Saving his house

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Preacher: Prof J.Douglas Macmillan

[0:00] Let us turn together to the New Testament Scriptures and to the Epistles of the Hebrews. Epistles of the Hebrews on chapter 11 on verse 7.

Hebrews 11 verse 7. By faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared enough to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.
He said to these words, By faith Noah prepared enough to the saving of his house. Noah did prepare enough, and through that preparation he and his family, or his household, were saved.
By faith Noah saved his house, and in this way became a witness to future ages that the faith of a believing unrighteous parent obtains a blessing, not only for himself, but for his children also.
Let me pause and emphasize again these words. By faith he saved his house. These words from our text are the New Testament commentary on the character and belief of this great Old Testament believer, Noah.
[2:00] The Old Testament records, as we read, records of this man that God said of him, I have seen thee righteous before me.

Come thou and all thy house into the ark. The fact that not only Noah, but his household, all his family and relations were saved is placed back by the Old Testament scriptures to the faith and the righteousness of Noah himself.
In this we find, I think, a very important and very basic principle of God's working in grace.
That is the principle that God regards the family as a unit. we are very used to the idea in evangelical circles and evangelical preaching, rightly so, we are very used to the idea that God deals with us as individuals.
And continually the evangelical pulpit stresses that each person as an individual must be born again if you are to be saved you must be saved as an individual.
[3:52] Nevertheless, there is also another principle running all through scripture. That is that God deals with us not merely as individuals but he deals with us in our family relationship.

This comes out quite clearly for example in the fall of man. The fall affected not only Adam according to scripture but it affected his posterity.
The sin of the individual was more than the sin of the individual. It was the sin of all mankind descending from him.
Sin worked on the fact that no man stands isolated. Sin worked upon the fact of heredity. And when man fell man fell not only as an individual but as a family unit.
The first time you see the real ravages of sin you see it in a family. And I heard the tape of the sermon that was preached from this pulpit and that's in last Lord's Day morning.
[5:13] The one who rose up and slew his brother. Sin at its worst among human nature manifested in the life of the family.

But if sin made hold of the family relationship and if sin used the family relationship as a road into the destruction of all humanity grace has regarded the family relationship also.
And grace deals with us not merely as individuals but as family. And we see this principle rise and come into view first of all in the light of this gracious and wonderfully believing man Noah.
Because Noah saved his house. My Christian friend can God say this of you and your faith today. are you a saved father and a saved mother and will eternity reveal for you a saved house.
[6:33] Blessed be the house and blessed be the father of whom God says they are saved.

one of the brightest things that we see in the whole realm of religion I believe is family religion.
One of the one most wonderful sites among all the wonderful sites of the great things that God does by his grace is to see not just an individual but a family saved by his grace.

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There we see religion there we see the Christian faith at its highest and if I can use a Scottish word there we see Christian faith at its bonniest don't we?
To see a father and mother and a family who love the Savior and to testify to the fact that God's promise is to his people and to the children.
[7:51] Can I ask you as I search my own heart are you going to be satisfied with atomistic individualistic salvation?

Let me put it a little bit differently. Are you going to be satisfied merely to be in the covenant and in the Savior yourself or do you wrong to see those who are yours in the ties of blood saved and in the Savior also?
we see this principle as I said rising first of all and being manifested wonderfully in the life of Noah. Notice that some of the other great principles of redemption can be seen clearly illustrated in the salvation of Noah also.
Let me just enumerate some of them. In the story of Noah being saved when the whole of his generation was being destroyed under the judgment of God in that history I say we see this we see one of the leading principles of salvation we see that mercy is to be exercised in the very midst of judgment mercy exercised in the very midst of judgment do you know where else you see that very clearly brought out to the fore at a place called Calvary don't you there you see mercy unveiled more clearly than you ever see it anywhere else God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself and there you see judgment also but there you see one who was not a sinner himself but who was bearing our sins there you see him born down into the waters of death by the wrath of
[10:09] God and by the punishment of our sins and he traced that leading principle he traced it first of all in the salvation of Noah that God's redeeming grace will always show mercy in the midst of judgment is that not true also of every individual believer here this morning you are being saved what mercy yes my friend what mercy God has shown towards you if you are a Christian today you are being saved when multitudes about you are being judged we talk today of the apathy of men we talk about the terrible indifference we face when we go out to talk to them about Christ and the gospel but what underlies that apathy I'll tell you the judgment of God and a man or a woman cares nothing for Christ or of his

God when a man raises himself up and says there is no God oh that's something sad that means that that man is already under the judgment of God it's not that our age is more enlightened and more intellectual and more advanced than any other age it is that our age has come under the judgment of God a few ages in Scotland have mercy in the midst of judgment another leading principle from this story is this one faith as the means of deliverance by faith Noah saved his house and faith is always the means of deliverance the Bible has called Noah just man and what does the Bible say of those who are just they say that the just shall live by faith isn't that the principle you see it shining out here of this history faith the means of Noah's deliverance and you see another principle still you see life the emerging out of death the flood was not only judgment it was the death that judgment so often carries with it and yet in the midst of death life and life on the basis of faith go back to where does your life root and my life root if we are kind our lives our real life roots in his death that's really true it is life out of death why because heaven had written out an inviolable principle the wages of sin is death and the soul that sin it shall die ah but when this soul that had not sinned when it experienced death it was life how does
Paul put it he has brought life and immortality to light in the gospel what a wonderful gospel he didn't just bring immortality to light immortality lands of days there is something else that makes it worthwhile he brought life and immortality to light in the gospel when he talks of life there it is a quality of being not just an endless ongoing of being it is a quality of being that is full of richness and satisfaction and glory and that is the life that every believer inherits the moment they believe so there's three principles you see mercy moving in the very midst of judgment save the basic means of deliverance how is a man to be saved and the biblical answer always whether you go to the new testament or the old the biblical answer always is by faith what must
I do to be saved are there any in the church this morning who are asking that basic question how does a man become saved listen to the answer and it's been ringing down through the ages from the very time of the patriarch believe on the lord jesus christ thou shalt be saved on thine house that brings me to the basic the main principle I want me to emphasize this morning a fourth principle here that family that family life is one of the unit of the means of grace god took the family tie and he made it a means of grace now you know what I mean when I talk of a means of grace god's word

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the bible which he has given us is a means of grace it's able to make us wise unto salvation the sacrament of the lord's supper and the sacrament of baptism that we are administering this morning the sacraments are a means of grace too prayer is a means of grace the fellowship of the christian congregation a means of grace and let me say this the family unit a means of grace
[16:38] I look out over the congregation here this morning and I see people reared in godly home godly mother or a godly father for a means of grace god put in your way what a staircase by which to climb up to salvation and fellowship with himself one of the greatest of all the means of grace a godly parentage here it is coming out in Noah Noah and his family Noah and his children can I ask you to follow that through follow it through the whole unfolding history of redemption and you find that principle reiterated again and again and again come to the time when the first really visible church was ordered and instituted by god through

Abraham what do you find Abraham I will make my covenant with you covenant that carries in its heart the promise of the saviour and Abraham the covenant is with you but it is not only with you but Abraham the covenant is with you and who you know the answer don't you the covenant the promise is to you and you see the same principles as we find in the history of Noah emerging again in a stronger way at the clearest of all the publishing of the covenant of death you'll find it in Genesis 17 go back to Genesis 12 Genesis 12
Genesis 17 Genesis 20 and every time this covenant is reissued or republished without fail let me say in every single occasion this one covenant of grace is republished it carries this attachment to it to you and to your children it was the giving of the covenant to Abraham that the seal of the covenant the old testament seal of the covenant was given the seal of circumcision that was to be an outward sign and an outward token of the inward reality of God saving grace and saving power used to be a sign to Abraham and his posterity of God's promise of his coming savior that made circumcision a sacrament we believe that the outward sign symbol of circumcision spoke of an inward one and again and again you get the spiritual reality of which circumcision was the sign spoken of in the old testament scriptures circumcise your hearts spiritual circumcision then you get circumcision being left behind the reality unchanged salvation by faith through grace the reality of the covenant unchanged but the outward symbol being clearer and fuller
Christ had come born not of the seed of man it was the man who was circumcised he was not to be of the seed of man but born of the woman and now Christ being come blood having been shed the washing of regeneration or let me say this the real spiritual circumcision is to be signified and sealed with another shine the water of but and we link the two together Paul writes to the Colossians and he says don't listen to those who say you have to be circumcised in the flesh Colossians 2 9-11 find it there don't listen to those who say you have to be circumcised for you are circumcised already with this circumcision made without hands the circumcision of Christ and if you ask the question but
Paul when were they circumcised when they were buried with him in baptism that's when baptism and circumcision signify and seal the day in grace as we close the service this morning I want to go back and to re-emphasize this the faith and the obedience of this parent by faith you are saved his hand Christian parents let your faith be around not only your own soul but around the soul of your family also take your family in believing prayer to
[22:58] God you see why faith is necessary you see some of the things that faith can do it will hold on to God through every difficulty for the family it may seem unlikely that your children will ever believe in the kind of climate in which they're being brought up today they are being educated not to believe the Bible of course they are our secular schools educate people not to believe the Bible that's one great difficulty to overcome they are being educated along humanistic lines one wonders if it's right to take children that we have given to God in covenant and sacrament and shove them into our system where they are taught no God one wonders how we can do it but faith will take our children and it will lay hold of the promises of

God and faith will take our children and it will teach them the word of God as the word of God and faith will set a believing and a godly example before the children and faith will expect to see God fulfill his promises in these children but faith matters I would say that to the fathers of the children who are going to be baptized here today if you are ever really going to do anything worthwhile for your children in time and for eternity it will be by faith knowing you both I believe that you do much you do all in your power for your children in this life I would like to believe that your faith would make you do much for them for the life which is to come off my friend you can do it and you will do it only

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because of faith let me take time of we leave the sermon behind to ask ourselves what we really do in baptism what do we do when we baptize a adult or a child we administer a sacrament of the New Testament Church you ask me what is a sacrament let me give you the answer compiled by those much more able than myself compiled in a beautifully comprehensive way what is a sacrament in a shorter caracism tells us this a sacrament is a holy ordinance special holy it's a holy ordinance instituted by Christ wherein by sensible or outward signs Christ and the benefits the blessings of the new covenant are represented they're represented through through these symbols the benefits and blessings of the new covenant represented to us they are represented sealed and applied to us in this case of course it's an outward application the application of waters in an outward way by a servant of the
Lord and it speaks to us of an inward application of grace and cleansing and power by the Holy Ghost that's what the outward should speak to us of the inward now let me stress that baptism is a sacrament that's blessed for us when the catechism goes on after asking what a sacrament is it asks how many sacraments are there the Roman Catholics tell us there are seven the Reformed Church believed there are two on the basis of scripture there were two in the Old Testament and there are two in the New there was the sacrament of the Passover which became the sacrament of the Lord's Supper there was the sacrament of circumcision which passed into the sacrament of baptism two the sacraments of the New Testament are baptism on the
Lord's Supper and let me say this to those who have had baptism for the children here and are having baptism of the children here today the baptism for your child is just as much a sacrament as the communion of the Lord's Supper just as much a sacrament and to be dealt with in just a solemn and holy and careful way as a sacrament of the Lord's Supper then our Catholicism goes on to say this that baptism is a sacrament wherein the washing with water water this is where we find our great theological difference that I do with our believing brethren in Baptist churches they say that baptism represents death burial and resurrection along with Christ we say that baptism signifies through a washing with water in the name of the
[29:11] Father the Son and the Holy Spirit it signifies and seals our engrafting into Christ in the totality of his work and our partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace and our engaging to be his we are one with Christ not only in his death burial and resurrection but we are one with Christ in all that he is and all that he has done for our salvation that unity has come to us through the washing of regeneration the important thing to be symbolized says the reform symbol is this the symbol of washing and of accepting and of obeying not just we include what our brethren hold but we include much more and then

I want to take time still to give you this one who is to have baptism and I cannot but say this and say it with a sore heart I believe that the main difficulty about infant baptism lies not in its use but in its abuse and I have no doubt that it is abused in almost every church that practices it I have no doubt that it is abused in our church too who is to have baptism what is our Catholicism say listen to this baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church till they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him but the infants of such are as members of the visible church are to be baptized so part of the teaching of the biblical basis of infant baptism at all says that baptism is a door into the visible church therefore every person it is argued who is baptized is a member of the outward visible church when they profess their faith and come to the communion table that is only a ratification of that membership now there are those and personally
I would be among them there are those who believe that only the children of those who have ratified their faith and their own membership should really have the right to infant baptism that seems logical but our church for many years has practiced this that the children of those who are members by baptism have their children baptized too that they have the right to it and I can see biblical logic in that argument and that's why I do it but I always pray this and I've prayed it over every couple to whom I have given baptism if they are not community members I pray that the Lord will strengthen their faith and give them that faith which will take them not just for the supplement of baptism but for the supplement of the
Lord's supper as well they are making a profession of faith when they bring their children here for baptism they are wanting their children identified with the redemption of God and Christ and they are wanting their children identified with the visible church that is good that is good we can only hope and pray that they will want their identification to be complete and real and that they will want salvation for the children for it was by faith that Noah saved his house now I have to say to myself

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and say to every other parent here that no matter what rights we go through for ourselves or for our children if these rights are not made real and valid by faith then they are worthless and in fact we shall have to give an account for them at the judgment seat of
God I say that was all solemnity to my own heart and to you take one one I say to you

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