

Boxed in by God

August 3, 2016

There is an interesting phrase, found in the middle of the flood description in Genesis. In Genesis six, God commanded Noah to prepare an ark because he had decided to destroy the world because of wickedness and sin. In chapter 7, Noah collects the animals, prepares his family and gets on board the ark in preparation for the flood to hit.

And then the scripture says this, **“And the LORD shut him in.”** (*Genesis 7:16 [ESV]*) Now I know the pictures that were presented in Sunday School when I was a kid – the picture of a hand of God closing the door to the ark as the drops of rain began to fall. As I reflect on what Noah must have thought, and what I have often thought in the journey of my life, I wonder if we shouldn't see something more.

In that moment the ark door was closed, God shut Noah and trapped him in a difficult, tumultuous, fear filled experience. There was a long and arduous journey ahead of him and his family and he was stuck in an enclosed ark with a bunch of stinking animals (who cleaned up the litter box – and what a litter box it must have been?)

- He was trapped with nothing to see but water (if he was even able to see out at all).
- He was enclosed without any control over their direction of their drift – no indication there was a rudder or a sail or a wheel.
- He was encased in a filthy environment.
- He was enveloped by an uncertain future and an unknown destiny.
- He was encircled with nothing but trust in God as the option for his life and the life of his family.

And there are times in my life where I feel God has closed me in very difficult situations. There are moments where occupational crisis hit, relational difficulties arose, medical issues were declared and life happened where I would feel trapped and the world closing in on me. And I must confess that I felt like God had me cornered and boxed in.

And yet...

When God closed Noah into the boat, he was acting to protect him and his family. God was doing something to preserve them, deliver them and watch over them. He wrapped himself around them so that they would experience life, salvation and a whole new world.

When I look at the crises of my life, those moments when I felt trapped and closed in, they were also the times when God was covering me, protecting me and often times delivering me. In my difficult moments there were also moments where God delivered me from the circumstances and even from myself.

When God shut Noah in – it was a difficult thing, but it was also a great thing. When I feel closed in by God, it is a difficult thing...but it is also a great thing. And when I read about God shutting the door for Noah, it reminds me of something David said:

***You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me. (Psalm 139:5)***

So today I must thank God for the difficult times, when he has surrounded me and shut me in, so that I might experience his protection and deliverance!