

**D.J. Reed**  
**June 19, 2011**

**Trinity Sunday (Father's Day)**

**Chilson Hills Church**  
**Howell, MI**

***"Big Responsibility"***  
**Genesis 6:11-19, 21-22**

<http://www.devotions.net/bible/00bible.htm>

(Bill Cosby – "Noah")

Bill Cosby first performed that routine back in the 60's. People have heard that routine hundreds if not thousands of times. It still gets thousands of hits on Youtube and it still makes people laugh.

Part of the reason for its continued popularity is Bill Cosby's facial expressions and the sound of his voice ("Right!"). And he also has that wonderful sound effect, "Vooba, Vooba, Vooba..."

But another reason this routine is so beloved is because Bill Cosby fills in the gaps of the story.

Did you ever notice that throughout the entire story in the Bible, Noah says nothing... absolutely nothing. And so we are left to wonder. What did Noah think? What did Noah say?

And Bill Cosby's routine really captures well what we think he might have said. And more importantly, he captures the disconnect between ordinary, good people and the call of God.

"Right!... Am I on candid camera?!" It's a perfect response to a call that seems laughable because the responsibility Noah is being asked to shoulder is ridiculously difficult.

In fact, I don't think there is another character in the Bible who has a bigger responsibility than Noah did. Build a boat and save the world – no other call (with the exception of Jesus) even comes close in scope and complexity. Noah has a massive responsibility

Noah is an unassuming 600 yr. old man who has a wife and three married sons. Noah does not seem to be particularly gifted, he doesn't seem to have a wealth of charisma and he doesn't seem to be a natural leader either.

But Noah was something that no one else was. It says in verse 9:

***"Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God."***

Now, this word, "righteous" isn't used to denote perfection or moral superiority. "Righteousness" is used in the Bible to describe a person who had a right relationship with God. This was a man who had high integrity and walked with God. In other words, Noah was a man with an unusually close relationship with God.

And this was unusual in Noah's society, which Scripture says over and over again was "corrupt" and "filled with violence." But no one had a rap sheet on Noah. Noah had a right relationship with God. And that was unusual back then and that, quite frankly, is unusual today.

This past week, New York congressman, Anthony Weiner, resigned after posting lewd pictures on his Twitter account. But this is nothing new. Weiner is another face in the long, growing line-up of disgraced, scandalized politicians and celebrities.

IMF Chairman, Dominic Strauss- Kahn, Arnold Schwarzenegger, John Edwards, Pastor Ted Haggard, Bill Clinton, Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, Tiger Woods, Woody Allen, R. Kelly, Mike Tyson... the list goes on and on and on.

All of these men had a private persona that didn't match with their public persona. They behaved differently behind closed doors than when they appeared on television, or on the floor of the House, or on a stage. They all had integrity problems.

It's hard to find men like Noah these days. In fact, I think we've kind of stopped looking.

Over the past several months, we've been house hunting. And we've taken the advice of our realtor, Joann and our good friend, Lynda Chase who continue to encourage us to not settle.

So, we've established an unwritten list of things we're looking for in a house: we want \_\_\_\_\_ amount of bedrooms, \_\_\_\_\_ amount of bathrooms, \_\_\_\_\_ amount of square footage, \_\_\_\_\_ a large dining area, forced air, an open floor plan, and a reasonable distance from the church (like 10-12 minutes from the church).

But we both know that we probably won't find the perfect house and that we might have to make some concessions in the end. So, we prioritize, and we determine what are the deal-breakers and what can we live with.

We might not be able to find a house with as large of a dining area as we were hoping for. We might not be able to find a house with the perfect finished basement. So, we're expecting to settle... a bit.

And I wonder; have we given up on expecting to find men who are like Noah; men who act differently because they behave rightly, men who have a faith and have a right relationship with God.

As Anthony Weiner faced the persistent pressure to resign, the expected jokes and ever-present critiques were expected, but I guess I was a little surprised by his supporters.

"No one is perfect," they said, "Everyone makes mistakes" (In fact, that's how Weiner referred to his Twitter posts – he said they were "personal mistakes"). "He didn't kill anyone." "He didn't break the law." He just lacked good judgment.

And so, because he is imperfect like all of us, and because it's indirectly related to his job performance, we excuse these misdemeanors and we might re-elect him or even celebrate him in the future.

Noah-like men are hard to find. So we settle and stop holding them to a higher standard; and then we wonder why they continue to behave badly.

I mean everyone wishes for a better behaving male population, but you know, "boys will be boys." Why fight testosterone and the call of the wild?

And what happens is that men become increasingly convinced that they are – at their core – disloyal,

wild, unemotional, aggressive, and incapable of being "spiritual" or "being into God." And the definition of manhood is becoming synonymous with being independent, irreligious, and unspiritual.

Now, I know there are plenty of men out there who say that they hear God in a deer blind or in their car, or in the laughter of their children. I know there are plenty of people (not just men) who point out that you don't have to do religious activity to have a relationship with God. And you're right, you don't have to be super-spiritual or super-moral to hear from God.

But, hear me when I say this: your ability to hear the call of God is directly related to how you live your life and the quality of your relationship with God.

Think about it: A person who spends time in prayer, hearing the word of God, and thinking about its words is probably more likely to be able to discern the voice of God in the world around him. Not because he's any better than anyone else, but because his spirit is tuned to the voice of God.

You may have heard the story of the young man who applied for a job as a Morse Code Operator back when the telegraph was the fastest mode of communication.

The applicant walked into the office where he promptly found a room full of young men all jockeying for the same position. The man calmly found a place to sit, and waited.

The room was quiet, an occasional cough a shuffle of shoes, the rustle of a newspaper... and the sound of a telegraph tapping away in the back office.

The young man waited and waited, and then got up, walked into the office where the tapping was coming from and shut the door.

The others chuckled at the young man's audacity, and continued in their coughing, shuffling and rustling.

A few minutes passed, the door opened and out came the manager who thanked everyone for applying, but, he informed them, the position had now been filled.

The men were stunned how could this be? One particularly angry gentleman approached the

manager to protest. "Sir," he said, "I've been waiting here almost 3 hours and some others have been waiting almost 4, and this guy comes in, waits for a couple minutes, marches right into your office and gets the job. Sir, that's not fair!"

The manager calmly replied, "I understand your frustration, but I've been sitting back there for the past 4 hours tapping on that telegraph the following message, "If you can hear this, come back to my office. The job is yours."

The radio operator didn't get the job because he was the best, brightest, or most charismatic. The radio operator got the job because he listened, because he was disciplined, and because he was sensitive to its presence.

Sure, you can hear God in the outdoors, in a deer blind, or at Comerica Park. And yes, we don't need religion to be saved.

But what we do here on Sunday mornings, is practice, giving vocabulary and songs and lessons to help you hear the voice of God throughout the week and also be ready for the times. And if you're not practicing how do you expect to know what God sounds like or what God is calling you to do?

Can you hit a 90 mph fastball without batting practice? Can you shoot a moving target without some time on the range? Can you have a solid short game without spending time on the greens? Why is faith any different?

This is what we see in Noah. No one saw a flood coming. No one believed their behavior, their actions, their spirituality really mattered. But Noah did because he had a right relationship with God and because right actions flowed out of that relationship. And because he lived this way, he was able to hear the crazy call of God on his life and be prepared for the coming disaster.

A couple of years ago, Time Magazine came out with an article entitled, "Why We Don't Prepare." The writer pointed out that 91% of Americans live in places at a moderate-to-high risk of earthquakes, tornadoes, wildfires, hurricanes, high-wind damage or terrorism.

However, despite knowing these risks, the article pointed out that our government structures are incredibly unprepared, and that we as citizens follow suit because we underperceive risk. "Americans," the article says, "have a tendency to

be die-hard optimists, literally. It is part of what makes the country great – and vincible."

In other words, preparation is tied to a healthy dose of pessimism. It means that we are aware that the worst could happen. It means that we are aware of our surroundings, the trends and the pitfalls.

God tells Noah that the world is corrupt, and because Noah has been living contrary to the world, he can see what God is talking about.

And because his relationship with God is right, Noah knows that the world has forgotten about God of love and have instead, given in to the impulses of violence.

Noah isn't superior to everyone else. Noah just lives differently. Noah hears and obeys. He takes on the responsibility of building an ark; an ark that has precise dimensions and specifications, an Ark that must be strong and seaworthy.

Noah obeys. And because he obeys, the world is destroyed, but Creation is redeemed. And because Noah obeys, and is faithful in obeying what God has instructed, God establishes a covenant with Noah and his family.

Yes, God wants to spare one human life, but God also wants to save nations. God wants to save societies. God wants to save families. This is why it's so important for dads to live with integrity and in a right relationship with God. Because if you don't, it effects so much more than your own life; your whole family is affected.

We've been talking a lot about this in the Children's Ministry Team lately. In fact they are probably sick of hearing me say it:

The average Sunday School teacher has around 40 hours in a year to influence the life of a child (That's probably on the high side). But the average parent has 3,000 hours in a year to influence the life of a child.

What does that statistic tell us?

Ultimately, you as fathers (and mothers) are the primary teachers of your child. I'm not (as your pastor), and the Sunday School teacher is not. You are.

We can have fun lessons, and well-trained teachers, brilliant curriculum and really cool

activities, but if parents are not teaching and talking about Jesus at home during meal times, drive times, mornings and evenings – the work that we do here is less powerful and less effective.

As we see in the life of Noah – God saves fathers (and mothers) to save their families. God speaks to parents to speak to their kids and if you are not being regularly taught from the word of God, praying and participating in a community of faith – I'm afraid not only for your sake but also for your family's sake.

I don't remember many sermons or Bible lessons from my youth. Sure, there are phrases from sermons and spiritual conversations that I remember having, but do you know what I remember the most? Do you know what I think was most influential in my life as a Christian?

I remember waking up at 6 o'clock in the morning, going upstairs to take a shower and finding my father, sitting in his armchair, with the Bible opened on his lap. He would say, "Good morning," and by the time I was done with my shower, he was on his knees, praying.

I remember him blessing me each night, and I remember having family devotions each night. My dad was and is, a lot like Noah – he had integrity, he had a great moral record, and he had a right relationship with God.

To all the fathers in this congregation let us strive to be like Noah. We don't have to always succeed. But let's at least spend our life on this earth trying to be like Noah. Let us live rightly and let us walk with God. Amen.

**LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**  
**For Sunday, June 19, 2011's Sermon**  
**Foundational Scripture: Genesis 6:11-19, 21-22**  
<http://www.devotions.net/bible/00bible.htm>

**Featured Scripture Reflection:** "But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you." – Genesis 6:18 (NRSV) (<http://www.devotions.net/bible/00bible.htm>)

**Opening Icebreaker:** Share about a time when you were given an awesome responsibility (example: receiving your driver's license, becoming a parent for the first time, a new job etc.).

**Scripture Questions**

**What is the scripture saying?**

- Read Genesis 6:11-22 (<http://www.devotions.net/bible/00bible.htm>). What stands out to you about this story? What questions does it raise?
- Read Genesis 8:13-22 (<http://www.devotions.net/bible/00bible.htm>). What words or phrases stand out to you when you read this passage? How does this passage help you understand the previous passage?
- Read Luke 17:22-27 (<http://www.devotions.net/bible/00bible.htm>). Think about what you've just read. How does it compliment what was read in the previous passages?

**How is God speaking through Scripture?**

- What is the "Good News" in these passages of Scripture?
- After discussing and pondering these passages, how do these passages affect me?
- How are these passages troubling or confusing?

**God's word**

- What is God's invitation to you?

**A prayer**

God, you have given all of us responsibilities. We are all called participate in the mission you have called us to. Give us the courage to obey you, the strength to complete our work, and the confidence that you are with us always. Amen.