



God's Covenant with Noah

Before we go into the covenant with Noah, we have to understand righteousness.

Q: How did Noah become righteous in the eyes of God?

A: By being obedient? God told him the rain was going to come and to build an ark. It took a long time.

Q: Yes, but obedience is consequence of another virtue.

A: Faith. Noah believed God. St. Paul says God considers those who believe and construct their lives based on what God says, "righteous."

This is one of the biggest pieces of the New Testament, and it is going to launch the biggest debate of the Reformation.

When Jesus starts the Sermon on the Mount, he says, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness” (Matthew 5:6) and “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.” (Matthew 5:10)

Jesus says, do not seek what the world seeks, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” (Matthew 6:33)

Q: What is Righteousness?

A: To be a beloved member of God’s family. To be pleasing to God, delightful to His soul.

Q: How did Noah achieve righteousness in this account?

A: He made his life based upon God’s word, like Abraham, who followed God to the promised land. He trusted in God.

Q: Why is trusting God important? Why is faith important? Why is this the most important issue for God?

A: Love?

Q: Trust and love are not the same. You cannot have love without trust. You must have trust in order to have love. Why is faith, trust important?

Q: How did humans lose their relationship with God?

A: The Devil said, "You will not die." You got into a conflict here. Which one should you believe?

Humans chose to disbelieve and distrust God. That is why they covered themselves and hid behind a tree.

Q: What is the first step to become a part of God's family, to become a child of God?

A: To realize that He rewards those who trust in him.

At the font of baptism, the person says, "I trust you, God, I believe and confess with my mouth, that you sent your Son to offer a mysterious act of sacrificing Yourself to offer us forgiveness, Your resurrection to offer us resurrection."

That's why St. Paul says, "If you believe and confess with your mouth, you are saved." (Romans 10:9-10)

We get righteousness by believing in the heart and confessing with the mouth. In the liturgy we have both. We say, for righteousness and salvation, "Amen, Amen, Amen, O Lord, Your death we proclaim; Your Holy Resurrection and Ascension we proclaim."

Believe in your heart and confess with your mouth and shape your life as a member of God's family.

David, in chapter 16 gets anointed, and in the very next chapter, 17, challenges Goliath. He was anointed to be the King to defend the people. (Nobody knew he was the anointed King, but he knew, and God knew.)

“For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.” (Romans 14:17-18)

If you would be perfect, you would say, “I am a useless servant. I only lived what God gave me.”

Joseph said, “How can I do this evil thing and sin against God?”

The Pharisee said, "Lord thank you that I am not like this publican." He actually sees himself good apart from God.

It is the trust of God that constructs our life.

The Rabbis would say, Moses gave us 365 commandments, summarized in 10, summarized in 2, as in Dt 6 and Lev 19.

Habakkuk would say, "As for the righteous (צדיק, tsadik), he shall live by faith." (Habakkuk 2:4), also quoted in Hebrews, "The righteous shall live by faith, but if any man turn back, my soul will have no delight in him."
(Hebrews 10:38)

Don't try to be good. Try to believe.

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
(Galatians 3:27)

“And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” (Romans 6:13)

“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.”
(1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

You have been purchased at a price.

A Pharisee will think of himself in and of himself and not in light of God’s gift.

This is a transforming point. Catholics started talking about saints as heroes and penance.

By faith ...

By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it, he, being dead, still speaks. (Hebrews 11:4)

By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. (Hebrews 11:5)

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. (Hebrews 11:7)

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. (Hebrews 11:8)

By faith Abraham dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. (Hebrews 11:9)

By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. (Hebrews 11:11)

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, (Hebrews 11:17)

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. (Hebrews 11:20)

By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. (Hebrews 11:21)

By faith Joseph, when he was dying,
made mention of the departure
of the children of Israel,
and gave instructions
concerning his bones.
(Hebrews 11:22)

By faith Moses, when he was born, was
hidden three months by his
parents, because they saw he
was a beautiful child; and
they were not afraid of the
king's command.
(Hebrews 11:23)

By faith Moses, when he became of age,
refused to be called the son
of Pharaoh's daughter.
(Hebrews 11:24)

By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not
fearing the wrath of the
king; for he endured as
seeing Him who is invisible.
(Hebrews 11:27)

By faith Moses kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them. (Hebrews 11:28)

By faith the Israelites passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned. (Hebrews 11:29)

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. (Hebrews 11:30)

By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. (Hebrews 11:31)

By faith Gideon, Barak, Samson,
Jephthah, David, Samuel, and
the prophets subdued
kingdoms, worked
righteousness, obtained
promises, stopped the mouths
of lions, quenched the
violence of fire, escaped the
edge of the sword, out of
weakness were made strong,
became valiant in battle, and
turned to flight the armies
of the aliens.

(Hebrews 11:32-34)

“Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

(Luke 7:50)

“Your sins are forgiven.” And those who
sat at the table with Him began to say
to themselves, “Who is this who even
forgives sins?” (Luke 7:48-49)

When I receive absolution from the
priest by the words of Christ,

“Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”
(Matthew 18:18)

and when I take communion by the hand of the priest by the words of Christ,

“Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you and for many to be given for the remission of sins; do this in remembrance of Me.”

how do I receive Christ inside me? What is that? I trust in the gift of Christ who said, take, eat, this is my body.

Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:23-24)

The father confesses some faith but also confesses his spiritual weakness and beseeches our Lord to create in him a clean heart and renew a righteous spirit within him.

“Help my lack of faith.” He is saying to the Lord, You can add faith to me. That is righteousness.

Righteousness is when we trust God according to what He says and transform the way we live according to His Word.

We do not just say it. We live our life according to God’s Word.

If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?
(James 2:15-16)

This is what we call the righteousness of God. We are to have it and be filled with it every single day of our life. It is our beginning and our maintenance. We cannot profess to be Christians without righteousness.

Consider Ephesians 2, the relationship between our faith and our works of faith.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in

Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:4-10)

This is not started by our own works.

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
(Ephesians 4:1-3)

I am going to call you like children. Live like His children. If I don't believe God, then I live otherwise. If Noah had not believed God, he would not have lived in turmoil for 40 years. When I live every day, I ask myself a question, "Who am I? What am I called to do." When I do good works, I am not boastful about them, not because I'm humble.

Now suppose a person says this in his confession:

Abouna, I'm doing the usual sins.
(That is to say, I'm not worse than anybody else.) My friends in school have multiple girlfriends and cheat on them. (I only have one girlfriend.) I lie.

What is he missing?

Immediately he is telling me he is not thinking of himself as being called, as being worthy of Heaven.

Start not by asking yourself if you can improve yourself to get to Heaven. Start by asking yourself if you are acting as God expects you to be. It is subtle, but it is what we call the Righteousness of God.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He

chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. (Ephesians 1:3-5)

Then, in chapter 4, St. Paul is going to say, "Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called." (Ephesians 4:1)

This is a huge issue.

When we go to church and practice confession and communion, this is righteousness. We say, "Lord I know you are in me now. I want to live in a way that I do not show you things you should not see, let you hear things you should not hear..."

"Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith." (Habakkuk 2:4)

Faith is in what God has done; hope is in what he will do.

“And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” (Genesis 15:6)

Abraham said nothing! Righteousness was accounted by what was in his heart.

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:9-10)

Let us make sure that our heart and mouth are in sync.

“Behold this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.”

I am beloved of God; therefore I have faith in God. God is pleased by me

because I am living according to my faith. Both are righteousness.

The prodigal son was of course beloved but was not pleasing to his father. We ought to live in a way pleasing to the Lord.

You have been given a lot to believe in, in the past. The challenge now is to live “according to the calling with which we were called.”

Queen Victoria’s nanny used to say, “Victoria, remember who you are.”

Joseph, in Potiphar’s house, remembered who he is and from where he came. “How can I do this thing, and sin against God?” He knows he was called to be consecrated above his brothers.

We do not do works to prove anything to ourselves or anybody. We do works because of who we are and where we came from.

