

Read also 2 Corinthians 2:14-16, Ephesians 5:2, Philippians 4:15-19

Have you ever tried to do something you really wanted to do, maybe even felt compelled to do? You might even say it is a call.

- Maybe you started your own business
- Or signed up for the military
- Or became a veterinarian or nurse or physical therapist
- Or a professional musician
- Or a linguist or teacher
- Or a computer scientist

You all have done many of these things, but one significant thing you have done is build this church. And, like the Texas Rangers, you have had your struggles. Even when the struggles were life-threatening to the church, you have said, “Something told us we need to be here; we felt called to something bigger than ourselves.”

I want you to see another side of a couple of local baseball players. Texas Ranger Josh Hamilton goes on the David Letterman Show (6/16/2011) and credits his relationship with Jesus Christ as the reason for not only his success, but his perseverance and his victory in overcoming personal struggles.

Ranger outfielder David Murphy also walks with God. He too, talks about his commitment to God and God’s help in his career. He feels called. Watch this video – http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-Uhr_8WjhM

Notice David’s priority to be known as “David Murphy, the man of God” who plays for His glory. Baseball is his ministry. Win or lose.

Noah felt compelled to be a ship builder and zoologist. God called him to it. It may have taken him 20 years to build the boat. He was probably heckled. But little by little he built his skill through the challenge. It was a process of learning.

You can take what you do and put in wholly in God’s hands and He can really make something of it. And so Noah did. He went wholly with God, got in the boat.

It rained and rained. How long, O Lord? 150 days for starters.

Chapter 8 begins, “But God remembered Noah and all the animals that were with him in the boat.”

It sounds like, “oh yeah, I remember I am supposed to pick up my child from daycare.” “Remind me, I am supposed to get my oil changed this week.” No, this word has much greater scope than simply to recall something.

The Hebrew verb “remember” means to act on behalf of someone. The Psalmist asks God to “Remember King David” (Ps. 132:1). That is a plea for divine intervention not just for David, but a blessing that continues to his descendants.

God’s remembering meant God’s power would go forward to take care of Noah and the animals.

God’s act of remembering meant commitment to the future and posterity of His creation. It was a promise of help. So, the rain stopped.

Remember back to the story of the creation of Eve. God created “a helper to be Adam’s partner” (Gen. 2:18). Helper means “essential partner; irreplaceable part of the equation.” Helper is one who compliments and completes the partner.

We discovered that in the Bible the word for “helper” is used for God.

Paul says the intent of the helper is to “respect the partner.” (Ephesians 5:33) So think of all of this when you think of God “remembering” Noah and the animals.

God is “helper.” Essential partner; irreplaceable part of the equation.

So if we do not walk with God in the very activity of our lives, we lose out. But if we DO center our life work in God, we gain a magnificent, powerful partner.

That is a blessing worth living or dying for.

For Noah and his family, it meant life in a sea of death. To give your life’s work to God is to be centered in life, no matter what storm may come your way.

It is a step-by-step process of togetherness; leaning on God; watching the results. Let’s read it.
READ Genesis 8.

The rain stopped. Days went by. Noah opened the window. Ah, fresh air. But what would they find? Days passed . . . Noah sent out a raven. Then he sent out a dove. It came back. He brought it back in. He waited. He sent it out again. It came back that night, with a freshly plucked olive leaf.

Noah knew it would be okay! YES! He sent it out again.

They would live! TRUST . . . Would not we all have thought, *what’s going to happen? What kind of good can come of this? How’s it going to happen?*

Step by step. It took PATIENCE, FAITH.

Day by day God attended to Noah and the animals. “At the end of forty days, then seven then another seven, then finally in the second month on the twenty-seventh day” God says, “Go out and abound on the earth.”

There are many flood stories from different ancient cultures. One is “Gilgamesh.” It has a survivor who sent out three birds in a similar manner. The man makes an offering sacrifice, but the gods were in disarray and disagreement because of the flood. They “crowded around the sacrifice like flies.”

This contrasts sharply with God’s dignified plan and overseeing of it. God is not in disarray because of the flood. He waits until just the right time for success. God blessed them, “Be fruitful. Populate the earth;” male and female together given a task to accomplish.

Noah and the animals were sheltered in the grace of God. God’s grace and hope for the future far overshadowed the judgment.

After all those months, Noah got off the boat and the very first thing he did was build an altar and worship.

Why didn’t he think of himself? Go build a house, get on with his life. He could have done anything, but the most important thing on his mind and heart was to kneel down and give God glory. Surely Noah remembered.

He remembered feeling the urge to build a boat; remembered the struggle and work of doing it. He remembered the miracle of getting all the animals onboard; the relentless storm, and yet they floated safely on the waters.

Would he quit now? Do his own thing? Live for himself?

How could he not get off the boat and worship God? Nothing else was more important than honoring the One who saved him.

Have you given God the worship He deserves?

Is worship first in your life? Intentional?

Worship flows out of the experience of walking with God day by day and step by step, learning to trust that He leads you to a good place.

So Noah, in response, brought “of *every* clean animal and *every* clean bird.” Sound familiar? Like Abel, who “brought the first and the best.” (Gen 4:4).

In other words, worship is costly.

While Noah brought what he had, we worship with tithes and offerings; with a God-honoring worship service, learning the word, and serving in the church and community.

Worship is a first thought; it is central and sacred. It is the sign of a true disciple. For Noah, worship and living sacrificially for God became his first thought.

Is it your first thought? My prayer is that it would be, for your own blessing.

If you place what you do in God's hands and see God open doors and windows for you, step by step, day by day, it will become a sacred thing.

Paul said *your worship is a pleasing aroma to God and earns you a reward*. Paul writes that *when you give your lives are a Christ-like fragrance that comes from knowing Him*.

You will see God give miraculous blessings, like Noah saw. He had to look back and say, how did I do this? How did I build that boat, gather the animals, and survive. **ONLY WITH GOD!**

God saw the worship and He honored it. He changed His mind, saying He would never send catastrophic destruction on humans and animals again. God went to bat for the worshiper, giving life, when we were headed for death.

Worship changed God for our benefit. Let us, with our hand in God's hand, be worshipers of God.

AMEN