

**THE PROMISE OF HOPE**  
**Genesis 9:8-17**

**THE THUNDER ROLLS**

We are still dealing with the worst national disaster to strike the United States. If you want to know what a death-dealing flood looks like, look at that.

An adult story!

There are a lot of stories, and children's pictures, and songs about Noah's Ark, but it's an adult story.

The seriousness of sin.

At the beginning of the history of humanity, God sees the appalling sin of the human race.

In the first six chapters of Genesis we see the progress of sin, like a fast growing cancer.

Adam and Eve are thrown out of the Garden of Eden.

Cain murders his brother Abel. Lamech introduces polygamy.

This is not just an ancient problem.

The first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century seem to be taking on the dark shape of stormy weather.

Our nation is attacked by terrorists. We initiate a war with Iraq.

Our world is rocked by natural disasters.

The polar ice caps are melting. "The accelerated rate of this melting can only be due to one factor: the human factor. The human impact on planet Earth can itself be likened to a tsunami that is changing the face of the Earth." (Leonard Sweet)

Lent is a 40-day period of honesty. This is the season when we confess our sin.

**I WILL REMEMBER**

*"When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant which is between me and you ..."*

*"Do this in remembrance of me" (I Corinthians 11:24).*

What do you remember?

"Love one another." The crucifixion. The glorious resurrection.

Remember this: The promise of hope and the gift of grace and mercy.

Have you ever experienced a moment that you would like to take back?

Words spoken in anger. Actions taken without thinking.

It happened to God.

The rainbow wasn't a sign for us.

*"When I see that bow," God says, "I will remember my promise."*

*"I've learned that my love can't take that kind of hurt. I'll treat you another way!"*

God remembers the rainbow. We are to remember the cross!

When the people conspired to kill Jesus, God could have killed them. But this time it didn't happen that way.

God says, "No matter what you do; no matter how bad it gets; no matter what happens, I'll still love you. And there isn't anything you can do about it. When you remember me, remember that!"

**Prayer Concerns:** *Burney Biesel, Deborah Hendrix, Mac Kerr, Ricky Kirby, Anne Miller, Vicki Page, Rachel Parker, Katherine Pickens, Mildred Sentell, Joe Tidwell, Jr., Ray Billings, Cledus Creel, Betty Crenshaw, Rachel Cobb, Ed Gatlin, Martha Gibbs, Nancy Godsey, Kristi Jackson, Jeff Joyner, Ava Grace Keleher, Joyce Kuhl, Robert Lee, Judy Malaquias, Catherine Mattheus, Margaret Moore, Macy Morgan, Taylor Murray, Jessie & Ann Pruitt, Florine Rickeman, Mary Elizabeth Roberts, Jerry Wayne Sims ...*

**Christian Sympathy** is extended to **Jeff Burns and family** on the death of his uncle, *George Burns*, on Monday, February 27, and to **Bill Parmenter and family** on the loss of his mother-in-law, **Lois Lay**, who died on Tuesday, February 28.

### PASTORAL PRAYER

Gracious Lord, we admit that we don't like the season of Lent very much. It invites us to take sin seriously, and not just the sin of the world, but our sin. This season also invites us to take seriously our relationship with you. You want us to define the relationship. Are we serious about giving ourselves over to your transforming love or merely going through the motions.

We are reminded once again that the Gospel is bad news before it ever becomes good news. It's the news that we are sinful and in need of a savior. We have not become the people you want us to be. But it's also the news that we are loved anyway. We are cherished and forgiven. You put a rainbow in the sky as a sign of that love. You have given us an old rugged cross to remind us that no matter what we do, no matter how bad it gets, no matter what happens, that you still love us.

Help us to realize our unworthiness, confess our sin, and experience the grace you so lovingly offer through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray ...

**THE LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

### GENESIS 9:8-17

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will look upon it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."

### SERMON SCHEDULE

#### In the Sanctuary:

March 12	<i>You're Never Too Old</i>	Genesis 17:1-16
March 19	<b>Dr. J. Earheart-Brown</b> President of MTS	<b>10:40 a.m. only</b>
March 26	<i>The Father's Heart</i>	John 3:14-21

#### On the Radio (1450 AM):

March 12	<i>The Beatitudes (Part 1)</i>	Matthew 5:1-6
March 19	<i>The Beatitudes (Part 2)</i>	Matthew 5:7-8
March 26	<i>The Beatitudes (Part 3)</i>	Matthew 5:9-12

**Faith Break (SL 100):** Monday through Friday at 7:20 a.m.