

life groups' sermon guide

jump: noah and the ark



Life Groups exist at Kingsway to provide authentic relationships for spiritual growth, caring for one another, and reaching out to others.

INTRODUCTION:

Last week we introduced *Family Central Sunday*, a family-focused worship experience, which also served as a springboard into our first “BIG IDEA” series. Remember, the “BIG IDEA” is a month-long period where each age group—children, students, and adults—studies the same theme at age-appropriate levels. Our theme for the month of February is faith and we’re titling the series “Jump,” since having faith in God is similar to the faith a child exhibits in his mom or dad when he jumps off the side of the pool and into their arms.

This week each age group will study the story of Noah. If you spent any amount of time in church as a child, you likely remember Noah. It’s somewhat ironic that Noah and the Ark has become a popular children’s story (it must have something to do with the animals) because in reality it’s a very adult story about the destructive effects of sin, God’s punishment and wrath against that sin, and the life of one man whose faithfulness helped save his family.

DIGGING DEEPER:

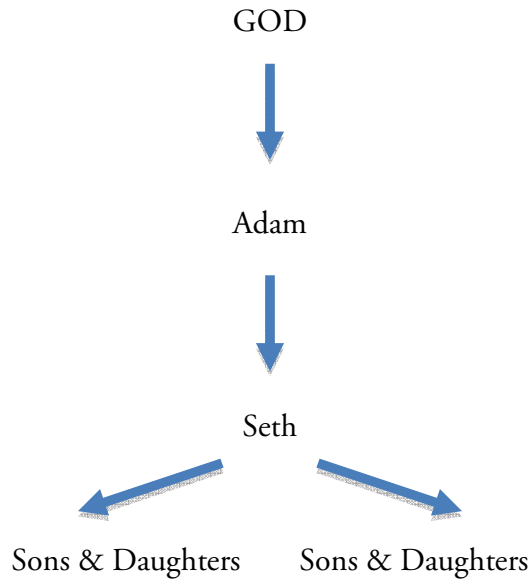
The story of Noah doesn’t begin in Genesis 6. Instead, it has a rather strange beginning in chapter 4. In order to understand the context for the story of Noah, read the following passages, taking a moment after each to summarize what the texts says before moving forward:

- **Genesis 4:25-26**

Summary: These verses occur right after Cain kills his brother Abel. God provides Adam and Eve with another son, whom they name “Seth.” Seth, himself, has a son whom he names “Enosh” and then the author of Genesis comments, “At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.”

- **Genesis 5:1-4**

Summary: As soon as Genesis 4:25-26 tells us that people began to call on the name of the LORD, the text jumps immediately into the genealogy of Adam’s family. Notice that it says God made Adam in His own likeness and that Adam, in turn, fathered a son in his own likeness, and that this son, Seth, had other sons and daughters. We might visually represent it like this:



So the Bible gives us the impression that despite Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden, God is still using Adam's family to rise up a new generation of committed believers.

Now read **Genesis 6:1-8** and *take a moment to discuss what seems to be happening in this passage?*

Genesis 6 has troubled readers of the Bible for years. Whatever happened in these verses seems to have angered God very much because it's at this point He decides to destroy the earth by flood.

There are a variety of theories as to what happened, one popular theory being that angels came from heaven to have sexual relations with women. The main problem with this view, however, is that the broader context suggests these "sons of God" are not angels, but rather the descendants of Seth. The most natural way to read Genesis 6:1-8 is to connect it with what came before it in Genesis 4:25-26. If you skip the genealogy in chapter five, the end of chapter four flows almost seamlessly into the beginning of chapter six. **Read 4:25-26 again and skip directly to 6:1-8.**

Thus, the sons of God are not angels, but descendants of Seth, and they're called "sons of God" because they worship and follow Him. Genesis 4:26, "To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD."

It appears Seth made the commitment to teach his family how to worship and serve God. Chapter 5 offers a brief interruption then 6:1 picks up where the story left off. Since we know Seth and his family worshiped God, it makes sense for them to be referred to as "sons of God."

The "daughters of men," then, are most likely the descendants of Seth's wicked brother, Cain. Unlike the family of Seth, Cain's family continues living in their father's ungodly ways.

What appears to have angered God so much, then, is seeing a godly family like Seth's intermarrying with Cain's family, people who do not love and honor God. This view seems to fit with the warnings in both the Old Testament and New Testament against believers marrying unbelievers (see for example, 1 Corinthians 7) and is similar to the warnings in **Deuteronomy 14:1-21**.

Deuteronomy 14 begins with the phrase, “You are the sons of the Lord your God...” and is followed by a list of pagan practices that God doesn’t want His people to participate in or associate with. The general idea appears to be, “You belong to God... so don’t act like those who don’t belong to God.”

So what does all this have to do with Noah and the Ark?

Noah and his sons are the last members listed in the genealogy of Seth in Genesis 5:32. After Genesis 6:1-7 talks about how God became angry toward humanity, verse 8 says, “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.” Verse 9 follows by saying, “Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation.” The Bible then summarizes his life by saying, “Noah walked with God.”

Poll the entire room: If someone asked you to complete the following sentence, what would you say... Noah exhibited his faith in God by (doing) _____.

Almost everyone familiar with the story of Noah probably answers, “by building an ark!” But Noah was 600 years old when the flood came (Genesis 7:6). His greatest act of faith was “walking with God” for the first 600 years of his life while living amidst a generation that refused to follow God. It was members of Noah’s immediate family—brothers, sisters, cousins, uncles, and aunts who God became angry with. Noah wanted to write a better story of his family and he did so by trusting in God and living faithfully for Him. We remember how Noah was faithful with the big things only because he was first faithful with the small things—the ins and outs of daily life.

APPLICATION:

In the Bible, “walking” is often used figuratively to describe the conduct of one’s life. “To walk with God,” means walking in a way that honors Him. For an Old Testament and New Testament example, read the following passages:

- 2 Kings 20:3
- Colossians 2:6

Perhaps the best example, however, comes in Ephesians. Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should *walk* in them.”

Most translations don’t use the word “walk” but that’s what the Greek word *peripateo* means. Sometimes we read Ephesians 2:10 and think that God has a specific career He wants us to pursue or a job to do or a spouse to marry, but Ephesians is more likely talking about the type of life God wants you to live. Once we accept Christ, God no longer wants us to “walk” in our old ways (Ephesians 2:2), but to instead “walk in love” (Ephesians 5:2) and “walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8).

Have you found yourself waiting for God to give you a BIG ark-like moment so you can demonstrate or prove your faith? Maybe God is waiting for you to first be faithful in the smaller matters of life, like Noah.

- In what areas of your life, big or small, do you need to step out in faith and “walk” with God?
- How might trusting God in those areas change your life or the life of your family?
- How can you model faith for your spouse, siblings, parents, friends, or children by the way you handle daily activities or problems?