**Genesis 8:1-19** Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. **2**The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. **3**And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. **4**Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. **5**And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth *month,* on the first *day* of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen. **6**So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. **7**Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. **8**He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. **9**But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters *were* on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. **10**And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. **11**Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf *was* in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. **12**So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore. **13**And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first *month,* the first *day* of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. **14**And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried.

**15**Then God spoke to Noah, saying, **16**“Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. **17**Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that *is* with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” **18**So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him. **19**Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, *and* whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.

Tonight, we’re in Genesis and looking at the story of Noah’s Ark. This is a story that I’ve heard from my youngest days. I remember my Mama lying on the bed with us and reading to us the story of Noah’s Ark. We’d ask silly questions, the way children do… even skunks Mama? We often look at the story of Noah as a story of salvation, and it is. But the story of Noah’s Ark is a story of Faith, Obedience, Perseverance, and Patience as well.

Earlier in Genesis, God speaks to Noah and construction begins. Many people think the Ark was built in a month or a year, but it took about 120 years according to most theologians. During that time, God gave men time to repent. Think of the Faith that it took for Noah to start such a project. Every piece of wood, every pound of pitch, every fastener, every picket for every cage had to be made by hand.

Think of the Obedience to heed the word of God. The Earth had never known a flood. People were evil and I’ve no doubt that they were merciless in their pointing and condemning. But Noah was obedient – even when he saw no rain, even when the fountains of the deep remained closed. He was obedient, even as the dust of the Earth coated his feet as he carried the boards to build the Ark. Noah was a righteous man, relentless in obedience.

Many times, God calls us to start a work when the outcome is not obvious. Faith and Obedience – 1 Samuel 15:22 says So Samuel said: “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. Yet, many of us hesitate to start the work God calls us to do, obedience, because we don’t see how it’s all going to work out, faith. Noah didn’t hesitate.

In Genesis 7, the flood begins. Noah and his family enter the Ark. God shuts the door. Noah is 600 years old. Faith is required again! Noah enters the Ark while the ground is dry! For seven days he waits! Not a drip, not a drop, not a drizzle. Then, it starts. Forty days and forty nights – water springs from the deep – rain from heaven. Forty days – forty nights. Some think that was how long Noah was in the Ark. Not true… that’s how long it rained. Genesis 7:24 says And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.

How many of us have answered a call that we thought would take a certain time and it ended up taking much longer? Remember the Staples commercial – That was easy – button? I used to want one that, when pressed, said – that was incredibly more difficult than I imagined. The difference between how long we think it will take and how long God actually takes is called Perseverance, it's call Patience. Things happen in God’s time – yes, the rain may fall in our lives for 40 days, but the resulting flood may last prevail much longer! We must be prepared. He who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not worthy of the Kingdom of God.

In Genesis 8:5 we read And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth *month,* on the first *day* of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen. When we consult the calendar, we realize that this is 224 days from the start of the rain… before the top of the mountains become visible. This was no forty day adventure! More than seven months before the first hope appears, but it’s not over yet.

Everyone here remember Gilligan’s Island? What started out to be a 3 hour tour turned into a 3 year show. How we persevere during the dry times, during the rainy times, during the flooded times, during the times we wait for the waters to recede in our lives speaks volumes about our faith in Jesus Christ!

Verse 6 - So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. **7**Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. **8**He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. **9**But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters *were* on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. **10**And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. **11**Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf *was* in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. **12**So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore. When we add these days up, we’re now in day 285 – no, the story of Noah’s Ark isn’t about the 40 days of rain. It’s about the months and months of being floating on a sea, with only God to trust for where you’ll land! It’s about praying for the mountaintops even as the seas of challenge surround you.

Verse 13 And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first *month,* the first *day* of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. We know, by the calendar, that this was 29 more days. 314 days. Noah is now 601 years old.

Verse 14-16 And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried. **15**Then God spoke to Noah, saying, **16**“Go out of the ark. Approximately 56 more days until God said – OK, go out of the Ark. 370 days, more than one year. 120 years of preparation, 7 days of waiting, 370 days inside the ark trusting and praying and persevering and patiently waiting upon the Lord. 330 days, waiting for the ground to dry.

Our walk with God is all about taking the steps He’s calling us to take when He calls us to take them. He prefers Obedience to sacrifice. We can give Him money or time all we want, but if we’re disobedient to His call, it means little or nothing. If He’s calling you to prepare, prepare faithfully. If He’s shut you in, wait patiently. If He’s parked you in a dry spot, watch expectantly. When the time comes for you to move, move obediently. Noah might have expected 40 days of rain, but he endured 370 days of flood. Be prepared to endure – God doesn’t promise He'll do it in our timing. He promises He will do it in His.