

The Flood

This morning we're starting a series called "Our God is an Awesome God"

We're going to be looking at something awesome that our God did — and in doing so, we want to see that our God who did that awesome act then is the same God who we live for today.

I know not all of us grew up hearing the story of Noah... several of us did.

The story of Noah makes such a wonderful little children's story. We paint pictures of Noah with white beard — he's usually there with a saw in his hands, or hammer and some nails... Making his cute little boat...

And there are all of the animals 2x2 walking in an orderly fashion, no chaos, no disruption.

Everything is pretty lovely actually.

Look at this picture (children's picture). I mean look how happy everybody is... when *the world is about to be destroyed!*

The story of "*The Flood*"...A cloud appears and it starts to rain. And rain. And rain. For a long time... Until the earth was covered in water.

[Pictures] But if you were living near the beach in Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, or India on December 26th 2004, then you'd realise that floodwaters aren't very romantic. Some say up to 280,000 men women and children were killed by the Tsunami that day.

I think many of us know how ugly and devastating a flood can be... Many of you were here when floods ravaged Nashville [picture].

Nashville shattered nearly every rainfall record conceivable the weekend of May 1-2, 2010. According to the National Weather Service, 13.57 inches of rain was measured during a 36- hour period. The combined two-day rainfall total doubled the previous 48-hour rainfall record in Nashville.

I was able to help one family clean out their house when it flooded in Baton Rouge in 2016... (picture of debri)... Have you ever been in a house after it sat in water for days at a time? You know how bad a wet dog smells? Imagine a wet house and everything in the house? It's horrible...

Floods are not nice things... Floods are powerful. They are destructive.

Well, the story of Noah is anything but nice. It is not lovely, it is not cosy, and most definitely is not a children's story. It's the story about a messed up world, the heart of God, and a man and his family who dared to be different.
genesis 6

Turn to Genesis chapter 6. That's where we'll be. Three different things with Noah and the Flood that I want us to look at:

#1 a clean sweep (v.1-6)

Did you ever watch the show Clean Sweep? It was a show about clothes on TLC (back in the day, watched it because my mom and sister, probably). The basis of the show was taking someone and their house — usually the house was a wreck, too much stuff, ugly stuff, etc. — and they would clean the house out. They would TOSS most of the stuff, they would have a big yard sale with some of the stuff, and they would keep only a little.

The premise of the show was to give the homeowner a fresh start — a new home.

In a sense, in Genesis chapter 6, God wanted a clean sweep.

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.

Evil continually! (Other versions?)

6 And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. 7 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."

Why would God do this? Look back in verse 5. We just read it. All the thoughts of the hearts of the people were evil — *continually!*

11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

Words.

Then in verse 17, we see the method introduced by which God would use to destroy the earth — a flood. The flood is something God had never used before and something he [later promises] he'll never use again.

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.

The earth had become a sewer... (MSG) It had become a dump. An awful place. An ugly place with ugly people...

These are the things that are usually *not* included in our children's stories... These are things we typically don't share with children when we're using toy animals and a boat to talk about Noah and the flood.

But this is what it looked like.

However bad the floods we face today are—and I don't want to diminish the natural disasters we face—this flood was greater. This was unlike anything ever before and unlike anything that will ever come.

This is an ugly image: bodies floating in the water. Debris floating in the water. This is ugly... Everything would be covered in water. And everybody would die.

#2 the heart of God (v.6-) — might change this

The last time it says God saw his creation was in Genesis 1 — and do you know he said then?

31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

It was good! // He looks at it this time and all he sees is evil continually. There's a lesson in this for us to learn: what we do matters.

It's easy for us to sometimes think, it doesn't matter what we do. It doesn't matter who we hang out with. It doesn't matter what we post or what we say on social media. It doesn't matter what we do in our alone time. It doesn't matter what we do with our boyfriend or girlfriend.

It's easy in those moments to think those things don't matter. But they do! Because God feels it when we hurt Him.

In the same way — this is so good to think about — it matters that we do good. God sees you when you're doing things the right way! ... When you're living the right way. This should mean something!

Because in the flood, God decided to keep a few. Noah and his family. 8 in total. (Can then go on about Noah.)

8 Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.

Our God is an awesome God: because he sees what we do. (2. He saves His people. 3. He keeps his promises.)

#3 daring to be different

God chose Noah and his family — 8 in total — to survive the flood and carry on the human race. A reset. But if they were going to survive this incredible flood, they had to do it God's way. With God's methods.

Looking from Genesis 6, verse 14-21, we see the specific way God says this is all gonna happen...

Guidelines for the wood (gopher). Proper dimensions. Pitch on the outside. Two of every sort of animal. And the right kind of food, not only for you, but for ALL of the animals...

Another lesson: God gives us guidelines on how to survive and how to thrive. (some notes below)

God has specific commands, better way to look at this would be "guidelines for living"... We have to follow these commands to the way God wants them followed...

Sometimes we might think it's okay to "water down" these commands of God... But our God today is the same God of the OT. He still expects us as humans to follow his command.

Another thought on this is: it might seem odd, it might not make complete sense for why God wants you to do things a certain way... But trust God — He will come through on his promises.

[Oh yeah... And from the moment I'm telling you this, it'll be 120 years before the flood happens.] Hebrews 11 says this about Noah.

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. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Of however many people left in the world, God chooses to save Noah and his family — 8 in total. It took an overwhelming faith in God.

Have you ever wondered if it rained before the Flood? Have you ever thought about that? This is one question people I think is interesting to think about.

Some interpret [Hebrews 11:7] as saying it had never rained prior to the Flood // and rain could be the correct understanding of "things not yet seen," or *it could be referring to the Flood in general.*

Either way... Noah had never seen the amount of rain / the amount of water that God said would come on the earth...

Have you ever wondered how old Noah was when he built the ark?

In Genesis 5.32, 500 years old. In Genesis 7.6, when the flood comes, Noah is 600 years old.

Another testament to the strength of Noah's faith. Incredible. He spent many, many years building an ark for something that he's never seen happen before.

The flood waters come. (Genesis 7)

12 And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

Noah was on the boat for a few days. Rained 40 days and 40 nights (verse 17).

17 The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. 18 The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. 19 And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. 20 The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep.

The ugly picture of the flood is shown again in verses 21...

21 And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. 22 Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. 23 He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. 24 And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

The flood waters took over for 150 days (7.24).

I don't know how long it took Nashville to go back to normal. I'm sure it took a few days for the flood waters to go away... I know Opry Mills was shut down for some time.

Final reason our God is an awesome God: he keeps his promises.

The flood was natural occurrence with no working of a supernatural being. This was all the working of our awesome God.

For it to rain 40 days and 40 nights... For the waters to stay on the earth for 150 days... This has never happened. And it will never happen again.

[Eventually] Noah served an awesome God. No matter how long it took, no matter the specific directions he was given (wood, dimensions, animals, etc.), he followed the guidelines, he stuck to the plan. And God came through as He said.

Hebrews talks about the faith of Noah.

That same God that Noah served is the same God you and I serve today.

The flood. Has an ugly image when you think of the destruction that occurred

But God needed a way of bringing His beautiful creation — earth and humans back (?).

Beauty from destruction?.

The silversmith has to melt down the metal, in order to get all of the impurities out. // The weightlifter is constantly breaking down their muscles in order to build up stronger muscle.

I don't think we're teaching we're teaching our children wrongly. That's not the point of this lesson. The whole picture sometimes isn't painted when we hear this story growing up.

Underlying theme: the same God that did those powerful works in the Old Testament is the same God we serve today.

Plagueonomics (Exodus 7-12)

Group work! Directions: break up into groups of three. read about the plague assigned to your group and study it carefully. Give us 3 details that we might've missed about this plague from childhood. be sure to include the verses where you observed these details. (note: all of these are found in Exodus 7-12!)

*Let groups share what they observed.

SO WHAT? (Life Lessons)

*Life Lesson #1: The plagues had a purpose. (Exodus 7:4-5)

1. to reveal His identity to Egypt.
2. to reveal God's power
3. to pronounce judgment
4. to deliver His people.

Life Lesson #2: The plagues foreshadow a more important coming day: the day of judgment.

On Judgement Day:

1. Christ's identity will be revealed.
2. God's power will be revealed.
3. God will pronounce judgment
4. God will deliver His people.

Philippians 2:9-11

2 Peter 3:10-13

Life Lesson #3: Like Pharaoh, many will cry out to God in a time of crisis, only to dismiss him after conditions improve. We must understand our need for God in every condition. (Exodus 8:15)

The Exodus

*What did we talk about last week?

Last week, we talked about all of the plagues that God sent on Pharaoh and the Egyptians. what was the purpose of the plagues?

The purpose of the plagues: 10 plagues to try and change Pharaoh's heart in order to let the people go. But God knew Pharaoh's heart would be hardened. It was a display of the awesome power of God. (Exodus 7.4-5) // 1. to reveal his identity / 2. to reveal ...

This is a story about God saving His people. He brought them out of captivity — slavery — and led them across a sea (how far?) with water parted...

We're going to do a Kahoot — to see what we know, what we don't know, what we can learn about God parting the Red Sea. // If you don't have a phone or you're not real sure how to do this, you can team up.

What if we did a Kahoot to ask some of these questions 5 mins // talk for 3-4 mins // then we got in groups of 3-4 people and discussed some questions 5-8 mins // what are some responses 5-10 mins // then close with 10 mins.

potential kahoot questions

[label them with difficulties]

Q: An easier one

Q: Who led the people out of Egypt?

Q: how long had the people lived in Egypt - in captivity? 430 years! Exodus 12.40. They had been there about 189 years longer than USA has been a country.

Q: looking at a map, why would God not let the people escape to the land of the philistines? Exodus 13.17 says it was nearby. But what would have happened if God let the people live there? The Israelites have a reputation of living like the people around them. That's not Godly living.

Q: Something about pillar of cloud and pillar of fire....

“And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.” Exodus 13:21-22 ESV <http://bible.com/59/exo.13.21-22.esv>

Q: In Exodus 14.11, the people are complaining to Moses, partly because Moses has led them into the wilderness.

Q: How many people? Ex. 12.37 // 600,000 men!!! How many people in Nashville? Or maybe think of taking all the people in MJ, Lebanon, Hermitage, Brentwood, Smyrna, etc. to total about 1 million people (and it would probably be more than that...) // https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nashville_metro_politan_area The greater Nashville area has 1.86 million.

Q: How long did it take the people to escape Israel? How long did it take the people to cross the Red Sea? We don't know, Half an hour, half a day, half a week, half a year

Q: who escaped egypt? (All the Israelites, the men, the women and children, or those families that did what god said)

Q: How did they cross the Red Sea? By boat, by plane, walking on water, walking on dry land Q: what is the importance of the parting of the Red Sea?

discussion questions

[Before we go into these questions, I can give the run down of what happens in the story.] Israelites (God's people) are fleeing Egypt, under God's command and leadership.

ALSO why want to leave? At first, started out good. Ex 1:8 new king that didn't know Joseph Okay...What's Joseph got to do with this???????

[Why leaving now? Why not run away earlier, been there for 400+ years!!]

Once it got bad, why had God's people never left Egypt before? This is something I had never really thought of before. Well they were locked in [14.3 'wilderness had shut them in']. They were surrounded by the Red Sea and by the Wilderness. Die in the wilderness. There were some mountains but the Egyptians would easily catch up and kill them. And they couldn't cross the Red Sea.

Verse 3

The third verse tells us all that it is necessary for us to know, and the information it supplies is far more accurate and reliable than any human geographies Israel were "shut in by the wilderness," and the Red Sea stretched before them. Thus Israel were so placed that there was no human way of escape. In the mountain fastnesses they might have had a chance; but surrounded by the wilderness, it was useless to flee before the cavalry and chariots of Egypt.

So God was their only option.

God sends plagues, as we talked about last week. Can anybody tell me what the purpose of the plagues was? 4 part purpose we mentioned: To reveal His identity to Egypt, to reveal His power, to pronounce judgment, to *deliver His people.*

Time has come. Pharaoh's mind changes, he's tired of the plagues, and so he tells Moses and Aaron to take the people out of there [12.31]. Then while God's people are headed out of town (out of country really) Pharaoh changes his mind... AGAIN [14.8]! (This is a recurring theme, have you picked up on that?)

So it becomes a race to get out away from Pharaoh and his army. God has told Moses to lead the people toward the Sea — 14.4 "and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord."

So they get to the Sea but it's a dead end. The army of Pharaoh is on their way. God's people can't go any further. I imagine the people at the edge of a cliff... Almost being pushed over the cliff (picture for this — 300?). And Pharaoh's army is on the way..

[verse 10-12]

10 When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord. 11 They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."

Then Moses stretches out his hand...

21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. 22 And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

They cross the Sea! They made it!

Now, I want us to break up into groups of 3-4. I've got about three questions I want every group to look at and talk about. Then we're gonna get your responses and talk about them.

Q: Read Exodus 14.10-12. Do you ever feel like your back is against the wall? Do you ever feel like there's no way out? In those times, what should you do? What Red Sea are you facing?

We all have faced times where we feel like we are in between "a rock and hard place." We've been in impossible situations. It is in those times that we need to access our faith (seeing more than the circumstances we're in.) See what God can do!

I heard it put like this, God wants us to exercise our faith because a faith that is never tested can never be trusted. (Job, James 1 verse???, Romans 5:3,4??)

We must learn, sometimes from experience, that God is the God of the impossible. When Christians face their own Red Sea, and it can take many different forms, we must learn to look upward for the only true source of our help...God Almighty.

To prove the point a little more, look at verse 14.13-14 and notice how Moses reacts when there are a lot of people upset with him... [Could talk about how irritated I get when somebody goes the wrong way and I know a faster way...]

To even further prove the point that God protects His people, what else do he do to lead the people? He guides them by day with a pillar of cloud and by night with a pillar of fire (Ex 14:19-20).

Q: Read Exodus 14.21-31. Talk about a thing or two that stands out to you about the people crossing the Sea.

It took God all night with a strong [east] wind to drive the waters back on either side... Could you imagine hearing this wind? Being close to this wind? This would be incredible.

Dry ground. Not wet at all, apparently.

Wonder how wide this must have been. For 600,000 men + women and children... This was not a 30 minutes ordeal. This would have taken a while!

The waters formed a wall on either side of the dry ground. When Moses stretched out his arm to bring the waters back, the entire army of Pharaoh was gone... "Not one of them remained..." // Have you ever seen Mulan... Do you know the part where the avalanche crushes the Huns?

Q: From the same passage (v.21-31), what similarities do you see between the Israelites crossing the Red Sea and baptism?

[Notes from above. Gonna have to have already discussed them crossing the sea]

(question within) Do you know what the anti-type is? 1. One that is foreshadowed by or identified with an earlier symbol or type, such as a figure in the New Testament who has a counterpart in the Old Testament.

The purpose of the crossing of the Red Sea is to show God's power and desire to free His people.

Have you given much thought to the similarities between the Crossing the Red Sea and baptism?

What are some of the similarities you see between Crossing the Red Sea and baptism that we see in the NT?

When the people cross the Red Sea, they are passing through water (water that might have still been blood? It is called Red...) // When we

we
There is symbolism in God's people coming up on the other side, clean, while the "bad people" (Pharaoh's people) were swallowed up by the waters... washed away by the waters // When we go down into the waters of baptism, the bad, the ugliness is left behind — it's washed away by the waters

There is symbolism in God's people heading toward and eventually going into the promised land... // We come out the other side of baptism, we're on the path to the promised land (verse for this?)

Similarities of Passover to Passover in the NT // Simi

Q: After the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, what did they do? And why would this be applicable to us?

[for after questions] lessons to takeaway

Demo Day (Jericho—Joshua 6)

Moses has died. Joshua is the man now...the leader. The people are ready. They're tired of wandering. They are ready to possess what God had been wanting to give them for 40 years! Joshua and Caleb only remain.

It's time to take what's theirs.

There is one thing left to do: take Jericho. The Promised Land is just over the horizon. And there stands Jericho. The last hurdle to cross.

Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in.

Why were they afraid?

Joshua 5:1 As soon as all the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the people of Israel until they had crossed over, their hearts melted and there was no longer any spirit in them because of the people of Israel.

2 And the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. 3 You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. 4 Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. 5 And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, [a: another way to translate that phrase: the wall of the city will fall down "under itself"...more on that later] and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him." 6 So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord."

7 And he said to the people, "Go forward. March around the city and let the armed men pass on before the ark of the Lord."

8 And just as Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the Lord went forward, blowing the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the Lord following them. 9 The armed men were walking before the priests who were blowing the trumpets, and the rear guard was walking after the ark, while the trumpets blew continually. 10 But Joshua commanded the people, "You shall not shout or make your voice heard, neither shall any word go out of your mouth, until the day I tell you to shout. Then you shall shout." 11 So he caused the ark of the Lord to circle the city, going about it once. And they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp.

12 Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. 13 And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord walked on, and they blew the trumpets continually. And the armed men were walking before them, and the rear guard was walking after the ark of the Lord, while the trumpets blew continually. 14 And the second day they marched around the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did for six days.

Recap...imagine being a resident of Jericho...Jerichonian? Jerichoite? Jerichoish? Imagine waking up every morning and seeing this.

Why are they doing this? What are your thoughts on this? (Not sure...intimidation factor? Totally silent...walkthroughs in football. One team would just come in total silence and just stand and watch...creepy.) Not sure why, but it would've surely been strange.

- Intimidation.
- God was encircling the city.
- They weren't charging into a city. Perhaps there was a "Be still and know that I am God" principle at play here.
- Patience and trust.

-What is was for sure: It was not wandering! It was a directed, calculated plan of God!
Another opportunity for the people to demonstrate faith and obedience.

15 On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. 16 And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city. 17 And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. 18 But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. 19 But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord."

The city is yours, BUT...

Special instructions for Israel:

- Shout, for the Lord has given you the city.
- Remember to devote the spoils to destruction. Talk about what that means. They weren't allowed to just plunder the city and take whatever they wanted. A little foreshadowing here...
- Remember to spare Rahab's household.

20 So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. 21 Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.

22 But to the two men who had spied out the land, Joshua said, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring out from there the woman and all who belong to her, as you swore to her." 23 So the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. And they brought all her relatives and put them outside the camp of Israel. 24 And they burned the city with fire, and everything in it. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. 25 But Rahab the prostitute and her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26 Joshua laid an oath on them at that time, saying, "Cursed before the Lord be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho.

"At the cost of his firstborn shall he

lay its foundation,

and at the cost of his youngest son

shall he set up its gates."

27 So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.

-Look at the curse vs.26.

(1 Kings 16:33-34 Remember this cat? 33 And Ahab made an Asherah. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. 34 In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation at the cost of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.)

Thus the prophecy was fulfilled.

Life Lessons

1. God is not a God who seeks to destroy, but rather is a God who seeks to save.

God is not afraid to punish. He is just. If He didn't punish He wouldn't be a very good parent.

So yes, Jericho is a story of destruction. But just like the story of the flood, and much like the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, our God is about saving people. But it's also a story about saving people: The LORD saved Rahab because of her faith, Rahab saved the spies, she saved her family, and she saved herself from fiery destruction.

He is not a God who looks to punish. Instead He is long-suffering, kind, and gracious.

Even in this story about the annihilation of Jericho, God is saving.

2. This story reminds us that God has given us a window of escape.

Rahab's window was a means to salvation, and so was the scarlet cord (Made me think about the Passover—if Rahab put the cord in her window then death would pass over her household. It was kind of like the blood on the doorpost).

Rahab literally had a window of opportunity to be saved from a coming destruction. But she had to get her window ready. **A scarlet cord had to be hung up in the window to save her. It's not hard for us to see the symbolism there, is it?**

The scarlet blood of Jesus Christ had to be hung upon the cross to save us. His blood has opened up a window for us. There is no other way for us to be saved from the destruction that is coming.

3. It doesn't matter who you are or who you have been, God can use you in His story.

Describe what Rahab's story had been like up to this point...

Matthew 1: The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram,[a] 4 and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, 5 and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of David the king.

Check. This. Out. Rahab. The great great grandmother of the great great king of Israel, David. You mean to tell me that a former prostitute is in the family tree of Jesus?

Absolutely.

It doesn't matter who you are or who you have been, God can use you in His story.

4. What is your Jericho? What is it that is standing between you and promises of God, the things He wants to give to you? The peace and the rest that He offers you?

Whatever it is, you need to let God conquer it. Surround that area of your life with God and let Him take over it. Let Him tear down your walls. Ask Him to dwell in that area of your life.

<https://goodnewsmag.org/2013/12/facing-your-jericho/>

Conquering Your Jericho: More than any other obstacle, Jericho was standing between Joshua and the people of God, preventing them from taking over and occupying the land God had promised them.

Very cool article about archaeology and Jericho... <https://answersingenesis.org/archaeology/the-walls-of-jericho/>

Hate to Baal
1 Kings 18:17-40

17 When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is it you, you troubler of Israel?" 18 And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father's house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the Lord and followed the Baals.

Ahab's resumé:

-A very, very wicked king. His love for idolatry lasted many years beyond his own lifetime. (He was infamous for his service to Baal.)

-His wife was horrible.

-He and his wife had a guy murdered because he refused to give him his vineyard.

-When he was killed, dogs licked up his blood.

1 Kings 16:29 In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri began to reign over Israel, and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. 30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him. 31 And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he took for his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshiped him. 32 He erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. 33 And Ahab made an Asherah. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

19 Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table." 20 So Ahab sent to all the people of Israel and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel. 21 And Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."

And the people did not answer him a word.

22 Then Elijah said to the people, "I, even I only, am left a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are 450 men. 23 Let two bulls be given to us, and let them choose one bull for themselves and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. And I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood and put no fire to it. 24 And you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the Lord, and the God who answers by fire, he is God." And all the people answered, "It is well spoken."

Showdown. Let's have a faceoff. I'll put my God against your god and we will see once and for all who the real God is. Whichever God answers by fire, He is God.

25 Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many, and call upon the name of your god, but put no fire to it." 26 And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. 27 And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened."

Maybe he's on vacation or he's taking a nap. Maybe he's taking a slam. Maybe if you make some more noise you can wake him up...

28 And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. 29 And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention.

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that had been thrown down. 31 Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord came,

saying, "Israel shall be your name," 32 and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord. And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two seahs[a] of seed. 33 And he put the wood in order and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, "Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood." 34 And he said, "Do it a second time." And they did it a second time. And he said, "Do it a third time." And they did it a third time. 35 And the water ran around the altar and filled the trench also with water.

What's Elijah doing here? (Making sure they understand that what they are about to see is miraculous. It's like when the performer says "And now I will do all of this blindfolded, upside down in a straightjacket submerged in water!")

36 And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. 37 Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back."

What do you hear in Elijah's prayer?

A plea to God to show Himself. Show that I am your servant. Show that I have done your will in this matter. Answer me that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God and that you have turned their hearts back.

And it might seem weird to make this point about this story about a face off between Elijah and prophets of Baal, but I think there's an important point to be made here.

Elijah is praying this prayer, not to win a contest. Not to win people over to his side of an argument. Dear Lord make me look good in front of everybody. That's not his prayer.

Life Lesson: We ought to pray like Elijah...

It's easy to lose sight of Elijah's heart in this awesome story, but his heart really is in the right place. His heart was breaking that the people's hearts had left the Lord. And guys that ought to break our hearts!

38 Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God." 40 And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there.

What has happened in this story? The people's hearts have turned aside to something that is not God.

Fish Food (Jonah 1-3)

Jonah 1:1-3

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” 3 But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord.

Life Lesson: when we refuse to do God’s will, we are inviting trouble upon ourselves.

4 But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. 5 Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. 6 So the captain came and said to him, “What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish.”

Jonah Is Thrown into the Sea

7 And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 Then they said to him, “Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?” 9 And he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” 10 Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, “What is this that you have done!” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. 11 Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?” For the sea grew more and more tempestuous.

12 He said to them, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.” 13 Nevertheless, the men rowed hard[b] to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. 14 Therefore they called out to the Lord, “O Lord, let us not perish for this man’s life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you.” 15 So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. 16 Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows.

*Even in Jonah’s disobedience, god was still revealing himself to those who did not know him!

Life Lesson: You can choose to obey God, or you can choose to disobey God, but his plans will still come to pass whether you are apart of them or not.

*Can you think of an example of this?

*What do you think it would be like to live for three days inside the belly of a fish? Have you ever been in a situation that would’ve caused you to do a lot of soul-searching?

-Read Jonah 2:1-9.

Group work: Look for Five noteworthy things that Jonah prays in Jonah 2:1-9! (and be ready to tell what makes each thing noteworthy!)

Life Lesson: All hope is never lost. God can bring you up out of the pit.

*Jonah’s once disobedient heart has now turned into a thankful, obedient heart. (Jonah 2:9)

Life Lesson: A saved heart is a grateful obedient one. What about yours?

-Read 2:10-3:10

-Life Lesson: The story of Nineveh leaves me feeling hopeful about how God can change a nation.

*Life Lesson: The story of Jonah is a story of grace and second chances for those of us who've ever decided to disobey God and have made a mess of things.

*Life Lesson: The story of Jonah reminds us of the story of Jesus. (Matthew 12:38-42)

Korah's Rebellion

korah's rebellion

[Show picture of Nora]

The water spray bottle.

Nora — our 4 month old puppy. It's funny how puppies work because they are cute when they're little — but they can also be very annoying. They bite everything. They try to eat *your* food. They play with anything they can get their mouth on.

When they're young, they're learning. It's a big world. // We try our best with Nora to teach her what we want her to do / what we don't want them to do.

[Insert spray bottle] // We got this at Walmart for 98 cents. We use this to let Nora know — "yes, this is what we want you to do!" OR "No!!! That chocolate will hurt you! The stove is hot!!!"

The point of the spray bottle: we want Nora to do the right thing! Be a good puppy. So she doesn't develop bad habits. // We also don't want her to hurt herself! Have a good life.

We're studying a story today / and the basis is very similar: God wants his people to follow His lead, so they can do the right thing — that they don't get hurt and they can have a healthy future!

But sometimes... people don't do the right thing. // Turn to Numbers chapter 16.

review on Moses

Q: By the time we get to Numbers 16, can someone tell me what Moses has done? Led the people across the Red Sea (by the power of God)

Now they've been wandering in the wilderness.

teaching the story

Now Numbers is not the most appealing book in the Bible... It has a lot of... well, numbers in it. But there is a story found in the middle of it called Korah's Rebellion. Anybody heard of this story before? I'm not sure I had ever *really* read or studied this story before.

But it's a story of 1. rebellion, as the title says, 2. criticism, and 3. response. // Let's pick up in verse 1. Numbers is near the front of the Bible.

1 Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, *took men*. 2 And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men.

What we have so far is a seed of rebellion taking root within some men of Israel. It starts with Korah, then he grabs his two friends Dathan and Abiram, and then they go and get 250 other men of the congregation.

Q: From what we've read, what kind of men make up this group? Prominent men in Israel. "Well-known." Korah was in the family tree of Levi — family of priests. The 250 were "chiefs of the congregation." Seemingly not *bad* dudes.

3 They assembled themselves together *against Moses and against Aaron* and said to them, "You have gone too far! For *all* in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. *Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?*"

They came as a group and confronted Moses and Aaron, and they say to them: "You've overstepped yourself. This entire community is holy

and God is in their midst. *So why do you act like you're running the whole show?"*

"Why do you put yourself above everybody else?" // Unhappy with Moses' leadership — big time. // But notice what Moses does...

4 When Moses heard it, he fell on his face,

He falls down... // Now remember, Moses is the chosen leader of the people — not chosen by the people, but chosen by God.

Right here, some say Moses "falling down" implies he might be praying... So he rises up in verse 5.

5 and he said to Korah and all his company, "In the morning *the Lord will show who is his*, and who is holy, and will bring him near to him. The one whom he chooses he will bring near to him.

Moses emerges from the prayer with a much clearer understanding of what to do:

6 Do this: take censers, Korah and all his company; 7 put fire in them and put incense on them before the Lord tomorrow, and the man whom the Lord chooses shall be the holy one. You have gone too far, sons of Levi!"

You ever heard someone say they just need to take 10 seconds. To think. To settle down. // [Church league can sometimes get heated — it's church league!] // Moses shows the importance of a patient response.

James 1.19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger...

On the surface Moses' response seems to yield to the rebel's request. You come and take charge. Bring your censers [censers were basically a fire pan/pail].

In a sense, Korah may have thought he won a victory. Moses here chooses *not* to defend himself or his position. Instead, [and catch this] He would allow God to defend Himself.

8 And Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: 9 is it too small a thing for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do service in the tabernacle of the Lord and to stand before the congregation to minister to them, 10 and that he has brought you near him, and all your brothers the sons of Levi with you? And would you seek the priesthood also?

Moses picks out Korah and addresses his sense of self pride that has led him to rebellion. Moses, "Korah, is the job that God has given you not enough? *Are you not satisfied with serving God in the tabernacle?"*

Korah was already an important guy in Israel. He was of the tribe of Levi, meaning he had the special responsibility to serve in the Tabernacle. But that wasn't enough... He wanted more.

11 Therefore it is against the Lord that you and all your company have gathered together. What is Aaron that you grumble against him?"

"Obviously, Korah thought that he could do a better job leading the people than Moses was doing.

But by leading this revolt against God's divinely appointed leaders, Korah was actually revolting against God (Numbers 16:11)."

12 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and they said, "We will not come up. 13 Is it a small thing that you have

brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you must also make yourself a prince over us?

They were unaware / had forgotten that God made Moses leader over Israel... Moses has had enough.

16 And Moses said to Korah, "Be present, you and all your company, before the Lord, you and they, and Aaron, tomorrow. 17 And let every one of you take his censer and put incense on it, and every one of you bring before the Lord his censer, 250 censers; you also, and Aaron, each his censer."

[This is nothing new. Something the priests did as part of the job.]

18 So every man took his censer and put fire in them and laid incense on them and stood at the entrance of the tent of meeting with Moses and Aaron. 19 Then Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation.

We don't know exactly what happens right here — except "the glory of the Lord appeared..." // But we do see them falling on their faces in awe in verse 22.

20 And the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 21 "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." 22 *And they fell on their faces* and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and will you be angry with all the congregation?"

God is getting ready to consume these people that ave rebelled against him — not against Moses, against God!!

Look down to verse 28. What we see happen in the verses following is... Moses devising a test — *one that will show the power of God.* This is

where the awesome power of God intervenes in this story. Buckle up.

28 And Moses said, "Hereby *you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works*, and that it has *not* been of my own accord. 29 If these men die as all men die, or if they are visited by the fate of all mankind, then the Lord has not sent me. 30 *But if the Lord creates something new*, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, then you shall know that these men have despised the Lord."

Moses says: "if these men die by natural causes, then the Lord has *not* sent me... However, if God opens up the ground, then you will know that you've gone against God!"

31 And as soon as (!!!) he had finished speaking all these words, *the ground under them split apart.* 32 *And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up*, with their households and all the people who belonged to Korah and all their goods.

God was *ready* to show His power to a people who didn't believe... [Korah gone!]

33 So they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. 34 And all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up!" 35 And fire came out from the Lord and consumed the 250 men offering the incense.

So what just happened (not the easiest story to follow): "Moses proposed a test to prove the source of his authority. Korah and his followers did not pass the test, and God opened up the earth and swallowed the rebels, their families, and all their possessions. *Furthermore*, "fire came out from the LORD" and consumed the other 250 men who were party to Korah's rebellion. The rest of the Israelites were terrified and fled (Numbers 16:31-35)."

But wait! The story's not over!!! The next day... More people are complaining against Moses and Aaron... God doesn't like it when people don't follow His leadership. Or when they complain about those he's set as leaders.

41 But on the next day all the congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and against Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the Lord." 42 And when the congregation had assembled against Moses and against Aaron, they turned toward the tent of meeting. And behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. 43 And Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting, 44 and the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 45 "Get away from the midst of this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." And they fell on their faces. 46 And Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer, and put fire on it from off the altar and lay incense on it and carry it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them, for wrath has gone out from the Lord; the plague has begun." 47 So Aaron took it as Moses said and ran into the midst of the assembly. And behold, *the plague had already begun among the people*. And he put on the incense and made atonement for the people. 48 And *he stood between the dead and the living*, and the plague was stopped. 49 *Now those who died in the plague were 14,700, besides those who died in the affair of Korah.* 50 And Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the tent of meeting, when the plague was stopped.

Wow. Aaron gets between God and the people. Aaron intervenes on behalf of the people! And the plague stops.

lessons to learn

#1 God watches how we disagree.

Moses was not the perfect leader. If you remember, Moses didn't want the job in the first place. He thought he wasn't a good speaker — not confident in himself.

Some of the people thought he was a very *flawed* leader... And they disagreed with him. Sometimes we disagree with those in leadership. There are both right and wrong ways to disagree.

We must be able to disagree agreeably.

A lot of times fighting can quickly degenerate into name calling and personal attacks. Using words we probably don't to use! We throw accusations and hearsay around like it's the truth. This type of rebellion (disagreement) is detestable to God. *It was in Korah's day, and it is today, too.*

Let's search for proper and mature ways to remedy our disagreements.. I believe God will bless us if our hearts stay right.

Also need to be on the lookout for rebellious persons:

Characteristic of a rebellious person

What are some characteristics?

Seeking to overthrow a leader

Seeking to overthrow a leader

Disrupt the leaders ability to be effective

Spirit of defiance, will do the opposite of what the leader says Try to create a spirit of division

Have a spirit if pride

Refusing to be counseled when in error

Unwilling to repent

Always want to pull you from what strengthens you

#2 God watches how we respond to criticism.

(smiling) We don't always respond to criticism very well, do we?

Sometimes we lash out. Sometimes we cry. Sometimes we grumble about it to someone else. Sometimes we store that criticism away as anger.

Korah and the people were in Moses' face — stirred up some people. // They came as a group and confronted Moses and Aaron. They had obviously been dwelling on this — maybe it's been something in the works for a while. They're unhappy with Moses.

They assault his leadership, saying he's taken them too far. "Why do you think you're so special, huh?" // Maybe it wasn't this violent, but I picture them coming at night with torches and pitchforks. They're tired of him!

And what does Moses do? // Falls on his face (v.4). There's often a tendency of fight or flight. Fight back or run away. That's not what Moses does. He falls on his face — relying on God in this situation.

So here's the question: How do you respond to criticism? How do you react when people don't like what you are doing? Most people have a "fight or flight" response. They either get mad and fight back. Or they get sad and say, "I quit." There is a third response which God seeks in us. It is the prayer, "God, show me what You're saying to me out of this."

Give the criticism to God. // Let God lead.

#3 Godly leaders let God lead.

Along the same lines as #2 // Moses had an opportunity to avenge those who opposed his leadership.

Let me ask a question: Q: What does godly leadership look like? // does it involve doing what you think best or what God says is best? Going your way or going God's way?

Because I don't think Moses would've taken the people to the edge of the Red Sea - if it weren't God leading. I don't think Moses would lead the people to the wilderness - if it weren't God leading.

All Moses has done is followed God's leadership. And that's what he continued to do. Moses tells them God will show His power and His will.

If you want to be a successful leader in whatever it is you do, let God lead your life.

#4 A bad attitude is contagious.

Talk about how you don't want to be the person who starts the negative talk on a mission trip, at camp, at stateside, etc.

Some people - often in this way - seem to only be able to start conversation with negativity.

"Well it sure is hot outside. Cold outside. Cabins sure are hot. We don't get good food. This is taking forever. They don't know what they're doing. This game is stupid. I don't like pizza. I don't like singing..."

Dathan and Abiram: "Isn't it enough that you yanked us out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the wilderness? And now you keep trying to boss us around! Face it, you haven't produced: You haven't brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, you haven't given us the promised inheritance of fields and vineyards. You'd have to poke our eyes out to keep us from seeing what's going on. Forget it, we're not coming.""

*And it's quite interesting that these people complain about the food, complain about Moses' leadership, complain about the wilderness... When they just came from Egypt — a land of slavery, genocide, and death.

One writer, in regards to these two, put it like this:

Their desire to go their own way caused them to distort reality. Shows their contempt for God's words of promise given through Moses.

Doesn't that happen sometimes? One negative attitude starts to distort the reality for those around them.

#5 Realize your responsibility.

God had given Korah, Dathan, and Abiram a wonderful responsibility of caring for the tabernacle of the Lord.

Moses uses some words in verse that pinpoint the root of their rebellion... vs. 9 – Is it a small thing (in your eyes) that God has given you the job of caring for the tabernacle? // In their eyes, they had not been given a big task.

We fuel rebellion when we are always looking at what is not our responsibility, rather than focusing on what is. // Whatever somebody else has is always more appealing than what I have. (can expand)

Q: Do you ever feel like you don't have much responsibility?

Col 3.23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men... Never should actions be irresponsible to get more responsibility.

conclusion

If you're looking for something wrong with the church and its leaders, you will find it! The church is made up of people and people make mistakes. People mess up.

God loves us and wants us to do the right thing - that means we need to be godly leaders and follow godly leaders. Positive attitudes. Realizing the responsibility God has given us.

random notes

This website has a lot of really good information and explanation for what happened with Korah's rebellion. <https://www.gotquestions.org/rebellion-of-Korah.html>

Good notes: <http://southsidechurchofchrist.com/sermons/lessons-from-korahs-rebellion.html>

More good notes: <http://bob-clanton.blogspot.com/2013/03/surviving-church-fight-lessons-from.html>