

## Genesis 8-9.17 – Trust the God who remembers and keeps promises Clint Le Page

How do you go at remembering things?-----**(SLIDE)**

I'm pretty average. Just ask Kirsti.----

If I don't have a note written down reminding me of something, I'll likely forget.

I try to be reliable and dependable, but I really need a calendar to help me do that.

What are you like at remembering things?-----

Whether that important birthday, passing on a message, or just remembering to get something at the shops on the way home.

We are prone to forgetfulness.----

Thankfully God is not.

God doesn't forget, God always remembers.

God always keeps his promises and acts for his peoples' good.

This is the God we meet here in Genesis 8 & 9.-----

Here we see a God who remembers to show mercy and even makes covenant promises.

And he's a God worth trusting, even when life is stormy.**(SLIDE)**-----

When we believers are anxious, we're more likely to turn to Rom 8 than Gen 8.

After all, Gen 8 describes God's "mop-up" operation after the Flood.

But the next time you find yourself in a storm, Gen 8 can give you new hope and encouragement.-----

It records the end of a storm and the beginning of new life and hope for God's people and the creation.-----

Remember what happened **last week**.

In Gen **7v6** Noah, his wife, sons and their wives entered the ark.

In the ark they escape the floodwaters that engulfed the earth, killing all mankind and all land animals.

All their wider family, friends, neighbours, Died.--- Everyone!-----

Chapter 7 finished with them being in the ark for 150 days.-----

Our covid lock-down, with many stuck at home for weeks on end was tough.

Our longest lock-down in Melbourne lasted 111 days, and it was hard.-----

Noah, his family, and the animals were in a floating box, likely with no steering wheel or rudder; no control.-----

They would be together in the ark for over a year.

That's a lot of "closeness", and a long time breathing the stench of animal dung.☺

Noah and his family didn't even know how long they would be in the ark.

The Lord knew, but they didn't.-----

**My first point is, God remembers.(SLIDE)**-----

It's hard not knowing how long the hardship will go on for, isn't it?-----

When you're going through a storm, it's easy to feel forgotten or forsaken.

Feeling forsaken is a human emotion most of us have experienced, whether we admit it or not.

**Ps 10** asks,**(SLIDE)** "Why, O Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?"-----

We can think God is absent, when we don't experience his presence with our senses, or happy circumstances.-----

In our mind, we might even be able to recall, **Heb 13:5(SLIDE)** "I will never leave you or forsake you"; but in our heart, feel lonely and abandoned.

We might ask: Where is God?----- Or, When will the storm end?-----

Noah after a year on the water, could well have felt forgotten? Or at least been asking, How long O Lord?-----

Yet what does **Gen 8v1** say?----- “God **remembered** Noah.”(SLIDE)-----

God remembered Noah.

God’s remembering is no mere mental recollection.

When God remembers it doesn’t just mean he thinks of you

It means he looks kindly upon you, and he will intervene for your good.-----

When God remembers Noah, who’s been in the ark for half a year, the winds blow and waters begin to recede.-----

[8.4- the ark rested on around Mt Ararat, and interestingly, the Hebrew for Ararat sounds similar to ‘relief’ 5.29 suggested Noah would bring]

But it still took months, months of waiting.-----

And eventually, **v13-14**, the ground was dry.---

God remembered Noah and God acted to help him.-----

When God remembered **childless Rachel**, Gen 30, she got pregnant and gave birth to Joseph.-----

When God remembers his people Israel & covenant with Abraham, after being enslaved in Egypt for 400 years (SLIDE-Ex 2.24), he raises up Moses.-----

Do you remember that **thief on the cross** beside Jesus who said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom”? (SLIDE-Lk23.42)-----

And what did Jesus say?-----

"I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."-----

When God remembers God acts, He intervenes to help and save.-----

Because God remembered Noah, he was enabled to leave the ark.-----

Do you feel abandoned?----- Forgotten?-----

God does not change.

He is still on the throne, And He will remember His own!

**He remembers you**, child of God, by faith in Jesus.-----

He promises, promises, he won’t let you be tempted more than you can bear.(SLIDE-1 Cor 10.13) Even when it feels like it.

He promises he is with you, and wont leave you.(SLIDE-Heb 13.5)-----

God is for you(SLIDE-Rom 8.31,35,38-39).

And nothing can separate you from his love in Jesus.-----

When we start to think God stopped caring for us, we need to Remember God’s promises.

Remember that God remembers to keep his promises.-----

Listen to a song, or sing a hymn that reminds you of that.-----

In **Dark clouds, Deep Mercy**,(SLIDE) author, **Mark Vroegop**, shares the pain and sorrow of he n’ his wife having a child stillborn at full-term.

How he wrestled with sadness that bored a hole in his chest, and learnt to lament.----

And later, when Mark, a pastor, was teaching on lament from the Psalms, a man came to meet with him.

And shared his long struggle with same-sex attraction, and with God.

And the many things he’d tried, from counselling, to being in the Word.

Mark challenged him to lament – to complain.

To lay out his pain, his questions, his struggles before the Lord.

For God could handle his messy thoughts, and knew them.

And slowly the darkness in this brother's life began to lift. The struggle with same-sex attraction didn't vanish, but his sense of divine abandonment did. He poured out his soul in lament and opened his heart for God to apply healing grace in his life. The pain & questions that once created a barrier between him and God, now became a vehicle to draw him closer to the One, who could change his heart, and renew his life.-----

Mark also shares how suffering can lead to trust.

He helpfully describes trust as, active patience.

And says, lament helps us trust.

For trust looks like talking to God, sharing our complaints, seeking God's help, then recommitting ourselves to believe in who God is and what he has done – even as the trial continues.

You live through suffering, by what you believe, not by what you see or feel.

You fight by calling the promises of God to mind, and therefore, you can have hope.----

Because God remembered Noah, he, his family and the animals **They Exit(SLIDE)** the ark.

On New Year's Day, **v13**, the water had dried up, and on 27<sup>th</sup> of second in Noah's 601<sup>st</sup> year God said, "Come out", **v15**.-----

Notice, Noah waits until God says, 'come out';-----

bring out all the creatures; so they can multiply and fill the earth.

Does that language sound familiar?---- 'Be fruitful and multiply'?(**SLIDE**)-----

It's just like at creation in Genesis 1 (v22,28).-----

In **ch9.1 and v7** God also says to Noah's family, 'Be fruitful and multiply'.

You see what's happening here, theologically, is like a **return to Eden**.

There's lots of Eden/ Genesis 1/ creation language here.

We see this in the waiting of 7 days, **v10, v12**, reminiscent of the 7 days of creation.

We see it in the categories of animals mentioned in **v19**.-----

Also, Noah's **name means 'rest'**, and in **v4**, the ark came to rest on the mountains, again reminiscent of the 7<sup>th</sup> day, day of rest.-----

Noah is like a second Adam.

The human race is starting again with Noah and his family.

And we are all descendants of Noah.-----

After God wiped the earth clean, this is like a **fresh start** for humanity, and a **re-start** for the world.-----

It's like Creation 2.0

Even though 2.0 isn't quite as good as the original.-----

Noah and all those aboard have exited, and **then what happens?----- (SLIDE)**

Once he's off the ark what's the first thing Noah does?----

He worships the Lord in **v20**.

He brings animal sacrifices, which is why he needed more than one pair of clean animals.-----

In this burnt offering Noah expresses his thankfulness to God, for their salvation and deliverance.

It also expresses his devotion, his devotion and commitment to serve God.-----

With a burnt offering the whole animal is burnt and symbolically offered to God.

None of it's left for the worshipper to eat, it's all sacrificed.

And so Noah is saying, he offers all of himself to serve God.-----

Noah's worship and sacrifice pleases the Lord.(v21)-----

And really this points us to the one sacrifice who truly, completely and enduringly, pleases the Lord: the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.

**Eph 5:2** says(**SLIDE**), 'Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a' fragrant, or sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice to God.

Christ's sacrificial death was truly pleasing to God and acceptable to God, and because of that, we can be acceptable to God now too.

Because of Christ's sacrifice we who've relied on him, will never be destroyed.-----

As we continue to consider what happens after the exit from the ark, **some things have changed and some things remain the same.**(**SLIDE**)

**One thing that's changed** after the exit is, animals will now fear and flee from mankind, **9v2**.

The pictures of you see in children's Bibles of the Garden of Eden with Adam & Eve patting lions, they are past; gone!-----

Another difference will be **v3**, men and women may now eat everything that moves. Not just plants, fruit & vegies; people can now eat meat!

And aren't some of us thankful for that ☺

But, meat must have its **lifeblood** drained out first.

The blood is identified with life, and reminds people that life comes from God.-----

[Lev 17.14; cf Mk 7.19]

Some things have changed but **some things stay the same**.

For one, from **8v21**, people's hearts remain the same, still sinful.-----

We'll think about this more next week.

Also, **murder** is still wrong.

But now it is to bring the death penalty.

**Ch9 v5 &6**, "Whoever sheds human blood, by humans his blood will be shed; for God made humans in his image".

God values human life. It's precious.-----

Capital punishment can be a controversial and volatile issue, but God here commands it.

He's not commanding personal vengeance, rather these verses form part of the basis for human governments having the right to execute murderers.(Rom 13.4)

From the Bible it is difficult to make a case against capital punishment.-----

Yet, instead of death, God wants life to reign, men and women to be fruitful and increase in number, and fill the earth, **v7**.-----

That will be important next week.-----

**My third main point this morning is that God covenants.**(**SLIDE**)

God makes & establishes a covenant with Noah and his sons, **v8-17**.-----

In case they fear another flood, God says, "I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you".

So this covenant isn't just with Noah, and even his descendants, but with all the animals which left the ark.

Interestingly in the Bible, God never makes covenants with lone individuals, it's with Abraham and his offspring (Gen15), with David and his dynasty (2Sam7), with Noah and humanity.

But **what's a covenant?**-----(**SLIDE**)

A covenant is something that formalizes a promise. It's a super-sure promise.-----

A covenant is a contract that formalizes an agreement.

It formalises a relationship based on promises.-----

Just like in a marriage ceremony.-----  
 When I promised to love and to cherish and be faithful to Kirsti, and she to me, we entered a covenant relationship.-----  
 Often covenants give obligations to both sides, like in a marriage.-----  
 But in this case, only God makes the commitments; he alone makes the unconditional promises here.  
 “Never again will every creature be wiped out by floodwaters; there will never again be a flood to destroy the earth.”-----  
 And this covenant, it’s established all by God’s grace. It’s totally undeserved. Covenants that God establishes are never two-way bargains.  
 They are always established on the gracious initiative of God, and done to help us trust him.-----  
 God is faithful, but we struggle to believe that, so God graciously makes covenant promises, to help our unbelief.-----

Also, covenants in the Bible always have **signs**.

A sign so that people can remember them.  
 For the Mosaic covenant with Israel, the Sabbath was the sign.  
 For Abraham it was the smoking firepot and blazing torch, then sign of circumcision.  
 Signs remind us that God remembers; God keeps his promises.  
 The signs help us remember.----  
 But amazingly, by the sign in this covenant, God remembers.  
 In **vv12-16** – the sign is the bow, the **rainbow**.(**SLIDE**)-----  
 I know the meaning of a rainbow has been hijacked by some in our culture.  
 But when you see a rainbow, remember what it really means.  
 When you see a stunning rainbow in the sky, in the midst of rain & dark clouds, pause, and remember what it means.  
 Teach kids and remind each other when you see a rainbow, of the grace of God, of the God who keeps his promises, and never forgets.-----  
 We will experience storms, and worrying will not help us.  
 Look for the rainbow of God's covenant promise.-----  
 You may see the rainbow before the storm; or in the midst of the storm; or like Noah, you may have to wait until long after the storm.  
 But look to God’s promises by faith.-----  
 Like in **Ps 55**,(**SLIDE**) ‘Cast your cares/ your burden on the Lord and he will sustain you’.-----

Interestingly, in Gen **9v15** & 16 the rainbow helps God remember;---- as if God needs help remembering.-----

God will never forget.  
 But the rainbow reminds us that God remembers.-----  
**Ps 105**(**SLIDE**) tells us, ‘He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations’.[v8]-----  
 And what we want God to remember is grace, and not our sins.  
 As **Ps 25** says,(**SLIDE**) ‘Remember, Lord, your compassion and your faithful love, for they have existed from antiquity.  
<sup>7</sup> Do not remember the sins of my youth or my acts of rebellion;  
 in keeping with your faithful love, remember me  
 because of your goodness, Lord..’-----

And the only way God in love is able to not give us what our sins deserve, is because **Jesus took what we deserved**. Jesus died for us.-----  
 Linking this back to Genesis 9,(**SLIDE**) God could certainly turn a bow of judgment upon us, because we've broken His law and rejected his rule.  
 But He has turned the bow toward heaven and taken the punishment for us Himself!  
 When Jesus died on the cross, he bore the suffering that rightfully belonged to us.----  
 That's what we remember in the Lord's Supper.-----

At Jesus' last supper in **Luke 22:20**,(**SLIDE**) we're told, he said, "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you."

The Lord's Supper is the sign of the new covenant.-----

**Heb 8** says(**SLIDE**) this new covenant Jesus establishes, is superior to the old one established through Moses, and it's founded on better promises.

So what's better about the new covenant?

Well, quoting the promise in Jer 31, God will write his law on his peoples' hearts, and will all know God personally. Our greatest need.-----

And that can happen because, **v12**,(**SLIDE**) I will forgive their wrongdoing (or wickedness) and I will never again remember their sins."-----

In the Lord's Supper we remember, that God chooses not to remember our sins, cos he's forgiven them through Jesus. How wonderful!-----

Now this God who forgives our sins, and gives us relationship with himself, through faith in Jesus, this is the God who asks us to trust him.(**SLIDE**)

To trust his promises; even in the storms of life.-----

So even if we feel flooded by waves crashing over us, trust the Lord Jesus now.---

Trust in Christ, and know God promises your sins are forgiven; he is with you.

You are not forgotten but remembered.

Under the new covenant God promises mercy for you today, and mercy on the last day.-----

**A woman called Rachel Pettett** had suffered through her third year of **chronic fatigue syndrome**, and she writes,

I often pray it will be my last. It has turned me from a confident, extraverted, active independent person, who hardly ever said 'no', into someone trapped in a frail, exhausted, pain-filled body, desperately desiring to get out of bed.-----

Sometimes God just feels so far away, and I feel I've got no trust left, that I can't do it anymore.'

She says, 'throughout this suffering my heart seeks comfort and joy... and I've found my biggest challenge in any day is to run to him, not to the world.

I wonder how many things God has to take away from me before I listen to his voice:

"Cling to me. Cling to me. I love you."-----

God remembered Noah and those with him.

God remembers and keeps his promises.

Believe that!-----

Let's pray.