

What We Need for the Lord's Days of 2022

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Bible Text: Genesis 8:1-19
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Dear church family, on the first Lord's Day evening of 2022 I would like to preach to you, with God's help, from Genesis 8:6-16 and particularly verse 13 which I'll read now and use it as a grid to examine what we need for the Lord's Days of this year. Verse 13 says,

13 And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.

So our theme tonight is what we need for 2022's Lord's Days. We'll look at three thoughts: we need expectation in God, we need perseverance from God, and we need waiting upon God. So we'll look at Noah's expectation in God, Noah's perseverance from God, and Noah's waiting upon God.

When we enter a new year and come to the first Lord's Day of that year, and consider the Lord's Days that stretch out before us in that year, we are called to have expectation not in man but in our Triune God. Maybe you made some New Year's resolutions yesterday that you've already broken today, but there is such a thing as a holy expectation in God, holy resolutions in God, and Noah possessed that. He possessed a remarkable expectation that remained steadfast for more than an entire year because he had been in the ark, confined in the ark. Boys and girls, you know what it's like when you can't go outside because it's too cold or too windy or too snowy and you're at home maybe for 3-4 days and you can't go outside, it's just too bitter cold. Imagine being trapped in the ark for more than a year, hearing early on in the ark 40 days, 40 days of constant rain, and hearing cries for help in the midst of the rainfall of perishing neighbors outside the ark, some that were relatives perhaps, few that were strangers. They floated on the waters of the flood for five long months. The entire world became an endless ocean. There was no civilization to see, no mountaintop.

Five months that tiny ark floated but they were safe, they were safe in the haven of God's provision, but it wasn't without trial. No doubt there were many times during those

months that Noah must have wondered, "Shall I ever set foot on the earth again, that earth which has disappeared under seemingly endless water? We are safe." But no doubt they felt inside at times like they were buried in the ark. God had shut the door. God had shut the door and for 150 days Noah received no new revelation from God. God was silent. The earth had passed away for the ungodly. No doubt there were also many days that Noah had expectation in the opposite way. "O Lord, who made my family to differ? Why was my family the only one chosen to be safe in the ark?" Perhaps Satan also buffeted him, whispering at times, "You too shall justly perish, Noah. You are a sinner as well." How many thoughts must have gone through Noah's mind, 150 days the Bible says, the water prevailed on the earth.

What was, then, Noah's expectation when it seemed like it was all endless ocean? It was the coming Messiah. It was the coming Messiah. God had made a covenant with him. God promised Noah that he would inherit the earth. Despite all the whisperings of Satan, despite not being able to see the promises being fulfilled, Noah believed it was God's design to uphold the human race through his own family line, for from out of the loins of his generations the Messiah must be born. Even the animals he carried with him in the ark were a testimony that God purposed to populate the earth again.

So Noah retained his expectation even though he must have wondered how God could ever fulfill his promises, and then we read as we enter chapter 8 in verse 1, "And God remembered Noah." And God remembered Noah, precious words. Precious words if you've been cooped up for five months. "And every living thing and all the cattle that was with him in the ark." God did not forget Noah. God sent a strong wind, verse 1 says, to dry up the earth and after 150 days, the ark touched ground, it rested safely on the mountains of Ararat. But Noah's trial wasn't over. Another 40 days were to pass before Noah's questions and riddles concerning his future life upon a new earth would begin to be answered. At that time, another 40 days later, Noah opens the one window, the one window the ark contained and the window was placed in its ceiling apparently, and there's a strong symbolism here, you see. Noah could not look out or around because the ark was built to keep out the water, Noah could only look up. By faith Noah opens this window and lets out a raven, the purpose is to see if it was possible to live upon the earth and the raven was a wise choice, of course, because ravens often feed on dead animals, and when the raven didn't return, Noah knew the earth was at least somewhat inhabitable. It gave him some expectation and yet still no direct word from the Lord, "Get out of the ark." The door of the ark did not go open. Noah did not dare to open it or to try to open it. Noah could only conclude that the earth was not yet sufficiently inhabitable for man. He had to wait on. The trial continued on. Seven months Noah had to wait with his family, seven more months on the top of Ararat for the waters to subside and all the time they had only one open window.

What a beautiful picture this is of the life of God's people at many junctures. Often God's people are brought into great straits, they can see little hope, no light around them, they're brought into deep seas, the water comes up to the lips, the Bible says, and it seems it will overflow them and they're prone to cry out with the psalmist in Psalm 4, and maybe this is you tonight, "O Lord, who will show us any good? Lift thou up the light of thy

countenance upon us. Lord, there's one window, there's one way. When I look forward it seems impossible like going across the Red Sea. When I look to the left and the right, I see my impossible mountains of sins that I have committed. When I look behind me, I see Satan approaching with all his enemies to swallow me up. There's only one way for me to look, to look up to the window of divine hope, to the living God, the God of the heavens, the God of the earth, the God of the seas, the God of the ark." The only place to look.

One time I was reading a book by Octavius Winslow and he said Satan wants you to look in one of five different places: in front of you, to the left, to the right, behind you or inside of you. But there's only one place he doesn't want you to look, to look up. And what you need and what I need particularly on the Lord's Days of this new year, every Lord's Day, is to come to this place with expectation morning and evening because God, the living God, is going to be speaking to you in every sermon. In every sermon, the Holy Spirit will be here taking the words that are spoken or read, putting them as arrows in his bow, shooting them out over the congregation, directing them to each heart according to each heart's need. You need expectation that God will open windows for those who feel closed to him, that God will convert sinners, that God will open windows of perseverance to go forward in the midst of trials, that God will open the window of sending you an undershepherd to break bread, to lead you in word and sacraments, to feed you with spiritual manna from heaven.

You see, children of God, one of our problems is we look out of our own windows too much upon the world, we look around us through our trials and it seems like the Lord shuts up our way until we have only one window left. "Look up to me," the Lord says. "Look up to me." And what a sweet truth this is. When we are oppressed, we are to cry out also in 2022 like Hezekiah, "O Lord, I am oppressed. Undertake for me." Look up, my friend, look up through heaven's window to the great God, the Triune God, who can help you. Then you see, that seed of expectation, that seed of faith, that seed of hope by which you come up not only to the house of God from week to week but live from Monday through Saturday as well, that blessed window that opens up to God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, exercise as God enables you faith through that open window.

Be like Elijah who sent his servant seven times to look for a cloud, even a cloud the size of a man's hand. Even if it cost persecution like Daniel. True faith, you see, is always standing at the window, the open window of hope, the open window of prayer. In the face of the lions' den we read, "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house and his window being opened in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime." Even though he knew he'd be thrown into the lions' den, that open window toward Jerusalem and today, of course, it's an open window toward heaven, was more important to him, that open access to God by prayer was more important to Daniel than being thrown into the lions' den.

I say to you for the Lord's Days of 2022, let your expectation in God be brought to a fever pitch through prayer no matter what the cost, no matter how dark things seem, no matter how dire the things in the nation seem, no matter what problems you face, go to

God in prayer through the open window by faith and pour out your heart before him as if he knew nothing about you, yet knowing he knows everything about you, unbosom yourself into the bosom of your God. That's the way to come up to the house of God, that's the way to live your daily life. Dear friends, what window is open for you? What windows do you look out of? Is your window open or are you in despair? And to whom is your window open? Are your windows the windows of your heart, are they open to the world or are they open to the Lord?

You see, Noah doesn't lose his sense of expectation even though he has only one window for a year's worth of water. After some time, he lets out a dove. A dove is, of course, quite different from a raven, it identifies more with the needs of people and animals. A dove does not feed upon carcasses but upon seeds from the ground. So Noah hoped to learn more about the condition of the earth but we read in verse 9, "But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark." Have you ever thought of what a disappointment that must have been for Noah, to see the dove come back, nothing in her mouth, no place for her to live? And here he thought the earth was beginning to dry up. The lowlands are still obviously underwater. The earth still cannot sustain Noah and his family and the animals of the ark, and yet letting the dove out shows the eagerness of Noah's expectation. Now there's a longing, you see, in Noah's heart to receive the expected promise that the Lord would grant a new earth cleansed by the flood, a new earth wherein would dwell righteousness. There's a longing, an expectation, or should be in the hearts of every believer that as we enter a new year that it might be the year of God's revival, a year of God's reformation, a year of God's renewal, in which the earth would be filled with righteousness.

You know, recently times and decisions and legislation in your government, in our government has been so depressing, sometimes you can hardly keep on reading about it, so ungodly, so much immorality legislated, sanctioned, so many babies still being killed in the womb, that you can get overwhelmed, can't you? What is the world coming to with all of its sexual permissiveness, with all of the crazy crazy things, insane ideas that you can determine your own sex and that's your identity. This is absurd. This is nonsense and we all know it. God has given you your sex, you're male or female. It doesn't matter what you think you are. This is so out of this world, so contrary to the most common sense of basic laws of God, and then the governments want to sanction transgenderism and things of that nature? What is the world coming to? You see, but here Noah has every reason to ask similar questions. It seems like there's no end to the trials. By grace, you see, the first world which was abandoned to wickedness, to wickedness just like in our day, that world is actually being remade through all the impossibilities, through all the darkness, through all the water, and God will bring Noah out into a world wherein dwells righteousness.

There's something beautiful about that, that in the midst of darkness God gives hope. I spent a whole summer of my life at one point studying revivals in church history, and one of the things, two of the things actually I learned was that nearly every revival, nearly every revival in the history of the Christian church, no matter what country it happened or countries it happened in, happened at a time when things were very dark, and nearly every revival happened at a time when things were very dark, when God's people were

grieved over the darkness and God's people began to cry out to the heavens through the open window of prayer for God to deliver, for God to revive. The Bible very seldom begins with the ungodly outside the church walls. Revival often begins with the godly, with the Noah's of this world, with the expectation that God would do a great work.

I've been thinking actually for months now and praying for months that God would do a greater awakening than the original Great Awakening in the 1740s. He's Almighty. He can do it. 1720's and 30's were a time of darkness. Puritanism had died out. People were embracing the Enlightenment. Men, the measure of all things was the motto of the day. You know, at Harvard at that time, Harvard was a school in America that was founded to be bottomed on Christ and there was a President in those days who pulled a craftsman aside and said to him, "It's May now and I'm leaving for the summer, but on this new building that's being erected I want you to put letters 10 feet high across that building, 'Man, the measure of all things.'" At Harvard which was instituted to honor Christ, "Man, the measure of all things." Well, the President came back at the beginning of September, came around the corner and wanted to look at what the craftsman had done and he looked again and it said, "God, what is man that thou art mindful of him?" You see, the man got fired, of course, but he couldn't carve out into that wall, and it's still there today, by the way, that Harvard with all its liberals, a think tank of the radical left, there it stands still today engraven in that wall, "Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him?"

You see, God can do that again. God can bring the godly to the forefront. He can break open the heavens. He can pour down blessings. He can dry up the earth from all the worldly waters that afflict us, and he can help us to come through the open window to heavenly places to cry out for revival.

Noah had expectation. Do you? Or do you just resign yourself to what's happening in Canada and say, "It just seems so dark. I don't know what to do." And so you don't even pray because, well, it seems like those who are contrary to God have won the battle. No. No. No. That is not the right attitude. That's not the right attitude to approach the Lord's Days of 2022. You come to this house with expectation and on the weekdays you cry out to God also for the nation with expectation. God can turn things around. God can do a mighty work. Yes, we don't deserve it. Yes, we deserve to self-destruct, America too. We absolutely deserve to be abandoned by God but let us pray through the open window, "O God, living God of heaven, what wilt thou do with thy great name? These nations that were once known for thy people dwelling among them, please don't let us self-destruct. Get glory to thy name. Revive us. Renew us. Let us be beacons of light in the world again. Let us be known as nations again that fear the Lord in spirit and in truth and let the church be the beginning of the revival. Fill us with holy zeal. Fill us with the open window of expectation and then help us," and that's my second point, "help us to persevere."

To persevere. When the dove returned, Noah does not sit down in despondency. He does not close the window. He doesn't say, "There's no hope anymore." True faith is always active. True faith cannot turn its back on the Lord. True faith believes that God can do the impossible. True faith embraces the promise, what is impossible with man is possible

with God. Seven days later, Noah sends out a dove again. Noah perseveres, perseveres, perseveres. The third bird he sends out, this time the Lord sends him a token of comfort. Look at verse 11, "And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth." What an encouragement for Noah. God was clearly helping. The waters had nearly receded. His promise was beginning to be fulfilled. His covenant was beginning to be realized. "Noah, there is a future. There is an olive leaf." There's a pledge that God's curse was removed from the earth. A newly, notice that, a newly plucked olive leaf. It was fresh. There was hope. This was an answer to Noah's prayers, an answer to his perseverance, a timely answer, a joyous answer, a sufficient answer, a token of God's favor.

Well, you say, it's a small thing, just an olive leaf. But you know, when you get something from God that's small, it's never small if it's from God. It's always big if it's from God. You know, if you have children, you can identify with this, or grandchildren. They bring you a little picture they drew, if that was a picture from an artist, you would say it was ugly. But it's a picture from your child, your grandchild, what do you do? You say, "It's beautiful." You take it to your office, you hang it up, you show other people, "Look at this picture my five year old drew." Or a grandchild. And you love it because of who it's from. You see, when you get something from the Lord, even if you ask for crumbs, he never gives you crumbs, it's always a whole loaf of bread because if it's from the Lord, it makes your heart rejoice, even if it's something as small as an olive leaf because it comes from him. There's hope in him.

God is not a land of outer darkness. Dear child of God, press on, persevere on. Has he not given you olive leaves in the past in the fulfillment of his promises, tokens of his covenant faithfulness, foretastes of heaven? So don't despair now. Press on. God's olive leaves to you are sure pledges that though Satan is a roaring lion, he will never be a devouring lion. He won't get the victory. Your expectations of God shall be confirmed, especially on the great day of days. More than confirmed. The Heidelberg Catechism says it so beautifully, doesn't it, "Since I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy, after this life I shall inherit perfect salvation which eye has not seen, ear has not heard, and has not entered into the heart of man, and that, what God has promised to deliver and that to praise God therein forever."

The message of the olive leaf is, "Do not despise the day of small things. Do not despise the day of small things." You know, some people make much out of nothing when it comes to spiritual blessing. Other people make nothing out of much. But don't rest upon the olive leaves either that God has given you but allow them to comfort you and to arouse you to greater soul activity, to continued perseverance, to press on for more like Noah. Noah was still not able to come out of the ark despite the olive leaf, but he was aroused by the olive leaf to renewed activity.

Seven days later, he exercises persevering faith yet a fourth time. Verse 12, "And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more." What an encouragement. The dove could now rest on the earth. The hope is

enlarged. God is on his way and yet still no word from God. Still no word from God. "You may get out of the ark now, Noah." No. Another month passes and finally on New Year's day, year 601, Noah becomes bold in his perseverance. He removes the covering of the ark. "And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry." First sign, first time he saw the earth in nearly a year. What perseverance he needed and what perseverance we need.

Don't be overwhelmed with fear. Your God lives. Don't say, "What will become of my children in this worldly world?" Your God lives. He's a covenant keeping God. Your children are not lost yet. God is not done dealing with them yet. He's a covenant keeping God. Storm his mercy seat. Beg for revival. Send out your doves. Send out your doves and wait on God. He is worthy to be waited on. Despite many waters, despite many closed windows, your God is not done with you either. Ask God to make much of each Sabbath day for your soul, not just the souls of your children, your grandchildren, your soul as well, that he would feed you with spiritual food that you would wait on him for more.

You see, God through Jesus Christ will satisfy his people fully, and so Noah waits on God, that's my third thought. Verse 13, the first day of the seventh century, the ground was dry but Noah still does not leave the ark. He did not close the door of the ark and he cannot open the door of the ark. He knows that he has to wait for God's timing. He knows that God will open the door at the right time. There's a holy expectation, there's a holy perseverance, but there's also a holy waiting. He doesn't want to run behind the Lord. He doesn't want to run ahead of the Lord. There's a holy waiting.

You see, there could be an unholy expectation, there could be an unholy perseverance that produces man-centered opening of doors that God has shut, but there's also such a thing as holy waiting, active, prayerful waiting. Matthew Henry said, "He that believes does not make haste to run before God but he does make haste to go forth to meet him." Let me repeat that because that's profound, "He that believes does not make haste to run before God but he does make haste to go forth to meet God." So we need wisdom, we need grace in 2022 not to close doors God has opened and not to open doors God has shut, wisdom to run with patience the race set before us looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

Noah had to wait two more months, two more months nearly after the earth was dry before the Lord opened the door and spoke to him. Finally he heard the revelation of God which, of course, we have in the whole word of God, every day we can read it, but "God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee." One year and 10 days Noah had not heard the direct voice of God. One year and 10 days he waited on God, trusting in his promises, and finally God came, "You may enter the new world, Noah." Noah's waiting was rewarded. As we sing, we wait to hear what God will say, peace to his people he will speak.

And when Noah can finally get out of the ark, what does he do? Well, the first thing he does is he builds an altar to the Lord, verses 20 and 21, "And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done." Isn't that beautiful? God remembered Noah and Noah remembered God.

When Noah got out of the ark, he didn't go plant a flag and say, "This ground is mine. The earth is mine. I'm the only family. I claim everything. Let's build a house." He built an altar. He built an altar. The first thing he did was to build an altar to worship God, to thank God. You see, that's also how we should begin this year. In the midst of darkness, in the midst of waiting, in the midst of persevering, we should still be building altars, prayer altars, family altars in the home, family worship every day. Our homes, said the Puritans, ought to be little churches where we worship God around the family altar.

What a beautiful type of God's people Noah's waiting is. A type of God's people here on earth. Here on earth, we are often waiting more than we're possessing. Often we cannot understand why the Lord still delays in answering some of our prayers. A young man perhaps in this audience is called to the ministry of the word but, well, the Lord seems to delay opening the door. Or maybe another or several of you are burdened with heavy heavy trials and the Lord seems to speak no encouragement and get no solution. In his sovereignty, in his wisdom, taking reasons out of himself, he seems to delay and you don't know why and you don't understand perhaps that we learn more spiritually for our own souls in waiting times than we do in possessing times. But I assure you based on the word of God, based on the experience of Noah, that those who follow God's word as their rule and his grace is their principle and his providence is their diary, those who are spiritual pilgrims shall have their waiting upon God rewarded.

God never disappoints the waiting people. God's covenantal faithfulness, he cared for Noah and his family for an entire year when the wrath of God had destroyed all other people and all animals that lived upon the earth. God is able to do that for you and your family in 2022. He's able to save every one of your children. He's able to do great and mighty things. Wait upon him. But not only on earth, wait on him for heaven. After many struggles, your little ship will one day land upon the shores of celestial bliss, dear believer, and you will hear the voice of your Master say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world." And you will enter the heavenly world, the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness and perfection, and you will come out of the ark of this world, of being in Christ here, and you'll be with the ark of arks forever, Jesus Christ in glory. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Well, I want to leave you tonight with three points of advice, three points of advice from this fascinating history. Number 1 is this: never be jealous of inactive faith. Never be jealous of inactive faith or of self-sufficient faith but seek holy, active, Spirit-worked faith. Seek holy, active, Spirit-worked faith. Faith that can open God's doors all by itself

is usually man-made faith. Faith that is inactive, consistently inactive, is usually dead faith, it's unbelief. God has no idle people. Spiritual slothfulness is at very best the fruit of spiritual darkness, but real faith is active. It waits on the Lord, not passively, actively. It prays on. It's like Noah, his expectation is seen in six exercises of faith: opening the window of the ark, number 1; sending the raven, number 2; numbers 3 through 5, sending out the dove three times; and number 6, removing the covering. And yet he couldn't bring himself out of the ark but the Lord doesn't put him to shame, he who closes doors will open the doors that he will open at his time, and his timing is always perfect. The expectation of the righteous, the Bible says, shall be fulfilled but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.

So seek holy, active, Spirit-worked faith. Lesson number 2: seek grace to imitate Noah's dove and not the first raven. Raven in the Bible, a raven is sometimes a type of the unconverted. It finds its home in the world. It flies to and fro, Genesis 8 says. There was no need to return to the ark. But the dove which serves as a type of God's people, as you know in scripture in different places, needs to return to the ark. It finds no rest in this world not because the dove has no eyes to see or no wings to fly, but because she was a dove she's not at home in this world. Josephus, the ancient historian, when he writes about this history says that the dove returned to the ark with her wings and feet wet and muddy. Just an interesting comment, wet and muddy. Symbolically, you see, child of God, you've grown wet and muddy, too muddy by intermixing in the world, and yet you cannot stay away from the ark, your ark of safety, Jesus Christ. What a blessing if in this year you would be constantly flying to the ark, that the muddy waters of this world would never give you rest, but that you would find your rest in Christ with the people of God.

So today is the first day of a year of Sabbaths, the Lord willing. Every Lord's Day you'll be called to examine something about yourself, not least of which will be your expectation. Soon the time will come when you have no year of Sabbaths stretching before you, the doors of God's house will go shut, we'll enter a world where everything is eternal. We need to be ready for that world. We need to be saved in this world, saved by grace, shall we enter the world to come in peace. Look at Noah's day. Who was saved? Only those who were in the ark. You've got to be in the ark. You've got to fly to Jesus Christ. The ark is a type of him. You've got to use the means diligently in this year, be in the word this year, be in the word with expectation. Jesus Christ can give you everything you need. He can grow you. He can save you. He can grow you. He can give you persevering grace. He can give you expectant grace. He can give you waiting grace. Seek grace to imitate Noah's dove, not the raven.

Then number 3: treat others as Noah treated the dove which returned to him. Treat others as Noah treated the dove which returned to him. As Noah was looking for the dove, you should be on the look-out for souls. Go off into the window for them in prayer. Look up to God and cry out for their salvation. Be on the look-out for their flutterings as they seek to enter the ark. Like Noah, stretch out a hand to sinners to receive them into the church family. Do it gently. Do it lovingly. Remember doves are not ravens. Stretch out your hand to lay hold of sinners. Seek grace to guide them to the ark. Do not rest in your dealings with sinners, in your counseling of sinners, until God has brought them into the

ark together with you. Do not rest until they, too, see their life in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Be more earnest about the souls of sinners than you are about their bodies while you do not neglect their physical needs either, of course.

And finally, my unconverted friend, what advice shall I leave you? Just four words: flee to the Ark immediately. Flee to Ark immediately, with a capital "A." When Jesus spoke of the second advent, of his coming again, he said, "But as the days of Noah were, so shall the days of the coming of the Son of Man be." We're in those days. We don't know when the Lord will come but we have reason to believe it will be soon. Soon. Could it be 2022? Are we ready if the Lord were to come in the clouds now? Are you ready? What is your life? Are you ready to prepare to be prepared to meet God in righteousness and peace of Jesus Christ? Or are you continuing to pursue the pathway of self-promotion, pathways of sin? Are you refusing to enter the open door of the ark? Are you embracing the dreadful sin of unbelief? The day will come God will shut the door, the door of the ark. Heaven opened its window, earth opened her mouth, but God destroyed the impenitent. God indeed shuts the door of the ark, well, let us not forget that that door was opened by him for many years. It was persistent unbelief that destroyed the first world. Don't let it destroy your world, your life.

Today in our wicked world, God sets before us the ark of safety and I proclaim it to you right now at the close of this sermon: friend, in him, in Jesus, God is well-pleased. He's God's Ark and this Ark is God's devised plan to save sinners from the coming flood of his eternal wrath. The door is yet open tonight, wide open for sinners. On the inside of the ark the door reads, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." On the outside of the door of the ark it reads, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." The invitation comes to you tonight. The door is open, open wide enough for the biggest animals to enter the ark, even cows and elephants could enter in. The biggest sinner here tonight, the door is more than wide enough to receive you. It may be a narrow door from our perspective because it means, like Noah, that we have to lose all our righteousness and we must die to ourselves, but from a divine perspective, God has a large heart in Christ to draw sinners, to save sinners to himself. In Christ there is plenteous salvation for the chief of transgressors. The Canons of Dort say it so well, "The death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sin and is of infinite worth and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world." Martin Luther said there's such an infinite value in one drop of Christ's blood that one drop of that blood is sufficient to save a thousand worlds.

Flee to God's Ark while there's still time, while the door of salvation is not shut, while the last elect is not yet drawn in, or your life does not yet come to a close. It will be too late, it will be too late on the judgment day to take refuge in the Ark of safety. Then the door will be eternally shut and if you remain unsaved, I say it to you in love, you will curse, you will curse your persistent unbelief for a never never never ending eternity.

I end where I began with you Friday night: God is digging and dunging about your fig tree this weekend, this Sabbath, and he'll be doing it, if he spares you, every Sabbath of this year. There's an open Ark, there's an open door, there's a vinedresser who can give

fruit on your tree. Why will you die, O house of Israel? Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near.

So what is your expectation for 2022? What is your perseverance for 2022? What are you waiting on for 2022? Be like Noah. Be like Noah. Let your expectation be in God. Let your perseverance be from God. And let your waiting be upon God in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.