

# Running Low on Hope

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In Genesis 6 the Bible begins to unfold the life story of Noah and his family.

## **Genesis 6:9 NLT**

*This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God.*

To borrow a line from Charles Dickens, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times... Noah walked in close fellowship with God, but it appears that very few other people did so.

## **Genesis 6:13 NLT**

*So God said to Noah, "I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for they have filled the earth with violence. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth!"*

He directed Noah to build a large boat and waterproof it with tar, inside and out. It was to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high, and filled with two of every kind of animal and bird.

And Gen. 6:22 tell us that

## **Genesis 6:22 NLT**

*So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.*

The story continues in Genesis 7....

## **Genesis 7:6-10 NLT**

*Noah was 600 years old when the flood covered the earth. He went on board the boat to escape the flood—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. With them were all the various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and for sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and the small animals that scurry along the ground. They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth.*

## **Genesis 7:17-24 NLT**

*For forty days the floodwaters grew deeper, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, rising more than twenty-two feet above the highest peaks. ... The only people who survived were Noah and those with him in the boat. And the floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.*

Water. All Noah can see is water. The evening sun sinks into it. The clouds are reflected in it. His boat is surrounded by it. Water to the north. Water to the south. Water to the east. Water to the west.

He sent a raven on a scouting mission; it never returned.

**Genesis 8:6 NLT**

*After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat and released a raven.*

He sent a dove. It came back shivering and spent, having found no place to roost.

**Genesis 8:8-9 NLT**

*He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground. But the dove could find no place to land because the water still covered the ground. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside.*

Then, just this morning, he tried again.

**Genesis 8:10 NLT**

*After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again.*

With a prayer he let it go and watched until the bird was no bigger than a speck on a window. All day he looked for the dove's return.

Now the sun is setting, and the sky is darkening, and he has come to look one final time, but all he sees is water. Water to the north. Water to the south. Water to the east. Water to the ...

You know the feeling. You have stood where Noah stood. You've known your share of floods. Flooded by sorrow at the cemetery, stress at the office, anger at the disability in your body or the inability of your spouse. You've seen the floodwater rise, and you've likely seen the sun set on your hopes as well. You've been on Noah's boat. I know I have!

And you've needed what Noah needed; you've needed some hope. You're not asking for a helicopter rescue, but the sound of one would be nice.

Hope doesn't promise an instant solution but rather the possibility of an eventual one. Sometimes all we need is a little hope.

That's all Noah needed. And that's all Noah received.

Here is how the Bible describes the moment:

**Genesis 8:11 NIV**

*When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth.*

An olive leaf. Noah would have been happy just to have the bird back – but an olive leaf?! Friends, this leaf was more than foliage; this was promise.

The bird brought more than a piece of a tree; it brought hope. For isn't that what hope is? Hope is an olive leaf—evidence of dry land after a flood. Proof to the dreamer that dreaming is worth the risk.

Don't we love the olive leaves of life?

"It appears the cancer may be in remission." That statement is an olive leaf of hope.

"I can help you with those finances."  
"We'll get through this together."  
"God has answered your prayer."

And, oh, don't we love the doves that bring them? That's the reason we love Jesus. We follow Jesus because he is our hope!

Paul began his first letter to Timothy with these words:

**1 Timothy 1:1 NIV**

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus **our hope**....

To all the Noahs of the world, to all who search the horizon for a fleck of hope, Jesus proclaims, "Yes!" And he comes. He comes as a dove. He comes bearing fruit from a distant land, from our future home. He comes with a leaf of hope, Jesus does!

Have you received yours yet?

Please don't think your ark is too isolated.

Don't think your flood is too wide.

Don't think the water's too deep.

Receive his hope, won't you? Receive it because you need it. Receive it so you can share it!

Let's turn our attention to Titus 2:11-14 NIV for a moment...

*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for **the blessed hope**—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us...*

Jesus gave himself to redeem us. To give us hope. And that's what the Lord's Supper reminds us of today. Hope.

**1 Corinthians 11:23-29 NIV**

*The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

And there's the HOPE! Right here, in v. 26...

*For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

He is coming. Jesus is coming again. With a freshly plucked olive leaf of hope.