

## “GOD REMEMBERED.....”

**READING:**        *Genesis chapter 8 verses 1 - 17*

### **Introduction**

*There is a Chinese festival called Qing Ming. It is a time to express grief for lost relatives. Customs include tidying up graves and taking walks with loved ones in the countryside. Legend has it that it began when a youth's rude and foolish behaviour resulted in the death of his mother. So he decided that thereafter he would visit her grave every year to remember what she had done for him. Sadly, it was only after her death that he remembered her.*

How differently God deals with us! Last week, our thoughts concerning Noah saw the door being shut and we were reminded that the God who shut the door was and is also the God who opens the door again. Through the story of Noah we read how the flood destroyed the world and that only those who were with Noah in the ark remained alive. I love homing in on phrases or words which we can overlook in the course of a bigger picture, and in this is one such phrase. In **verse 1** we read “***But God remembered Noah...***”

At first glance, it might seem that it had somehow slipped God's mind that He had set afloat Noah, his family and this floating menagerie. But nothing could be further from the truth. Matthew Henry in his commentary on this passage describes it as “an act of God's grace.” He goes on to say that “this was a return of his mercy to mankind, of whom He would not make a full end.”

You can almost imagine that Noah and his passengers, the human ones at least, were beginning to feel as if they had been forgotten about. Noah had put his reputation and sanity on the line. In the middle of a dry season, he built a boat as per God's instructions. They had listened to the howls and wails from outside as the rains fell and the floods rose. Then they had floated off, without any way to steer, to dear knows where. But God had not forgotten them.

For us, it is hard enough to think that people have forgotten us. At this difficult time, when families are cut off from each other unless there is contact through phone-calls, waving through windows, telephone calls, Skype or Facetime. Perhaps more so for those who have no immediate family to call on them. At some stage we may have felt that no one really cares, and even sometimes we may even feel that God has deserted us. That we are left to sail on life's seas with no real sense of direction or control. Surely, these few words should be a comfort to us – “***But God remembered Noah...***”

Throughout the Bible, we read of other occasions when God remembered individuals who were facing difficult times.

When God had exercised his judgement over Sodom and Gomorrah we read “**..and God remembered Abraham” (Genesis 19 verse 29)**. God had told Abraham that because of the evil that was rife in both these cities that He would destroy them. Abraham had pleaded with God, because he knew that his nephew and family were in those cities. God remembered Abraham’s plea and rescued Lot out of the disaster. Sadly, Lot’s wife didn’t quite make the journey as she looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt.

God remembered the cries of Rachel for a child (**Genesis 30 verse 22**) and later she gave birth to Joseph, as much a response to Rachel’s prayer as for Jacob her husband. as he also did for Hannah when she prayed for a son (**1 Samuel 1 verse 19**) and she had a son whom she named Samuel. When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt we read in **Exodus 2 verse 24** that God heard their cries and remembered the covenant, the promise, that He had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to make the nation great – not that they were feeling too great under the cosh of their Egyptian overlords and moved Moses to lead them from slavery to freedom.

The great thing we see from these instances is that God not only remembers for the current situation, but He remembers for what is yet to come. When God remembered Noah, it was an act of grace, ensuring the continuance of His creation. When He remembered Abraham, He also remembered the promise made that from his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed and this would flow through the line of Rachel and Jacob. For Hannah, it would be her son Samuel who anoint David to be king over Israel and through him would come Jesus.

Throughout the ministry of Jesus, we are reminded how precious we are to God. In **Matthew 10 verses 29-31** we are reminded that nothing which happens to us escapes our Heavenly Father’s attention. Even the dying thief on the cross when he asked Jesus to remember him when He (Jesus) came into His kingdom, was assured “**I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23 verse 43)**.

God remembers us wherever we are. Our concerns are His concerns. Our pain is His pain. He is the all-seeing God who remembers us and He waits to meet our needs, not just for the present, but also for what lies in his will for our lives. Noah, in his lockdown could have felt forgotten and humiliated, but God had not forgotten him. In **Isaiah chapter 49** we read of how God’s chosen people were feeling forgotten, but through the prophet Isaiah they were assured “**...I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands....” (Isaiah 49 verses 15 and 16)**. In the nail pierced hands of Jesus we are forever remembered in love and sacrifice, never to be forgotten any more.

**“Never will I ever leave you Never will I forsake you. So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid....” (Hebrews 13 verses 5 and 6)**.

## **“BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN”**

### **BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN,**

You were on his mind.  
And every tear you cry,  
Is precious in his eyes.  
Because of his great love,  
He gave his only son.  
Everything was done so you would come.

*Come to the Father,  
though your gift is small.  
Broken hearts, broken lives,  
He will take them all.  
The power of the word,  
the power of his blood.  
Everything was done so you would come.*

Nothing you can do,  
Could make him love you more.  
And nothing that you've done,  
Could make him close the door.  
Because of his great love,  
He gave his only son.  
Everything was done so you would come.

*Come to the Father,  
though your gift is small.  
Broken hearts, broken lives,  
He will take them all.  
The power of the word,  
the power of his blood.  
Everything was done so you would come.*

## PSALM 56

<sup>1</sup> Be merciful to me, my God, for my enemies are in hot pursuit; all day long they press their attack.

<sup>2</sup> My adversaries pursue me all day long; in their pride many are attacking me.

<sup>3</sup> When I am afraid, I put my trust in you

<sup>4</sup> In God, whose word I praise — in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?

<sup>5</sup> All day long they twist my words; all their schemes are for my ruin.

<sup>6</sup> They conspire, they lurk, they watch my steps, hoping to take my life.

<sup>7</sup> Because of their wickedness do not let them escape; in your anger, God, bring the nations down.

<sup>8</sup> Record my misery; list my tears on your scroll - are they not in your record?

<sup>9</sup> Then my enemies will turn back when I call for help. By this I will know that God is for me.

<sup>10</sup> In God, whose word I praise, in the LORD, whose word I praise—

<sup>11</sup> in God I trust and am not afraid. What can man do to me?

<sup>12</sup> I am under vows to you, my God; I will present my thank offerings to you.

<sup>13</sup> For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.