

Hebrews 11:7
Noah - The Man Who Stood Alone
July 8, 2018, Chris Coon

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Good morning! I'm really thankful to be here again to share with you some of the things that God has been teaching me through His word. I'm constantly being challenged to strengthen my faith through these scriptures in Hebrews 11 and I want to encourage you in your faith today. Let's pray first before we get started.

This morning we are going to be looking at the great example of faith set by Noah within the context of Hebrews chapter 11. We are going to see how Noah's obedience and faith, while extraordinary, are not only inspiring, but also relatable. There are some truths about Noah's story that we can adopt to produce a deeper, stronger faith in Jesus Christ. This famous story of Noah who saves all of humankind, and the entire animal kingdom, is not just a story about building a big boat. There's much more about the life of Noah that will help us to run the good race with endurance that God has given us. The verse that we are going to focus on this morning is Hebrews 11:7.

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Hebrews 11:7 says,

"It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who had warned him about things that had never happened before. By his faith Noah condemned the rest of the world, and he received the righteousness that comes by faith." (NLT)

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So, it's easy to see that there are 4 major components in this one short verse. There are 4 things that take place that make this a beautiful, epic story of faith, obedience, perseverance, and love. **First**, Noah builds a massive boat, traditionally, we like to call it an ark, and we all know a little bit about that part of the story. **Second**, he was obedient throughout the

process - he submitted to God's will before, during, and after the build. He obeyed God wholly. **Third**, he condemned the whole world by his faith and we are going to talk about what that means. **Fourth**, he was rewarded with righteousness by God because of his faith.

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Before we tackle these four aspects of the verse and story, I'd like to just briefly review Noah, the man. Who was he and why did God choose him to carry out this remarkable task? Can we relate to him?

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Genesis 6:9 says,

“Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God.” (NLT)

Now, it's important to remember that the words 'righteous' and 'blameless' do not mean 'sinless.' Noah was a man. He was not an angel or any other type of divine being. So, that means he was born a sinner just like you and me. Because he was human, there is no doubt that he struggled with sin and that he made mistakes in his life. When he hit his thumb with that big mallet, there may have been some....interesting words coming out of his mouth. I find the latter portion of this verse very encouraging, ***“...he walked in close fellowship with God.”***

Noah had a relationship with God - a close relationship. He talked to God and God talked to him. Jesus Christ had not been born into the world yet so Noah did not pray to God in Jesus' name. He did not believe in the authority of the name of Jesus Christ in his daily walk with God, but It's important to understand that Jesus was present. In the beginning of the book of John we know that Jesus was there from the beginning and everything was created through Him and by Him and He's the real hero of this story.

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John 1:1-3 says,

“In the beginning the word already existed. The word was with God, and the word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him.” (NLT)

Jesus is the word and Jesus is God, but at this time He had not fulfilled the role of Redeemer yet for Noah and his family and the rest of the world because he had not conquered death yet on the cross. This happens about 2500 years later.

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So we know that Noah had a close relationship with God. His faith was very strong and he was obedient. He listened and obeyed. He was a doer. Everyone in his community and all the neighboring communities and lands and peoples all around him must have told him over and over that he was wrong and crazy to be building such a huge boat. What is he doing? People must have thought that he was crazy. So we know that Noah must have had an unshakeable and immovable faith to endure all the harsh social scoffing that must have been ever present. He stood alone in this regard.

We also know that Noah was righteous and blameless. You couldn't blame Noah for anything. It's the opposite in my house. My oldest son Noah usually gets blamed by his brother and sister for everything. If something happens, it's always Noah's fault. It's not, always, they just say it is. We know that Noah was a husband and a father. He had 3 sons. We are told in Genesis 5:32 that he became a father at 500 years old and it was around this time that God commanded him to build the ark to save his family.

We know that Noah must have been a carpenter and an engineer of sorts and we can also deduce from the scriptures in Genesis that talk about the birth of his sons and other events that it took him somewhere between 55 and 75 years to build the boat.

The flood happened when he was 600 years old and he lived another 350 years after the flood so he was 950 years old when he died. 950 years old!

Man...I'm 48...and I'm already tired. I can't even imagine living that long. When do you think those old patriarchs were considered really old? In present times anything over 30 or 40 is considered... 'older' to anyone 25 or under right. So, back then, was it like around 4 or 500 years old when you started to be considered really old to the 1 or 200 year olds, or was that just middle-age. Back then, the 1 or 200 year old people were probably called the 'centennials' - like the 'millennials' of today.

We also know from scripture that Noah planted a vineyard in his old age and he got drunk on his own wine at least once. And, we know that he was a little hot-tempered because he cursed his son Ham just for telling his brothers that he had passed out naked. That's about everything we know about Noah the man. God saved him and his family because he was the only one in God's eyes who was worthy of being saved. He found favor in God's eyes. Every other living person in the world was evil and corrupt all the time and God wiped them out - everyone except Noah and his family. I think that says a lot about the man. Now that we know a little bit more about him, let's talk more about these 4 points in Hebrews 11:7.

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Number 1: The first part of the verse says,
"It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood." Hebrews 11:7 (NLT)

Sometime after Noah had turned 500 years old and had 3 sons, God told him to build a boat because He was going to wipe out every living thing on earth. God gave Noah specific instructions and Noah did everything exactly the way God told him to do it.

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Genesis 6:22 says,
"Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him."(NLT)

Noah was obedient to the core. His faith was not exhibited only by the things he said. He took notes from God and achieved his task. He just did it and when you think of the magnitude of what he accomplished, it's

absolutely incredible. I've built a few houses for my family and building a house takes 5 or 6 months, if things go well, sometimes a little more. Usually, I'm just so tired and I say I never want to do it again...at 4 months. Building a house is kind of like having a baby in some ways, not that I know what it's like to have a baby. It's like this tremendous amount of work and perseverance and anxiety and then, suddenly, it's done, like giving birth. You say, "I'm never going to do this again, but when it's done and a few months have gone by, you start thinking, I'd like to build another one. At least I did. But listen, Noah built the same boat for over 50 years. That's an amazing amount of perseverance, faith, physical and mental strength, patience, and determination for one project. What an accomplishment. How many people must have visited him over the years while he was working? How many of those people would have tried to give him advice? He was preparing for something that wasn't going to happen for 50, 60 or 70 years later. Not to mention...he was over 500 years old! That's crazy. That's incredible faith!

Noah trusted and believed God's words. The reason why Noah did everything exactly as God asked him to is because he had a loving and trusting relationship with God. He walked closely with God on a daily basis. Noah's faith was demonstrated by what he did and he did everything exactly as God had told him to do. I think that if Noah had any doubt at all about the things that God told him were going to happen, there's no way he could have completed that boat to save his family. I don't think there's any way he could have endured the physical hardship, the emotional turmoil, the social ridicule, or the mental gymnastics needed to complete the task if he had doubts about what God was planning to do in the future. I think he just wouldn't have been able to do it.

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Number 2: The second part of this incredible verse in Hebrews is about **obedience** and we've touched on this a little bit already.

Hebrews 11:7 says,
"He obeyed God, who had warned him about things that had never happened before." (NLT)

So, we've already seen that Noah was obedient to God and that is one of the reasons why his faith saved him and his family from God's wrath. Now, I have to draw our attention back to Jesus Christ at this point because there are so many parallels between the faith of Jesus and the faith of Noah. Jesus lived his whole life knowing that he was going to fulfill scripture through crucifixion on the cross when he was 33 and He was consistently obedient to His father for all those years that He lived on earth. All the decisions that he made throughout his life on earth were made knowing that he was going to save all of humankind by paying the price for all of our sins on the cross. He's the ultimate hero. Jesus' faith is the model of obedience for everyone.

Can any of us say the same? I can't. I'm totally ashamed to say that my faith is more consistently just words than it is obedience in action. I do a great job saying that I'm a believer in Jesus but I fail to prove it in obedience by doing the next right thing all the time. I stink at that. Can you evaluate your heart this morning and ask yourself, "Am I truly obedient to God?" "Do I do the things that I promise God that I'm going to do?" "Do I do the things that God asks me to do?" These are important questions that need to be answered if we are to grow and move forward in our relationship with Christ if we want to run a good race.

Now, I want to encourage you. There is hope for you and me.

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If you believe in the name of Jesus and repent of your sins and ask God to forgive you, you have the hope of Jesus Christ within you.

Colossians 1:27 says,

"For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory." Colossians 1:27 (NLT)

He lives in you and walks with you everyday and we need to take time to remember that. He carries us when we need to be carried and He is our

comfort and our strength. We need to talk with God on a daily basis and take the time to listen to Him so that our personal relationship can be filled with joy and peace. We are His children and we are beautiful and precious in His eyes. We are His bride.

So far, we know that God wiped out every living thing because everyone living then was corrupt. The world was corrupt and people were evil all the time. Every thought that everyone had was evil. Brutal. Noah was different because he pleased God and was considered righteous, but God didn't need Noah to build a boat. God created everything through the Word, through His son Jesus Christ. He created Adam and Eve and their lineage led to Noah. God didn't need to have Noah save what God had created. God could have done it in any number of ways. This begs the question...why? Why did God ask Noah to build a boat? God doesn't need us to do anything for Him. He doesn't need us in that way, but He loves us so much. He wants to give us the opportunity to love Him by being obedient. **Our obedience is God's love language.** We show our love for Jesus Christ by doing the things that he does.

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In **John 14:15**, Jesus says,
"If you love me, obey my commandments." NLT

Obedience is a choice. Noah chose to build the ark. God didn't force him. His faith was the way that he loved God. His obedience was the proof of that love. There is nothing in scripture that suggests that Noah questioned God or took his time to answer God. There's no indication that Noah needed any further explanation or clarification. He just obeyed and did everything exactly as God wanted. He kept it simple. There's an old hymn written by Joseph Brackett called "Simple Gifts" that captures the essence of this kind of simple faith.

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Simple Gifts: Joseph Brackett

'Tis a gift to be simple, 'tis a gift to be free

'Tis a gift to come down where I ought to be

And when I am in the place just right
I will be in the valley of love and delight
When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend I will not be ashamed
To turn, to turn will be my delight
'Till be turning, turning, I come 'round right.

I love those lyrics - "To bow and to bend..." You see, God can't shape and mold us into the people that He wants us to be unless we bow and bend and turn toward Him. Believers are like lights on the earth, and when we have a close relationship with Jesus, who is the Living Water, we bend or refract toward God because light bends in water. Our obedience allows us to be clay in His hands. We have to be willing to be molded by Him and not be ashamed of it.

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Number 3: The third part of **Hebrews 11:7** says,
"By his faith Noah condemned the rest of the world..." (NLT)

Because of Noah's faith and obedience to do exactly what God had asked of him, the rest of the world was condemned to die. Noah condemned them because of their unbelief. He stood alone in this aspect. He stood firm in his belief and in his conviction that God would do what he said he was going to do. The rest of the world was completely wiped off the face of the planet. Everyone and everything drowned in the great flood.

This meant that Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives were to start a new world. There's not a lot more to say on this point except to say that it must have been extremely hard for Noah emotionally to carry on throughout the years knowing that every human being and animal was going to perish because he had become part of God's plan. Noah believed and trusted in what God was telling him. He believed that God was going to execute this plan of total annihilation and he just kept working. **His great faith was simple**, childlike and, as a result, **He was free** to do God's will.

It seems that Noah didn't overcomplicate or over-examine his faith. There is nothing in scripture that indicates that Noah needed God to prove anything.

Is your faith like this? Is it simple and childlike or do you wait to hear or see more from God before you obey Him? Are there stipulations to your faith? Have you ever prayed, "God, **IF** you help me through this, I will be faithful to you. I will do whatever you want. I will be good...**IF** you help me through this." I've prayed prayers like these before.

Jesus Christ is our spiritual father. There's nothing wrong with obeying Him just for that reason. When my kids were younger I used to say, "You'll do it because I'm your dad and I asked you to do it." I totally own that and I think that's okay. Now, I know that one of my kids is probably going to write a book about growing up in my house but that's okay too. Noah's simple faith was strengthened by obedience and perseverance and, because of it, the rest of the world was changed forever.

I want to encourage you to **stand firm** in your faith in Christ today. Don't let the unbelief of the world around you shake your faith. Be bold and stand firm.

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Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 16:13-14**,
"Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong. And do everything with love." (NLT)

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Number 4: The last portion of **Hebrews 11:7** says,
"...he received the righteousness that comes by faith." (NLT)

This is the most encouraging part of the verse, but the hardest to really understand. Noah ran a good race and He and His family received God's blessing. They lived. The waters receded and they were the only people

left on the earth and the animals they had with them were the only animals. All that was corrupt drowned in the flood. This was an incredible act of God and nothing like this had ever happened before in history, **BUT** this wasn't the end of the story. This wasn't all God had promised Noah. Remember, Noah walked closely with God. He had a close relationship with Him. Noah knew that he and his family were only **guests** on earth. A few verses later in Hebrews chapter 11:13 it says,

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“All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth.” Hebrews 11:13 (NLT)

This verse is the key to understanding Noah's faith. He inherited this world because he survived the great flood, but he also inherited the world to come through the righteousness of Jesus Christ because of his faith. The righteousness Noah received is not a reference to his obedience to the law. It wasn't because he was a good law-abiding citizen, although I'm sure he probably was. The righteousness Noah received is the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

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There is only one way to God and that way is through Jesus Christ who is sitting at God's right hand. Noah's faith and our faith have the same essence - **a personal belief in a personal Christ** who seeks **us**. He's the hero of everybody's story. The ark didn't save Noah. The relationship he had with God and the trust he had in the promise of a distant future with God is what saved Noah and his family.

This is why we can relate to Noah. Our faith is the same. We also have to repent, believe, and trust in Jesus. This is what brings the distant future of living forever with Jesus near to us. The act of accepting the gift of God's grace was the same for Noah as it is for us today. The act of trusting, believing, and accepting God's words with our whole hearts throughout history has always been and continues to be the same. It's the same for

everyone who's ever lived and everyone living now and everyone who will live.

Do you trust in God? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to God? Maybe you only believe in **some** of these stories that you read in the bible. Have you ever doubted **some** of God's truths? As I get older, I hear more and more of my friends and acquaintances saying, "I just don't think that **everything** in the bible is true, but I believe **most** of it. I just think that what God was saying was for the people back then and their culture and it just doesn't apply as much now. I mean, we know so much more now with the technology we have." That's a lie. Have any of you heard these words before or have you spoken them yourself?

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The way to God is narrow. Jesus says in **John 14:6**,

"...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me." NLT

Noah knew this. Throughout our lives our faith will be constantly tested by the people around us who don't believe. It could be family, friends, bosses, teachers, politicians, lawyers, doctors, even judges. The world is full of unbelief and sometimes you might feel like you're the only one in your community or your work place that believes in the word of God. Wherever you are, you might be the only person that believes in the name of Jesus Christ. Be encouraged, you're not the first. Noah stood alone first.

If you believe in Jesus Christ, he lives in you and will give you the strength to endure any kind of hardship and persecution. What is preventing you from putting your faith in Jesus today? I want to encourage you to trust in God's promises. I want to encourage you to believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to God and that He is searching for you and waiting for you to respond to Him. There is no other way to God.

After the flood, God promises Noah that he will never again destroy the earth in the same way.

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Genesis 9:8-17 says,

⁸ Then God told Noah and his sons, ⁹ “I hereby confirm my covenant with you and your descendants, ¹⁰ and with all the animals that were on the boat with you—the birds, the livestock, and all the wild animals—every living creature on earth. ¹¹ Yes, I am confirming my covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth.”

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¹² Then God said, “I am giving you a sign of my covenant with you and with all living creatures, for all generations to come. ¹³ I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my covenant with you and with all the earth. ¹⁴ When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will appear in the clouds, ¹⁵ and I will remember my covenant with you and with all living creatures.

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Never again will the floodwaters destroy all life. ¹⁶ When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth.” ¹⁷ Then God said to Noah, “Yes, this rainbow is the sign of the covenant I am confirming with all the creatures on earth.”

This is called the Noahic Covenant and it is an unconditional covenant because it is based solely on God’s faithfulness. It has nothing to do with anything that Noah did. Whenever we see a rainbow we should be reminded of God’s faithfulness and His amazing grace. We should be reminded of His unconditional love for us.

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Hebrews 12:1-2 urges us to fix our eyes on Jesus.

“...And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.” NLT

Just like Noah, we are Christ’s ambassadors today. God’s judgement is coming and we are to urge others to be reconciled through Christ. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:20,

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2 Corinthians 5:20 (NLT)

²⁰ So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!”

This is what I want to leave you with today. Come back to God. Put your trust and believe in Jesus Christ. Remember God’s faithfulness and stand firm. Let’s pray.