



Waiting Actively

Encounter Prayer:

Dear God we give you thanks for being both Divine Father and Mother. We give thanks for our mothers who have blessed our lives. Help us to wait patiently and act by your will. Heal the brokenhearted and those who are waiting for work and a new beginning. In the name of Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen!

Encounter God:

Where have you seen God at work in your life this week?

Encounter Neighbor:

What good have you done for someone else this week?

Encounter Scripture: Genesis 7:1-5 & 11-12

“Then the Lord said to Noah, ‘Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this generation. Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and its mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and its mate; and seven pairs of the birds of the air also, male and female, to keep their kind alive on the face of all the earth. For in seven days I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have

made I will blot out from the face of the ground.’ And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him.” // “In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. The rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights.”

First let me say Happy Mother's Day to all the mothers whether through biology, legal adoption, spiritual adoption, through the blending of families or foster care. Our mothers are so important in our lives. The number one draft pick in the 2014 NFL Draft, Jadavian Clowney talked about how his mother worked extra shifts at the potato chip factory to support him, his number one concern was becoming the best football player he could be and taking care of his mother. The Olympic gold medalist Gabbie Douglas talked about how much her mother sacrificed to support her and now all she wants to do is was take care of her mother. When Kevin Durant won the NBA MVP, in tearful acceptance speech he famously said, “Mom you are the real MVP.” Mothers sacrifice so much for their children and expect nothing in return.

While we honor our mothers and celebrate how they have influenced and blessed our lives, we must remember the sobering reality that Mother's Day presents a challenge for some people. Some people's relationship with their

mother in Facebook terms well "it's complicated." Others grieve the loss of their mother or grandmother. Some have tried for years to conceive. There are some are past childbearing age and so they know they may never conceive a child.

Mothers are experts at actively waiting: They actively wait nine months for our births. They wait during the adoption process. Mothers wait for their children to come home from school, dates, summer camp, and college. Mothers pray for their children and wait for their prayers to be answered. Likewise, Noah shows us how to actively wait in our scripture lesson. This lesson is timely and timeless. Most of the world, not just the United States, is waiting for antiviral drugs and a vaccine to turn the tide in our favor against COVID-19. Health officials are estimating a vaccine may be a year away. Over the past couple of months, we have been practicing various extents of social distancing and the closing of nonessential businesses to flatten the curve. Our state has begun the process of reopening Texas, but many have already lost their jobs and they are actively waiting for gainful employment. Others are waiting to return to work as their places of business reopen. We are waiting to return to our onsite worship.

Humanity broke God's heart. Humanity's sinfulness was so deep and distasteful to God that God regretted even making humanity. However, Noah walked with God, meaning he was a righteous man. God instructed him to build an Ark because God was going to send a flood to cleanse the earth and give creation a new beginning. It is estimated that it took 75 years of preparation before the flood. God told Noah to load the animals and his family into the Ark. They waited for seven days before the flood came. It rained for forty days, there were another one hundred and ten days of the floodwaters prevailing. Followed by forty days of waiting while the earth dried out. Then there

were fourteen additional days of waiting before Noah and his family left the Ark. Currently, there are fifty-seven thousand people trapped at sea aboard cruise ships because no one will allow these ships to dock due to the high number of passengers who have contracted COVID-19. While this unfortunate and I am sure these people long to see their loved ones, these ships are full of amenities or a least they were. Can imagine being stuck on the Ark full of animals and the associated noise and waste. Not to mention the emotional stress that was placed on the family unit. Time on the Ark was no vacation. I am sure as soon as the rain stopped, and the water receded Noah's family was ready to disembark the ship. Instead, they waited. Noah took a cautious approach by sending doves to check the conditions on the ground.

For most of us time at home as been no vacation. We have had to educate our kids while simultaneously keep up our productivity for our jobs. Families that at not used to spending so much time in proximity are trying to adapt to the new normal lovingly and peacefully. The church has had to do ministry in new ways. Most of us, like Noah, have been actively waiting in some form. From Genesis 7:4 -8:15, Noah does not speak. Noah listens to God and obeys. Perhaps, one of the areas of growth that we can experience during this time of waiting is learning to discern the voice of God and respond with obedience. Through Noah's obedience humanity and all of creation were given a new beginning. Noah was a channel of grace for all of creation. Likewise, we are called to be channel grace for those who are in need.

Encounter Heads:

How is being the body of Jesus Christ like being in the Ark?

Why did God choose Noah to build the Ark?

What is the difference between righteousness and sinlessness?

Did God send COVID-19 to punish humanity? (please review <https://www.patheos.com/library/methodist/beliefs/suffering-and-the-problem-of-evil>) If not, then how is God working through the midst of this pandemic for our good?

Encounter Heart

Share a time when you discerned that God was telling you to wait. What did you learn about God? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about others?

Why is waiting so hard to do?

Share what you have learned from waiting during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Encounter Hands:

Did you cause harm in word or deed to someone this week? (self-examination). If so, confess your sin to God, then seek to reconcile with your brother or sister.

Share your prayer concerns and celebrations.

Ask a member of the group to pray for the concerns and give thanks for the celebrations.

Notes Sections

Prayer Concerns:

Celebrations:

Daily Reflection Questions

Where have I seen God at work in my life today?

What is one thing that I am thankful for?

What is one thing that broke my heart today?

What is one good thing did I do for someone else today?