

Through The Storm Part 1

You're Gonna Do What?

Genesis 6:11-22

Memory Verses: 1 John 3:20

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle) We are a month and a half into the world-wide Covid-19 pandemic and there is as of now, no light at the end of the tunnel. We live in a time of dark uncertainty no doubt. Schools, stores, and churches are closed, pro sports seasons have been canceled, the stock market has plummeted into recession, retirement accounts are all but gone, countless jobs have been lost, over 2 million people have been infected, over 100,000 people have died, and as of now there is no cure. And even after its all over with... what will be left when we sift through the rubble? Will our economy ever be able to recover? Will you be able to find a job again? Will your 401k rebound?

I'm not trying to paint too bleak of a picture here... I'm just voicing some of the questions that I think many of us are secretly asking. But the biggest question that many of us are asking is... why? Why would God allow this to happen to us? Isn't that where most of us go at times like this? We look up to the heavens and we throw our hands up in disbelief and frustration and say... why are you doing this God? If you are good, if you are loving, if you care about us... then why are you allowing this to happen to us right now?

Well, you wouldn't be the first one to voice these concerns to the almighty. When we look at some of the most faithful men and women of the Bible we see them in similar situations asking similar questions. I think of Job, the most faithful man on the planet at the time, who had everything stripped from him; his family, his fortune, even his health. And even though he would not curse God and die, as his wife suggested, he still was bold enough to ask God... why would he do this to him?

Or what about Joseph, who was a good kid, loved God, had a good family and everything going his way... that was until he was thrown into a pit, almost killed by his brothers, sold into slavery, accused of rape, thrown into prison, forgotten and left for dead. I'm sure there were countless times that Joseph asked God... what in the world are you doing up there? Why are you doing this to me?

Or consider David. Faithful, giant slayer, anointed heir to the throne... hunted by Saul, hiding in the desert, fearing for his life. Here's what David says to God in **Psalm 10:1 - Why, O LORD, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?"**

Why God, why? It's a fair question. But it's not the most important question in these times. You see one of the most fundamental

teachings of the Christian faith is this idea that God is so much bigger than us that we cannot know all his ways... we can't always know the why. **Isaiah 55:8-9 says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."** And I know what you are thinking. So. So what? How does that help me right here, right now! It can seem like an empty cliché... but I assure it's not. You see the most important question isn't why? The most important question is... **"can you still trust God when you can't understand the why?"** When you can't figure out what God is doing, or why he's doing it, when you can't see him working through the darkness... when you can't see how this can amount to any good at all... can you still trust him?

Over the next few weeks we are going to be contemplating this very question. Because in our uncertain times it is more important than ever before to recognize one fundamental thing... though we can't see him working, or know what he's doing... or why he's doing it... he's still in control... and... he still holds us through the storm. .

So this morning we are going to look at a very familiar story of one of the most famous men in the Bible and we are going to start this conversation with God about how to trust him when we don't understand why. And that conversation starts before the why... it starts with the what. Turn over with me to Genesis chapter 6.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

Let's read **Genesis 6:11-14, 17-18**. After all this... can't you just see Noah saying, "You're Gonna Do What?" Could you just imagine that conversation. I think it would go something like this... "wait a minute God, so you're a little frustrated I can tell... but your plan is to drown everyone? Maybe we should pump the breaks a little, take a deep breath. Also, what's rain? And... what's a boat?"

Let's be honest, if God were to counsel with us before making his decisions, how many of his decisions would pass the vote? None right? And this is one of the reasons that God doesn't ask us about his plans before hand. You see, the thing about God is that he knows everything... and we don't know anything really. And sometimes our not knowing everything, our uncertainty, can cause us to feel anxious, or fearful, or depressed. The Bible phrases it this way "our heart condemns us." How many of you can relate to this. How many of you can say that recently your heart has been telling you some scary stuff... that your heart has been condemning you rather than reassuring you? But if God knows everything then he is obviously greater than our fear, depression, stress, and anxiety, right? Look at **1 John 3:20**. Isn't this reassuring... the fact that even when we don't understand the what and can't know the why... God does?

So with that in mind... we can explore the what a little more can't we. For instance, let's explore the what of Noah's situation. God is going to create and cause a tragedy to bring about his plan. And here I want us to understand something very vital for all of us. **Sometimes God Allows The Storm, Sometimes God Causes The Storm.** Right before the lock-down my mother-in-law made the comment, "well, God didn't do this... he didn't cause this." My father-in-law retorted... "well Kathy, perhaps he did... he's done bigger things than this." My mom responded with, "well I believe God allows bad things to happen but doesn't cause them or create them." Have you ever been involved with a conversation like this before? Who's right? My mom or my dad?

It is way easier to think that maybe Satan creates all the big bad problems and tragedies and then sometimes God might stop them or sometimes he might allow them to happen. And we know that sometimes that is the case. Think about the serpent in the garden when God allowed him to trick Eve into eating the forbidden fruit.

But think about this. We believe that God is sovereign. Which means that he is in control. It means that nothing happens that is not a part of his plan. And so if something does happen... like Covid-19... then we have to believe that God has a huge part in it... and is possibly the creator and cause of it. Look at **vs.13**, God says that "I have determined to make an end of all flesh," and "I will destroy them." Look at **vs.17** where he says "I will bring a flood." It is clear here that God is doing this... not merely allowing it, and that **nothing is happening that God didn't plan to happen.** The flood was part of God's plan, and Covid 19 is a part of God's plan. 2 million infected is part of God's plan. 100,000 dead is part of God's plan. Your job loss, your retirement account down, the toilet paper crisis – its all a part of God's plan.

And if God were to tell us that all of this was going to have to happen as a part of his plan we would have done just like Noah and said... You're gonna do what? We would have tried to talk him out if it. We would have tried to reason with him and tell him that he would get a lot of bad publicity for a move like this. We would have protested and perhaps led a revolt. But God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts and his ways are higher than our ways – and we must trust him.

So, can you trust God when he does something that you are totally against and may even think is evil? This is huge... This is what separates believers from non-believers. This is the very question that draws a line in the sand where atheists are on one side and Christians are on the other side. **Some say... there is no way I can believe in a God that would do this. Others say... I don't understand it... I may not even agree with it... but I trust in God's unseen plan.** So which side of the line are you on this morning? Can you trust a God who doesn't just allow seemingly bad things but actually creates and causes

them? **can you still trust God when you can't understand the why.**

But there is one more thing to ponder here. Look at **Genesis 6:22.** Saying we trust God in the storm is one thing... but **Our Faith Is Measured By Our Obedience.** God tells Noah to build a boat, bring in his family, a bunch of animals, and some food, and Noah did all that God commanded him. Get this... when the storms of life come... the thing that matters the most for you is not whether you understand the what or the why. The most important thing for you is how you respond. You see, the way we respond to the storms in our lives shows the world whether we truly believe that our God is real and who he says he is. **Your greatest testimony to your God is how people see you respond to tragedy in this world.**

Even though you don't understand the why... you can still be obedient. Of course Noah asked God, "why would you flood the world, and kill everyone? And why are you saving me and my family and all these animals in a boat? Why? But, even though he didn't get an answer as to the why or the what... he was still obedient.

Can you imagine how hard it was for Noah to be obedient? No one had seen rain before, no one had seen or even knew what an ark was, and for years there was no evidence of the coming storm. Yet Noah kept building didn't he.

And it will be hard for you to be obedient in the midst of your storm too. People will tell you to find answers apart from the word of God. Your feelings may tell you that church is a waste of time. You may even hold a grudge against God and wrestle with the idea that living for him is for nothing. But we pray you don't. We pray that instead of running from God in the storm you would run towards him.... **In the midst of the storm you can run from God or run to him... which way are you running?** So what is God asking you to stay obedient to in the storm? Is he asking you to be obedient in Prayer? Of course he is. Is he asking you to be obedient to read the word? Of course. What about church fellowship, serving, giving? Yes, all of it... everything that you will want to quit he is saying... stay the course.

I've been there – sitting on the floor, yelling at God... claiming how faithful I'd been to him and yet how could he would put me here... I've been there. I remember telling him that I'm not doing ministry any more, that I'm not living clean for him anymore. It was bad. But what got me out of it was the idea that he hadn't failed me... but rather I had failed the test, I had failed him and I had to be better, I had to stay obedient to his calling.

Some of you may be familiar with the story of Jeremy Camp. He's a Christian Music artist who's pretty famous and they just made a movie about him and his story. If you aren't familiar with it, Jeremy camp married his first wife at age 23 and four months later she died of ovarian cancer. Could you imagine... one day you are getting married, not a storm cloud in sight and

then a short 4 months later you are navigating the biggest storm you could ever imagine? How did Jeremy respond? When asked why God let this happen he said, "I remember not wanting to ask God, 'Why?' but I finally did. . . He said, 'Jeremy, I don't always want you to know why, because I want you to have a testimony of walking by faith.'" You don't need to know the why... you just need to be obedient and walk by faith. Wow. After the dust settled a little Jeremy wrote a song about this storm he had gone through. It's called "I Still Believe" and the first verse and chorus go like this... "Scattered words and empty thoughts Seem to pour from my heart, I've never felt so torn before, Seems I don't know where to start, But it's now that I feel Your grace falls like rain, From every fingertip, washing away my pain I still believe in Your faithfulness, I still believe in Your truth, I still believe in Your holy word, Even when I don't see, I still believe. **Can you still trust God when you can't understand the why.**

Application

So what? What do you want us to walk away with this morning Shevi? Well, first you need to recognize that there is no getting away from the trials and storms of this life. Life will have joy... but it will most certainly have tragedy.

And that tragedy is most likely engineered by God. He is in control, and he has a plan. And we will most likely not understand it, because his ways are much much much higher than our ways.

So, if there is a why we can understand... it's how we respond. Instead of running from God... we can testify to his goodness by remaining faithful and obedient. So the challenge is to stay faithful to God in the midst of the storm. The challenge is to respond in a way that shines a light on the goodness of God. The challenge today is to **resolve to remain faithful to God even when it's hard to be faithful**

So take a minute to examine how you respond to the storms of life? In some of the darkest and most trying times... how did you respond? Did you remain faithful to God? Did you remain obedient? Or did you run from him, hold a grudge against him? Have you walked away from him? Today you can come back! Today you can reaffirm your faith in him even in the midst of the storm. Today you can resolve to never let the storms of this life shake your faith and your trust in the God how is so much bigger than we are. **Can you still trust God when you can't understand the why**

Conclusion

This is not the end of the conversation by the way. I believe there are answers to the why? Assuring answers. Life defining and sustaining answers. We will explore more of those next week. Today wasn't about

the answers as much as it was about the fact that God is in control and our faith is based on our obedient faith even though we don't understand the why. **can you still trust God when you can't understand the why**