

Genesis 8.20-9.17

Noah built an altar to the LORD; he took one of each kind of ritually clean animal and bird, and burned them whole as a sacrifice on the altar. The odour of the sacrifice pleased the LORD, and he said to himself, “Never again will I put the earth under a curse because of what people do; I know that from the time they are young their thoughts are evil. Never again will I destroy all living beings, as I have done this time. As long as the world exists, there will be a time for planting and a time for harvest. There will always be cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.” God blessed Noah and his sons and said, “Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth. All the animals, birds, and fish will live in fear of you. They are all placed under your power. Now you can eat them, as well as green plants; I give them all to you for food. The one thing you must not eat is meat with blood still in it; I forbid this because the life is in the blood. If anyone takes human life, he will be punished. I will punish with death any animal that takes a human life. ¶Human beings were made like God, so whoever murders one of them will be killed by someone else.

⁷ “You must have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth.”

God said to Noah and his sons, “I am now making my covenant with you and with your descendants, and with all living beings—all birds and all animals—everything that came out of the boat with you. With these words I make my covenant with you: I promise that never again will all living beings be destroyed by a flood; never again will a flood destroy the earth. As a sign of this everlasting covenant which I am making with you and with all living beings, I am putting my bow in the clouds. It will be the sign of my covenant with the world. Whenever I cover the sky with clouds and the rainbow appears, I will remember my promise to you and to all the animals that a flood will never again destroy all living beings. When the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between me and all living beings on earth. That is the sign of the promise which I am making to all living beings.” (GNT)

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in Your Sight Oh Our God.

Some of you may be wondering why I have started with the Old Testament reading. Basically, as you all know I am currently studying to join our Readers and this week I am required to preach from the Old

Testament. Those of you who joined in with Rev Stuart's Lenten Bible Studies will know that he introduced the Old Testament as a love letter to first the Jews and to the whole world.

Yet how apt that in this time of shut down we read about a family shut in basically a wooden box with lots of animals who emerge after a year. (At this point I intended showing an Ark and animals but was unable to tape my presentation) It brings the three months some of us have been advise not leave our homes into perspective especially as we are being cared for by our brothers and sisters in Christ who whilst staying at home most of the time use their shopping time and in my case exercise time to meet the needs of we who are shielded. Chrissie who walks my dogs and who knows that I am preaching about Noah says she is glad she did not have to exercise the animals when they came out of the ark. We have windows to see out of, we can clap with our neighbours on Thursday evening. The fact that many people are using the same sign of the covenant that God gave to Noah to symbolise His promise never to destroy the world by rain to show that they are supporting the NHS is interesting as the NHS is light in the darkness Covid-19. Also I have discovered that children are sending pictures of rainbows to those in nursing homes, care homes, elderly care complexes or villages to show that they are thinking of them. By putting the rainbow in the sky it is clear that when it is raining the sun is not far away is surly evidence of God's Love.

What about the rest? God recognised that even though Noah had previously walked with God, mankind is sinful, and all the earth's resources are not sufficient sacrifice wipe out those sins. God ensured that the earth's resources where plenty after the flood sadly we humans are greedy and have taken the resources that God kindly provided for us as food and use them as trophies failing to ensure that all are able to share in the abundance that God provided. God does not require the sacrifice of animals as He provided Himself but many of humans do.

We even require the grain sacrificed to gods of profit causing starvation meaning that populations are more likely to succumb to the pandemic.

One of the side effects of our present time is a willingness to reach out by others for example on Thursday need to go to the Dr and could not open my garage door so asked my neighbour for help he came round and not only sorted my door but when I returned had fixed my fence which had blown down a few days ago and we should be reaching back with God's Love by praying for 5 people who God has laid on our hearts by joining the global wave of prayer at www.thykingdomcome.global. If you do not have internet no need to worry on Thursday which is Ascension Day begin praying the Lord's Prayer for your 5 friends.

We are the first generation facing a global pandemic who have had as much information stream to our homes. This means we can be inspired by Captain Tom raising money by walking laps in his garden and now at 100 years being top of the hit parade. But equally depressed by a politician on life television suggested using bleach internally to cure the pandemic. Part of this is a desire to look outside ourselves for answers many of the religious services broadcast have had higher than expected audiences. We as Christians know that the answers are in Christ but what about our neighbours perhaps this week you could tell them about our service and where to find it on the internet.

What about verse 7 which says **"You must have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth.** well firstly we are not required to repopulate the world as it will not need it. Secondly in the human sense many including me have gone past the time when we can do this in the physical realm but in our Gospel reading Jesus promises that God will send us a Helper who will reveal all truth. That means that we can know all truth about Jesus and share it. These are the children God seeks. We are blessed to have Rev Paul, Rev Stuart, and Ian to share God's Word

with us also Eileen who though retired still is able to inspire us but what about those who do not come to our services? How do they hear? Through little Stars sadly not at the moment. By afternoon tea and chat also not at the moment. May be by each one of us sharing what we have heard on Sunday. Also by sharing why we come to church. Why we are like Noah in that we walk with God. If we do not walk with God why not? Look at the nature He has provided for each and everyone of us. We are His creation we live in His wonderful creation. He offered Himself as the ultimate sacrifice Jesus He dwells in each one of us by the Holy Spirit. So if your neighbours are on the internet invite them to our fellowship next Sunday and share your own faith with them. If they are not internet users why not pray for them and you that you will be able to share your faith in a meaningful way. If they are sheltered and face isolation may be a phone call. Pray that God will lead you.

Amen