

Welcome to our morning service. It's the 19th of April, 2020. We meet in the name of Jesus on this Sunday morning to seek God's face. I bring greetings to you in the name of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus from Tabor Baptist church, Llantrisant in South Wales. Shall we begin with a word of prayer:

“Loving and eternal God in heaven we thank you that on this day the first day of the week Jesus Christ rose from the dead. We meet in our own homes, but gathered together as one body, not only as an individual church, but part of the body of Christ worldwide. Father in heaven we thank you that we come before You the Great and the Mighty God. We thank you for your Son Jesus Christ whom you have exalted over all things. We praise you for the Holy Spirit who has been given to us a gift to comfort us so that we would not be left as orphans, a gift to guide us and to lead us into truth. Father, we just praise you, and thank you that this day that we met in Your presence. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, One Triune God, we worship you. We recognise that we are so small. We recognise our sinfulness and our unworthiness. Lord it staggers us that sinful people like us can come before You, and speak to You and You receive us, because we are received in the Lord Jesus. We think of countless millions of people who praise You today, who seek your face in prayer. And each person, you know, and every prayer that is offered, You respond to according to your will. Lord, this baffles us and boggles our minds and staggers us. Lord, You are so different to us. You're infinite. You are eternal. The heaven of the heavens, this vast universe, cannot contain you all. Father in heaven as we bow before you this morning we ask that the word of God, this word that you have given to us, will penetrate our lives. We thank you that you have not left us Lord without a witness. But you have given us the sure Word of God to speak to us. We pray heavenly Father that as we listen to the Word of God that you would indeed write it upon our hearts. And we ask Father for any who are listening this morning that You might be pleased to use Your own word to save their souls. We realise that one day is coming a great day of wrath, when you will judge this world, and that we all need to be ready for that day. So cleanse us afresh from all of our sins. Thank you for Calvary. Thank you for that precious blood that cleanses from every sin. Washes clean we pray, and may You do as good this morning. In Jesus name, Amen.”

Well, brothers and sisters we're going to look at Genesis chapter six verses 5 to 14. So I invite you to open your Bibles. Last Sunday we began a new series. It was entitled **“Behind closed doors.”**.... There were the disciples, they had shut the door, they had locked the door. They were in fear for their lives,... and the Risen Christ appeared to them behind locked doors! He said to them PEACE..... On Tuesday, we considered the Lord's injunction and his directive for Christian people not to be ostentatious, not to parade ones spirituality, or to be pretentious, but rather to serve God quietly.... To go into our own rooms, to close the door and to seek God's face in prayer. And he who sees us in secret and will reward you. Now this morning we're going to look at a part of ancient history where God shuts the door of the ark. So my message this morning is entitled, **“God, shut the door”**. Please turn with me first to Genesis chapter six and verse five:

⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ So the LORD said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” ⁸ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Noah Pleases God

⁹ This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. ¹⁰ And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹ The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

The Ark Prepared

¹³ And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.”

So Noah built the ark and the animals went in two by two and then we read in Genesis 7:15-16:

¹⁵ And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life. ¹⁶ So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in.”

We thank God for the reading of his word.

Now my friend, how do you feel about being shut in? Do you feel hemmed in, and wonder why God has permitted this? Maybe you're asking the question, how long, how long will the coronavirus crisis continue? Will we have to wait until there's a vaccine? How long? Or perhaps you are not looking on the negative side, but you're saying "What a mercy from God. By and large way we're shut in and so shut out of the danger zone. By and large this is a time of quietness and peace. God has been so good. The weather has been so beautiful, for weeks on end and it's been time to be with the Lord and time to be with my family. What a mercy! What kindness God is showing to us! He's reordering our lives." But maybe it's not all positive and you have a mixture of emotions. It's the struggle, as well as the blessing. Well I'd like you just to think for a moment about Noah. What did it mean for him to be shut in to the ark.? How long was he there? Well in Genesis chapter seven we learned that the Lord said initially he was to be seven days in that ark whilst the animals came in, and then it would be going to rain upon the earth for 40 days and 40 nights. The Lord shut the door, and a deluge of rain came down. The Lord also broke up the waters from beneath the earth. And for 40 days and 40 nights, there was a mighty torrent of rain and gushing water from beneath. We've just seen recently what a few days of rain can do in South Wales with many homes affected, but imagine this !! The Bible says that for another 150 days they were on the sea as the waters were receding. So that's seven days, plus 40 days, plus 150 days and then the Bible gives other dates and times before eventually Noah could come out to his Ark. And if you add up all the days recorded in the Bible you discover that Noah and his family had been in that ark for nearly a complete year! How difficult for Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives! He had said goodbye to all that he knew and was shut in to a confined space for nearly a year... Just think of the difficulties with all those animals not to mention food supplies. And yet, yet, yet it was a mercy from God. God had saved him from the flood. He would eventually leave that Ark. And he would enter into a new world. God would put a rainbow in the sky and make a covenant with him. So we're going to look at this passage this morning and concentrate upon the door of the ark that God shut and ask what did that door signify? But perhaps you're asking the question, but did this actually happen? What is the evidence apart from the Bible?

Well, I would suggest to you that the evidence is overwhelming... throughout the world we have flood stories. Virtually every culture contains in its ancient legends and myths stories about floods. Why do they speak about worldwide floods? It is because these legends, myths and stories are actually based upon factual things that happened. You see beginning at Mount Ararat where the ark eventually was stationed we have flood stories that have come from ancient tribes people. You can then go to the Far East and you can hear stories from China, written down about a great flood, and you can go to the Maori people of New Zealand, or the aborigines in Australia and you will find the same thing. You can go to the far north of the States, to Alaska and the Eskimos and find such stories.... or you can go to the Andes Mountains of South America, to the Quechuans or to the Aztecs and there you will hear stories of a worldwide flood. The American Indians of North America retell such stories...., Then go to Russia, go to Siberia, go to Lapland, and go to Ancient Egypt, and down into Africa, and you will hear the same story over and over, of a worldwide flood. There is universal evidence for Noah's flood. But we have not time to look into this

Now this morning I'd like us to ask three very important questions that arise from our passage.

1. Why was only Noah and his family saved?
2. What does the shut door signify?
3. When is it too late to come to God?

1. Why was only Noah and his family saved ?

Well, I want to remind you that during the history of mankind we've seen some very brutal and inhumane acts. Things that defy the imagination.... Stalin killing millions of people, and many of his own countrymen; Hitler gassing over a million Jews; and during the Crusades over a million people killed, and so we could go on... unspeakable acts of wickedness and cruelty. Genesis 6 records a period in humanity, where gross evil and moral vice have advanced to a terrible degree. Let's consider verses five to seven. *"The Lord saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent to the thoughts of his heart was only evil*

continually.” The Lord not only saw their actions and that their wickedness was great, but he saw what was going on inside their hearts... the planning and the plotting of evil, the lusting, and the perversion. He saw that men's hearts were corrupted. These evil intentions resulted in great violence upon the earth. Verse six say, *“The Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved his heart.”* God had made man in his own image, that he might worship Him and have fellowship with him, and that he might love his neighbour and have fellowship with his neighbour. But, men had not loved God or each other but done the exact opposite. Not only had men put a fist in the face of God, but also a fist in the face of his fellow human being. And so the Lord said in verse seven, *“I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth.”* Now God had been so gracious. He had given many opportunities for men to repent. He'd been raising up prophets to warn them. We read that, Enoch the seventh from Adam was a Prophet and Noah himself was a preacher of righteousness (We read that in 2 Peter chapter 2). Noah warned the people to turn back to God. He called them to repent of their wicked ways. He preached that God was just and holy and hated all evil and moral vice. And he called men to turn to a loving and this gracious God. But man had corrupted himself. Even that godly line that had descended from Seth had become corrupt. We read in verse two that the sons of God intermarried with the daughters of men, because they saw their beauty. What does that mean? Well these godly descendants from Seth, who loved the Lord and worshipped Him had now begun to corrupt themselves by intermarrying with a murderous and wicked people. So no longer was the line of Seth being kept pure and holy. So regretfully God chose to send a terrible judgement upon mankind. In one sense it was a remedial judgement because it would rid the earth of corruption, and God would start again. He would remedy the situation and would keep the line pure through Noah. This man, Noah, had found grace in His sight. God kept him and his family, and established a new covenant with him.

But why was only Noah and his family saved? Was Noah a cut above the rest? Was Noah more righteous than any other person? Was it that that Noah was moral and because of his morality God accepted Him? Whereas everybody else was stubborn and rebellious in their sin and so were judged? They were bad and he was good? Well, I want to explain this The Bible says that *“Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”* What does grace mean? Grace means “undeserved kindness”. Grace means the loving kindness of God shown to guilty sinners. Grace is all from God's side, it's all his kindness showered upon those who just don't deserve it. Noah was a sinner like anybody else. His heart was corrupt and deceitful like anybody else. But he'd repented of his sin and he confessed his sin to God. He turned to God for mercy, and God turned to him and was gracious to him. So we read in verse nine that Noah was a just man. God had put him right. God had counted righteousness to him. But not only that, God had imparted righteousness to him. God had given him the power and the strength to live a godly and pleasing life. For this reason he was a “just man.” It wasn't that Noah was looking down on others, and thinking that he was a cut above the rest. No, he recognised that he was a sinner. But he knew that God had been kind and gracious to him. God too had enabled him to obey him and love him and so we read that *“Noah was perfect in his generation”*. Not perfect in terms of sinless, but perfect in terms of maturity and uprightness. Why?... because *he walked with God*. He loved God. He prayed to God. He had fellowship with God. So, why was Noah saved and the rest condemned? Because Noah **found grace in the eyes of the Lord**. He was a repentant sinner, whereas the others just ignored the voice of God and continued on in their sin. That's very tragic isn't it? It's a terrible state to be in when men will not repent. The consequences were death.

But let's think about the days in which we're living... We are living with daily news of death. Now we're certainly not seeing the scale of death that Noah saw, but we are seeing this Coronavirus outbreak deeply affecting our nation. Many are dying and every single death is a tragedy. We mourn the fact that 96 Liverpool fans died at the Hillsborough disaster. But now we have the magnitude of over 100 Hillsborough disasters just in a few weeks. Over 100 times 96... Think too of the United States. Remember the day when terrorism hit those twin towers and over 2600 died? Now, in the United States there are over 25,000 people who've died from coronavirus in a short space of time. That's over 10 times the Twin Towers disaster. Mercifully he figures are not on the scale of the Black Death or previous pandemics... and even if the figures in the UK should reach 20,000 deaths, it looks likely that this still means that over 99% of the population will be spared. **But every death is a tragedy.** And every person who goes down to the grave quickly with no preparation is in peril. Like Noah's day there is little time to repent. In his day the people had had a long time hearing the word of God but they didn't listen and perished. Brothers and sisters, Great Britain has had the gospel for many years and whilst we may not see this coronavirus as a judgement it is

certainly a wakeup call from God. Are we repenting? I was in Tesco's this week and one of the girls on the tills was speaking to somebody else, and I heard her say "This is a wakeup call".. she used the very words that we are using. You see life is fragile. No man or woman knows the day of his death. We need to be ready to meet our Maker. We need to turn from sin, confess it, and trust in Jesus. And never should consider ourselves better than others, or more worthy than others. On the contrary, we need to confess continually our unworthiness before God and recognise our need of a Saviour. We read in the Bible that once Jesus was present with some people who told him about some Galileans. These men had brought sacrifices to the Temple and Pilate had killed them and mingled their blood with the blood of those sacrifices. The people who broke this news to Jesus, assumed that these Galileans that died in this most terrible way were worse sinners than others. Jesus said, "*Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.*" And then Jesus went on to say this, 'Do you not remember those 18, who died in that disaster when the Tower of Siloam fell upon them? *But do not think that they were worse sinners than all others in Jerusalem, I tell you. No, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish*". Of course, those who have contracted coronavirus we wouldn't for a minute consider that this is God, judging them for specific sins, not for a minute. But I wonder, do we ever look at wicked people and do we ever consider them with disdain feeling that they are worthy of judgement for their evil deeds and we are not? Remember the words of Jesus "*Unless you repent, you will perish*". The truth is that we all need the grace of God. My friend outside of Christ: 'Oh that you would find grace in the sight of God.' Oh that you would find his loving kindness and mercy, Oh that you would find the welcome that comes through the cross of Christ. Oh that you would embrace him by turning from sin and finding salvation. Noah was a man who loved God, who walked with God and he found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and He was saved. But let's go on:

2. What does the door signify?

Well we've thought of Noah. But what about the door of the gate that Noah entered. What does it signify? My answer is this: The door signifies two things (i) to those who are shut in, it signifies salvation, safety, and security (ii) for those who are shut out it means loss, anguish and perishing. So it signifies a dividing line between the saved and the judged.

Now for Noah and his family it must have been very difficult. They had to say goodbye to their property, their home.... maybe their land, certainly their relatives, and their neighbours. All they knew and all that was familiar to them... How heart-breaking it was for them to have to enter into this ark and continue to see those around them during the 7 days that the animals came in. They saw the people continuing on in their foolish ways, and ignoring God. How heart-breaking...But they come into the place of safety and protection. And they would emerge from this ark after nearly complete year to praise God and thank him for his goodness to them. Now in the New Testament in John chapter 10 verse 9 Jesus says, "*I am the door. If anyone enters by me he will be saved.*" Just as the door of the ark was the entrance to salvation so Jesus is the gateway to salvation to all who enter in. We by nature are condemned and we need somebody to come to rescue us. God has sent His only Son into this world, to bring us back to God and Jesus says if you come to Him, if you come to the door and go through the door you will be saved. *There's no other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved*, only the name of Jesus. No other religious leader can save you. For a religious leader is just a moral teacher, just somebody like you a sinner who is trying hard to point you in the right way, but he can't save you. Jesus is the only way, the only door. There's no other route, no other salvation, no other person but Jesus. Why? Because Jesus came from heaven. He who is God clothed himself in humanity and lived a sinless life. And he is the only one who's ever lived the life that you and I should have lived, a perfect life and a sinless life. And what's more he's offered that life upon the cross as a payment for sin. There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. And there is no other. Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but through me*". What does the door signify? For Noah that shut door signified salvation. He went through it and God shut him safely in. My friend if you have come to Christ, if you've gone through the door, He shuts the door for you and you are safe. You are secure. No one will ever snatch you from his hands, you are safe in the arms of God, safe in the hands of Jesus Christ. He said this about his people "*I give them eternal life. And they shall never perish. Neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand.*" You're safe for time and eternity. Christ is your Ark and He will bring you into a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells

My friends there are many doors in this world. At the time of Noah people went from door to door. The Bible tells us in the New Testament that they were buying and trading, they were giving their sons and daughters in marriage, they were continuing on as normal. So some went to the neighbour's door for a good old gossip and others would go to the prostitutes' door. Some went to the door at the gate of the city to plot and plan evil. There were many doors that the people went through. My friend the door of the world is very wide. There are doors that open up to profit and financial gain. There are many doors to further your own selfish ambitions. The door of the world is very wide. It promises you much.... it promises you pleasure. It promises you progress. It promises you satisfaction. But it's all corrupt and leads to destruction. Jesus said, *"Enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go by it, but narrow is the gate and difficult the way that leads to life. And there are a few that find it."* **My friend, which side of the door you on?** Noah was on the right side. He'd faced the mocking and the jeers of his community as he built an ark... "Are you crazy? it's gonna rain is it? and we're all gonna drown? How do you know what God has said? And how do you know that God is displeased with us? We have our morality. Forget yours" You see, Noah was "one of the few" "one of the minority." He was on the narrow path and it was difficult, but that solitary figure and his family knew the grace of God. They went through the right door and the Lord shut the door and they were safe. But all the rest were on the wrong side of that dividing line. They'd shut themselves out of salvation. They had chosen to ignore the voice of God and for them it meant a terrible judgement. We can't begin to imagine what it is for people to drown to death. What it is for them to see family members, and those who they love around them drowning to death? The Lord took no pleasure in this. The Lord takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He did it because he did not want men and women to continue in their violence and their hatred. He did not want the earth to continue its wickedness, its slaughters and its perversions. He did it to cleanse the earth and to preserve a Faithful Remnant.... to begin the world as it were again. And then he promised to never again flood the earth. God had been patient with that generation. He had sent prophets. He had sent preachers and every time that Noah banged in a nail or sawed a piece of wood to make the Ark it was a testament against them. At the same time Noah preached to them for many years for it took decades to build the Ark. But then came that fateful day, when the door was shut. And they were on the wrong side of it.

My friend, there is coming a fearful day again. John the apostle saw a vision of that day. It is the day of God's wrath. On that day which side of the door will you be on? John says:

¹² I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. ¹³ And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. ¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" Rev 6:12-17

Maybe you think, "Well, what if the Bible is not true? I don't believe Jesus will come again. All this is fabrication..." But my friend that was what the people said to Noah "It's all a lie" My friend on that last day how terrible it will be for you to face the day of God's wrath, without being protected and without being inside the ark of God's love in Christ. If you're outside of Christ you're outside of the door and you're shut out forever. So on that day you'll only be exposed to the anger and the wrath of God. But if you're in Christ you have nothing to fear. You are on the right side of the door. Romans chapter five verses 8 to 10.

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. ¹⁰ For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

What glorious divine logic! If God loved us when we were sinners, and gave his Son for us. If He saved us and reconciled us to himself while we were enemies... divine logic says "If he did that then now we are friends and now that we have peace with God we can be sure that He will save us on that final day of wrath" If he's saved us whilst we were sinners, now that we are friends will He not save us on that Day? How

glorious to be able to say “Yes Yes Yes.” All the promises of God are true. Those who have been given to the Father will be saved. On that last day he will raise up his people. We are safe. So what does the door signify? It signifies a dividing line between the saved and the unsaved. Which side of the line are you on? Have you entered through the door? But lastly

3. When is it too late?

Now is the day of grace. Now is the day of opportunity. Now is the day of salvation. Now is the day to turn to Christ. Noah, over and over and over called people to turn to God, but they refused. And there came a day when it was too late. Have you seen the urgency my friend? Tomorrow is not yours. Surely the coronavirus tells you that the future doesn't belong to us. The final judgment is coming and no man knows the day or the hour when Christ shall return. Satan wants to keep you in your sin. Satan wants to destroy you. Satan wants to take you down to hell. It may just be too late if you keep putting off the day of turning to Christ. I heard of an old story of Russian travellers who were travelling through remote mountains. When they heard the sound of wild wolves in those wolf infested mountain they urged their horses to ride on quickly. However the wolves began to pursue and ferociously came behind them. And so the riders rode on as quickly as they could towards a hut in the forest. They just managed to get to the hut, dismount from their horses, and got into the hut, closing the door. The wolves pounced on top of the hut and some lashed at the doors and the walls **but they were safe inside**. Those Russian travellers had fled for their lives, but were now safe. Oh that you would see the urgency to flee to Christ. He alone is a refuge on the day of wrath. The Lord Jesus continually warned people of the coming judgment and told his disciples that he was going to return and they needed to be ready for it. Jesus said this in Luke chapter 17. ²⁴ *For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day.* ²⁵ *But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.* ²⁶ *And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:* ²⁷ *They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.* ²⁸ *Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built;* ²⁹ *but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.* ³⁰ *Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.*

My friend. Are you just going through life casually, you just continue on in the normal activities of the day eating, drinking, buying, selling or whatever else... and yet, forgetting God, and forgetting that there's a day of Judgement coming. Oh that you would flee to Jesus for refuge. Remember that no man knows the day or the hour when Christ shall return. It will be like lightning... as quick as that... Jesus told a parable of the 10 virgins: Five were wise. They were ready for the coming of the bridegroom for they had their lamps lit, but five were foolish, their lamps were not lit and they hadn't enough oil. And so they went away to buy oil, but it was too late. This is what the Bible says in Matthew chapter 25. *“And while they went to buy the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding, and the door was shut. Afterwards the other virgins came also saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us’, but he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming”* Friends, the Bridegroom is coming, he's coming for his people. Are you part of his people? Are you waiting for his return? Have you entered through the door? Are you still lingering? Do not think that there are many things that you must do to prepare for is coming. There is but one thing: To enter through the door. Oh that you will be wise and run into the arms of Jesus Christ. He will receive you. Don't leave it until it's too late.