

## The sermon

### Intro

There's so much uncertainty in life. The weather tomorrow. The stock market. How a person's going to treat you. Where the industry you're employed in is headed. When the gas prices will come down. Where property taxes will be in five years. Where your health will be in three years.

What gives you confidence in the midst of so much uncertainty? What gives you stability in a world with so many variables and so much that is unpredictable?

### READ PASSAGE

### Body

#### Point 1: Live from confidence in God's promises (8:20-22; 9:8-17)

Noah burns clean animals as an offering to God.

**"burnt offerings"** = the whole animal is burned up, given as a gift to God. Nothing left over to eat. The smoke from the burnt animal ascends to God.

We're not told why Noah burnt these animals. Early on, after the fall, Abel sacrificed from his flock, suggesting God instructed the first humans on animal sacrifice, but there's no instruction recorded in Scripture. Somehow, Noah believes this is the right thing to do. God agrees.

God makes two promises.

#### Promise 1

***"I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth."*** – 8:21

In the flood, the ground was cursed in that every creature that lived on the ground died.

The ground was cursed by the flood because of man's evil deeds: *"the wickedness of man was great in the earth...every intention...only evil continually...the earth was filled with violence"* (6:5, 11). Why was the earth filled with evil deeds? Because the human heart is corrupt from youth = from birth. We come into the world with a sinful nature.

***"for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth"*** indicates the flood didn't change the heart of man. Mankind was still enslaved by sinful passions, blinded by Satan, and susceptible to various temptations. We should expect history to repeat itself!

God's promise comes in the form of a covenant.

***"Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, <sup>10</sup> 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."*** – 9:9-10

***"the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations"*** – 9:12

***"my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh"*** – 9:15

God makes a covenant with Noah, his children, their future descendants, and all the animals of the earth.

***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.***” – 9:11

***“And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.”*** – 9:15

There will never again be a flood on the earth that wipes out every living creature that dwells on the land.

The sign of the covenant is the rainbow in the clouds (9:12-17). **What should you think when you see a rainbow in the sky?**

1. God once flooded the earth and wiped out every living creature of the land and the birds of the sky.

Rainbows remind us God takes sin seriously.

2. God made a covenant with Noah, his descendants, and all the creatures of the earth.

Rainbows remind us God is a covenant-making, covenant-keeping God.

3. Because of God’s covenant with Noah and all living creatures, a flood like that will never happen again.

Rainbows remind us God makes promises.

4. As long as this age continues, God is patient with sinners, giving them time to repent.

Rainbows remind us God patiently bears with sinners.

Human history would be flood after flood were it not for God’s covenant. Wickedness, evil intentions, violence, they’ll come back. But there won’t be another flood.

### **What’s a covenant?**

Definition: A structured relationship between God and people, initiated by God alone, whereby God binds himself to act in particular ways.

The biblical covenants are **unilateral** (one-sided). God initiates the covenant relationship. God sets the terms. God doesn’t negotiate with Noah. God simply says this is what I’m going to do.

Some covenants are conditional: humans have to meet stipulations to enjoy the covenant blessings. The Noahic covenant is **unconditional**: humans and animals don’t have requirements to meet to ensure there won’t be another flood.

### **What does this mean for us?**

The work of the church will never start over like Noah did. God’s giving time for his church to be built.

### **Promise 2**

***“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”*** – 8:22

The daily rhythms established by God, night and day, light and darkness, will remain. The sun will continue to rise and go down. The seasons established by God, summer and winter, spring and fall, will remain.

The point is God gives stability to human existence. There’s things we can count on, because God is actively involved in his creation. Day and night and the seasons will remain. We don’t have to worry about a nuclear war that will end the seasons. We don’t have to worry about global warming/climate change ending of the seasons. We shouldn’t be living in fear.

I'm not saying nuclear weapons aren't dangerous. I'm not saying industrial activities are never detrimental to the earth and its population. Just saying that God is maintaining the stability of days and seasons.

### Application

**Big idea:** We're designed to live from confidence in God's promises. Confidence in God's promises means living with certainty. I can have total confidence that my sins are forgiven. I can have total confidence I'm born again. I can have total confidence that God is working inside my heart to change me. I can have total confidence God's empowering strength is sufficient in life's hard times. I can have total confidence that there's a coming kingdom and I will be welcomed into it. I can have total confidence there won't be another flood. I can have total confidence day and night and the seasons aren't going anywhere.

There's a great number of things I can't be certain about. How long will I live? How will my children turn out? What will Palermo Christian Church be like in five years? What will my health be in five years? How long will my roof last? How long will my car last? But there's a good number of things I can be certain about. Because God promises them to me. **So the Christian life is living with much certainty in the midst of much uncertainty.** I can have much peace in my soul because God has promised much! There's much we don't have to be anxious about because God has promised much!

Living by faith is living from/by God's promises. God gives us promises. These promises give us confidence and strength in a world of uncertainty.

**Practical question:** what promises give me confidence in a world of uncertainty?

### Point 2: Value human life (9:1-7)

God's starting over with Noah and his family.

Two things stay the same:

1. Man's heart is still sinful from birth.
2. Man's original purpose: ***"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth"*** (9:1)

Have children. Spread out. Fill the earth.

Three things change:

1. Animal life is now terrified by humans.

***The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered.*** – 9:2

This enables mankind to subdue the earth and exercise dominion over animal life (1:28). The word ***"fear"*** is used of the terror God will put in the hearts of the people who populated the promised land to ensure Israel's success (Deut 11:25).

2. Humans are now permitted to eat animals.

***Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.*** – 9:3

At creation, God gave mankind plants and fruit (1:29). Now he gives mankind animal meat. With a stipulation.

***"But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that, its blood."*** – 9:4

Can't eat the meat without first draining out the blood out of the animal. Blood is equated with life. Blood treated sacred because of what is symbolized: life given by God. Animal life imparted by God can't be treated casually.

3. Because mankind is still sinful, the death penalty is given to curb human violence.

***"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. – 9:6***

The punishment fits the crime. If you take a life, your life be taken. Who takes the murderer's life isn't stated. In Romans 13, God appointed the state to carry out the death penalty. State sanctioned execution, not personal vengeance.

Human life is sacred, because we're created in the image of God, therefore, killing fellow human is serious business. There will even be a reckoning for animals who take the lives of humans (9:5). In Exodus 21:28-32, the ox that kills a human must be stoned to death. And ox's owner must be executed too if they knew about the danger and didn't contain the ox.

### **Death penalty**

Why the death penalty?

1. Because God instituted it.
2. Because God values human life.
3. Because human hearts are evil and deterrents are necessary to prevent humanity from being as bad as we would be.

The main concern with the death penalty is, what if we get it wrong? An innocent person might be executed. And once executed, we can't take it back.

I understand the concern, but we must side with God's word, not human reasoning. By that same logic, we shouldn't have prisons. An innocent person might be convicted. By that same logic, we shouldn't have church discipline. An innocent person might be removed from the church. By that same logic, we shouldn't spank our kids. An innocent child might be spanked.

Despite the possibility of human failure, God still demands the death penalty, church discipline, and spanking. In fact, God gives death penalty/church discipline/spanking because humans are corrupt from birth. **The death penalty is required because humans are fallible sinners. We don't discard the death penalty because humans are fallible sinners.**

Christian, in regards to the death penalty, we need to stand with God, not human logic. Per Romans 13:1-7, the death penalty remains: God institutes human government to carry out the sword = the death penalty. As Christians in a democracy, one consideration in our voting should be, does this candidate support the death penalty? We should want policies that agree with God!

### **Application**

**Big idea:** Human life is sacred. Humans have value. Thus the death penalty. This is why Christians oppose abortion.

So maybe you aren't a murderer, how can you value human life?

The heart of this is protecting human life from danger. Related is treating people with dignity because they're God's image.

In your speech. I don't believe calling people white trash or trailer park trash is appropriate given Genesis 9:6. Does God view people as trash? Don't think so. So we shouldn't call our fellow humans trash.

In your driving. Driving safely so as not to harm others. The person who tries to pass seven cars at once and is coming head on at me in my lane doesn't care about human life.

In caring for a declining loved one. That person doesn't matter because they have Alzheimer's is a sub-Christian mentality.

That's a start.

**Practical question:** do I value human life?

### **Point 3: Honor father and mother (9:18-29)**

Noah got drunk and laid naked in his tent. His son Ham saw it. Ham told his brothers Shem and Japheth. Shem and Japheth were careful not to see Noah's nakedness. They cover him up. Noah finds out what happens. Ham's descendants are cursed.

There's debate about Noah's culpability here.

1. Noah's behavior isn't condemned or condoned by Moses.
2. *"began to be a man of the soil"* indicates the beginning of a new activity.

Noah might have become drunk because he'd never drunk wine before. The vineyard was a new thing. He didn't know what too much wine does to a person. Noah might have become drunk because he was sinful. We can't be sure.

3. One thing we do know: bad things happen when you get drunk.
4. Regardless, Moses' concern isn't Noah's behavior. Moses' concern is Ham's behavior.

### **What did Ham do wrong?**

Ham's guilty for doing what shouldn't be done: he looked at his naked father. Ham's guilty for what he didn't do: he failed to cover up his father's nakedness.

### **Why are Ham's descendants (Canaanites) punished for what Ham did?**

1. Like father like son. Ham's descendants will be sinners themselves.

### **What is Noah saying?**

Noah prophetically speaks God's will. In the future, the Canaanites will be punished for their sins: they'll serve the descendants of Shem and Japheth. For example, from Shem's line comes Abraham (Gen 11:10-26). One day the land of the Canaanites will be taken from them and given to the descendants of Abraham (Gen 15:13-21; Deut 7:1-5).

### **Application**

**Big idea:** Ham failed to honor his father. He looked at what he shouldn't look at. He didn't protect his father from further embarrassment.

I don't plan on getting drunk and naked in front of my children. And I don't think I'll ever see my Dad drunk and naked on his couch. How can we imitate the spirit of this account? We can defend the honor of our parents. When they're slandered, we don't join in. We stand up to the slanderer and correct them. If a sibling accuses my father of wrong, and he's done nothing wrong, I silence the false accusations with my mouth. When someone heaps false guilt on my Dad, I tell him he's got nothing to be ashamed of. Ignore them.

**Practical question:** how am I protecting my parent from shame?

## **Conclusion**

One reason why the people of Israel couldn't eat the blood of an animal was because the blood of the animal made atonement for sin (Lev 17:11). The life of the animal delivers the one giving the animal from the punishment their sins deserve. One life is given as a substitute for another life. The death of an acceptable substitute (the animal) excuses the sinner, despite their guilt. Relationship with God restored.

Animal sacrifices pointed to a future, greater, once for all sacrifice: the death of Jesus Christ. Jesus died as a ransom for many such that whoever believes in him won't experience the 2<sup>nd</sup> death. Instead, they'll have everlasting life in the kingdom of God.

Much like God accepted Noah's sacrifices, the Father accepted Jesus' death as a worthy substitute for sinners.

Sin is a real problem. Both the law-breaking that renders us guilty before a holy God. And the corrupt heart that causes us to break God's commands. Jesus saves us from both. Jesus' death is worthy to take away our sins and bring us forgiveness. Jesus gives those who believe a new heart. We who believe can walk in confidence that our sins are forgiven! And that we have newness of life!

Have you believed? Are your sins forgiven? God wants us to be confident in the merits of Christ's death. Much like he wants us to be confident that there won't be another flood and the days and seasons will remain until Christ's return.