**Surviving Quarantine Series**

**Discovering 40 Day Episodes in the Bible**

**“Trusting in the Promises of God During a Catastrophic Event”**

**Genesis 7-9**

**Introduction**

Today we are beginning a new series of sermons entitled “Surviving Quarantine.” Before the Covid-19 the idea of being quarantined was only something we heard about or saw in a movie. But after the last couple of months we all have become personally acquainted with being quarantined.

The word “quarantine” comes from two Italian words *quaranta giorni,* which means “40 days.” The practice of being quarantine began during the 14th century to protect coastal cities from plague epidemics. Ships arriving from infected ports were required to stay anchored off shore for 40 days to make certain that each member of the crew was healthy.

It is interesting that the Bible has many instances where God used the period of 40 days. Even though the current “stay at home” restrictions are loosening, I thought it would be interesting for us to take our own 40-day journey through the Scriptures to look at 7 episodes where God used 40 days to make a spiritual emphasis.

Today we will look at a very first 40-day episode in Scripture. The very familiar story of Noah and the Ark. The record of the flood covers four chapters in the book of Genesis – chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9. Of course, time doesn’t allow us to read the entire account of the flood but God does provide us a short summary in the book of Hebrews chapter eleven and verse seven.

Here now the Word of God:

*By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.* (Heb.11.7)

There are many aspects to the story of Noah, the Ark, and the Flood but this morning I want us to focus our attention on how Noah survived being quarantined. Before I get into the sermon there is something I need tell you. Even though the rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, Noah, his family, and all the animals were in the Ark for 371 days! Now, that’s being quarantined!

Remember how you felt when the 15 days to “Slow the Spread” changed into an additional 30 days to “Stop the Virus.” Remember how you felt when it finally sunk in that you were not going back to work, school, or on that vacation but you were going to be stuck in your house with your family for 45 days! Just imagine how Noah and his family felt when 40 days turned into 100, then 200, then 300, and then 371. Truly, Noah and his family are the experts on being quarantined.

**Faith and Reverence**

How did Noah survive a 371-day quarantine? Well, the writer of Hebrews begins *“By faith Noah.”* The first thing we learn from Noah is that everything in his life grew out of his faith in God. The Bible tells us that *Noah was* *a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.* (Gen.6.9) Noah’s faith in God began long before the Lord told him about the flood. Before Noah’s knew anything about the Ark or the animals he walked with God. Noah was five hundred years old before he knew anything about the flood so we can assume that Noah had walked with God for hundreds of years.

You see, having faith during times of trial is wonderful but having faith as part of your daily life is what truly pleases God. (Heb.11.6) Before Noah had to live off the daily rations of food on the Ark he had faith in God for his daily bread. Before Noah and his family entered into the Ark for safety from the Flood Noah had faith that God would take care of his family. Brothers and sisters don’t wait for an extreme situation to muster up faith. Allow faith to be part of your daily life. Charles Spurgeon said it best. “Faith will not come upon you all of sudden in the darkness of night if you have shut it out through all the bright days. Faith must be a constant tenant not an occasional guest.”

Our text tells us that Noah’s faith extended to *things not yet seen.* God warned Noah about His plans to bring a *flood of water upon the earth,* and that everything on the earth would perish. (Gen.6.17) This would have been “crazy news” because it had never rained. The Bible tells us that before the flood the earth was watered by a mist that would rise from the ground – like a universal irrigation system as described in Genesis 2.6. So rain – and especially rain that would cause a universal flood was outside of man’s experience. Noah had never seen a drop of rain but he believed God’s warning about bringing a flood of water to cover the earth to be true. The Bible tells us that faith is *the conviction of things not seen* and Noah was truly a man of conviction. (Heb.11.1) Faith that believes the probable is anybody’s faith but faith that extends beyond probability or possibility and rest on the Word of God is the faith that pleases God. Noah believed that with God all things are possible and so should we! (Mt.19.26)

You need to understand that Noah stood alone in his faith. Only Noah’s wife, his sons, and his son’s wives stood with him. The world in Noah’s day was full of corruption and the degree of the rebellion was excessive and extensive. (Gen.6.1, 5a) Just listen to the way the Bible describes it. The wickedness of man was great. (Gen.6.5a) Every intent of the thoughts of man’s heart was only evil continually (Gen.6.5b) The earth was filled with violence (Gen.6.11) All fresh was corrupt. (Gen.6.12) Noah was alone and isolated in his faith. But instead of sheltering in place the Bible tells us that Noah was *a preacher of righteousness.* (2Pt.2.5) Through the construction of the Ark, Noah was making “proclamation” to the world that God always provides salvation to those who live by faith. It took Noah and his sons 120 years to build the Ark and after 120 years of preaching Noah did not have one convert. Noah’s faith gives testimony to the words of the Gospel Hymn, “Though none go with me still I will follow.” We all have heard the phrase, “there’s strength in numbers.” Well, how strong is your faith when you’re standing alone?

But the lack of response did not hinder Noah from continuing to follow the Lord. He persevered to the end. O that we would have faith like Noah! The writer of Hebrews continues telling us that *in reverence*Noah *prepared an ark for the salvation of his household.* This gives us a clue to Noah’s motivation. Noah wasn’t driven by fear or a desire to escape disaster. His motivation was driven by his awe of God. This word “*reverence*” means, “to stand in awe of.” Noah stood in awe of God. God was supreme in Noah’s life. God was number one and nothing else mattered to Noah but God. So when God said, “*Make for yourself an ark*” that is exactly what Noah did. As I mentioned Noah and his sons worked building the Ark for 120 years. And the Ark was huge! It was 450 feet long (about the size of 1.5 football fields), 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high, with three floors. It had about 10,000 square feet of space inside. It was shaped like a mammoth shoebox covered with pitch, a tar type substance that made the Ark waterproof. Now, that’s a backyard project!

Noah’s firm faith and reverence for God is how he lived prior to the flood and was certainly how he survived the 371-day quarantine. But now I want to point out a few areas of Noah’s faith that might help us survive our current quarantine. First, Noah had to believe the Ark would float and keep his family safe. Seven days prior to the flood the Lord told to Noah enter the Ark with his family. As they sat in the Ark waiting they must have had conversion about whether the boat would float. The thing was huge and weighed thousands of pounds even before the animals came on board. “What if we missed a spot when we were covering the Ark with tar?” One little spot could sink the ship. But the Lord had told them exactly how to construct the Ark and was the divine job supervisor throughout the project. The Lord established a covenant, made a divine promise to Noah and his family to keep them safe and they needed to trust God’s Word.

Brothers and sisters, God has established a covenant with us through Christ and we need to trust His Word. The way we survive the quarantine is by having faith that God will bring us safely through the storm and not doubt His Word. The Apostle James tells us, “*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials . . . But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God . . . But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.* (Js.1.2-6) So as the Ark was driven and tossed by the wind, Noah’s faith was firm and he trusted God and His Word.

Secondly, I want to point out that Noah had to believe that the provisions for his family and the animals would last throughout the time they were on the Ark. The Lord had only told Noah that He would send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights but Noah had no idea how long it would take for the waters to recede. The Lord told Noah to store enough food on the Ark for his family, the animals, and for the altar of sacrifice. But how did they know the provisions would last 371-days? Brother and sisters, the way we survive quarantine is to trust God as our provider. The Lord is Jehovah Jireh – The Lord our Provider. “Provision” isn’t a word most Americans think much about. Maybe because of hurricanes South Floridians think about it more than most. Once we hear that there is a hurricane might be coming our way we go out and purchase our cans of gas, non-perishable food supplies, and prescriptions but what about when the disaster lasts longer than expected and the provisions start running low? During these times it is easy to become anxious and begin to worry.

Jesus told us, *Do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?**Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?* *And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!*(Mt.6.25-30) We survive the quarantine by trusting in God as our Jehovah Jireh!

Thirdly, Noah had to believe the Lord would close the door before the flood came and to open it when it was safe to return to dry land. The Bible tells us that after Noah and his family along with all the animals entered the Ark that the Lord closed the door behind him. (Gen.7.16) During the virus the Lord has closed many doors. Business, schools, and churches all closed their doors. Many lost their jobs and lost income. The doors were closed on travel, new careers, family reunions, graduations, and celebrations. Even though the Lord has closed the doors on many things the way we survive the quarantine is by believing that the Lord will open doors in the future. As Job told us, *The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”* (Job 1.21) Let’s bless the name of the Lord and trust Him to open doors for the future.

Forth, Noah had to believe that the Lord would guide the ark. The Ark had no rudder, no wheel, no sails, or motor. The Lord was the pilot! Giving up control is one of the hardest things to do. Being in control gives us a sense of confidence and stability but the reality is none of us are really in control. Things can change in a heartbeat – literally. Who would have ever thought that we would be experiencing in a 40-day global quarantine? Noah had to let go of all control and surrender to God’s sovereign control. Following Noah’s example of surrendering to God’s sovereign control is how we survive quarantine.

Fifth, Noah had to believe that the Lord would park the Ark in the perfect spot to start a new life. The Bible tells us that the Ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat. The mountains of Ararat are located in modern day Turkey and is a perfect spot for Noah’s sons and their wives to dispatch to the four corners of the earth to repopulate the earth. (Gen.8.4) Brothers and sisters, to survive this quarantine we must trust that the Lord to bring to the perfect place for our good and for His glory.

Six, Noah had to trust the Lord for all the “new normal” to come. The world after the flood was different than before. The earth’s landscape was different with mountains, lakes, rivers, and oceans. The climate was different with a regular course of seasons – seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night. (Gen.8.22) There was a new system of government. There was a new item on the menu – meat! And there was something new in the sky – a rainbow. (Gen.9.1-17)

Noah and his family would adapt to this new normal. Brothers and sisters, to survive the quarantine we must trust God for the new normal and “be fruitful and fill the earth.”

And lastly, Noah had to trust God is the midst of uncertainty. Of course, everyone was overwhelmed with happiest to get out of the Ark. You talk about “cabin fever!” But as they walk out of the Ark they were entering into world of uncertainty. How long would it take for plants to grow? Where would the animals go? Would they be ok? Where would Noah’s sons and the wives settled? How long would it to feel like normal? Well, the Lord must have known that Noah was experiencing uncertainty so He came to Noah and said, *“I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh.”* (Gen.9.15a) As we leave our homes and go out into our world we must allow the Lord to overcome our uncertainty and trust in His covenant promises! *Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments.* (Dt.7.9)

**Closing Thought**

As I close this morning I want to remind you that the first thing that Noah did after he walked out of his 371-day quarantine was to build an altar and offer burnt offerings to the Lord. Just as Noah walked with God before the quarantine he now walks with God after the quarantine. I think this a good example to follow. Let’s be the people that walk with God regardless of life’s circumstances. Let’s be the people who trust in God’s promises during catastrophic events. What we learn from Noah’s quarantine experience is that God brought Noah and his family safely through the water and He will bring us safely through Covid-19.