

Covenant

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[0:00] Open your Bibles up to Genesis chapter 9. We are still in the middle of the story of Noah, which most of you are familiar with. By this time in the story, the flood has subsided.

Noah and his family and the animals with him in the ark have been rescued by God. They have now exited the ark and Noah has begun life upon this new world, this newly shaped and newly formed earth by offering up to God a sacrifice and God has responded by making certain promises and giving certain commands to Noah.

And now here in verses 8 through 18, we're going to read about a covenant that God makes with Noah. So I want you guys to stand as we begin in verse 8 where God begins to speak.

It says that God said to Noah and to his sons with him, Behold, I established my covenant with you and your offspring after you and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you.

As many as came out of the ark, it is for every beast of the earth. I established my covenant with you that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.

[1:14] And God said, This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you for all future generations. I have set my bow in the cloud and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

And I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds. I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth. God said to Noah, This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.

The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed.

Thank you for your word, Father. May we hear from it this morning. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. In 1833, Charles Lyell finished publishing the final third volume of his massive work that was called The Principles of Geology.

[2:38] And that particular work, those three volumes, exerted such a massive influence upon the scientific community that really, if we were going to sort of divide the history of science up into categories, and we really wanted to place a marker and say, this is where the professional academic study of science and of the world really began to take a turn away from the way it had been done previously.

Prior to the publication of Lyell's book, most geologists, and then many scientists who relied upon the conclusions of geology, most of them assumed a biblical account of the history of the world.

Or if they did not take the Bible specifically, literally, they believed that they could find within the Bible a basic blueprint that remained true to the outlines of human history.

So that almost every geologist before Lyell accepted that the flood was a real historical event that took place in history. And they understood that as they looked at the world around them and the physical features of the world, they expected those physical features to have been shaped, to have been influenced and formed by the events described in these chapters.

And yet, Lyell came along, and he didn't invent the concept, but he popularized the concept that was known as uniformitarianism. Now, that's a long word that simply means that the world that we see today is operating on the same principles and the same processes are in place now that have been in place since the world came to be.

[4:20] So that when you look around you and you try to discern, how did these mountains come to be? Well, Lyell would say that the way that you discover how the mountains that exist today were formed in the past is you look at present processes.

And so he would argue that wind erosion and some water erosion and the slight uplifting of the crust that we can see happening just minutely, little bit by little bit, is what formed the mountains around us.

If you ask, how did the ocean basins come? He would say that the same processes that made the mountains formed the ocean basins. And these processes, as they operate today, generally happen very, very slowly.

So as a consequence of this uniformitarianism, this belief that the world has always operated according to the same processes that it operates by today, as a consequence of that, he then had to push the age of the earth to ages past, millions and hundreds of millions of years.

And eventually other scientists would carry it all the way back to billions of years. Until today, most scientists believe the earth is somewhere around 4 billion years old. And for those 4 billion years, for most of that time, the same processes, according to these scientists, have been at work.

[5:32] But prior to Lyell's publication of his book, everyone assumed that the earth was shaped and formed by various catastrophes, major events that took place within the history of the world.

The flood, many of them believed, was one of those, if not the largest major catastrophe in the history of the world. And so when you ask these geologists, earlier geologists, how did these things come to be the way that they were, they would say, well, the flood did some of it, and then there were some other major events in the history of the earth that must have taken place, and it was these major catastrophes that formed the mountains and the valleys and the ocean basins and everything else that we see in the physical world around us today.

These major catastrophes have sort of punctuated the history of the world until all these things were, came to be in the shape that they are. That was the view prior to Lyell.

After Lyell, everybody believed that you could determine the history of the world by looking at the present. And what's ironic about that is that the very promises that hold the world in its current operation, the very thing that allows the world to operate in such a uniform fashion today is found in Genesis chapter 9.

Because after the flood, God promised that He would hold the earth not only in existence, but that He would keep certain processes regular and normal.

[6:56] In fact, we saw the beginning of that promise initially stated last week, earlier in chapter 9. So if you look back in chapter, not in chapter 9, but in chapter 8, at the end of chapter 8, we see this.

Verse 21, God says, Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I've done, while the earth remains, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.

So after the flood concludes and Noah leaves the ark, God makes a promise. I'm not going to do this again. I'm not going to flood the entire earth. I'm not going to wipe out all the living creatures of the earth.

In fact, I'll go beyond promising that I won't send another flood. I promise that the processes that are now beginning to operate, the seasons, the coming of day and night and cold and heat and the regularity of planting crops and expecting a harvest at a certain time of year, those things will remain.

I promise I will keep those things in place so that now we live in a very uniform world. I mean, there are, from year to year, there are differences. I mean, this year, because it's been a little bit colder in March, we think that winter has lasted forever, where I'm sure some people would come and say winter never arrived here.

[8 : 13] It just barely kind of passed by very quickly. It never came to stay because we count on the regularity. I mean, things are just uniform around us. We know that at least by March or April, it's going to be in the 70s here in this part of the world.

We know that in the summer, it's going to be in the 90s and even the 100s a little bit. We know these things. We count on these things. These are regular. And in different parts of the world, the cycles are different. But nevertheless, in various regions, the cycles remain the same.

And when they do change, they don't change by such a large degree that you can't recognize the seasons as they come and go. There are slight changes, but on the whole, we look at the world around us, we read in history, and we look at the evidences in the natural world, and for a long, long time, we've had the same seasons.

We can expect plants to grow in the spring. We can expect crops to yield to harvest in the fall. We know this is just the way that the world works. And if you ask yourself, why does the world work that way?

It's because God made a promise after the flood. And the very promises that cause this world to operate uniformly now are the ones that enable someone like Lael to look at the world and say, well, the flood must not have taken place.

[9 : 34] But had the flood not taken place, the promise would have never been made, and the world would be vastly different than it is today. Of course, we're not as familiar with promises as they operate in the Bible today as we ought to be, because a promise in today's world doesn't really mean what it ought to.

In fact, we regularly expect our politicians to lie to us. That's just expected. I mean, they can make outlandish promises on a campaign that cannot possibly logically be kept.

It's impossible. If you know how to do math, you can figure out that the promises of politicians regarding budgets and spending and how much money will be saved here and there, it's not possible. It's mathematically possible for most of the promises they make about the economy and those sorts of things to happen.

They just cannot happen. Or other things that they promise will happen. They promise that this piece of legislation will definitely lead to this, and any thinking, rational person will step back and say, well, that can't be.

And yet none of us are shocked. None of us are surprised. We expect politicians on the campaign trail and sometimes even in office to make outlandish promises that they cannot possibly fulfill.

[10:46] It can't be done. So that when we hear promises, we don't take them at their word anymore. Not even in political circles. We expect this at work. We expect certain things to be put out there and say, this is where we're headed.

This is what we're going to do. This is what we're going to accomplish. And we don't expect any of those things to actually happen. Or we certainly don't expect them to happen to the large of a degree as those in leadership promises that they will happen.

We're just skeptical. We don't take promises to be binding promises. But in this chapter, God goes even beyond the simple promise.

He moves beyond a promise, which should be enough for us because the Bible tells us He's not capable of lying. He cannot lie. And yet God takes it upon Himself to move beyond a bare promise in chapter 8.

And in chapter 9, He makes a covenant. A covenant, of course, is a binding agreement between two parties or two individuals. It is a solid, sacred oath between two people or two groups that cannot be broken without severe penalties being enacted.

[11:57] Covenants were really common in the ancient world. Kings would often make treaties with their conquered nations around them. And those treaties took on the form of a covenant so that one king might defeat another nation and then he would make a covenant with that nation's king and say, I won't completely destroy you.

I promise I won't. In fact, I'll go beyond that promise. Not only will I not destroy you, but I won't let anyone else come in and take over you. And I'm going to covenant with you that I will do that if you in turn covenant with me that you will send money and troops whenever I request them.

Those covenants were very common. Those kind of treaties were very common in the ancient world. And for the covenant to be broken brought about severe penalties for the person who broke the covenant.

Well, we find covenants scattered throughout the Bible. Old Testament, New Testament, we find covenants everywhere. But we especially find a lot of covenants in the early books of the Bible, particularly in the book of Genesis.

And there are various kinds of covenant, but the two basic types of covenants that you can find in the Bible would be covenants in which mirror very closely the one that I just described between two nations in which a superior party obligates himself to do something for the inferior, but the inferior has to fulfill their part of the obligation.

[13:15] So that God may make a covenant with someone and say, I promise to do this for you if you are obedient to this command or these commands. We've already seen that sort of covenant in Genesis chapter 2.

The word covenant wasn't used there in Genesis chapter 2, but later the prophets reflect back upon the events of Genesis chapter 2 and refer to it as a covenant that God made a kind of covenant with Adam in which God would sustain Adam and continue to provide Adam with food and even give Adam access to God's own divine rest, yet Adam had to obey the command not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And so when Adam broke the covenant, God's promise to provide him with abundant food was gone. He was removed from the garden and he had to work the ground and work the land. God's promise to allow Adam to remain and participate in his divine rest was gone.

Now that hope is far removed in the future only for those who trust in God's promises. Adam would work in labor and toil and we work in labor and toil and food is not promised to us all the time and safety and security are not always guaranteed to us because we're fallen people in a fallen world because Adam broke the covenant as the prophets tell us.

So there are those kinds of covenants which are frequently called conditional covenants. In fact, the covenant with Adam is often referred to by theologians as a covenant of works because if Adam did certain things he would earn certain things from God.

[14:49] It was based upon Adam's works. The law of Moses, the covenant that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai was the same kind of covenant. All of these rules, all of these laws and if you do these God promises to Israel I will do this for you.

But the covenant that we find here in Genesis chapter 9 is a different type of covenant altogether. It's an unconditional covenant. If you notice you can see the term covenant.

It appears in here seven different times throughout the passage. Verse 9 Behold I establish my covenant with you and your offspring. Verse 11 I establish my covenant with you. Verse 12 This is the sign of my covenant.

Verse 13 This shall be a sign of the covenant. Verse 15 I will remember my covenant. Again in verse 16 God will remember the everlasting covenant. And then in verse 17 you have the sign of the covenant mentioned again.

Over and over this is the covenant. This is the covenant. And not one time in all of those seven times that the covenant is mentioned does God require Noah or his sons to do anything.

[15:53] Not one time. God makes promises about what he will do and what he will not do but never once does he require Noah or Shem or Ham or Japheth or any of their wives to do anything to earn the promises that God gives here.

Not once. This is an unconditional covenant. covenant. What's more is that this is a covenant that's not limited to Noah. It's not limited to Noah's children. This covenant is for everyone descended from them and for all the other living creatures in the world.

Take a look. I want you to notice six times we have a reference to who the covenant is for. Verse 9 he says I'll establish my covenant with you and your offspring and then in verse 10 and with every living creature.

So Noah his offspring which includes everyone and every living creature on the face of the earth.

Verse 12 God says he makes the covenant between me and you and every living creature. Verse 13 between me and the earth. Verse 15 he says it's between me and you and every living creature of all flesh.

[17:06] In verse 16 it's between God and every living creature of all flesh. And in verse 17 God says it'll be between me and all flesh that is upon the earth. All flesh.

Everyone and every living thing that's on the earth God makes this covenant with. And if you're not sure if all flesh includes all of Noah's descendants not just his sons you only have to read two verses beyond the covenant.

Verses 18 and 19 tell us that the sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth. And then verse 19 says that these three were the sons of Noah and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed.

Everyone. When verses 8 and 9 tell us Noah's offspring received the promise of the covenant and then at the end in verses 18 and 19 we're told that all of us are offspring of Noah we can be sure that the covenant made here with Noah is a covenant made with you and I as well.

In fact this covenant is called an everlasting covenant. Not limited in terms of distribution to just Noah and his sons but to everyone but not limited in time to only one generation but not limited at all to every generation.

[18:27] In fact there are only a few covenants in the Bible that are referred to as everlasting covenants. This covenant the covenant with Abraham is called an everlasting covenant and then the covenant that later on in history God makes with David where God promises that David will always have a descendant of his to sit upon the throne for all time a descendant of David's will sit upon David's throne who we know is Jesus.

That is also called an everlasting covenant. These are covenants not only that extend to all of humanity but that we can count on to last to last forever.

God says this covenant is for everyone and for all time and I bind myself by an oath. The specific nature of the covenant is pretty simple.

I mean we know the story you know it well God is promising exactly what he promised in chapter 8 he's promising that he's never again going to flood the earth so long as the earth remains. In other words until the final judgment day when God creates a new heaven and new earth out of the existing earth and heavens until that day while this earth remains God promises he will never again destroy the world he will never again destroy all flesh which includes humans and animals he will never again do that so long as this earth remains.

Take a look at the terms of the covenant. Verse 11 I establish my covenant with you that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.

[20:04] Verse 15 I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

Never again will this happen. It's a solemn promise. It's a covenantal oath that God makes with Noah Noah's sons Noah's offspring and you and I never again will he flood the earth.

And God even goes so far as to give to all generations a visible physical reminder of the covenant that he's making. He gives us the rainbow.

It seems an odd thing for God to do that. The only other covenant that God gives a sign for is the covenant with Abraham and the sign there is circumcision and there circumcision is something that the people of Israel must perform.

But in this covenant even the sign of the covenant is something that God does. We don't put rainbows in the sky. We don't do that. God does that.

[21:06] And God says every time you see this rainbow it will be a reminder. And what's interesting is that the reminder is not for us. Notice you see what he says?

He says that when he sees the bow in the cloud he will remember. He will remember. Verse 15 I will remember my covenant. Verse 16 I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant.

Well why is that necessary? Why does God have to be reminded of the covenant that God himself has made? He doesn't have to be reminded.

but he puts the rainbow in the clouds as a second guarantee to us. He will not falter on his promises.

For God to remember something is not for God to recall a past event that he had previously forgotten. For God to remember something means that God will remain faithful to all the promises he has made.

[22:08] So when he says I will remember what he means is I promise I'll be faithful. And the rainbow is a sign of my unending faithfulness to my covenant promises.

Unending faithfulness. Because that's really the point of the covenant. The point of this entire passage is a simple one. It's not complicated. It's not one that we have to spend a lot of time trying to figure out.

It's very simple. God is faithful. That's it. If God makes a promise God always fulfills the promise. If God goes so far as to make a covenant God always fulfills his covenant obligations even if in a conditional covenant we do not God remains faithful to his side of the covenant.

He remains so faithful to his covenant promises that God himself eventually comes in the form of a man and fulfills the terms of the covenants that lie on our side.

So that Jesus fulfills all the obligations of the law of Moses. It's a conditional covenant of course. It's dependent upon human obedience to the laws and yet we cannot do it yet God remains so committed to fulfilling his covenant promises in the law of Moses that he sends his son who in our place fulfills our covenant obligations.

[23 : 38] obligations. It is the same thing with the covenant that Adam broke. Adam was to obey God's word simply straightforward obey it never disobey and Jesus comes into the world as a second Adam Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians why does he do that?

so that he might succeed where Adam failed. And throughout his entire life of 30 some odd years Jesus perfectly obeyed every word spoken to him by the father.

In fact he even told people that I can only do what the father tells me to do. In praying he tells the father I have come to accomplish your word.

Adam failed to obey God's word and broke the covenant in the garden. Jesus obeys God's word and fulfills the terms of the covenant. God is so faithful to the covenant promises that he made that even in a conditional covenant where we break the covenant he will come and fulfill the obligations in our place.

And yet here he doesn't even require that. He just says I will do it and you can trust me I will be faithful to all my promises.

[24 : 54] And that theme of God's faithfulness to his promises to Noah is picked up later on in the Old Testament prophets.

I'm not going to look at a lot of passages but I want to show you one place because it's so significant. I want you to turn in the book of Jeremiah chapter 31. Because I will often throw out terminology when I'm preaching about things and I will often use the phrase new covenant.

covenant. I will say those of us who live under the new covenant or we as the new covenant people of God and all the while I'm well aware that some people may not understand what I mean by that.

That that terminology may be meaningless to you. New covenant. Well what covenant? Why is it new and what's a covenant? Well we said a covenant is a binding sacred oath and the new covenant is a covenant that God promised in the prophets.

prophets. It's new because it's not old like the covenant that God made with Moses and it's new because it's different. See in the covenant that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai through Moses God gave hundreds of commands and the people were to obey those commands to receive the covenant blessings.

[26 : 08] The problem with the covenant was not really with the covenant itself. The problem is that God made that covenant with sinners. people who are unable to keep their end of the bargain.

Unable to obey the very commands that God says that they must obey. So that the covenant that God made with Moses in and of itself is perfectly fine except that it's a covenant that he made with sinful people.

The new covenant that will replace the old covenant is altogether different. Take a look in Jeremiah 31. Promises made.

Behold, 31 verse 31, Behold the days are coming declares the Lord when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

My covenant that they broke though I was their husband declares the Lord. He says it's different than the covenant I made back through Moses. They broke that one. I'm making a new one.

[27 : 12] It's different. Verse 33, But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days declares the Lord. I will put my law within them and I will write it on their hearts and I will be their God and they shall be my people.

No longer will I give you an external list of commands and say obey these. Instead, I'm going to take the principles of the law and I'm going to write them upon your heart.

The book of Ezekiel, speaking of the same covenant tells us that God does that by means of pouring out his spirit into all believers. Joel tells us the same thing about the new covenant. So the new covenant is a solemn promise made by God in the Old Testament that someday he would cease requiring his people to obey external regulations and rather than give them an external list of laws, he would work within their hearts to transform them and change them into obedient people.

In fact, it's so different now that under the new covenant you're not a member of the covenant simply because you're born into the covenant community, you're a member of the covenant community because you believe, because you know the Lord.

Take a look at what it says in verse 34. No longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother saying know the Lord for they shall all know me. Who's the all?

[28 : 37] All of those within the new covenant. All of those who receive the blessings of the new covenant. They're in the new covenant, they receive the blessings of the new covenant because they personally know the Lord, which is another way of saying that they have believed in him.

If you were an Israelite born in ancient Israel prior to the coming of Christ, you were considered to be Abraham's offspring and considered to be a recipient of the covenant that God made with Israel on Mount Sinai simply because you were a descendant of Abraham.

That's not the case with the new covenant. Now, you're a member of the new covenant community because you know the Lord. And those within that covenant community have their hearts fundamentally transformed and changed by the Lord.

So that now, we don't arrive at a point of obedience simply by checking off a list. We arrive at obedience in our lives as the Holy Spirit transforms us and we submit to his work in our hearts.

That's the new covenant, altogether different from the old covenant. And I'm bringing it into this discussion because as you continue to read through the covenant, Jeremiah references the covenant with Noah.

[30 : 06] Verse 35, Thus says the Lord who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar.

The Lord of hosts is his name. If this fixed order departs from before me, declares the Lord, then the offspring of Israel shall cease from being a nation before me forever.

I have set up, God says, light and dark. I have set up a fixed order, Genesis 9. If that fixed order can be discarded, then so can my faithfulness to my new covenant people.

And yet it cannot be. We see something similar if you turn over to Jeremiah 33. not in direct reference to the new covenant, but in reference to God's covenant with David. That there would come a descendant of David to sit upon the throne.

And God says this in Jeremiah 33, 19. He says, The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, thus says the Lord, If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, then also my covenant with David and my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests, my ministers.

[31 : 30] You see what God is doing here? If God wants to encourage his people, and if he wants his people to feel confidence that his covenant promises will be true, say his new covenant promises to put his spirit within us and write his law on our hearts and forgive us of our sins, or his promises made to David that there would be a descendant who would rise and sit on the throne forever.

However, if he wants us to have confidence in those promises, he points all the way back to Genesis chapter 9, where he made a covenant about the day and the night and the seasons and the heat and the cold.

And for all these centuries and millennia, he has been faithful to his covenant promises. Genesis 9 is about the faithfulness of God.

It's about his faithfulness. And we will only fully trust in God's promises now if we believe that he is the faithful God that he tells us he is in Genesis chapter 9.

So you have the new covenant promises before you that God will change you. He will transform you. He will put his spirit within you if you trust in Christ.

[32 : 50] It will happen. In fact, Jesus says in Luke that the blood that he sheds on the cross, this he says, this is the blood of the new covenant.

So the Christ says, I have inaugurated the new covenant and all those promises belong to those who trust in me. And yet oftentimes we look at our own lives and we see only struggle.

We see only a fight for holiness. And we see only frustration when it comes to making progress in the faith. And at times we would be tempted to despair and think, the promises aren't true.

I don't feel it. I don't see it. I really messed up today. How can the spirit of God be doing any work in me when I did that? There will be days like that.

And on those days you need to remember the promises of God. that just as he is faithful to maintain heat and cold and day and night, so he will be faithful to transform your heart.

[33 : 51] It will take time. There will be stumbles and missteps along the way. And yet there will come a day for all those who trust in Christ, if we were able to step back and see the broad panorama of our lives, we would see significant spiritual progress.

progress. A progress that's only possible because of the promises of the new covenant. Consider the other promises that God has made to us.

He says that he will work all things to the good of those that love him. But it doesn't feel like that sometimes. It doesn't feel like that. When you get a report of cancer and you find out that you're going to be fighting this disease for the rest of your life, or that the rest of your life may only be a matter of months, it's not it doesn't feel like God's working everything for your good.

Or when relationships begin to crumble, or when depression begins to set in and you're just down and frustrated with all, with everything in your life, at that moment, you need to be reminded that the God who is faithful to maintain the sun and the earth in its orbit around the sun carries that same faithfulness into his promise to work all the bad things of your life for your good.

Of course, ultimately, the ultimate application of believing in the faithfulness of God has to do with our own salvation. How can you know that your sins really are forgiven?

[35 : 36] How can you be certain that all you need to do is trust in Christ in order to be saved? How can you know that? How can you have any real confidence, especially when there are a thousand other ideas out there that maintain different ways to be right with God, or to inherit eternal life, or to become one with the universe, or whatever they call it in particular religions?

How can you be sure that simple faith in Jesus is enough to make you right with God and give you eternal life? I mean, because there are some seedy pasts among us, aren't there?

I mean, some dark, dark spots, some really bad periods of sin, and piles of guilt that lay over us at times. How can you know that all of that can be washed away by repentance and faith in Jesus?

How can you know? Because the same God who holds the earth in orbit around the sun and guarantees winter, spring, and summer and fall every year, the same God who does all of those things is the very same God who promises to save you through the blood of His Son.

It matters whether or not we believe in the faithfulness of God, and it matters whether or not we can see in the everyday world around us evidence of His faithfulness.

[37 : 12] The mark of a mature Christian is not simply knowledge by itself. The mark of a mature Christian is not simply being able to state God's Word and recall the promises that He's made.

The mark of a mature Christian, one of the marks of a mature Christian, is the ability to look and see in the world around them evidence everywhere they look of God's faithfulness to those promises, and then to live in response with genuine faith in His faithfulness.

And it will transform everything about the way that you view God's promises. Let's pray. It is so tempting at times to doubt your faithfulness, Father.

Yet I pray that this morning that we would hear and receive this very simple message of the covenant you made with Noah and with us. That if there are some of us here who've been really struggling in the past weeks with our sin, really frustrated over what we see, doubtful that the Holy Spirit has done anything in us, that you would strengthen us and sanctify us by faith in your promises.

That if among us there are those of us who have really been wrestling with your goodness, knowing it intellectually to be true, but seeing so much chaos and hurt and pain in our lives and the lives of those around us in the world at large.

[38 : 56] If we are tempted to doubt, remind us now of your faithfulness. I pray, Father, even now as we come to sing to you, that we would sing out of hearts that are glad and grateful to serve a faithful God.

I pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Let's stand.