

## Sermon, FAILURE AND FULFILLMENT

There is a part of Noah's story we don't usually talk about. It's not the ark. It's not the rain. It's not even the flood.

It's what happened after all that. No, we don't often talk about what happened after the miracles and after God proved to be so faithful.

Yall, Noah fell apart. Think about that for a minute. The same man, chosen by God to be spared from the destruction of the entire human race. The same man who obeyed when nobody believed him. The same man who survived judgement while he was building a boat in his driveway.

The same man who gathered his family and all the animals and survived the flood. The same man who watched God wipe the slate clean. The same man who had such an intimate relationship with God that he confidently spoke with God.

Noah fell into immorality, drunkenness, nakedness. He failed to even attempt to establish a positive and faithful generation following the Flood. He was a poor leader who showed no social concern. He was not a model parent. Certainly, Noah is remembered as a pillar of faith, especially he is the

great example of listening and obeying God.

But after the flood, He fell apart. And that messes with our theology. Because we like to believe that if God brings us to it, God will bring us through it. And if God brings us through something big and difficult, we should come out healed, grateful, delivered and strong.

But what we see in the Bible about Noah tells us otherwise. We see surviving does not mean you have surrendered. Deliverance does not mean you are not numb. And victory does not automatically restore what trauma touched.

Some of us did not break before the storm, we broke after. After the divorce. After the loss. After the diagnosis. After the crisis. After the season we prayed to just get through finally ended.

And instead of restoration and rest, we got numb. Instead of being comforted, it feels like we did our best to just escape. Instead of healing, we hid.

See, we don't talk about the after part because it feels inconvenient, not holy.

But the Bible does not sanitize pain. Noah did not fall because he was wicked, he fell because surviving

something intense does not make you immune to collapsing.

And here's the hard truth. You can be chosen by God and still mishandle pain. You can be faithful and still need healing. You can obey God publicly and bleed privately.

All that does not disqualify you. No, it identifies where the work still needs to happen.

God saved Noah from the flood, but Noah still had to learn how to live after it.

And so do many of us. If you are struggling after your breakthrough, after the prayer was answered, after the rough season finally ended, you are not broken beyond repair. You are human. So, listen to this. God does not care only about getting you through the storm. God cares about who become once it is over.

Religion is at its best when it makes us ask hard questions of ourselves. It is at its worst when it deludes us into thinking we have all the answers.

Not seeing the result? Feel like giving up? Consider that the last thing to grow on a fruit tree is the fruit.

We are all in process. God is still at work here. Your greatest value comes from being who you truly are. Let your

beautiful, unique, unfinished,  
fascinating and authentic self become  
alive. But be patient. Not be perfect,  
be patient.

Martin Luther once wrote, “We are not  
yet what we should be, but we are  
growing toward it.”

How then, does God call us to live? Be  
crazy enough to live with joy.

Be foolish enough to care.

Be curious enough to make mistakes.

Be humble enough to learn.

Be grateful enough to appreciate it all.

Be passionate enough to seize what  
God places before you.

Be brave enough to speak the truth.

Be strong enough to pull your weight.

Be cheerful enough to laugh along the  
way.

Be honest enough that we can trust you.

Be hopeful enough to keep going and  
going, no matter what may appear in  
your path.

Failure and fulfillment go hand in hand.

A blessing for you: Success is not your work. Faithfulness is your work. Have faith that God will get you through the roughest of times. God seeks your effort, not your perfection. God is at work through you. Do not lose heart. Blessings in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.