

## Pastor Penny's 2 Cents

When it rains it pours.... That saying is so true. I am sure there are many reading this right now going through this. I know it is literally a drought outside, but the circumstances in my life at this moment.... Well I'm experiencing a down pour, and I can't keep my head above water. Maybe I am just solely speaking from my life right now, but I have a feeling there are many of you reading this nodding in agreement. I had the pleasure of accompanying a friend and congregant to Kentucky to see the Ark Encounter. It definitely lives up to its name. An Encounter it is. A FULL SIZE replica of what the ark was like on the outside and a very good depiction of what it very well looked like on the interior. As with anything in life we have a perception, and idea of what we think something or someone is like. However, until we actually experience or go back and reread a scripture, a story, or get to know that person, we can not fully comprehend or grasp the fullness unless we get to experience it.

Just the sheer size of the ARK is awe-inspiring and I love how the Holy Spirit moved them to recreate with unbelievable organization what the 3 levels, the cages, food and water system and living quarters might have looked like. If you get a chance to go you will not be disappointed.

But if you think to the events leading up to that first drop of rain, Noah had to have such unbelievable faith and obedience. In a world that had literally gone mad, corrupt, profaned and something that even the best horror film could not fully depict, he put it all on the line when God chose him and his family to be the ones to start again. God could have, and probably should have, called it quits at that point. Humanity and the Angelic realm had done nothing but disappoint and turn their backs on him.

As a parent, nothing hurts more than when your kids purposely disobey, do the opposite and turn their backs on you. Yet as a parent we can't help but STILL love in spite of the pain and rejections.

God not only spared Noah, his family and the species HE created, but it had to be so difficult and pain-ful to see everything and everyone one He created fight until they couldn't keep their heads above wa-ter. Here's the thing though, it didn't have to be that way at all. It didn't, it was a choice by each and every one that was born or cast down to this earth. Noah chose wisely.

God gave another gift and that was a sign, a rainbow that shimmers in the light after every storm as a promise to us and a reminder to him that no matter how bad it gets here, he will never wipe away the world with a flood again. So the next time you see the rain, remember that is a gift from a curse. It had never rained until 7 days after God shut Noah, his family and the animals in the Ark. And there had never been the promised sign in the sky until after that horrific stormy trial was over.

There was a mural on the wall there depicting what the cities, temples and people might have looked like when the monstrous waves came crashing through. There was a lady holding an infant on the side of the mountain reaching up for a man's hand in desperation. That picture was a million words. You could not look at that and not feel God's heart breaking. It didn't need to be that way. It was a choice.

Jesus tells us a time is coming soon when another door will be shut and those who chose not to heed God's call or accept Christ will be on the outside of that door in frantic screams, and he will have to say with broken heart once again. "I Do Not Know You". It doesn't have to be that way. It is a free gift, given in grace and mercy.

If you feel yourself drowning in situations or circumstances beyond your control, take heart, have hope. My prayer is if you have held fast to the savior's arm just like Peter did when the water was above his head it will be Christ who will pull you up out of those raging waters. And if you have accepted him, He will call you by name, and say I DO know you, I've Got you and I will never let you go.

It was Jesus who climbed into the boat holding Peter BEFORE he calmed the storm. If the storm is still raging, and you have reached out, know that the Savior has grabbed you, he is holding you tight in the boat until the storm is calmed. It is a choice.

Shalom Pastor Penny