

I. Introduction

Happy Father's Day! Let's begin with a bite of history. On May 9th, 1909, the pastor of the Central Methodist Episcopal Church in Spokane, Washington, preached a special Mother's Day message. The message left a deep impression on one member of his congregation, although it was probably not exactly the impression that the pastor had intended.



That morning, Sonora Smart Dodd left the church with a question on her mind. "Why isn't there a special day for fathers also?" Sonora was the oldest child in her family and the only girl. Her mother had died when she was sixteen years old, leaving Sonora and five younger brothers to the care of their father. In 1909, at the age of 27, Sonora was a young mother herself. But while she was growing up, the hero of her family had been her father. So, Sonora went to a meeting of the pastors of the city of Spokane, and proposed that they establish a special day for fathers. The idea was accepted and one year later, on June 19th, 1910, the churches of Spokane celebrated Father's Day.



Sonora Smart Dodd

Today, over 100 countries celebrate Father's Day. Prior to 1909, there were other times in history when fathers were honored, but our modern Father's Day started as an idea in Sonora's mind. One Sunday, one woman listened to the sermon and was inspired, and she ended up influencing 100 nations to honor fatherhood. Wow! May the Lord also inspire us to make a lasting difference in the world!

This morning, I would like to take a look at the familiar story of Noah's ark and see what the Lord might say to us about the role of fathers through it. In Genesis 5, we find a genealogy that leads to Noah and his sons. **Genesis 5:1** says, "This is the written account of Adam's line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God." And after this Adam's descendents are listed, down to the birth of Noah's three sons in **Genesis 5:32**, "After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth." Let's read a few selected verses to remind us of what happens next.

II. Scripture

Genesis 6:5 "The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time."

Genesis 6:8-9 "But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God."

Genesis 6:22 "Noah did everything just as God commanded him."

Genesis 7:1 "The Lord then said to Noah, 'Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation.'"

Genesis 7:7-9 "And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah."



III. Teaching

Noah and his wife, plus his three sons and their wives entered the ark. And all of the animals came and climbed aboard. And they waited for the flood to come. John Linnell painted the scene on the evening before the flood like this. The focus here is on Noah and his family as they watch the storm clouds gather.



But here is another painting of the same evening by a different artist, William Bell Scott. In this painting the ark is in the background, but the focus is on people who refused to board the ark. In Matthew 24, Jesus speaks of these people and compares their situation to those who are not expecting Jesus' own Second Coming.



Matthew 24:37-39, “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”

Jesus says these people knew nothing about what would happen. But this does not mean that the people were not warned. **2 Peter 2:5** calls Noah a, “**preacher of righteousness.**” So we know that the people were warned of the coming flood. But they did not, “know,” because they refused to believe the warning, just as so many people refuse to believe the warning that Jesus will come again in judgment.



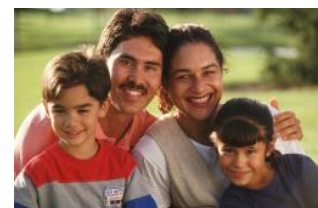
It began to rain, and it rained for 40 days and 40 nights. But Noah and his family were safe inside the ark. After the rain stopped, it also took months for the ground to dry. A full year passed before they were able to leave the ark.

But finally the day came when they stood on dry ground again. Here we see Noah at his best. The flood has come and gone, but Noah and his family are safe and they are giving thanks to God for their salvation. Sadly, we also know from the Scriptures that some time after this after this Noah sinned in drunkenness. That is a warning to all of us that strong temptations often come after a great spiritual victory has been won. Noah sinned, but Noah is still a hero of the faith.



Noah's ark is a familiar story, but do you know why Noah built the ark? We know that the Lord told Noah to build it, but why did Noah obey? Of course it was because Noah was obedient to the Lord, but Scripture also tells us a very specific reason why Noah built the ark. Take a look at **Hebrews 11:7, “By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.”** What does it say? It says that Noah built the ark, “**to save his family.**”

Noah loved his family and he built the ark to save them from the coming flood. Fathers, I want to encourage you to follow Noah's example. Walk with God. Listen to the voice of God and obey. Love your family and build a safe place for them, a loving home where the Lord is worshipped and honored.



Noah built an ark, but I am pretty sure that he did not do it alone. I think Noah involved his whole family in the work. In a similar way, a good father leads his family in the task of making a safe spiritual home. Lead your family in worship and involve your wife and children in preparing a home where Jesus is Lord. Read the Scriptures together, pray together, work together, and walk with God together.



IV. Conclusion

My own son was almost 12 years old before I came to faith in Jesus. And after I came to faith, I was a new Christian and I did not really know how to build a Christian home. So I did not do as well as a father as I would have liked. But those of you who have young children have the opportunity to do better. Spend time with your sons and daughters, pray with them, and share the love of Jesus with them. And for those of us who have grown children, let's keep on working to lead our family to Jesus. Because true safety is found only



in Jesus, Jesus is our ark. The family that is enclosed in Jesus' loving arms is safe.

V. Closing Prayer