

**Genesis 7: 1-16; “The Lord shut him in”, Sermon # 28 in the series – “Beginnings”,
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on August 2nd, 2010 ,
in the Morning Worship.**

I have been trying to show you in past sermons that the ark is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Being spiritually “in Christ” you are delivered from the wrath of God against your sin. The ark had a door and this door was also a picture of God’s purpose. The door was open for a time, for Noah and his household and the animals to enter. And then at the appointed time, the time when God would bring the judgment, the door would be closed. The Lord’s shutting the door of the ark is meant to instruct us concerning our responsibility to enter into God’s great purposes before it is too late; that we will repent of all of our sins and believe in Christ. In salvation, God Himself will then lead you into a new life of righteousness and holiness.

It is our responsibility to enter into the ark of Christ’s salvation and be saved from this present worldly and sinfully perverse generation. We cannot leave the world, but we can leave off our love of the world and our love of sinning when we are in Christ. When we find grace we will be able to change more and more into people who want to do God’s will. What I want to do this morning is to show you more of this truth of God’s great purposes and your great responsibility in relation to God’s shutting Noah in. Let me give you 3 observations.

1st of all – God shut Noah in, only after both longer and shorter delays took place, in order to show His patience with sinful men.

The longer delay that I am thinking of, is mentioned in Chapter 6, verse 3 when God says, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” This is not referring to how long men should live in that day, for most of them were living to be five hundred to nine hundred years old, or older. No, this is referring to the time that God would give the people of that generation to repent. Turn with me to 1st Peter, chapter 3, and we will look at verses 18-20.

It says, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is eight souls were saved through water.” Now, I will attempt to deal in a later sermon with verses 21 and 22, which talk about baptism.

We see here very clearly here, that Christ died for sinners. He died as the Just and Holy One, for the unjust, even us. He did this by His being put to death in the flesh. Christ, the Son of God, was put to death on a cross, for us who believe in Him. But He was made alive by the Spirit in His resurrection. On the basis of this certain purchase of grace, by His future death, Christ had previously preached by His Spirit, through Noah, to the people of Noah’s day. These were people who were dead in their trespasses and sins, and they would not repent at the preaching of Noah.

Noah preached to them by words, warning them of God’s purpose to bring the Flood, and words of invitation and promise, that anyone who would come into the ark would be saved. Noah was only able to convince those of his immediate household and their wives, and his own wife to enter; eight people in all. The rest were disobedient. While they were being disobedient, the Divine longsuffering waited, it says in verse 20. God was striving with them by His Spirit, and He was waiting for them because of His patience.

This seems to do violence to the doctrines of grace, does it not? We who believe in the sovereignty of God, we tend to think to ourselves, “Well, if God wanted to save these people why doesn’t He just do it?” Certainly He has the power to do it. “His arm is not so short that He cannot save.” Certainly if it is His purpose, He can intervene and change men’s sinful hearts. But the thing that we forget is that God is not that blunt. God is not that crude about things. He has far

more at stake in terms of the demonstration of His justice and glory. He has far greater purposes than we think. He sees down deep inside of our hearts and minds, and has all the motives for what we do under His immediate scrutiny, without at all forcing us to His conclusions by His great power. This is how it is in our lives. He is sovereign, in an absolute sense. But He gives all men the responsibility to choose and decide for themselves whether they will listen to His word and heed it.

I am aware that it takes a work of Almighty power and grace to bring any person to that place where they will see their need and trust in Him and obey His Word. But I am also aware that He so works as to leave men without excuse if they reject His Word and never are saved. He does intervene and bring many things to our attention in His sovereign providence and in relation to the commands of Scripture, those things which He expects and which are our duty. If we think that we can do it on our own, He will let us try, but He will state patiently that to be righteous in the perfect sense that He requires, cannot be done without grace.

Will we believe it? The lesson of this morning is that in His goodness and kindness, God is patient, He is longsuffering because He is looking for a response from you and from me. That response is repentance. Turn with me to Romans 2: 4. These verses, in the context, are talking about people who judge others, because of the sins that they see in them, when they themselves are practicing the same sins and not taking notice of them. The judgment of God is “according to truth against those who practice such things.”

He goes on to say in verse 4, “Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?” “But in accordance with your hardness of heart you are treasuring up wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” This is the “patience of God kept waiting”, this is the Divine longsuffering of God, to wait while you live out your life as a response to what He has declared in His word that He will do. It says in Acts 17: 26, 27 that “He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.”

Ask yourself, did you know that the Lord has “pre-appointed” your times and the place where you would be born, where you would live and how far you would go in life, even before you once thought the matter over? It is so. What is your response to Him? “I will worship You, O Lord, I will receive Your Words, and repent of my sins when I discover them, and believe in your Son Jesus Christ for all my righteousness and all my strength.” Do you say this? For the text in Acts 17 goes on to say in verse 30, if you do not understand that God is expecting this, you have a sinful problem.

Paul goes on to say here: “Truly these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” The response to God’s patience, kindness, and goodness is repentance. You will say to me, if you are wise, “But is not repentance unto life a gift and grace of God?” “If so, then how can I repent?” When God gives us grace we often cannot tell whether we are receiving grace, or in what amounts it is being given. Our duty is to repent, trusting that He is giving, and that He will give grace. And He will give it, if we are believing in the promises of His Word. He is patiently waiting.

The shorter delay that I am speaking about this morning is found in verse 4 of Chapter 7 of Genesis. “For after 7 more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things.” The thing that we need to grasp from this shorter delay is that God is not only patient in a long term sense but He also gives last minute warnings of His judgments, as well, when He speaks of judgments upon the whole world like the

flood. He lets His people know what He is doing, so that they may warn others. I am quite sure that this last seven days notice was given to Noah, not only for Himself, but also to the wicked unbelieving world around him, so that they could even at a late hour repent.

We see an example of this in Genesis 18: 17, where it says this, “And the Lord said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing?’” And also when the angels who came to Sodom to rescue Lot in Genesis 19: 12, they say to him, “Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place! For we will destroy this place...” But no one came with him out of the city, except his wife and his two daughters. But God shut Noah in, only after both longer and shorter delays had taken place, in order to show His patience with sinful men.

2nd – God’s shutting the door shows us how deliberate and final, will the Last judgment be. And He is saying to us – Prepare, or be left outside.

Verse 18 says, “The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters.” “And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and the high hills under the whole heaven were covered.” “The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered.” “And all flesh died that moved on the earth.” We are speaking together this morning about the passage of time in relation to God’s purposes. God is patient but, there will come a most certain and definite time for each of us when that day of grace will end if we do not repent.

This is the picture of God shutting the door. Noah is shut in and the people, who will not believe that God will judge all their sin, are left on the outside of the ark to perish. How wonderful and awful a picture, all together. It is truly wonderful to think of how safe Noah and those with him must have felt on that day, when the great invisible hand closed or put into place that massive door. It is probable that the door was so big and so thick that it could not be moved into place without God’s help.

Could 4 men even have closed a door that was perhaps 15 to 20 ft. square and perhaps 2 to 3 ft. thick? Perhaps, but once they were in, how could they seal it? How could they pitch it on the outside and be sealed in, so that the waters could not seep in? This should show us how dependent we are upon God to not only save us but to keep us in this Christian life. Many of the greatest things we cannot do. The Lord must shut us in; the Lord must close the door. We cannot avoid the judgment that is coming; neither would we want to, if we are truly Christ’s.

But what He does ask us to do is to prepare for it. Turn with me to Matthew Chapter 25. In verses 1-13 we find the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. The kingdom of heaven is likened here to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. They all took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Those who were foolish took no oil with them in their lamps, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed they all slumbered and slept. All were virgins, all had lamps, but not all took oil with them in their vessels with their lamps. All fell asleep while waiting. To be prepared does not simply mean staying awake and alert. We may be still unprepared. “At midnight the cry is heard: Behold the bridegroom is coming, go out to meet him!” Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ “And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.” “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’” “But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’” “Watch therefore for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.”

So, we have here a parallel between the door of Noah’s ark being shut and the door to the wedding celebration at the time of Christ’s second coming. The lamp in the parable is the picture

of a Christian profession. All ten virgins have made this profession. The difference between the wise and the foolish is that the wise took oil in their vessels with the lamps. The foolish took no oil which means that at the crucial time when they needed it, the time of the return of the bridegroom to meet and marry his bride; that they did not have the ability to shine their light. True Christians are the light of the world. Jesus says, "Let your light so shine before men that they will see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5: 16) The oil in the lamps is the grace of Christ within the believer, which is lit by the Holy Spirit, and caused to shine by the believer's responding to the Lord's Word in faith and obedience.

For Noah, the closing of the door of the ark was the end of the world. For us in New Testament times, the closing of the door is the return of the bridegroom Jesus Christ, which will be the end of the world as we know it now. Then will come the judgment. To be prepared is not only to be watchful, but to have grace in yourself, so that whether you are awake or asleep that you may be ready when the cry comes, "Behold the bridegroom!" The reason that these foolish virgins were turned away after the door was shut was because they had not prepared by seeking Christ in the time when He may be found. They realized their need too late. They had the profession of a Christian and had enough common grace to want to meet the bridegroom and to be at this marriage celebration.

But their common grace was not enough to keep their lamps from going out before the bridegroom returned. They needed saving grace, and it was too late to buy. "Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding." Just a little earlier in Matthew 24: 37, 38, it says, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."

It will not matter whether you were the foolish virgin or the wild and careless sinner in the day when God judges. He will prove the folly of both in that awful day. You must see to it that your heart has grace at work in it and you will be prepared. Don't miss salvation and eternal life because you were too busy with the celebration of things in this life; the eating, the drinking, the partying, the graduations, the weddings, the birthdays, the parade of the good things of this life. It is all too possible to have the good things and the good times, and even to have an interest in doing good and helping people, and still not have saving grace. That only comes by entering the door of salvation, and seeking Christ for it.

Oh, will you not come today? Do not say, I will make time for this later. I don't want this until later. Don't speak to me about this until I have had my fun and seen the world. The door may close, and the Lord may never strive with you again. Make time to find Christ and enter into the ark of salvation before the door is closed. No amount of pleading will change a thing after the door is closed. But it will if you come to Christ now.

And 3rd – Are you not glad, so very glad, that you are shut in here with Christ today?

Oh the wonderful feeling of being safe and secure which must have swept over Noah in waves that matched the waves that he was riding upon that day. To know, that in the midst of the storm which lasted forty days and forty nights that he would ride above the awful effects of judgment. All because he had obeyed the gospel of his generation; made the ark, built the ark, and entered the ark. He and his family would not perish, but live and declare the works of the Lord. Oh what it must have been like; to have been shut in the ark with all those animals, each and every day for a year. It would have had its problems and difficulties, but for the most part, it would have been a joyful adventure.

The Lord had shown them His mercy and His goodness. They would be leaving the old world, the old life behind, and be beginning a new life when the waters subsided and the ark touched

down on the solid ground of Mt. Ararat. They could afford to be a year in the ark, riding upon the waters. What joy must have filled their hearts! So it is, too, with you and I who have believed in Christ. It is all of this and more so because we have believed in Christ, not only to escape an earthly, temporal judgment, but to escape an eternal judgment. We have entered in to Christ our ark. We have believed in Him to escape an eternal and endless judgment. We are shut in with Him here for the “year” of the rest of our life. But, oh the wonderful feeling of being safe and secure forever, because of Christ! Oh, to realize that although we may have trials and difficulties, and at times have to say with David; the words of Psalm 42, verse 7, “Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and billows have gone over me.” We can also say the next words of that Psalm – “The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me—a prayer to the God of my life.”