

SERMON FOR JULY 25, 2021

TEXT: GENESIS 9:8-17

THEME: RECLAIMING THE RAINBOW

8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, **9** “Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, **10** and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. **11** I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” **12** And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: **13** I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. **14** When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, **15** I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. **16** When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” **17** God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

In the name of Jesus:

So what comes to mind when you see a rainbow? Do you remember when Judy Garland sang the hit tune: “Somewhere Over the Rainbow?” Young children might think of leprechauns and a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. For many people today, the rainbow has become a symbol of pride for the gay community. All of these meanings, though, sadly misinterpret and neglect the true meaning and significance of the rainbow. And so, its time that

we as Christians talk about the Biblical meaning of the rainbow and RECLAIM THE RAINBOW.

Our text for today informs us as to the origins and the meaning of the rainbow. We go back to the book of Genesis. There, previous to the verses that we read for our Old Testament lesson for today, we see that God was “sorry that He made man on the earth and it grieved Him to His heart.” For “the wickedness of man was great in the earth and every intention of the thoughts of his heart were continuously evil.” (Gen. 6). So the Lord said: “I will blot out man whom I 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. But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.” (Gen 6).

God, in mercy, desiring not to wipe out humanity but to save it, told Noah to build an ark. Noah was a righteous man, a believer in the Lord. Noah built the ark, and upon its completion the Lord sent rain for 40 days and 40 nights. Not only did it rain, but the Bible says that “all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of heaven were opened.” So it isn’t hard to imagine that with water coming from above, and the earth splitting wide open from beneath, to allow the water under the earth to gush forth and explode upon the earth that the earth would find itself in a God made man induced catastrophic flood, one which we say was of Biblical proportions!

At the end of the time designated by the Lord, He brought forth Noah and his family from the ark and placed them on dry land. There, the Lord made an eternal agreement, a covenant now and forever, that He would never ever destroy the earth by means of a flood. And so we read in our text: "And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: **13** I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. **14** When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, **15** I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. **16** When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." **17** God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

God doesn't not will the death of the sinner but that all repent and live. He showed that by saving Noah and his family, eight people in all. God certainly will punish sin, He must punish sin, the Bible says that the soul that sins most certainly will die. That is why you and I will die, not by means of a Biblical flood, but we will die a physical death as punishment for our sin, for the wages of sin is death.

But the sign of the rainbow is THE SIGN of God's mercy and grace. He loves the sinner. And so He told Noah that a flood of Biblical proportions would never happen again. The appearance of the rainbow is a sign of joy and life, for God wills to spare sinners, to save sinners, because God loves the sinner.

So too, God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life. The reality of Jesus' cross and empty tomb signifies to the world that God loves the sinner, that even though the wages of sin is death the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ.

One of the great joys in Luann and my life is to show the rainbow to our kids and grandkids after it rains. We go out on the porch and remind our kids and grandkids that the beauty of the rainbow is the sign that God will never destroy the world again. The rainbow is a picture, a reminder of His love. Just as there is joy on a child's face when they see a rainbow, just imagine the joy and delight on the faces of the followers of Jesus when the angel announced the Good News on Easter that "Christ has risen, just as He said!"

The sign of the rainbow speaks to God to remind Him that He will never destroy the world by means of a flood. And the sign of the cross and empty tomb reminds us and speaks to us that God loves us with an everlasting love in

His Son Jesus. For He sent Jesus into the world not to condemn the world but to save the world through Him. The story of the rainbow tells us that God takes sin seriously. He promised to punish sin. The world and modern man scoffs at such a statement. But God will not be mocked. Those who doubted the Lord's Word in the days of the flood perished due to their own unbelief. But the story of the rainbow also reminds us of God's love for all in Jesus Christ. No, there will not be another flood, but the Bible does say that there will be a second, world wide event at the end of history. Our Lord Jesus Christ will come again in clouds of glory. Jesus is coming, and soon! To, in the words of our creeds, "to judge both the living and the dead."

But we who are in Christ, need not fear. For the Lord who gave us the rainbow also has given us Jesus. And to show us His love is a visible and tangible way, the Lord has given us Baptism and the Lord's Supper, two signs which save us. For just as Noah and seven others were saved from the flood by means of the ark, so also Christ saves us today by baptizing in the Name of the Lord for our forgiveness, and by feeding us with the true body and blood of Christ for our strength and life.

So dear friend, whenever you see a rainbow, remember that God has promised never to destroy the world again by means of flood. But He has promised to save you from sin, Satan, death, and everlasting condemnation by

means of the death and resurrection of Jesus. To God be the glory, what great things He has done, in Jesus' name. Amen