



“He Will Empower”

Genesis 6:9-22

Idea: God is the ever-starting engine force that powers His calling in your life.

Intro: In 1860 a huge crowd lined the edges of Niagara Falls as Blondin, the famous tightrope walker, crossed the falls that day. He crossed back and forth numerous times – a 1,000 foot trip suspended 160 feet above the raging waters. Blondin not only walked across it; he pushed a wheelbarrow across it. One little boy just stared in amazement. So after completing a crossing Blondin looked at that little boy and asked, “Do you believe I could take a person across in the wheelbarrow without falling?” “Yes, sir. I really do.” Blondin’s response was, “Well then, get in, son.”

Does trust come easy for you?

On August 26, 2016, the Washington Post ran an article entitled “Americans Are Less Trusting than Ever Before.” In it Ana Swanson revealed that, according to the Pew Research Center, public trust in the government is at its lowest level since 1958, and the belief that people can be trusted is at its lowest level in over 40 years. This growing distrust of others is

leading to greater political division, which fosters public policy and business practices that serve the good of the individual rather than the good of the public. People are looking out only for themselves.

What is the cause of this growing distrust in our culture? In the article Swanson describes several contributing factors such as economic instability and differing political ideologies. I believe, though, the underlying factor in our growing lack of trust is the distrust of God. We have removed God from almost every area of our culture, so it should not surprise us that we don't trust anyone else. When the one Person who can always be trusted is ignored and even rejected, it stands to reason that we would only trust in ourselves.

The growing distrust we see is not just in our culture; it is in our churches too. Today, the typical church-goer will trust God only as far as his or her own abilities will allow. But is that trusting God?

“If we cannot believe God when circumstances seem to be against us, we do not believe Him at all.”

– Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Today, we begin a four-week sermon series we have entitled, “He Will.” It will be a study on trust, looking at some of the great miracle stories in the Bible. No matter what is going on in your life and family, through this series, you will learn that God can always be trusted. He will empower, provide, protect, and be present in your life. We must trust.

Inquiry: We begin our study with Noah and the Ark.

Read Genesis 6:9-22.

The pre-flood culture was wicked. Marriage had been demonized, and violence was idolized. Sexual violence was the trend. Therefore, God decided to wipe the world clean of every trace of humanity, except for the man Noah (6:8).

Noah was the last descendant in the godly line of Adam through Seth. By the time of the flood every one of these ancestors had died, but, like the righteous in all ages, their works lived after them. Noah had learned to trust God from six of his ancestors who were still alive at his birth (Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Methuselah, and Lamech).

Surely, Noah understood the significance of the name his great-grandfather Enoch had given to his grandfather Methuselah (“when he is gone it will come”). Enoch’s preaching of coming judgment was depicted in the name he gave his son. In addition, the name given to Noah by Lamech means “comfort” or “rest.” It may be that Lamech named his son “rest” in anticipation of that final rest from labor promised to the people of God.

The Bible tells us that Noah “*found favor in the eyes of the Lord*” (6:8). As we seek to understand this statement, we must remember that verse 9 comes after verse 8. In other words, Noah was righteous after experiencing the favor/grace of God. Noah didn’t find grace because he was righteous. He was righteous because God extended His grace toward him.

The rest of humanity was wicked and facing the impending, cataclysmic judgment of God. The Lord, however, told Noah that he along with his wife, three sons, and three daughter-in-laws would be saved. An ark would be their salvation through the tumultuous waters of judgment.

This great story embodies what it means to trust God. We learn here a great truth: God is the ever-starting engine force that powers His calling in your life. He will empower you. Let’s look first at...

I. God’s Action

The Lord is always at work. The Bible tells us that He neither sleeps nor slumbers (Ps 121:4). He sees all and knows all. He has great plans for each of us, and He is

working those plans out for His glory and our good (Jer 29:11; Rom 8:28). Here in Genesis 6, in the face of great evil that was in the world, God was acting. There are three things about God's action worth pointing out.

- 1) God told Noah what He was going to do.
(vs. 13)

Noah was not entitled to know what God was going to do. God, though, in His grace chose to include Noah in His plan. He did the same thing for Abraham when judgment was going to fall on Sodom (Gen 18:17).

God prepared Noah's heart and mind by informing him of the coming judgment.

- 2) God called Noah to join in His activity. (vs. 14)

"Make yourself an ark of gopher wood."

Can you imagine getting that "call?"

God – "Noah, I want you to build an ark."

Noah – "What is an ark?"

God – "I want you to build a large ship 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high, and I want you to build right where you are."

Noah – "I have never seen a ship. I have no idea how to build one. And I definitely do not have to tools to do it. But yes sir, I'll get it done."

There are a couple things that we need to learn from the Lord's invitation for Noah to join in His activity.

- God's calling on your life is an extension of His grace.

He is not obligated to include you or I in anything He does. But the Lord includes us so that we might better know His goodness and faithfulness.

- God's calling on your life always exceeds your natural abilities. You cannot learn to trust God as long as you are trusting in yourself. Therefore, He calls you to step out into deeper waters where only He can sustain you.

God told Noah what He was going to do, and He called Noah to join in His activity of salvation. This brings us to the Lord's third action.

3) God gave Noah His plan. (vs. 14-21)

Every one who has a job wants and needs a plan. The same was true of Noah, and God gave him a one. The plan, however, probably didn't make sense at first. In verses 14-16, God described to Noah how this ark of gopher wood was to be constructed. He was going to build a massive ship, one and a half times longer than a football field.

As God was giving the dimensions and instructions, Noah's mind was surely thinking about how much wood it was going to take and how he was going to complete the task. Perhaps, in his mind, he even contemplated the why? Why do you want me to build a ship so far away from the sea?

God answers the question in verse 17. He would bring a flood upon the whole earth. Noah had no concept of rain, much less a flood. Up to

this point in history it had never rained, but rather a mist would come up from the ground and water the surface (Gen 2:6). Under such circumstances, what would have been more ridiculous from a human point of view than for Noah to build a gigantic ocean liner – on dry ground?

II. Noah's Reaction

How would you have responded if you were Noah? You probably would respond the same way you respond today when God calls and invites you to join in His activity. Some might respond in faith. Others might respond with excuses.

Noah could have responded like some us do today:

- Make excuses
“I don't know how.” “I don't have the skills.”
“I don't have the time.” I don't have the resources.”
- Delay the work
Noah could have said yes to the work, but put off the start date until a better time comes along.

Delayed obedience is not obedience.

- Say no
He could have rejected God's invitation and call.

How did Noah react?

- 1) Noah believed God. (vs. 9, 22)

The Bible describes him as a “*righteous man, blameless in his generation.*”

This description speaks both to his positional righteousness as well as his practical righteousness. Noah was positionally right with God because He believed God. It is said of Abraham that because He believed God, it was counted toward him as righteousness (Gen 15:6). This was also true of Noah and every one who has placed their hope and trust in the Lord.

Noah's positional righteousness worked itself out in the practice of his life. His family, friends, and acquaintances had no doubt that he loved and followed God.

Therefore, since Noah had believed on God for salvation, he had no difficulty believing God for this new calling. His belief led to a second reaction.

2) Noah walked with God. (vs. 9)

Like his great-grandfather Enoch, Noah experienced a taste of the intimacy and obedience that pre-fallen Adam and Eve knew when God walked with them in the garden. He did with God what any of us do when we walk with others. He shared his heart, fears, struggles, temptations, angers, and delights. He talked. He prayed. He received encouragement, wisdom, and even correction. He had a strong and vibrant relationship with God, and that relationship led to a third reaction.

3) Noah obeyed God. (vs. 22)

Noah never pushed back. He never questioned. He never delayed. He never fussed. And he never quit. *"He did all that God commanded him."*

He obeyed God because He trusted God. He trusted God because He walked with God. And he walked with God because He believed God. He knew God's Word to be true. It had never failed him. Therefore, he did all that was commanded him.

Application: Can the Lord say of you, "He/she does all that I have commanded?" Can you say of yourself, "I trust God in all areas of my life? I trust Him with my kids, my career, my finances, my service in the church, and my future?" Can you say that you believe God's Word?

You only believe those parts of the Bible that you practice.

Conclusion: If Jesus was tightrope walking across Niagara Falls today and invited you to get in the wheelbarrow, would you? Would you trust in His power, ability, and wisdom to carry you safely to the other side?

God called Noah to an impossible ministry and task, but God didn't call Him to do it alone. He gave Noah the plan and promised to be with him (6:18). God covenanted with him. He also promised to supply everything for the ark and the ride.

Today, God calls each of us to ministries and tasks that are impossible from a human perspective. But nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37). God invites us to join Him in His activity, and as we do so, we get to learn new heights and depths of His grace. Will you learn to trust Him today? He will empower you if you will trust Him.