

God's Invitations, Part Two
The First Invitation
Genesis 7: 1 – 7
November 1, 2009

Last Sunday I preached on the invitation God gives us in Hebrews Chapter Four to meet Him at the throne of Grace, where we will find grace and mercy for our needs. As I was preparing that message, it came to me this is not the only place where God has issued an invitation to people.

So I began a search to discover those places where invitations have been offered, so we can learn about God and our relationship with Him. The first invitation I found is in Genesis chapter Seven, verses One through Seven (read). In the first invitation, God invites Noah and his family to come into the Ark so they might be saved from the flood God is about to send upon the earth. Let's see what we can glean from this invitation.

1. This was – and is – the only hope for humanity (Genesis 7: 1).

A. In Noah's day, God's invitation to enter the Ark was the only hope for humanity against the catastrophe about to befall them.

1. Today, the only hope humanity has is to accept God's invitation to receive Jesus Christ as Savior.

B. What would have happened to humanity if Noah and his family did not enter the Ark? Of course, humanity would have been completely destroyed.

C. Thankfully, Noah and his family accepted the invitation, which brings me to this follow-up question: "Do we always accept God's invitations?"

1. The obvious answer is, "No, I don't always accept God's invitation."

2. Then, I ask, why did Noah make the right choice?

2. Noah was receptive because he walked with God before the invitation was offered (v. 6: 9).

A. It is easier to accept God's invitation to do something if have already been walking with God.

1. If you examine Genesis Chapter Six, you discover Noah had already been walking with God. It was said of Noah, "Noah was a righteous man (Genesis 6: 9)..." He was a just man; his life was marked by his relationship with God; his neighbors were witnesses to his walk of faith.

B. If you haven't been walking with God, there is no basis for such deep trust, that if God were to invite you to do something completely outside your comfort zone – you would put up excuses and reasons why this is not a good thing to do.

1. Walk with God in a growing relationship, and when/if He tells you to do something, you are more likely to do it.

3. The Ark was not Noah's idea; it was God's (v. 14).

A. If God had not spoken to Noah; if God had not revealed the idea of the Ark, then Noah would have perished in the flood.

B. If God had not come up with the idea to send Jesus to die in my place, then I would still be caught in my trespasses and sins.

1. Both ideas are products of the heart and mind of God. They stand alone as unique – once-in-a-million years events.

2. Yet the amazing thing about Noah's response is that he didn't hesitate to say, "Yes, Lord, I will do as you command."

C. Too often I want to tell God how I want something done.

1. Think of the absurdity of anyone countering God's idea with one of our own, in essence telling God how He ought to do something in our life. But that is precisely what we do many times.

4. With God's invitation there is never a cause for fear (v. 16).

A. Think about the risk Noah took when he believed God's invitation:

1. What if not all the spots that could possibly leak were covered with pitch;

2. When Noah closed the door to the Ark, what if it started to leak;

3. There were no sea trials to determine if the Ark was in fact seaworthy;

4. I wonder if these and dozens of other potential problems kept Noah up at night?

B. I remind you, **Noah wasn't safe because he was a master boat builder.**

1. In fact, the Ark was a unique vessel; Noah had zero experience with such a vessel.

C. No, **Noah was safe because God shut him in the boat.**

1. Remember, God invited Noah and his family, and the success of the venture was based upon God's provision for their safety, provisions, and even their future lives.

2. If God shuts you in, there is no way water is going to into your personal Ark.

3. Yes, God takes the fear out of His invitations.

The bottom line for Noah to say "Yes" to God's invitation was this: How much did he believe God? And so we see clearly that when it comes to accepting God's invitations – no matter how big or how small – it is a question of faith.

When God's invitation to Noah came, Noah went. What have you done with god's invitation?

Let's pray!