

“After The Flood Comes The Rainbow.”

Genesis 9: 8-17

There is or was in print an interesting little book entitled, “*Why Didn’t Noah Swat Both Mosquitoes?*” and it was written by a Methodist pastor by the name of Rodney Wilmoth. In the book he tells about one of the members of the church staff who came to work one morning telling a story about one of the neighbors on her street.

According to her, a man had been up on the roof of his house the day before doing some repair work. Because the roof was steep he decided to tie a rope around his waist and then throw the rope over to the other side of the house so it would reach the ground.

Then he called for his son and told him to tie the end of the rope to something secure. So, the boy tied the end of the rope to the bumper of the car which was parked in the driveway.

Yes, what you think happened next -- did.

The wife had to go take care of an errand and so she jumped in the car and drove off.

The man survived, but the injuries were quite painful.

What is it that we all know about Murphy’s Law? *If anything can go wrong, it will -- and at the worst possible moment.* Maybe that isn’t a healthy outlook on life and I’m certainly not espousing it, but one can certainly wonder sometimes.

Think of poor Noah. The rains came and came, and the flood waters were rising. Noah and his family are cooped up inside an ark for about 190 days. 40 of those days were spent waiting out a rainstorm, and the remaining 150 were spent floating along on the ocean blue -- until the waters receded and the ark came to a rest atop the mountains of Ararat.

Noah’s Ark was not a cruise ship. He was cooped up in there with every possible imaginable animal on earth -- two of every kind -- and the smell couldn’t have been pleasant. He had his own family, but his neighbors were all gone as well as his old neighborhood. The world as he had known it had disappeared and now he was having to start over.

There is an old saying, “*Into each life a little rain must fall.*” That would be an understatement. Many people don’t experience only “a little” rain -- rather, they experience a total gully washer that floods their whole world!

-- The wife who loses her husband.

-- The daughter who loses her dad.

-- The son who watches his own dad slowly fade away.

-- The young woman who is diagnosed with cancer.

-- The middle-aged man who loses his job.

-- The man who is betrayed by his wife.

-- The son or daughter who can’t kick their addiction.

The list goes on and on. These aren’t mere “rainy days.” These are storms -- these are floods! These are events that destroy a person’s known world. When the waters come, we find ourselves barely keeping afloat atop the dark and uncertain waters of chaos and confusion.

There is a story about two men from Cape Town Africa who stowed away on a Norwegian freighter in hopes of reaching Europe, only to learn the bitterly cold truth three days into the trip. The ship wasn’t bound for Europe -- it was bound for the Antarctic. Never in their wildest dreams had they thought that they would wind up in a place that is colder than most people can imagine!

These two men were from Cape Town Africa -- they had never even *seen* snow and ice before. They had sneaked aboard this Norwegian ship “Polar Queen” when it stopped in South Africa en route to Antarctica.

The stowaways hid under the engine room deck, emerging filthy, hungry, and desperately seasick after three days. The 14-member Norwegian crew got them cleaned up, fed them, loaned them clothing and took them sight-seeing on the ice pack.

There was enough food and space for all aboard the ship, but the stowaways were stuck on the frozen continent until the “Polar Queen” sailed for Cape Town about two weeks later.

Life does that to us sometimes. We think we are headed toward Europe and we end up in Antarctica. We try to do what God wants us to do and we end up sailing with a boatload of animals toward a world we cannot even imagine. This is Noah's story but it is also our own. What do we do when the waters are rising, and the world around is rapidly changing and life seems dreadfully frightening?

For one thing, we can keep reading in the Noah story and realize that eventually the waters subside and out comes a rainbow.

Storms do not last forever. Most people who lose their jobs do find another. We get stronger through our grief. Single mothers do make it through somehow. Our long and cold winter eventually melts away, giving way to green grass, blue sky, and warm sunshine.

God is not a Divine-tormentor who sits up there in the sky, pushing a pain button while getting a kick out of watching us jump. Neither is God a weak, limited, or disinterested Deity who avoids getting involved in our affairs. The same God who sends the rain -- or even allows the flood -- is the same God who pushes the waters back and sends a rainbow.

Most of our troubles are temporary. Somehow we do get through them. It probably seemed like a lifetime to Noah being cooped up on that smelly old ark. But eventually the waters receded and a rainbow appeared in the heavens. The rainbow was a symbol of God's promise to Noah that never again would God flood the earth. Now granted, Fond Du Lac may get flooded but not the whole earth. That promise still stands today. Think of that the next time you see a rainbow in the sky. But the next time you see a rainbow, think also of the fact that God is merciful.

I'll close with a true story about a man who was a failure at everything he tried. As a youth he wasn't a very good student. As a young man he went into the Army, but he didn't make a very good soldier, either. He kept getting fired from job after job. His wife left him because she considered him a total loser. At last he had reached the lowest point in his life and he decided to resort to a life of crime.

Someone offered him a sum of money to kidnap a particular child, and so he set out to do it. He cased the place, he watched where this child walked everyday. And so he plotted how he would abduct this child for the individual who had offered him the money to do it.

On the day that he decided to carry it out, he sat in the bushes quietly waiting for the child to appear. As he sat there, he thought about all of the events of his life that had

brought him to this point. Because he was a failure at everything else in his life, he was now about to stoop so low as to commit a horrific act of transgression!

“Oh! How could I do this!” he agonized. *“Because I’m a failure at everything else, this is what I’ve become??!?”*

He couldn’t go through with it. He never did carry that out. Instead, he decided to give himself just one more chance; just one more chance to succeed at *something*.

Because he was somewhat handy in the kitchen, he began experimenting with a new recipe for breaded chicken. Eventually he hit upon one that contained 11 herbs and spices, and the rest is history.

The Kentucky Fried Chicken success story is the “rainbow” that came into Harlan Sanders’ life after he had drowned in a flood of failure. (1)

This is not to say that each of you is going to go make it big in the chicken restaurant business after your current problem is over with. But it could very well be something else!

I don’t know what your particular “rainbow” will be, but if you commit your life to God through Christ, that rainbow will come.

AMEN.

(1) Paul Harvey, *The Rest Of The Story*