



Sunday Teaching Guide

Lent, Week 1

February 18, 2024

Bible Texts

- John 3:16-17
- Genesis 6:9-19; 21
- Micah 6:8
- Genesis 8:1
- Genesis 9:8-11

Important Terms

- Lent: A period in the Christian calendar that focuses on fasting and repentance leading up to the feast of Easter.

Sermon Notes

- The Book of Genesis tells the story of a great flood. This story begins by telling us the world is overcome with sin and is full of violence. People on earth had stopped partnering with God and each other, as was intended. Instead, they were failing each other, creating enemies of each other, and using the resources God had given them to kill instead of care for the world. The author tells us that God could no longer watch this take place because all the people on earth were like this, all but Noah. We're told Noah was righteous, blameless, and faithfully walked with God.
- All cultures have an origin story, and nearly all of those same cultures have a destruction story, many often built around a flood. When we see a similarity to other ancient stories, we shouldn't be surprised. But the author of this story does something incredible. In the other flood stories circulating around the ancient world, the gods were angry, everybody died, the gods were satisfied by the destruction, and the story ended. But this was a very different kind of God. God was heartbroken by the way the people treated each other and the way they treated his creation. Nobody had ever talked about a god like that before. God had been sad enough with the actions of humanity to destroy them, but God was also saddened by the destruction the flood had caused.
- As we saw in the story of Noah, this broke God's heart; it continues to break God's heart because it is not the way God wants the world to be. So, what is God to do? Hope and promises began to be told that God would do a new thing, and he did, instead of sending destruction, what many thought God would do; God did something so different that we still are shocked at God's response to our sin: God sent his Son.

Reflection Questions

- What is your prior experience with the flood story? How have you interpreted this story in the past?
- What details from the flood story stand out to you? Does anything in the story seem uncomfortable?
- Why do you think God wants to establish a covenant with Noah after the flood? What does this act say about the characteristics of God?
- Why do you think the season of Lent begins with the flood story?
- How does the John 3:16-17 verse relate to the flood story?
- How does the story of Jesus affect our understanding of the characteristics of God?
- Where are you in your faith journey at the start of this season of Lent? Are there areas where you are struggling? What can you ask God to help you with?

Prayer for the Week

- God of our salvation, your rainbow in the clouds proclaims your covenant with every living creature. Teach us your paths and lead us in your truth, that by your Holy Spirit, we may remember our vows to you and be keepers of your trust with earth and its inhabitants. Amen.

Additional Readings

- 1 Peter 3:18-22
- Mark 1:9-15
- Psalm 25:1-9