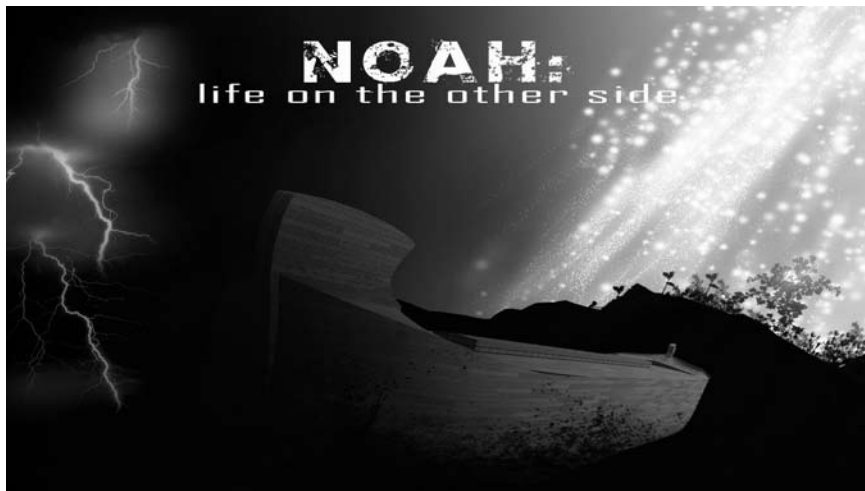


new summer design!



connecting a personal and small group study with Sunday's sermon



Noah: life on the other side
part one of a two part sermon series

Genesis 6

"The Flood"

June 17, 2007

personal and small group study

storyline *Author: Phil Niekerk, senior small group pastor*

Our baby's going to college! It's really happening. On Saturday, we served dessert to a couple of hundred friends for her graduation open house. On Sunday, we traveled seven hours for freshmen orientation at Northern Michigan University. Her life (our lives!) is about to change. As big as this step is, I think the Niekerks are ready. Kari's a great kid who will do well in college and in life. She's very independent, does well with people and has a solid walk with God.

College orientation for new freshmen and nervous parents was very interesting. I had a ton of questions going into this thing! *What's this really going to cost? How much study time should she plan on? What about a job? Will she ever come home? How will she get home?* The list goes on. But my biggest questions had to do with campus life. What's life like on a college campus these days? I've heard the drug, sex and booze horror stories. I remember the movie *Animal House*. What will she see? What will she experience? Is this really the University of Sodom and Gomorrah?

Freshmen orientation basically taught me two important things. First, the university has high *written* standards for the conduct of their students regarding the use of drugs and alcohol. The dean of housing stated, *"Other than one dorm whose residents are all over the age of 21, our campus, by law and by rule, is 100% 'dry' and drug free."* Secondly, it depends on your point of view on whether the university has structures in place to address the thousands of conduct violations that occur each semester on campus. The dean of students stated, *"We place a lot emphasis on the community that the students build to govern their own lifestyle."* In other words, NMU has high expectations for their students but dorm life is basically self-monitored. As a parent, I've come to the uneasy conclusion that my daughter, under this philosophy, will be facing a new level of social and moral depravity that she's never experienced before. As a follower of Jesus, she will at times, need to navigate through a new depth in the ugliness in humanity. But, she will also have the opportunity to make good choices in an environment that lacks moral wisdom, shedding light into dark places. I think she's ready for this challenge!

There's a man in the Bible who faced an even more difficult challenge. He was known as "a righteous man, the only blameless man living on earth." The only? Really? Yes, Noah was one-of-a-kind during time in history when depravity ran so rampant that God decided to step in with a devastating response. Noah's story teaches some important lessons. It teaches us about the depth of depravity that humans are capable of when left to do as they please. It teaches us about the heart of God when His created human beings turn their back on Him. And, it teaches us about living right in ugly environments.

? This will most likely not be first time you've heard or read the story of Noah and the Ark. What rating would you give this story: G? PG? PG-13? R? Why did you choose that rating? Where have you experienced this story?

Read Genesis 6

Describe the world in which Noah lived in. How bad was it?

Verses 1-4 may have left you asking some very interesting questions, such as: *Who were the "sons of men"? Why did people live so long? What's up with the giants?* Take time to do some research at the library, internet or with Bible commentaries or study Bibles. Not all your questions can be clearly answered but you may find some interesting possibilities.

? What triggered God's decision to destroy the human race? What did He see in the people that was so heart breaking? Is God being rash? Where do you see His patience? Where do you see His grace?

What is God's primary emotion toward humankind and their sin?

? What's the difference between God being "ticked off" and being broken hearted about our sinful choices?

Why was Noah singled out to be saved? Was Noah perfect? Spend a few minutes meditating or mulling over verse 9.

? God responds firmly to people stepping outside His boundaries or crossing His "No Trespassing" sign. What fences are easy for you to cross?

? How does God respond to those who choose to stay on the right side of the fence? Who is God asking you to impact through your lifestyle of obedience?

Prayer

Take a minute ... or hour... whatever it takes, to confess and apologize to God for the times you willfully stepped over the fence. Tell Him that you are sorry for breaking His heart. Accept His forgiveness. Ask God to show how you can make an impact by living well in dark, broken world.

coreverse

"Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless man living on the earth at the time. He constantly followed God's will and enjoyed a close relationship with Him"
Genesis 6.9 (NLT)