

Coram Deo
Soli Deo Gloria, Soli Deo Gracia, Soli Scriptura
Agnus Dei, Qui Tollis Peccata Mundi
Deo Volente

Sermon Preach at Stouffville United Church
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“Remember to Float: Let Go and Let’s Go”

Lessons Learned From Noah’s Ark Series 7

August 7, 2022

Genesis 7:11-24

Have you ever noticed that sometimes it is hard to just relax? Everything around us conspires at times to make us feel that we have to do something.

I know that when I would go to the family camp in Northern Ontario; my mother in law would always have lots of work for me to do. And when reading a book, she would complain I was doing nothing. It was not until I pulled out a fishing pole and brought it to the lake with my book that she would leave me alone. She would say, “don’t bother him he is fishing.” She never knew I never had a hook on the line.

Noah reminds us that after we have done everything we can and accept that there are things we can’t do anything about all we can then do is as he said, “Float.”

I

And this meant that he had to **let go of the past**. For Noah the good old days, were the bad old days. He had to let go of the past and the things he wishes he could have done or thought he should have done. There comes a point that we all have to let go. We have to let to of the past.

A young preacher was shocked to hear a well-known evangelist say, “I have spent some of the happiest moments of my life in the arms of another man’s wife.” For added effect, the evangelist repeated himself— “Yes, I have spent some of the happiest moments of my life in the arms of another man’s wife.” Then after a dramatic pause the evangelist added, “That woman was my mother.”

The young preacher was impressed, and like any good preacher on the hunt for new material, he mentally filed the story away to use in the future. A few weeks later when the preacher was speaking to a civic club, he decided on the spur of the moment to use the evangelist’s clever story. “I have spent some of the happiest moments of my life in the arms of another man’s wife,” he said. Enjoying the stunned look of his listeners he repeated the shocking statement again with even more feeling. Then after a long pause the preacher said again, this time with notably less confidence, “Yes, I have spent some of the happiest moments of my life in the arms of another man’s wife.” Finally, after a

seemingly endless pause the young preacher added meekly, “But for the life of me I can’t remember who she was!”

Memory can be a precious blessing

That is why when someone suffers from dementia or Alzheimer’s it is so painful...

We’ll meet again....

A little boy after losing little league baseball game and apologized to the dejected pitcher and the manager for missing an easy fly ball that cost the team the game by saying, “Sorry I missed that easy fly ball. I thought I had it. But suddenly I remembered all the others I’ve missed in other games and practices and the past got in my eyes.”

Sometimes life is just like that. We let the past get in our eyes and we are blinded by it. We are blind to the present, and the possibilities of the future because we live in the past, stuck at a point we are unable to get beyond. We accept that no one is perfect, only in relation to others, but never ourselves.

The church father St. Francis de Sales said: “Be patient with everyone, but above all with yourself.”

II

Noah had to let go of the past and secondly, **let God into the present.** We learned that he prepared to worship in the and give thanks during the storm.

Noah had to be willing to stop trying to control everything and start trusting and turning his life over to the power that is greater than himself.

One of the greatest problems people have is how to get over themselves. We think our problems are the biggest, our failures are the worst, and our losses are the greatest. So each of us become own worst enemy and in the long run, what others do to us is not nearly as damaging as what we do to ourselves.

It is only when we stop doing damage to ourselves and turn ourselves over to a power greater than ourselves that can restore us to sanity that we begin to stop making a mess of our lives by playing god and start relying on God.

If you think of it like a child’s puzzle box; on the front is a beautiful picture of what is supposed to be inside. However, when we lift up the top, the box is filled with a jumble of pieces that need someone to put the pieces together. In the same way, often the picture we present to the world about ourselves is a beautiful one but underneath that picture is the reality of a life in pieces. And it is only when we turn our lives over to God, and allow Him to put the pieces back together again that we gain a measure of sanity. So we need to let go and let God.

III

Noah let go of the past, let God into the present, and finally, said **let's go**. He boarded the Ark and was on his way with all those willing to come.

Why do so many people just mark time, kill time, put in time and not make the most of the time they have. Perhaps one of the reasons is that they give up too soon. They may start out fine. But then they get discouraged because they lose sight of where they are going and what they are supposed to be doing.

Much like Florence Chadwick, aged 34, on July 4, 1952 waded into the water off Catalina Island and began her 21-mile swim toward California. If she completed her journey, she would be the first woman ever to accomplish this feat. The water was ice cold, and the fog was so heavy, that Florence could hardly see the boats in her own party. Sharks often began to attack Florence as she swam and men armed with rifles in the boats surrounding her had to drive them off with carefully aimed shots. But the constant numbing cold of the water was her toughest problem. Fifteen hours after she began, she asked to be taken out, her muscles sluggish and unresponsive due to the frigid water.

Her mother and trainer, alongside in the boat, told her they were near land. They encouraged her not to quit. But as she looked ahead, all she could see was the dense fog....so she gave up and asked to be taken out of the water. When they pulled her out, she was only a half mile from the California coast! Only a small fraction of her journey was incomplete.... she almost did it. Later, when Florence's body began to thaw, the shock of failure finally hit her. To a reporter she blurted out, "Look, I'm not excusing myself. But if I could have *seen* the land, I might have made it."

Two months after her failure, Florence Chadwick walked off the same beach into the same channel and swam the distance, setting a new speed record, because she could see the land.

We, like Noah and Florence, sometimes get to a place where we can't see our way through. It is then that we must understand that we must not give up because no matter what we are going through it will all be ok in the end. And if it's not ok; it just means it's not the end. You think about that. Amen