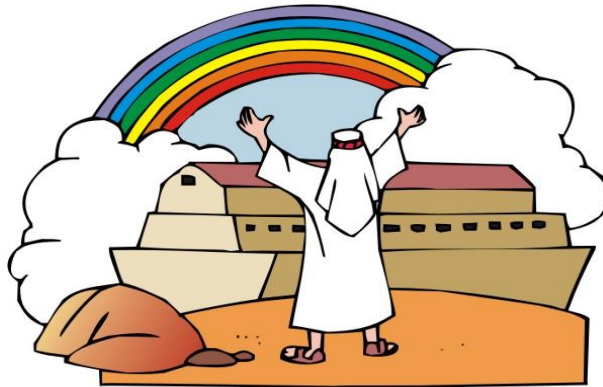


August 23, 2015

## *Heroes of Faith*

*"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family."*  
Hebrews 11:6-7



*"The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and the birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord...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. So make yourself an ark...Noah did everything just as God commanded him." Genesis 6:5-22*

Over the next few weeks I would like us to consider several believers down through the centuries that have been called by God to do extraordinary things. Through our study we will be focusing on the **nature of the call**, the **response to the call**, the **cost of the call**, and the **outcome of the call**.

The first hero of faith that I would like us to consider is Noah. The description of the time in which Noah lived is horrific. It is hard to imagine what it would be like if the minds of everyone in the world were always focused on evil and violence. We think we live in a dark time, but our time is not yet that bad.

To be the one man, in a whole world of people whose minds are *"...only evil all the time"* is an amazing accomplishment and helps us to understand how very faithful Noah must have been. So let's take a look at the story of Noah in light of the four things we want to focus on.

**The nature of the call:** God comes to Noah at a time when those who populate the earth have become so evil and so violent that the Lord is grieved and his heart was filled with pain. He determines to destroy all living things on the earth, but in Noah he finds one man who still believes and trusts in him. He calls on Noah to build an ark. In Hebrews it says that Noah was *"...warned about things not yet seen..."* Some scholars believe that Noah had not only never seen an ark or a

flood, but that the patriarch had never seen it rain. Thus, God's call to Noah was filled with total uncertainty.

**The response to the call:** While the context doesn't give us much information to go on, it seems clear that Noah immediately began to do just as God had called him to do. Unlike some of the faithful who will follow him, Noah apparently does not seek to change God's mind, not to ask for clarification on his plan. Noah simply begins the daunting task of building the huge ark, barge really, that God has designed, by hand.

**The cost of the call:** Again, the context does not give us much insight into all of the obstacles that Noah must have faced in the construction of such a massive object. No doubt his contemporaries mocked, persecuted and threatened him and the project itself. We do know that Noah, along with his three sons worked for very nearly a hundred years to construct the vessel that God had directed them to build.

**The outcome of the call:** Because of Noah's great faith he and his family were spared the destruction of all life on the earth. They endured forty days of massive storms and eruptions and more than a year in the ark before finally emerging into a world where they were literally completely alone; where nothing was left. And because they endured and persevered in their faith all of us are here today. Every one of us is physically descended from Noah and his wife. Every one of us who believes is also spiritually descended from this great man of faith, who simply chose to obey God.