
Living in the Last Days (Genesis 6)
12/3/2017 Sermon by Pastor Jason Liebenow



I don't know about you, but when I'm learning to do something new, I really appreciate having an example in front of me. Watching good public speakers helps me to learn public speaking. Talking to people who are retired helps me to learn how to prepare for retirement.

Today, in our lesson from Genesis 6, we get to see an example of someone Living in the Last Days. Noah lived in the days before the flood came and decimated the entire world. In a very similar way, you and I live in the days before Jesus returns on Judgment Day. Noah lived in a more and more sinful society. You and I do too. So how do we live in this time? God has given us Genesis 6 so that we can have an example of what it looks like Living in the Last Days.

In Genesis 6, we hear that the human race was growing, and already humanity is divided into the children of God, those who were still clinging to God's promises in faith, and the children of humans, those who had abandoned God for their own sinful ways.

Next, we hear something terrifying. The Church, the group of people who still clung to God in faith began to disappear. In the first few verses here, we begin to see those believers falling away. How does it happen then?

Love. Wait, love can't be a bad thing, right? Well, look what happened! The sons of God (that's the believers) saw that the daughters of humans (that's the unbelievers) were beautiful. Believers fell in love. They got married. How can that be a bad thing? Isn't true love the greatest thing in the world? We've been fed that message in our books and TV for a long time, but the Bible shows us the truth. Those marriages pushed believers away from God to the point that almost all of them fell away. As the believers connected themselves to unbelievers like that, they fell for that unbelieving influence.

With God's people virtually gone, humanity only got more and more wicked. Even to the point that God says, "Letting humans live for hundreds of years is only bringing more and more sin. I'm gonna limit evil by letting people live only about 120 years, give or take."

This really says a lot to us as we live in the last days before Jesus' second coming. We need to be focused on what is most important. How many people today even consider whether a person believes in God before they marry them? When you were looking for someone to marry, or if you are now, do you consider whether or not the person will have a godly influence on your life? Most of us just eat what the

movies and advertisements have been selling us without a second thought and we follow that gut feeling of “being in love,” or “chasing the American dream,” or “doing what makes me happy.” Suddenly, those things become more important to us than our God.

But what is most important? Is marrying someone you are in love with more important than getting to heaven? Is having a good career more important than walking with God? Is being at a church where we feel comfortable or where you like the pastor more important than hearing God’s true word?

In Noah’s day, believers didn’t make God their first priority and it led them away from God. As they pursued true love, they ended up walking away from God who is our actual true love! Think about that! What human would suffer death and hell for you like our God did? What human would love you unconditionally like God does, to the point that died for you when you were his enemy and he forgives you for the same sins over and over again? People aren’t like that. But God is.

Some of you will be shocked to hear me say this: but wouldn’t it be better to marry someone who repulses you if they are going to lead you closer to God? Is it really worth marrying the man or woman of your dreams if that person is only going to lead you down the path to hell? Wouldn’t it be better to be homeless and unemployed but walking with God than to have the perfect career and walk with Satan? Wouldn’t it be better to be at a stale, boring church that preaches the truth of God’s Word than to be in an exciting and encouraging church that teaches lies about God?

In Noah’s day, God simply wasn’t a priority, doing the right thing didn’t matter. People chose to follow their concepts of true love rather than follow their God. It got so bad that there was only wickedness on the earth, only evil.

The sin among those people became so great that God himself, and this is crazy to think, but God himself regretted making humans. With no believers in the world, what reason was there to keep the world spinning? There would only be an increase of sin and more and more people suffering death and hell.

Then we see an interesting passage. “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD... Noah was a righteous man.” What does it mean to be righteous? What would you say? Does that mean that Noah was a good person? Does that mean he kept God’s laws? Not at all. Genesis records Noah as being a drunk. It shows him having quite an anger problem too. Noah was a sinner like anyone else. So how was he righteous?

This is a place where we can let the Bible interpret the Bible for us. Romans 3:20 tells us, “No one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the

law.” So Noah wasn’t righteous because of what he did. He wasn’t righteous because he was such a good person. How was he righteous? Genesis 15:6 shows us how someone else became righteous. It says, “Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.” There is only one way to become righteous in God’s sight, only one way to be good in God’s book: through faith in God’s promises. When we read that Noah was righteous, that simply means that Noah was a believer! Noah was righteous through faith in God’s promises through Christ, just like we are.

Here’s the really scary thing: Noah is the only one described as righteous, as having found favor in God’s sight. It’s possible that Noah was the last believer in the world. Some commentators even suggest that when Noah’s wife, sons, and daughters-in-law entered the ark, they may not even have been believers! This is why God didn’t completely destroy the world. There was still one believer and so God spared him and creation all because he loved this one man.

Can you imagine that though! Being the absolute last believer in the world, the only one walking with God? We call our world pretty bad today, but that is nothing compared to what Noah had to go through. Can you imagine Noah preaching to people about the truth for over a hundred years right up until the flood came and to have not a single person believe him? To only have his family join him on that ark? Do not take your fellow Christians for granted! Focus on growing those relationships! Focus on spending time with believers who will push you closer to God. What better friends can you ask for than fellow believers?

So, what can this last righteous man teach us about Living in the Last Days? First: The Scripture calls Noah righteous, that is, he is a believer. He trusted in God’s promise. And God was able to keep Noah in his faith even when he was surrounded by nothing but sin. That is a powerful God. We too can be confident that God will keep us and all his Church standing firm even as our world gets more and more sinful!

But we dare not mess around with sin! Think about the 5 people you spend most of your time with, whether that’s people you are physically around, people you listen to on TV or the radio or people that you read. Ask yourself, “Are these people pushing me toward God or away from God?” If they don’t have a Christian influence on you, you might want to make some changes. Again, what is most important?

Second: Noah is described as “blameless” (or complete, mature). Noah was an all-around child of God. His faith showed itself in every phase of his life. Again, it’s possible that Noah had made that mistake of marrying an unbeliever, but he

continued to grow in his faith and be on guard against that sinful influence. He let his faith guide his life rather than simply letting life happen around him. He made sure that he was getting godly influences in his life so that he wasn't just swept away by the sinful storm all around him. He grew and matured in his faith.

Third: Noah is described as "walking faithfully with God." That word stresses the continuity of the action. He continually walked with God. His life of faith was also a public thing. While his justification was a private matter between him and God, his walk with God was something public. Let your light shine. Don't let your faith be something others can ignore and don't let it be something *you* can ignore!

The last thing we'll look at today: as we said, Noah may have been that last believer in the world. Even his wife and sons may not have believed, but Noah's family was saved from the flood because of Noah's faithful influence. We absolutely need to be careful about the sinful influences in our lives. It can come from family members and loved ones. When we consider how the rest of the world fared when believers married unbelievers, we shouldn't assume that the Christian influence will always win out when it is surrounded by unbelievers, but, as with Noah, God can use just one person's faithful witness to lead others to faith as well. Never discount what God can do as you let your light shine in this dark world!

The world around you and maybe even in your own family may look bad, but do not forget the salvation that God can bring to people. We have a powerful God. He was powerful enough to save Noah even when literally the whole world was against him. God was gracious enough to save Noah's family through Noah's faithful life and preaching. And God is powerful enough to save us as we go on Living in the Last Days. Amen.