**“DARK IN THE ARK”**

**TEXT: Genesis 6:14-16**

**THESIS:** To show why darkness (suffering) is often the lot of the believer.

**INTRO.:** A. We all know the story of Noah & the Ark. We are fascinated w/Noah’s obedience. We marvel at how Noah & his 3 sons cared for all the animals for a year. We ask how did Mrs. Noah & her 3 daughters-in-law feed everyone w/out a local supermarket or MacDonalds, & kept their home-on-the-water clean. ***What had begun as an adventure of faith surely lost its luster after a few weeks or months.***

 B. But have you ever thought about how dark it must have been inside the Ark? Here was a boat (barge) longer than a football field (520 ft), three stories high (51 ft), and 85 ft. wide with only **one 18”window!** And most of the time the weather outside was dark & stormy. Surely it was **“DARK IN THE ARK!”**

**TRANS.:** Over the years in the ministry after visiting countless hospital patients, ministering to the hurting, afflicted, sick & dying, I found myself searching the Scriptures & preaching messages about suffering a lot. For those who are well & walking in the light, they may wonder why. We are presently in the throes of the **Corona Virus Pandemic** and may be finding out for the first time that it is beginning to be **DARK IN OUR ARK** or home, or life.

**I. ONLY ONE WINDOW:**

1. Dark in The Ark Because No One Joined Them:
2. Before dealing with the MAIN reason there was only one window, I want to speak about other reasons for darkness inside the Ark.
3. Loved ones, friends, neighbors had rejected Noah & his message of “gloom & doom.”
4. They no doubt chided him because he was too negative.
5. They ridiculed him because they didn’t believe a flood was possible.

**ILLUS.:** From the human standpoint & from logic & their knowledge of the laws operating in the universe, they were convinced that Noah was a religious fanatic. After all they had not only never witnessed or heard of a flood, but they had never even seen rain!

 Many today scoff at our belief in Christ & our trust in the Word of God. They say “Those wierdos have been talking about Jesus coming back for centuries. They are wackos!” **But He has come & He will come! And one reason for his delay is that they might get saved!**

***2 Pet.3:3-9 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.***

1. The pain of their rejection must have added to the darkness of the ark.

**ILLUS.:** The thought that outside the ark everything was **chaos, death & destruction**, must have grieved Noah, knowing that all they had to do was believe the message that God had given him & they would have been spared. He knew instead that **God had finally shut them out** & outside the Ark their bloated bodies were floating & rotting & their never-dying souls would be eternally lost! No wonder it was **“DARK IN THE ARK*!”***

 ***(Loneliness is a difficult part of suffering!)***

1. Dark in The Ark Because Of The Length of The Flood:

1. While it is true that Noah & his family were safe inside, they nonetheless had to suffer in **darkness & lonliness**.

2. For over a year they had to sit in the darkness & gloom & contemplate a world which had been devastated & would be nearly

 devoid of life when they stepped off the Ark.

1. Day after endless day, the Ark bounced around on a boundless ocean & they had no idea how long this would continue.

***(Length of time is a difficult part of suffering!)***

**ILLUS.:** Are you going thru **a dark time in your ark?!** Do you feel like this Pandemic will never end? Do you despair at the outcome? **(closed businesses, a possible depression, job loss, sickness, death?)** Does it seem like there is very little light in your pain or suffering, your temptation or trial? Hang on, wait it out, the darkness will not last forever, because ***you are a child of light & Jesus is the Light of the world***. Also you need to remember that … **IT WON’T RAIN ALWAYS!**

**NOTE:** A special song that helped my wife Shirley and I get through the sudden death of our 39 year old son was this one which we watched and listened to over and over again…

**IT WON’T RAIN ALWAYS**

Someone has said that in this life, some rain is bound to fall,

And each one sheds a tear – And trouble troubles us all.

But the hurt won’t hurt forever – and the tears are bound to dry.

And it won’t rain always – the clouds will soon be gone.

The sun that’s been in hiding, has been there all along.

And it won’t rain always – God’s promises are true.

The sun’s gonna shine, in His own good time.

And He will see you through.

1. Dark in The Ark Because Of God’s Design! (The MAIN REASON!)

1. Noah’s situation was by God’s design & the fact that there was only one window was also by God’s design.

**ILLUS.:** You need to remember that this Pandemic may also be by God’s design. God is in control of this world, it’s weather, it’s wealth and it’s woes! He has sent numerous warnings: earthquakes, wildfires, storms, tornadoes, disease, etc. and no one has been listening – (Like Israel!) Now we have a worldwide virus…a Pandemic! Will anyone pay attention?! Will YOU?

 2. An infinite, omniscient God could surely have designed an ark with windows everywhere, a giant skylight or whatever, but in

 His sovereignty He chose not to do so.

 (***Much of our suffering is also part of God’s design!)***

**ILLUS.:** As the waters began to quiet & Noah & his family were able to go “topside” to the one window, think of how much they would have appreciated **the light & the fresh air!** If your pain or problem is by God’s design, think of the blessings of the sunshine & refreshing new life you will have when the storm subsides(and the Pandemic is over!) & you are sailing along peacefully on calmer seas! Perspective is everything.

**POEM:** “I walked a mile with Pleasure, She chattered all the way, But left me none the wiser, for all she had to say. I walked a mile with Sorrow, And ne’er a word said she; But, oh, the things I learned from her, When Sorrow walked with me!”

**II. AT LEAST ONE WINDOW:**

1. In Temptation – An Escape Window:

***1 Cor.10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.***

1. There may have been only one window in the Ark, but thank God there was at least one!

2. There is “light” in God’s Word to help us w/temptation & the “fresh air” of God’s Spirit to help us when we are tempted.

1. In Trials – A Prayer Window:
2. I can visualize Noah often going to that one window & asking God when his trial would end.
3. Perhaps many long hours were spent there looking out over the vast expanse of water w/bloated carcasses & debris floating around & no signs of life, & Noah pleading w/God for relief.

**ILLUS.:** Noah had lived 650 years before the flood, but the one year on the Ark, during the flood, was no doubt the longest year in his very long life! There were the same amount of days, hours & minutes in that year as in all the others*,* ***but it surely seemed longer***. Except for that one window, where he could breathe fresh air & look for relief, it would indeed have seemed hopeless. But Noah lived another 350 years after the flood, that worst year of his life. ***So too, your trial will end & things will be better. Why not use your prayer window while you are in the trial?!***

C. In Tribulation – A Grace Window: 2 Cor.12:7-(**10)**

1. Paul never quit serving God because of his “thorn” of pain; God reminded him of His never failing grace.

**QUOTE:** Samuel Gipp, who broke his neck & lives daily w/suffering, in his book **“Living With Pain”** states: “Whatever your duties are, you will never find satisfaction by successfully shirking them. The less that you do, the worse you will feel. The worse that you feel, the less you will do. Now all you need to do is to pick up some “shrink book” on how to “cope” w/your problem & you are doomed! You don’t need to sit around & wallow in your pain…today’s psychologists offer no more help for hurting people than to give them an excuse for doing nothing. Today there are millions of people who have been made “mental cripples” by “discovering” that they were sick because of something that they read among the ramblings of a fantasying “expert.” They use what they have read as a license to do nothing & as a proof of the need for sympathy & preferential treatment. **Burn the “shrink” books, Read your Bible & get to work!”**

1. God’s grace is sufficient ***in*** your pain as well as ***before*** or ***after*** your pain.
2. If you are unsaved, there is no “grace window” for your pain & if you believe that your plight couldn’t be worse, you are wrong! and if you don’t like your present discomfort, you’re going to hate Hell!

 **There is no window or light in Hell! And no hope of the end of suffering!**

**CONCL.:** It may be **“DARK IN YOUR ARK”** now, but remember God may have designed your ark! But He has also designed ***an escape window for your temptation***, ***a prayer window for your trials*** & ***a grace window for your tribulations***. There may be **only one window** to lighten your darkness, but thank God there is **at least one window!**