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Genesis

Chapter 8 - Reconciliation's Breath The Way of Reconciliation (vs.13-19)

Genesis 8:13-19: Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the surface of the ground was dried up. In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. Then God spoke to Noah, saying, “Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. “Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him. Every beast,

every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by their families from the ark.

This is a story about reconciliation, really. From the very beginning, we see the grace of God demonstrated to us in so many wonderful ways. When you think about creation and all of the things that He made just for us, it's almost unimaginable, isn't it, that God would love us that much, that He would do that? You would think that man would be more than grateful, that his every thought would be just how good God was. Nevertheless, that's not the way it ended up. Man's heart is deceitful, desperately sick (Jeremiah 17:9), and God knows that all too well. Man left to himself just continues to degrade and would eventually implode in the sense of destroying himself. God would continue to look for ways to rescue, and He begins to demonstrate that as we go through the Book of Genesis. And then as you go through the rest of the Bible you see

God reconciling man back to Himself. It is not man that seeks for God, but it is God who seeks for man, and as God has His arms open wide, He begins to call.

Jesus gives this great declaration in Matthew 11, "Come unto Me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is God calling us to Himself, and His desire is that we come to Him. "Behold, I stand at the door, knocking. If any man hears My voice, he'll open the door; I'll come in with Him and we'll have this fellowship together." "But as many as received Him, to them, He gave the right to become children of God," to those that would believe on His name.

Continually throughout Scripture, you see God calling us, beckoning us, and you see the grace of God in this. You see His desire to reconcile us to Himself. And if you were to define reconciliation, it would probably be best defined as a restoration of relationship, that there is a desire to have this compatible relationship with God once again and a harmonious relationship with God again. So, once again we look at this wonderful word of reconciliation.

If you were to go all the way back to Colossians in the New Testament, it in many ways summarizes really the whole gospel plan. So, if you look with me in Colossians 1, you'll see God's desire to actually transfer us from this domain of darkness. How do we get in the domain of darkness? Well, we handed over the title deed to the serpent, and by so doing, he becomes the prince of the power of the air. As Scripture will tell us, he is the one that is the ruler of this air, as first John 5 will make reference to. If you look at Colossians 1:13, it declares that God has delivered us from this and once again it's His desire to reconcile us to Himself, to a relationship with Him; for us to be in His Kingdom and out of the kingdom of darkness.

It reads this way,

(Colossians 1:13) “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.”

I mean, you immediately begin to feel that you're in a relationship when you hear the word “beloved,” don't you?

It goes on to say,

(Colossians 1:14) “in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Well, that's a necessary ingredient in order for us to be reconciled with God.

It goes on and says,

(Colossians 1:16) “For by Him all things were created...”

And then it explains in verse 17,

“He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

Now, that particular verse is telling us that not only has He created everything, but He controls everything and what He's going to go on to say is, in His controlling all these things, He's using all these things on the earth to reconcile us back to Him.

It goes on and reads this way,

(Colossians 1:19) “For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,

(Colossians 1:20) and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.”

Clearly it is a ministry of reconciliation. God is reconciling us to Himself. A relationship, once again, to Himself as He had walked with Adam in the garden. The desire is to restore that relationship once again. It's always been God's heart's desire. I think sometimes people perceive the flood and they go, “I think God's desire is just to make everything perfectly clean in every area.” And I would say, “Well, if that was His sole desire then He wouldn't have put dirt on the boat.” Because if you consider that man was made out of dirt, He put them on the boat. So, if you wanted to make everything clean, don't put dirt on the boat. What God was seeking was the relationship, and it was in that relationship that He begins to beckon us, and He begins to call. The wonderful thing about this whole perception and declaration of reconciliation is that He is calling us to be a part of that with Him, and I just want you to take note of that in 2 Corinthians.

These are passages that we've turned to before, but by way of reminder, to see where we're heading as we go to these particular passages in the Old Testament. 2 Corinthians 5 tells us this, that in Christ things have become new, and that's a great beginning, isn't it? Like a new day. Start anew.

It reads this way,

(2 Corinthians 5:17) “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

(2 Corinthians 5:18) “Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ...”

What was His desire? To reconcile us to Himself. How does He do that? Through Christ.

It goes on and says,

“... and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”

So, He has not only reconciled us, but He has actually given us a ministry of reconciliation as well.

(2 Corinthians 5:19) “namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their

trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

(2 Corinthians 5:20) Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ..."

It's a great picture, and as Paul will end in verse 20,

"... we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

We have this great ministry of reconciliation. When you go to the Old Testament, as we've oftentimes made reference, what you're seeing are pictures of what reconciliation looks like and how it works. In many respects, what you have with Noah is a type in the sense that through Noah, the world is being reconciled to God. Think about it. As we come to this particular passage a year later, as the flood has now begun to subside and he's still in the boat, you literally have the whole population of the world in the ark. It's an interesting picture. All of humanity exists within the ark; all of flesh dwells within the ark. So, as we come to this book and we begin to see this wonderful picture, what we're seeing is Noah has this position and this ministry of reconciliation. Now once

again, just by reminder of his name, “*nōah*” is making reference to a sigh of rest.

In fact, go all the way back to Genesis 5, and you'll see the naming of Noah by his father, Lamech.

(Genesis 5:28) “Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son.

(Genesis 5:29) Now he called his name Noah, saying, “This one will give us rest from our work...”

What was the hope? What was the desire? To have rest from our work. The better description of that would be the laborious things of life, the things that oppress us, the things that bring us down. Once again, this is why Jesus would say in Matthew 11, “Come unto me all who are weary and heavy laden.” Those are those burdens of life. Life not only is burdensome, but it's also cyclical in its burdensomeness. You wake up and every day becomes another burden, and the older you get, the more burdens you start getting. But what you're dealing with and longing for is some sort of rest from this world of toil, and the promise is that you can have rest from that toil. It is, in a sense, a new beginning and a reconciliation actually

begins to define that. What you see with Noah then is he becomes a picture or a type of how we begin to find rest in Christ. If in fact, Christ ultimately is the One that gives us rest. In the Old Testament, you're going to have this picture of rest, i.e. Noah, the one who was named "rest," that is going to usher us into that rest. Where do you begin? Well, I would say just very simply at the very start, you want to get in the boat. I think sometimes that the perception is that we're going to help with the ministry of reconciliation. So, we're going to be really nice to people and in our being nice to people, they're going to really like us and then in them liking us, eventually we'll win them over, but the perception and the power isn't necessarily in us. It's in us getting them in the boat, and really, people can't be saved, and you really can't find reconciliation until you first get in the boat. We look for some kind of rejuvenation in people's lives, and our hope is that they get better, but until they desire to get saved, they really can't have any kind of reconciliation with God. So, get them in the boat, and what you see with Noah in particular is a man that walks by this kind of faith; whatever God says. I know that we all have our solutions,

and in our perception of solutions, we've come up with all kinds of formulas, how we're going to fix people. Let it go. If God says build an ark, build an ark. This is why Hebrews 11 says, "By faith, Noah built an ark." Why? Because that's what God told him to do.

If you look with me in Genesis 6, it reads this way in verse 14, which God turns to Noah, and He says, "Make yourself an ark." Now, not only is God displaying His desire for the relationship, i.e. in saving one who desires to have the relationship with Him, as we understand that Noah walked with God, and he desired therefore a relationship with God, but what we're going to see is that God has given His heart to Noah in the sense of Noah was wanting to bring others with him. What we're going to see is actually family members as well as he becomes responsible for others.

It starts off,

(Genesis 6:14) "Make for yourself an ark..."

Sometimes people wonder, "Why did God save me? Why does He actually love me?" and I would say, "Well, it didn't begin with you. It began with His love for His Son.

One of the great prayers that you see in John 17 is, “Father, I desire that these come with Me” and it's a great picture of His love. Now once again, it's the heart of the Father as well, but you see that it begins with His love for the Son. “This is My Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Listen to Him. So, you begin to see an interesting pattern, especially with Noah, as God says, “Ok, so build yourself an ark and then I want you to bring all these animals and everything.” I mean, I'd have a lot of questions, but you really don't see any questions in any of this.

What you just see simply is,

(Genesis 6:22) “Thus Noah did...”

I mean, it couldn't get any simpler.

“... according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.”

Now, Genesis 7:1 tells us that Noah was the only one that God saw as righteous, and once again, I just want to clearly define that as not perfect in the sense of sinless, but in the sense of wanting to get on board with whatever God told him to do. There was a desire to obey Him and

do whatever He said. Therefore, he was righteous. He wanted to be with God. Therefore, he was righteous. Abraham is actually declared righteous because of his faith. Romans 4 will emphasize that as well.

(Genesis 7:1) “Then the LORD said to Noah, “Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time.”

So, now Noah actually becomes that way in which you become saved. That is to say, you start following this one, Noah.

In fact, if you back up into Genesis 6:20, if you look at the end, it talks about all these living things that are coming. Who are they coming to? They come to you to keep them alive. So, God begins to bring different ones, particularly to Noah.

You drop on down in Genesis 7:5, and as God gives Noah more orders, it says once again,

“Noah did according to all that the LORD had commanded him.”

As we come to the chapter that we're looking at in Chapter 8, you're going to see that once again, in which God will tell Noah to go out of the ark at this time, and the way it reads in verse 18,

(Genesis 8:18) “So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him.”

So, all of this has given us this interesting picture of reconciliation, and I would say few places really explain the spirit of reconciliation as well as the work of reconciliation of God as well as this particular passage does.

As we come to Genesis 8:13, it starts off with this one great simple phrase about what time it was. Once again, I just want to emphasize that the timing is directly correlated to the age of Noah, and Noah becomes the timetable, and of course ultimately, our timetable is going to be directly attached to Christ. So, all of the things that affect us are going to be connected to Him. So, you're going to see this in the text. It was the 600th year that the flood began. It's now 601 years and God's not giving us a BC or an AD or anything like that. He's just saying it was

this time because of, not from the time that Adam was born, not from the time of the beginning of creation, but we're talking about Noah's life.

The passage reads,

(Genesis 8:13) “Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month...”

Now, there's a lot of firsts in there, and the reason for that is that it's establishing a new beginning. Now, reconciliation actually begins with that concept, and as you begin to share this wonderful ministry of reconciliation, as God has even called us to be ambassadors for Christ and reconciliation, it really begins with that concept of this is a new beginning for you. You can talk about all kinds of things, but this is really what it's all about. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away; all things have become new. So, what we have is first year, first month, first day and Scripture is telling us this is a new beginning. Now, we know according to Exodus 12 that this particular month is what we would perceive to be the beginning of spring, and it is at the beginning of Passover. In the beginning of

this month on the 14th of this month would be Passover. So, this is the time in which not only Christ will die, but also in which the resurrection will occur, and it is that picture of what? New life. It is also the month of the first fruits. So, what is that a picture of? Well, it's a picture of new life.

You consider the time in which the earth had been dried. Now has been some time, and you probably look at in some cases 30 to 40 to maybe even longer days before they actually get out of the ark. But what is actually happening, I believe is God is preparing the food of the ground to be ready for them. So, these seeds that have been planted as they had clearly fallen during this time and now are in the dirt as they begin to grow up, you begin to see fruit. I did a little research. Beets and zucchini, probably within 40 days. Lettuce in 30 days, peas in 60 days. Tomatoes maybe 80 days. So, you realize that God is allowing for these times to actually come to fruition, because His desire is that they have plenty when they get out. So, you can see the thoughtfulness of God in this concept of reconciling.

It says this and it goes on to say,

(Genesis 8:13) “...the water was dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the surface of the ground was dried up.”

Now, that passage almost sounds redundant in the sense that it starts off by saying, “the water was dried up from the earth,” then it says, “then Noah removed the covering.” Then, he saw, “Hey, the earth is dry,” and it sounds like God is just being repetitious in this. But what He is actually establishing within the text is what this whole ministry of reconciliation looks like. We know that God is the only One that can save us, and in order for us to be saved and in order to understand what true reconciliation is about, we have to do things His way. It is within man's nature to try to control. It is within man's nature to try to manipulate things into happening at just the right time. This is an interesting picture to me of the way that the person who begins to work in the realm of reconciliation should begin to work, and that is you and I, when we're in a position in which we don't know what's happening, and oftentimes when God is working, you

don't see it, but that doesn't mean that it's not happening. That's an interesting picture when you consider because, as it says in verse 13,

“...the water was dried up from the earth...”

Now, look at the next phrase,

“Then Noah...”

See that? Now, what it's telling us is the water had already been dried up, but Noah didn't find out till later. You and I, as we begin to follow the Lord, and He begins to tell us to do specific things, you need to understand that just because you can't see it, it doesn't mean God's not doing it and doesn't mean God hasn't already done it.

One of the passages that have always meant so much to me is when you have that wonderful dialogue of Christ, I would say the Christophanies in the Old Testament with Abraham, and there He is dialoguing back and forth and saying, “Abraham's My friend, I need to tell him about Sodom and Gomorrah.” Well beyond that, of course, what we know is, as He begins to share what's happening with Sodom and Gomorrah, and I'm sure Abraham is very

acutely aware of what's going on as well, Abraham becomes very concerned about his nephew, Lot. He doesn't come right out and say, "You've got to rescue my nephew, Lot." He goes into this interesting kind of prayer, and as he begins to pray to the Messiah or the Christ in the Old Testament, you began to hear him say something like, "Well, if there are just 100 or 50 or 40 or 30." It kind of goes down, and then, "Would You spare it then?" And "Yes, I would spare it then." Well, in the whole process of him begging for the life of Lot, it finally gets down to 10. You realize that's a wicked place. I mean, how in the world would God even consider what I want in the midst of all this? But what's interesting to me about the whole passage is God had already sent the 2 angels to go rescue Lot before Abraham even began bartering for him. What we need to understand is as we begin to obey God and just simply do what He tells us to do, I know the thought is, "Well, I can't see it. So, something must not be getting done." It's already dry. God's already doing it because God works on behalf of those who will put their trust in Him, but without faith, it's impossible to please Him. You must first believe that He is all that He says that He is, and

that's not only that He's a great God, but that He's a loving God. I don't know why it's so hard for people to grasp that God actually loves more than they do; that God is more concerned for the people that we love than we are. I don't know why it's hard for people to grasp because He died for them, but you see this continually and you need to put your trust in Him. I need to put my trust in Him. As we see with Noah, the passage is saying God was already doing the work even before he saw it. Now, the second thing that we see within the passage is that,

“... Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold...”

It's a kind of an exclamation and demonstrative in the passage.

“... the surface of the ground was dried up.”

The flood's over. It's great. A new beginning, clearly, as we begin to comprehend this. What actually is the picture that is given within the passage? What is this uncovering that He is doing? Well, in many respects, what you're

seeing is the uncovering of flesh. I would even say, like with Paul, the scales of the eyes, but it would be of our fleshly perspective. The reason why I would say that is that the word for “cover” within the text, the only other place that's made reference to is the tent of the tabernacle, which is the skins that they use to build the tabernacle. So, that's the only other place that it's used which is telling us this is actually a skin that he's removing. I guess a lot of skins had been sewn together as a top so that he could roll it back and remove it. So, you have this interesting picture of skin being rolled back, and you realize that until you stop seeing through the eyes of the flesh, you're not going to see things clearly. Because with the eyes of the flesh really, about the only thing you can see is darkness. There is no hope, right? There's no hope with the eyes of the flesh. There's no sense of expectation of good. I mean, you don't even know what's happening. You're living in obscurity in and of itself and God says, “Well, you've got to pull it back.”

Ephesians 1 gives us a great picture as Paul prays for the church at Ephesus, “I pray that the eyes of your heart

would be enlightened, that you might know the wonderful things.” We walk by faith, not by sight. So, you have to stop looking with your eyes and you need to start looking with the heart of God, and He begins to roll that back. What a wonderful picture that is.

Paul will make mention of this in Corinthians as well. If you look with me, go back to 2 Corinthians passages. Not only is he talking about this ministry of reconciliation, but in Chapter 3 he gives an interesting analogy with Moses. Do you remember the veil that he begins to wear so that when he comes off the mountain, people can look at him because the veil was there and they couldn't see the glory of God?

It reads this way,

(2 Corinthians 3:12) “Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech,

(2 Corinthians 3:13) and are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away.

(2 Corinthians 3:14) But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.”

Something has to be removed, right? What is it? It's a veil. What is the veil? Well, the veil is that which in some way is man's way of perceiving things in the flesh. How does he perceive things? Well, I think that man perceives that maybe he's the answer because really, you're talking about the Law in this particular text, and he perceives that “If things aren't going to go well, I can't get it done. It's not going to get done.” It's no wonder we're so depressed. Because you realize just how many things you can't do, and the longer you begin to meditate on that, the more depressing it gets. But God says, “Why don't you take off the veil? Why don't you see a greater glory than yourself?”

It goes on and says this,

(2 Corinthians 3:16) “but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.”

Once you take that cover off and you look heavenward, because that's the first thing you saw when he took it off; it wasn't the land, it was heaven. Once he took it off then you began to see clearly, right?

2Co 3:17) “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

(2 Corinthians 3:18) But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image...”

I mean, it's a transforming work when you consider what God is doing in our lives.

If you go in 2 Corinthians 4, it even goes on it says,

(2 Corinthians 4: 3) “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

(2 Corinthians 4:4) in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving...”

Once you get into the thought of it's all about man and what he can do, and he's the source of liberation, he's the source of righteousness, you begin to realize that the only way that I'm going to make that stick is by lying about it

because you'll never be that. So, now you've got to live in a hypocritical way. Unfortunately, so many people began to use Scripture in the Bible in such ways that it's so twisted and so distorted that it's so all about man, and that's exactly what the god of this world wants us to do.

(2 Corinthians 4:4) “in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ...”

How do we do that? Well, we not only fake it, but then we exploit people in it. That's why Paul will say in 2 Corinthians 2:17, we are not like many peddling the word of God. We're not trying to make money off it; much of religion is that way. It's no wonder people are taken back, and they go, “What is this thing that you believe? It just looks like a circus.” And it really is. There's nothing true in it, but where the Spirit of God is, it's real and you begin to see things clearly.

So, the passage reads in Genesis 8,

(Genesis 8:13) “...behold, the surface of the ground was dried up.”

And the flood was over.

Then, verse 14 goes on and says,

(Genesis 8:14) “In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.”

Now, just by way of reference, it's very interesting, and if I had time, I'd go into it in more depth, but when you're looking at the second month and the 27th day, if you were to figure this out, I don't want to go all the details of this, but you would actually end up at the time in which Christ ascended from the earth. At that time in which He ascended, Scripture tells us that He was with the disciples and showing signs for some 40 days after the beginning of the month or after the Passover, which is in the middle of the month. Once again, I'm not going to go into the details, but what you have in Acts 1 is He calls the saints together and ultimately there's 120 that will wait in the upper room. He calls them all together and He says, “Ok, you're going to be My witnesses, and what you're going to do is you're going to go in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, uttermost parts of the earth.” And then He rises up before them, and they're all sitting there, dumbfounded,

probably with their mouths open and the angel goes, "What are you standing there looking at? He's coming back but go." Then, about 10 days later we have this feast called the Feast of the First Fruits or Feast of the Weeks, which is Pentecost. Then, what happens is we get the crops. 3,000 are saved that particular day, and you have this interesting picture that is happening right here in the text, in which God is going to say, "Ok, it's time to get out. It's time to go out and it's time to multiply, and it's time to be fruitful." Do you think that's an accident? It's a foreshadowing of what's going to happen. Once again, an interesting picture of reconciliation. Now, the passage is telling us that reconciliation is happening. God is doing the work that we can't see, and you and I actually have to believe that. But it goes on in which Noah removes the covering, he sees things, and I would trust, as Scripture tells us, that we no longer are walking by sight. So, we look at things as Paul will say, not seen. So, we're looking at things differently. So, not only are all things new, but the way that we perceive things is different.

The reason we know that, if you look at the passage, it says this,

(Genesis 8:15) “Then God spoke to Noah...”

Now, what we have is that it was already dry. Noah then opens up the place and says, “Hey, it's dry.” And now God says, “Go on, get out.”

So, the passage reads this way,

(Genesis 8:16) “Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons’ wives with you.”

I suppose that it's about 11 months, but close to a year, here you are in these corners, and it's probably pretty tight after a while. I can just imagine how people felt in the space station after so many days. But here you are, all together in this place and maybe you're feeling a little apprehensive about even getting out. But I believe more is at work than just apprehension here. What I believe is once again, what Noah's been doing all along is whatever God says. What you're going to see within this wonderful example is not only is God doing the work that you can't see, but you need to be so obedient and have eyes that

are so focused on God that though you might perceive everything's ok, though, you might even feel that it might be the time to leave, you're not going to make a move till He says so. It's a very interesting text because Scripture already told us it was already dry. Then it says he opened it up and he saw that it was dry, but he's not moving till God says, "Get out of here."

The passage reads this way,

(Genesis 8:15) "Then God spoke to Noah, saying,

(Genesis 8:16) "Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you."

Now, all along what we've seen is this ministry of reconciliation not only begins at home, but these that are being saved are really saved because of their following Noah.

As you go back to Genesis 7:1,

"... you alone I have seen to be righteous..."

But now because of his righteousness, they have trusted in him, and now they've been accounted as righteous;

they've been counted as saved. They actually have the benefit of life.

If you look in in Genesis 7 here, it tells us that all went into the ark to Noah, as it's been saying, and in verse 11, (Genesis 7:11) “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life...”

Once again, making reference to Noah's life is the source of salvation within the text giving an interesting picture.

(Genesis 7:15) “So they went into the ark to Noah...”

Then, that particular verse ends with “the breath of life”. It's not a mistake the way it's put.

So, as it reads at the end of verse 23,

(Genesis 7:23) “...Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark.”

So, who was saved? Those that were with him in the ark. You begin to realize that there is this intense responsibility that we have that God has called us to in the fact that there are other lives at stake in which we're called to minister to. Not only is God saving you, but as Paul will say to the Corinthians, we have this ministry of reconciliation. So, let me just say this, why do you think

you're here? I mean, you were saved. I trust you received Christ as your Lord and Savior. I trust that you're a genuine believer. I trust that God has called you. Now, you join the forces of reconciliation. Your job is to reconcile to God; reconcile others to God. How are you going to do this? Well, you have to first be obedient. You have to first trust Him for everything. You have to be an example of trust in every way. There are going to be times in which God actually brings people into your life to an extent in which maybe as far as you're concerned, it's going to be real close corners. In this scenario, you're going to go through trials in some way together with them. If you look at this passage, what you have is a group of people that went through a flood together, and everyone went through the trial together. You begin to realize that's how God begins to work. He puts us in the grouping together and He goes, "Now, we're going to go through some rough waters." But we're going through rough waters, not only once again to reconcile us to God, but He's doing something beyond that; He's reconciling us to ourselves. One thing that you didn't have before the flood is you didn't have the emphasis of any kind of

relationship. It's really interesting. I mean, you have Adam and Eve and they're walking with God in the garden and there's this relationship with God, but you don't sense that Adam had a real concern for his wife. I mean, if he did, he wouldn't have thrown her under the bus, he would have said, "That's my wife. I'm going to protect her. I'm going to do whatever I can. It's my fault. I was the one that allowed this to happen." But he doesn't. In fact, the first thing that does is he points the finger at her. As you continue, you don't see really a relationship with their sons. It's very interesting. Even when you have Enoch, who had walked with God, Enoch was a father. He had a son by the name of Methuselah. We know that and other sons, but it says Enoch walked with God and he was not, for he was taken up. Now, I'm saying to myself, "He was taken up by himself?" And the answer is yes, by himself. Well, what happened to his family? There's no reference to that and the world is in such dire straits in this interesting scenario that you see them hating each other and killing each other basically, as the Scripture describes in Genesis 6:5,

“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

What He's talking about is that not only was it impure, but also hostile and malevolent towards one another. But as you begin to see Noah coming into the ark, he's bringing his family with him and according to Scripture, seems like all his kids. Now, once again, you go through the genealogy before the flood, and you begin reading this list, and there was this person born, but it was going to actually point us to the Messiah coming. Then, after that, it says, “And there were other sons and daughters.” You go, “Well, what happened to the other sons and daughters?” Well, inconsequential, I guess. We don't know anything about them, but you come to Noah, he has three sons, they have wives, and they all go on the ark, and what we're seeing is a strange phenomenon. Now, what is the strange phenomenon? Family becomes a strange phenomenon in which God begins to say, “This is how we're going to begin the reconciliation process.”

If you look at the passage, that's why it says,

(Genesis 8:15) “Then God spoke to Noah, saying,

(Genesis 8:16) “Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons’ wives with you.””

It's all once again, directly directed to him. Why doesn't it say, “Your sons have wives?” It says, “Your son's wives.” See, “Your wife. You. Your sons.” It all has to do with the relationship with Noah.

Then, He goes on and says,

(Genesis 8:17)

“Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you, birds and animals and every creeping thing...”

And He says at the end,

“...and be fruitful and multiply...”

Which once again is literally taking us to the time of the first fruits.

(Genesis 8:18) “So Noah went out...”

Of course, this is his pattern,

“... and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him.”

Why is he repeating that so many times? I'm going to tell you why.

(Genesis 8:19) “Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by their families from the ark.”

Now, this Hebrew word, “*mišpāḥâ*” is not mentioned before this. You will not see the word “family” mentioned until now. That's very interesting, isn't it? Because when it talks about the different created animals up to this point, it uses the word “*mîn*” which makes reference to “according to their kind”; oftentimes translated “species”. So, up to this point, Genesis 1 will mention “these according to their kind. These according to their kind,” but you don't see the relationship. But in the ark, something happened. They went in like according to their kind, they come out a family. It's a very interesting point that the text is making. So, the question in many respects is, what makes a family? That's an interesting question, isn't it? Why wouldn't you just say, “Well, they're kind of like me” that would be after your kind? “It's my same species. You guys are my same species.” But what makes

us a family? Well, to me, the understanding is that first of all, you have to go through difficult times together in order to be a family. Then, families are born out of tight corners, but what's interesting is when you consider the word here, "family," "*mišpāḥâ*," it actually is a derivative of two words. One is "*šipḥâ*," which actually has as its root "to serve in a humble way," and then the other part of the word, "*šāpâ*" is dealing with "laid bare" or "transparent". So, what makes family a family? Well, a family is a place where you actually live and serve in a humble way. You could be a star, but your family goes, "I know who you are." And it puts you in a situation in which you have to learn to live with one another. So, you learn to live with somebody in a way, and you begin to serve one another in a way, this actually begins to bring forth family, and it's a place in which things are laid bare. In other words, who knows you better than the person who's lived with you? So, what is family? Family, you go through difficult things together. You begin to serve one another in a very humble way, and by virtue of this, you begin to open up to one another. You begin to share oftentimes your deepest concerns and your value system.

You know what we are? We're a family, and that's how the church is beginning to function. In fact, Ephesians 2 says you once were not a family, but now you are, and you're of the household of God. So, what God is producing through all of this is not only a reconciliation to Himself, but a reconciliation with each other. God is building a relationship with each other. Now, it's got to start with being right with Him; it's got to start with obeying Him; it's got to start with trusting Him; it's got to start with taking your cues from Him, not from what you see and not from what you feel, but if God says it, then I'll do it. If He doesn't, I'll wait. What a wonderful picture that is, but then we begin to minister to those around us and God will put you in a situation that is not different than this ark, and it is in that situation that you begin to be used as an ambassador for Christ for reconciliation. It's a great ministry He's called you to do. So, what a wonderful beginning. We have the beginning of families in the ark.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we ask You to do a work within our hearts. Lord, You know that You've started this great work, and You have finished this great work through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. For He died for our sins, and He pleased You, and now we follow Him. As the writer of Corinthians says, we have now become fellow workers with Christ, and as we do this, as we walk in this path, our desire is only to please You, and as our desire is to only please you, we find ourselves being not only examples, but we find ourselves having the same heart as You have. That heart of reconciliation to the world; bringing them to You. It is a desire that is so strong that we would beg others, "Be reconciled to God through Christ." Lord, You've given us a heart and desire to see others saved, and we can see that it begins with family, and we begin to see that You have extended the family in the sense that You have brought us not only together, but You have brought us together as we begin

to share difficulties and trials and tribulations. Together, we begin to cast those cares upon You and trust You for the result. We draw closer together. We begin to open up to one another. We begin to serve one another, and You begin to draw us closer together. We see reconciliation at work as we make You our focus and turn our eyes upon You.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, what we're asking you to do is get involved in the work of reconciliation. What we're asking you to do is to have the heart of Christ in you, that you would draw all men to Him. How do you do this? Well, you're going to have to get up close and personal. You're going to have to get involved. God's going to put people in your boat. You be faithful.