Rain, Rain, Go Away

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[0:00] May I have a seat? And please, if you have a copy of the Bible in your hands or nearby you, you can open up to Hebrews chapter 11 and put a finger there or maybe a bookmarker or an index card or something like that.

And then also get yourself on over to Genesis chapter 6. We are a handful of weeks into this series exploring Hebrews chapter 11.
What is faith? And we're taking time to look at Hebrews, the text from Hebrews 11. Some call it the Hall of Faith.
And then exploring some of these Old Testament characters and their faithfulness before God. And we are looking this morning at the character of Noah.
And so, Amy, would you please come and serve us by reading Hebrews chapter 11 and verse number 7.
[1:06] That would be perfect. By faith, Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Let's pray together. Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for the privilege that we have of having your word, your revelation to us.
Thank you that it's in our language that we can read it. Thank you for those who are doing the hard work of translating your word, Holy Scripture, into other languages.
Bless them and encourage them. Help us as we have been blessed with so much, so much richness of resources related to Scripture.
Please help us to be faithful with what we have been given. Help us to read and study and meditate and memorize your word.
[2:13] Help us to apply it to our lives faithfully. Help us to hand it off to the next generation, unperverted and uncorrupted.

Please keep us faithful by your grace. Father, would you please help us as we engage now and continue in our time of worship.
Help my brothers and sisters here before me as they continue to worship by sitting under the preaching of your word. Help them to listen, to hear, to discern.
Help them to compare Scripture with Scripture. Please make them faithful Bereans to listen to the things that they are hearing and test whether they are true by your word.
Please help us all to listen and to believe and then to obey. We so desire to be changed by what you have to say to us through the character of Noah.
[3:16] Father, please help me. Keep me from foolishness. Keep me from error. Keep me from sin. Guard my heart and my mind and my mouth.

Please be honored and glorified in the things that are said during this time. In Jesus' name, amen.
Faith is not a blind leap in the dark.
That may be surprising to you. Faith is not a good luck charm or some kind of a get-out-of-jail-free card. Faith is not irrational.
Faith is not clinging on to something that is just simply too good to be true. Faith is not a hollow, holy hope-so.
So then what is faith? Well, Hebrews chapter 11 verse 1 tells us that faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
[4:24] Faith is confidence that God keeps his promises. Faith is conviction that the unseen future that you hope for will become a reality.

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Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 6 says, For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.
What is faith? Faith is believing that God exists. And that the unseen God will reward those who seek him.
With what? As we noticed last week, with eternal life. Faith, then, is careful thoughtfulness about the unseen God and his promises.
The God who graciously chose to make himself visible by sending Jesus, who is God the Son.
[5:38] We read in John chapter 1, The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son, from the Father, full of grace and truth.

That's why we're here this morning. Because we have seen his glory, and compelled by the glory that we have seen of Jesus in the Word.
We gather together to worship. And aren't we here also because, as Hebrews chapter 10 tells us, we have need of endurance?
Faith doesn't exist in a vacuum. The world is dark and disorienting. The devil is treacherous and despicable.
If we are not going to be shrink backers, like we read about at the end of chapter 10 of Hebrews, if we are not going to be shrink backers, those who pull back, then our faith needs to be built up, bolstered, buoyed.
[6:51] We need our hope nourished by this reminder from Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 37, yet a little while, and the coming one will come.

Jesus will return, brothers and sisters. Though the path is long and lonely, faith hopes in God's salvation.
How would you describe a blizzard? Not the ice cream one. Sorry.
How would you describe a blizzard to someone who has never seen snow? Kids, what words would you use to describe a blizzard to someone who has never seen snow?
Alice? Cold and white and windy. Very good words. Yes, Josie? I can't hear your car, but are you so mean? Yes, you are driving and you cannot see.
[7:56] That is very likely a blizzard, especially if it's cold outside in the winter, right? Who else? Have we about covered it? It would be hard, wouldn't it, to describe a blizzard to someone who has never experienced snow?

Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 7 says this, by faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen.
Why did God warn Noah? And what did God warn Noah about?
Well, by faith, Hebrews 11 verse 3, we understand that the universe was created by the word of God. That is what we understand by faith.
God creates man and woman in his image and then God commands the first couple to be fruitful and multiply and to have dominion over every living thing on earth.
[9:09] Five times in Genesis 1, God says, it was good. It was good. It was good. But just 10 generations, 10 short generations after Adam's rebellion in the garden.

This is what we read in Genesis chapter 6, verse number 5. The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
Every intention, your translation may also say every imagination. It's an interesting, descriptive, vivid word in the Hebrew. It has in mind a potter who takes a lump of clay before he has made anything, but he has something in mind that he is going to make with this lump of clay.
But he hasn't made it yet. But he has kind of a picture in his mind of what it will look like at the end when he is done spinning it on the pottery wheel.
Every intention of the heart only evil continually. What a shocking contrast to go from it being very good in Genesis chapter 1 and verse 31 to here in Genesis chapter 6 10 generations later every intention only evil continually.
[11:03] Now we do not believe that humans are as sinful as we could be. Neither do we believe that we are incapable of doing good things.

The doctrine of depravity helps us understand that every part of what it means to be a human being, every part of our personhood, has been tainted by sin.

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Because of sin your heart is deceitful. Because of sin your emotions are disordered. Because of sin your conscience is unreliable.
Your mind is corrupt. Your will is selfish. Your desires are dark. Because of sin your body is dying. Every part of what it means to be a human being has been touched by sin.
Every intention only evil continually. God's assessment continues in verses 11 and 12. Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight.
[12:19] And the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth and behold it was corrupt for all flesh had corrupted their way on earth.

Verse number 6. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth. And it grieved him in his heart.
any time that we talk about God's character precision is required.
And this is especially true when we talk about God's emotions like having regret and grieving. Sometimes our emotions drag us around.
That's why I say they are disordered. Sometimes our emotions are allowed to rise above where they belong. We stop having them be governed by the Holy Spirit and our emotions just drag us around.
[13:31] That could look like anger that causes us to lash out. It could look like grief that causes us to isolate from others. It could look like just difficult challenging circumstances that we face that cause us to change our minds about the direction of our lives.

God never changes. God never changes. His emotions do not drag him around.
When we read the Lord regretted that he had made man, it is not because the Lord changed his mind or made a mistake or lost control.
two texts from the Old Testament help us I think as we wrap our minds around this. This is Numbers chapter 23 and verse 19.
God is not a man that he should lie or a son of man that he should change his mind.
[14:42] regret. And then 1 Samuel chapter 15 and verse number 29. And also the glory of Israel speaking of God will not lie or have regret for he is not a man that he should have regret.

regret. So how do we understand then our text here where it clearly says that God regretted and had grief and yet scripture elsewhere testifies to us that God does not have regret.
How do we reconcile these texts? Think about how you talk to a baby.
you have some words in mind that you might use to talk to a baby. When you give a baby a cracker you might say something like this.
Here's a cracker and now we want the baby to say what? Say it. Thank you. But we can't tell the baby to say thank you because it's a little baby and so we say what?
[16:05] You say ta ta ta right? You say ta ta and you have little baby words that you use to try to convince the baby to say something to communicate back to you.

water water water right? Dada right? We know that these are not the real words and yet we use these words to try to communicate with the baby and to get the baby to communicate back to us to teach the baby language you might say something like do you want mama to bring your little binky and wanky to you so that you can go na night we use baby talk Calvin this may surprise you Calvin develops this illustration in his institute he says in order to help finite creatures like us understand our infinite creator God condescends to us and uses baby talk to help us understand him because otherwise we wouldn't understand how could we know what
God is really feeling in this moment as he looks down on earth and sees only evil continually! Every intention only evil continually how could we ever wrap our minds around what God is feeling he is holy we are not what words could he ever give us that would help us make sense of that well he gives us words that we would use words that we understand you might say he uses baby talk with us and so we read words that help us grasp what God feels he uses our language he gives us our words for emotion the Lord saw the Lord regretted and the Lord was grieved verse number seven so the Lord said I will blot out man whom
I have created from the face of the land man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens for I am sorry that I have made them verse 13 and God said to Noah I have determined to make an end of all flesh for the earth is filled with violence through them behold I will destroy them humanity with the earth why Noah why does God give Noah this insider information why does God tell Noah his plan verse number eight but Noah found favor or grace in the eyes of the Lord these

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are the generations of Noah Noah was a righteous man blameless in his generation
Noah walked with God we've seen this before haven't we Noah's great grandfather is Enoch and Enoch walked with God to the same place following the same path at the same pace and here's Noah following in Enoch's footsteps if you will walking with God Noah found favor God showed Noah grace and as a result of God's grace Noah did what was right and he did what was right with his whole heart this is what it means when it says that Noah was righteous and blameless he did what was right and he did it whole heartedly surrounded by all of the darkness of depravity Noah was like a brilliant flashlight light so we now know why
[20:39] God warned Noah but what was the warning verse 13 God said to Noah I have determined to make an end of all flesh for the earth is filled with violence through them behold I will destroy them with the earth make yourself an ark of gopher wood make rooms in the ark and cover it inside and out with pitch this is how you are to make it the length of the ark 300 cubits its breadth 50 cubits and its height 30 cubits make a roof for the ark and finish it to a cubit above and set the door of the ark in 17 for behold I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven everything that is on the earth shall die remember trying to describe a blizzard to someone who has never seen snow what if

I said to you I am going to hit you with a hump a lumpy what is that is it a pillow is it my fist it looks kind of lumpy is it a dirty kleenex like what is this hump a lumpy that you're telling me you're going to hit me with this is the unseen thing that God warned Noah about I'm going to send a flood and Noah is like what's that what is this flood of which you speak Noah has never seen a flood we can't be certain from scripture that Noah has ever experienced rain as we know it when God warns Noah about a flood that will destroy everything on the earth God might as well have said to him I'm going to bring a hump lumpy or a blizzard Noah doesn't know what a flood is how will Noah respond Hebrews chapter 7 and verse 7 by faith Noah being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen!
In reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household the primary unseen thing for Noah is this flood that God tells him is coming but there is a second unseen!
thing that Noah must put faith in God for and that is that God provides for Noah safety and security and salvation through the building of an ark if Noah doesn't believe what God says when God says I'm going to bring a flood then there is absolutely no reason for Noah to build what God promises will rescue him save him from the flood if you don't believe that the flood is coming then there's no reason to build this massive!
[24:44] ship in the middle of the desert but Noah has faith and faith is confidence that God keeps his promises faith is conviction about what is unseen!

Noah reaches into the future and grabs hold of God's promise of salvation through the ark and pulls God's promise into the present and then begins living as though God's promise has already come true that's faith what is the promise you will find salvation through the ark what does Noah do he builds an ark for the saving of his household I don't know about you but sometimes I have difficulty trusting God for the next 100 seconds even the next 100 minutes an hour and a half and a little more that can also feel really hard can't it sometimes to trust
God for 100 minutes 100 days a little more than a quarter of a year that's hard constructing the ark took 100 years of Noah's life though the path is long and lonely faith hopes in God's salvation verse seven again by this by this by grabbing hold of God's promise and responding as though it was already true by this he condemned the world what does that mean for every day of those 100 years Noah's faith in God was made visible by his obedience to God did you catch that Noah doesn't just say I believe in God you can tell everyone knows that Noah believes in God because God warned Noah about this unseen thing called a flood and Noah is out there building something that looks like a big ark that's going to save you from this massive flood that supposedly is coming Noah didn't just say I believe Noah proved it for a hundred years he proved it that he believed in God that God was really trustworthy when every other intention of every other heart was only evil continually Noah walked with God by grace when everyone else was a square peg
Noah was a round plug when he didn't succumb to doubt he didn't give in to compromise he didn't stop doing what was right even though the path was long and lonely Noah's faith nourished his hope in God's promise of salvation and so he built an ark and Noah's faithful obedience for every day of a century testified to God's trustworthiness but then at the end of those hundred years when only Noah's immediate family goes with him and seeks shelter in the ark what happens the

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regrettable sinfulness of the world is very obvious and that
[29:15] God's need to bring justice on the world is very clear a hundred years of a man walking with God demonstrating to you year by year by year by year that God is worth believing showing you this flood really is coming I believe God's promise heed God's warning and in the end it was only Noah's immediate family and so by his faithful obedience he condemns the world he shows the world its sinfulness and its need to be judged by God Noah condemned the world verse 7 and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith what does it mean to be an heir well you can't make yourself an heir somebody needs to make you their heir somebody needs to say

I choose to give you what is mine you don't get to take an inheritance it is given to you by someone else you cannot make yourself an heir of God's righteousness righteousness not through your good works not through your best efforts not through the sincerity of your religious rituals not not through any of that all of that is just self righteousness you need something else you need God's righteousness righteousness that you cannot work up on your own righteousness that requires you to be an heir and that means a son or a daughter of God if you wish to be an heir of God's righteousness you may have it but only by faith that's how Noah got it by faith he became an heir of righteousness friend your sins deserve
God's judgment have you trusted in Jesus for the salvation of your soul do you believe God's warning of coming judgment on your sin is your hope in God's promise of salvation through the bloody death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross come to Jesus trust in Jesus put your hope in Jesus call upon the name of the Lord Jesus and you will be saved God how can we follow Noah's example today part of what makes the story of Noah so remarkable is how unremarkable it is think about that for a minute
God warns Noah about coming judgment tells him to build an ark and Noah begins building an ark and next thing you know in the scriptural record a hundred years has gone by how unremarkable and yet that is remarkable isn't it a hundred years of labor a hundred years we know almost nothing about but certainly a hundred years of hearing why did Noah build the ark jokes a hundred years of being reviled and not reviling in return a hundred years of sticking out like a sore thumb willing to be different willing to be set apart willing to be sanctified and holy willing to do what is right with your whole heart even if it means doing it alone may God give us grace to walk with him in such remarkably unremarkable humble obedience secondly second
Peter tells us that Noah was a preacher of righteousness preacher of righteousness so while he is building the ark Noah is undoubtedly warning others of God's judgment that is coming and inviting them to join him and his family in the ark so I wonder who in your circle needs to hear the gospel of Jesus from you who in your circle needs to be warned what we read in Hebrews chapter 9 that it is appointed to man to die once and after this the judgment who in your circle needs to be told that God commands all men everywhere to repent and receive repent and believe the gospel who is near you and facing the hopelessness of spiritual emptiness and needs to be nudged perhaps perhaps for the one hundredth time gently but firmly reminded that there is one mediator between
[35:15] God and men and it is the man Christ Jesus who needs to be compelled to call upon the name of the Lord Jesus and be saved because it is the name of the Lord Jesus and in no other name by which we must be saved may God give us grace to warn those near us of coming judgment and share with them the good news of hopeful fullness and abundant life by grace through faith in Jesus like Abel those who live by faith will die without fully receiving God's promise but like Enoch those who walk with God will finally triumph over death because like

Noah those who believe God rest in God's promise of salvation our labor is not in vain and our faith is not in vain it is not meaningless or empty we are not shrink backers like Noah by God's grace to us we are heirs of righteousness though the path is long and lonely faith hopes in God's salvation let's pray father we are so grateful to receive your word thank you holy spirit for doing work among us to help us understand and interpret and explain and apply would you please holy spirit continue to do work on our hearts even right now as we take a few moments prepare to receive the lord's supper we desire to receive the bread and the cup in a worthy manner and so we ask that you would as we quiet our hearts show us our sin show us our need of forgiveness remind us of the places that we have fallen short of the glory of god and please grant us repentance so that we confess our sin and receive the forgiveness that you offer us through the blood of our savior jesus father we confess there is nothing stronger than the wonder working power of the blood of jesus through which our sins have been fully paid for thank you lord jesus for making full atonement thank

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you for propitiating god's wrath the wrath of god on our behalf thank you for satisfying god's wrath thank you for absorbing the judgment that should have fallen on us and thank you that we find safety and security and salvation refuge in you we are so humbly grateful to receive the forgiveness of our sin by grace through faith thank you in jesus name amen and

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