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Lent Day 2: The Bow

3-4 minutes

Genesis 9:8-17 (ESV)

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have 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 that 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 see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

The Lenten season has historically been a time of solemn

reflection on the human condition. Ash Wednesday reminded us that human life is fragile — for dust we are, and to dust we shall return. But we learn quickly that the human condition is marked not merely by fragility, but by depravity. In fact, by the time of Noah, human corruption and violence had become so pervasive that God was said to be grieved to his heart and filled with regret. That the all-powerful God could be portrayed as regretting the creation of man powerfully conveys the sinfulness of sin.

Yet what pierces is that the Bible is not speaking about the human heart abstractly. No, it is speaking specifically about my heart, the sinfulness of my sin and, indeed, the divine regret as to how I have lived.

Yet, in the midst of the gloom and in the aftermath of the storm of God's judgment, we see hope shine through. Noah looks up and sees against the gray clouds the dazzling glory of the rainbow emerging where sun and storm meet. And there in the clouds he sees the bow of God's wrath laid aside in the promise of peace.

And that great promise is that no matter how dark our sin might grow, God will not turn his face against us again. Instead, God would sooner point the bow of his wrath upward, towards heaven, at his own Son, than unleash his wrath upon us again. And on the cross, where the sun of God's love and the storm of God's wrath would meet again, Jesus would die in darkness so that the brilliance of the glory of God's saving plan would shine forth into our hearts. All this without a hint of divine regret.

Prayer

Lord, help us to share your sorrow and grief at our sin. During this season, grant us the courage to look honestly into the gloom of our

sin so that we might see anew the brilliance of your glorious promise and grace to us in Christ. In Christ's Name, Amen.

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