

**Altered by the Altar**  
**Worship as a Right Response**  
**Genesis 6-8, especially 8:20-22**

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**Text Introduction:** Genesis is the book of beginnings. Genesis shows us the beginning of many things—creation, humanity, sin, family, even nations. Genesis also shows us the beginning of worship. For example, the last verse of chapter 4 tells us, “At that time people began to call on the name of Yahweh.” (4:26)

We ought to be able to learn something about worship from this book of beginnings. A recurring phrase in the book is “built an altar.” We will look at each of these texts as we examine how worship changes us or how we are “Altered by the Altar.” Over the rest of the weeks of the summer we will look at each of the texts that have this phrase. We start today in Genesis 8.

**Text:** <sup>20</sup>Then Noah built an altar to the LORD. He took some of every kind of clean animal and every kind of clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.<sup>21</sup> When the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, He said to Himself, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, even though man’s inclination is evil from his youth. And I will never again strike down every living thing as I have done.

<sup>22</sup>As long as the earth endures,  
seedtime and harvest, cold and heat,  
summer and winter, and day and night  
will not cease.”

**Introduction:** Noah is introduced as a righteous man, blameless in his time, and one who walked with God. In six chapters, this is already the second time that someone is said to have walked with God. God must want us to know that He longs for us to walk with Him.

But, even though Noah is a righteous man, the world around him is filled with sin—so much so that we read some of the most devastating words of Scripture.

Genesis 6:6-7—“The LORD regretted that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. <sup>7</sup>Then the LORD said, “I will wipe off from the face of the earth mankind, whom I created, together with the animals, creatures that crawl, and birds of the sky—for I regret that I made them.”

What follows in chapter 6-8 is the account of God announcing his plan to destroy the earth only saving Noah, his family, and the living creatures that God instructed Noah to bring on the ark. We then read of Noah’s complete obedience in doing what God commanded him to do. In fact the recurring phrase is “He did everything that God commanded him.”

Next, we read of the flood. Finally, we read of the drying of the earth after the flood.

Our text today tells us of Noah’s immediate actions upon exiting the ark. He built an altar. He worshipped. Worship is the right response. Think about it. You have been saved when the whole world around you has been destroyed. The proper response is worship, isn’t it?

**Worship is the sensible response of salvation.**

Can we begin with a basic question this morning? Who told Noah to build an altar? He built an ark at the command of God. Noah, so far as the record of Scripture goes, did not build the altar at the command of God. He built the altar because worship was the sensible response of the salvation from the flood.

Romans 12:1 almost immediately comes to mind when I read this text in Genesis.

Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship.

Other translations render this word “spiritual” “logical” or “reasonable.” Worship of God for what He has done for us is “reasonable.” The word for reasonable service is *logikos*. You can hear our English word logical in that word. This is logical. Christ died for us. It seems logical or reasonable that we would devote ourselves in worship to Him

Notice Noah’s cycle of worship.

- Fearing God—Noah feared God, so He obeyed God.
- Faith—Parallel to Noah’s healthy fear of God was His faith. The writer of Hebrews made comment about Noah’s fear of God and his faith in Hebrews 11:7. “By faith Noah, after he was warned about what was not yet seen and motivated by godly fear, built an ark to deliver his family. By faith he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.”
- Following—Fearing God and faith in God led Noah to obey God to build an ark when he had never seen rain.
- Faithfulness of God—Noah’s fearing God, faith, and following was rewarded with the faithfulness of God.
- Fearing God—His worship comes full circle. This is where we are today in Genesis 8:20-22. He enters the ark with fear and faith. He exits the ark with greater fear and faith. He has been saved. Worship ensues. Worship is the right response. Worship is the only response.

Worship was the sensible response because of the salvation.

**Worship must be a sincere act represented by a sacrificial offering.**

If we have read once in recent days about the mess our world is in, we have read a thousand times of the mess. I am certainly not minimizing the mess that our world is in today, but if you want to really talk about messes, think about the world that Noah and his family entered when they exited the ark. There is nothing. Animals are gone. People are gone. Vegetation is gone. There is nothing. Where do you start? There are shelters to build. There is work to do. So, where do you start? Noah started with building an altar. Noah started with worship.

And look at his worship. Noah took some of every kind of clean animal and every kind of clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. (God prepared him for this it appears because He told him to bring 7 pairs of the clean animals.) Noah did not have much, but that did not matter. He believed the proper response was to worship, and his worship was sacrificial.

For me, Noah's worship is reminiscent of David's worship as recorded in 2 Samuel 24. A plague has come upon the people of Israel during the reign of King David because of their sin. God commands David to go to a man named Araunah who owns a threshing floor and there build an altar and make sacrifice to the Lord. David, in obedience, went and offered to buy the threshing floor and oxen to make sacrifice. Araunah protested because David was king and instead says "No, my lord the king, take whatever you want. I give you everything here."

But David says, "No, I insist on buying it from you for a price, for I will not offer to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

There is a hymn "Trust and Obey." The chorus goes...

Trust and obey,  
For there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus,  
But to trust and obey.

I want you to hear the fourth verse of this hymn.

But we never can prove  
The delights of His love,  
Until all on the altar we lay;  
For the favor He shows,  
And the joy He bestows,  
Are for them who will trust and obey.

You want to be altered by the altar? You want to experience the best in a relationship with Jesus? Hold nothing back. Lay it all on the altar!

**Worship seems to always call us to do something.**

As you know, I have grown fond of closing the message with "So what?" We have added to that question in recent days, the challenge to "do something." Worship seems to call us to do something.

That was true for Noah. Notice what follows in chapter 9.

God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. <sup>2</sup>The fear and terror of you will be in every living creature on the earth, every bird of the sky, every creature that crawls on the ground, and all the fish of the sea. They are placed under your authority. <sup>3</sup>Every living creature will be food for you; as I gave the green plants, I have given you everything. <sup>4</sup>However, you must not eat meat with its lifeblood in it. <sup>5</sup>I will require the life of every animal and every man for your life and your blood. I will require the life of each man's brother for a man's life.

<sup>6</sup>Whoever sheds man's blood,  
his blood will be shed by man,  
for God made man in His image.

<sup>7</sup>But you, be fruitful and multiply; spread out over the earth and multiply on it."

We see in Noah's story the reason for his worship. God saved him. We see in Noah's story the realness of his worship. His worship was sincere characterized by sacrifice. Now, we see the result of his worship. The worship did not end at the altar. He continued to obey the Lord.

In just a moment, we are going to close this service devoted to worship, but worship isn't over. We depart in worship. Maybe we have been this morning altered by the altar. May it be!