

## **Drama Sketch**

*Scene opens with Noah at work sawing. Boards are everywhere. Noah's wife enters carrying a tray.. [Tech team plays the clip [which I own] from Bill Cosby's "Noah" of the sawing sounds – VARUBA]*

N'S WIFE I brought you some lunch. I was worried that you would forget to eat.

NOAH Thank you, my dear. I admit, I have been a bit preoccupied. It's just that I don't know how much time I'll have to finish the work

N'S WIFE You shouldn't worry. God will provide the time you need.

NOAH I know He will. Please set it down. I will take a break soon.

*Noah's wife sets down the tray, kisses him on the head and leaves. Noah resumes work sawing [Varuba – Varuba] and Jareb enters.*

JAREB Hello, Noah. We haven't seen you in town lately.

NOAH No, Jareb. I have been busy.

JAREB I can see that. Quite a project. Is this an addition to your house? Some kind of storehouse?

NOAH No, nothing like that.

JAREB Lots of rumors flying around about you. Ugly stuff. Ugly.

NOAH I don't concern myself with rumors.

JAREB People say you've lost your mind. That you're building some kind of huge boat, way up here on this hill. But I stuck up for you. I told them that you were the wisest of men and would never build a ship miles from water. That would be insanity, pure and simple.

NOAH Thank you for your support. You're a good friend.

JAREB So what are you building.

NOAH A huge boat.

JAREB So it's true. (Looking around) Noah, this framing is for a ship ... 400 feet long.

NOAH 450 feet, to be exact, and 75 feet wide.

JAREB You realize that you cannot haul a boat this size to the shore. It's impossible.

NOAH I have no intention of taking the boat to the water. I'm afraid the water will come to the boat.

JAREB *(condescendingly)* Is that right? Look, don't you think this is too big a project for someone your age? What are you now, 530? 540 years old?

NOAH Please, Jareb. I am only 522.

JAREB Still, you should be taking it easy. Enjoying life. Besides, people look up to you, or at least they used to. Sure, to some people you're a little too...squeaky clean. Alright, to a lot of people. But people respect that. These are crazy times and you are kind of a pillar of stability. You don't want folks to think of you as that nutty old guy who built the giant boat up on the hill.

NOAH I appreciate your concern. I really do. But I have work to do.

JAREB Noah, I was hoping I could reason with you. But since you won't listen to me, I brought with me Arpeth from the village, I think you know him, and this is Kelosh. *(Kelosh and Arpeth enter)*

ARPETH Hey, Noah.

NOAH What is all this about?

KELOSH I have heard a lot about you Noah. I can see you are quite the ..uh...handyman.

NOAH Is this going to take long?

KELOSH Noah, your friends care for you a lot and they are concerned about you.

NOAH They don't need to be, I'm perfectly...

KELOSH Please hear me out. Your friends respect you a great deal and are troubled that you are undertaking this kind of unusual project. Quite frankly, they think you need help.

NOAH So you've all come to help me build? That's wonderful...

ARPETH No, Noah. It's not that type of help. This is what they call an...what was it?

JAREB An intervention.

ARPETH That's right, this is an intervention.

KELOSH We need to know why you would put your good name at risk by undertaking something so....irrational. There I said it.

NOAH Oh. I will certainly tell you why I am doing this. You have probably noticed that men and women do not live as they once did.

KELOSH Go on.

NOAH Well, believe me, God has noticed it. He has seen how evil men have become, how violent. And it breaks His heart to see what we have made of His creation. So God

told me that He plans to make a clean sweep of things. He told me to build a ship from teakwood; He gave me the dimensions, and told me to take two of every living creature on board the ship, with stores of food for all of them.

KELOSH God told you this.

ARPETH Wow, God talks to you

JAREB Will you be quiet?

NOAH God intends to bring a great flood upon the land that will destroy everything except that which is on board this ship.

KELOSH I see. And will God choose any people to save along with these animals.

NOAH God told me to that He will establish a covenant with me and my family. My wife, my sons and their wives will all board the ark with me.

KELOSH Don't you think it's a bit...arrogant of you to think that of all the people on this earth God will single out your family to survive this flood.

NOAH On the contrary. I am humbled that I have found favor in God's eyes. All I can do is thank him and obey him by completing this work.

ARPETH Do I give it to him now?

NOAH Give me what?

JAREB *(irritably)* Go ahead. *(Arpeth hands Noah a brochure)*

KELOSH Noah, this is a brochure for an excellent...uh...spa...where people can go who need a little help regaining their grip on reality. You would need to be there a few months, but I am sure that in time –

NOAH Enough!! I don't have time for this! I am not crazy and I don't need to go to a ... spa. I know you mean well, but if you don't leave at once I will have to call for my sons and they will make you leave.

JAREB Come on. It was worth a try.

ARPETH They made me come. No hard feelings, right?

KELOSH Keep the brochure, just in case you change your mind.

NOAH Out!!! *(Kelosh, Arpeth and Jareb exit) (Noah's wife returns)*

N'S WIFE What's going on? I heard voices and shouting.

NOAH           Jareb was here. He brought Arpeth with him and some man I did not know. Jareb thinks I've lost my senses. I tried to explain why I'm doing this, but I couldn't make him understand.

N'S WIFE       I suppose we both need to get used to it. The women in the village have all been talking about you. They are saying unkind things, too. *(Noah's wife starts to cry. Noah rises to console her.)*

NOAH           *(Gently)* My love. We knew this wouldn't be easy. You know, I think I'm ready for that break. Let's have lunch together out on the hillside.

N'S WIFE       I'd like that, *(gently teasing)* if you're sure you can spare the time.

NOAH           For you I will always have time. *(Noah picks up the lunch tray and they leave.)*

## Introduction

Thank Catherine and the drama team / Sermon Series restarted

Our reputations are important to us – what others think about us is very important. And whether we admit it or not, we all have our own reputation spin doctor working inside us to build / enhance and protect our reputations. You know how it goes – we take an action and begin thinking about how we are going to put a positive spin on it to others. What others think about us matters. We want to look good. And we'll go to great lengths to do that.

Companies spend vast amounts of money building / enhancing / protecting their reputations. In the fall of 2002, a Fed-Ex truck hit a sign on a freeway outside of St. Louis, ruptured its gas tank and exploded. Within the hour, FedEx employees were spray painting the burning truck and plastering it with stickers to conceal the FedEx name. How far we will go to protect our reputation! I love the title of the last chapter of a book for businesses about building and enhancing their reputation. It's titled

If all else fails, change your name.

Unfortunately, most of us don't have that as a option. Our name sticks with us our whole life. The Word of God tells that building and keeping a good name and reputation is important. In Proverbs 22:1

**“A good name is to be more desired than great wealth”**

A solid reputation and a good name comes from a solid character. And we are called to develop character – both in our own lives and in the lives of our children. Maybe you heard the story of :

A young homeschooled girl who was approached by a stranger in a grocery store and was asked why she wasn't in school. She looked up at the stranger and replied, "I am in school. My parents are teaching me to be a character!"

Scripture tells us that our leaders need to be of good character and have a solid reputation.

I Tim 3:7 “He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.”

## Faith-filled Actions can Damage your Reputation

The tension is that we are called to have a good reputation with those outside the church yet – often when we live out our faith, our actions can sometimes put us in a poor light – we can be misunderstood – can be seen as crazy – throwing our life away – Following God by faith can take our reputation to the edge.

C.S. Lewis was the most popular and most widely published lecturer at Oxford for 29 years. Yet he was never made a full professor. His own peers rejected him every time an opening for a professorship came up. In his last attempt at becoming a full professor, one of the three candidates stepped down so as to not divide the anti-Lewis vote. It was Lewis' obedience to the word of God that was an affront to his academic colleagues. And his reputation among his colleagues suffered.

Responding with kamikaze faith can affect our reputation with our friends.

We have a young woman in our midst who just recently demonstrated a kamikaze heart that caused her reputation to suffer. She had taken some faith based actions based on God's leading. And they were steps that were out of the ordinary. They made her look different. And God rewarded her actions with confirmation by bearing good fruit from her actions. But afterwards at school, she noticed that kids looked differently at her. Some said things like – “If you hang out with her, she'll make you do weird things like she does.” And they began calling her a “Bible thumper” and a “Holy Roller.” As adults, this is hard enough – but in the worlds our kids live in – these kinds of things can be devastating.

You want to know what this daughter of our King did? She began to meditate on the life of Noah. And she began to write in her journal – asking God to give her the courage and the perseverance of Noah. And He has begun to do that – very gently and personally.

That's what we want to do today. Look at how Noah practiced kamikaze faith and ask God to give us courage and perseverance to follow his example. Let's pray

Thank you Father for raising up young people in our midst with kamikaze hearts. Open your word today – to challenge us, to convict us, to change us. Help us to take some additional steps today to develop Kamikaze hearts. Amen

People of God – hear the Word of God

## Scripture – Hebrews 11:7

<sup>7</sup>By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Noah was called to make quite a commitment – He heard God's word. And then lived it out – working perhaps as long as 100 years building that ark. <sup>1</sup> And all that time he looked foolish to

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<sup>1</sup> Gen 5:32 Noah was first mentioned and was 500. Gen 7:6 Noah was 600 when the flood came.

almost everyone around. It's hard to imagine him having a good reputation with his neighbors. Building the ark wasn't one of your every day home improvement projects. In children's stories we often portray pictures of the ark like this.

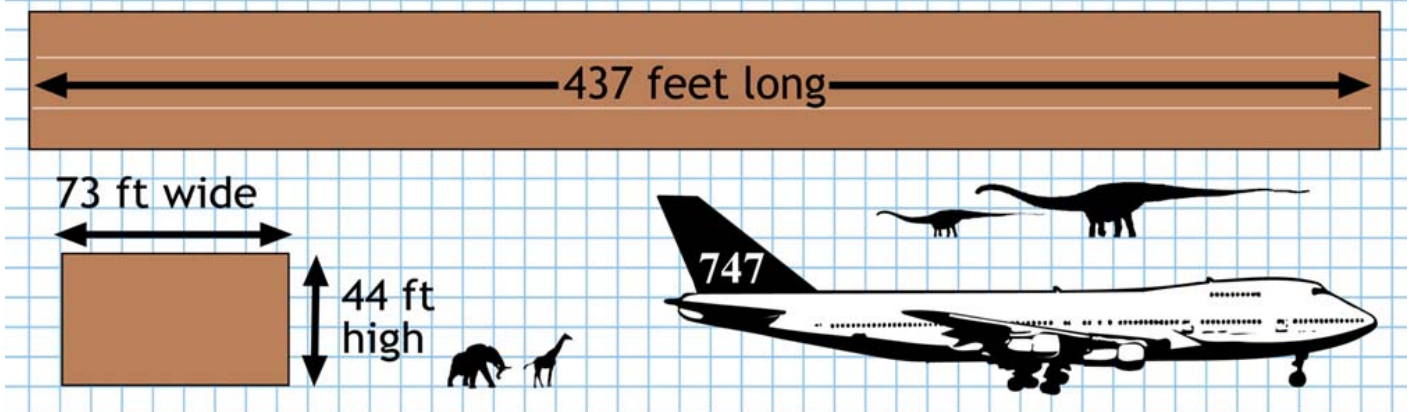
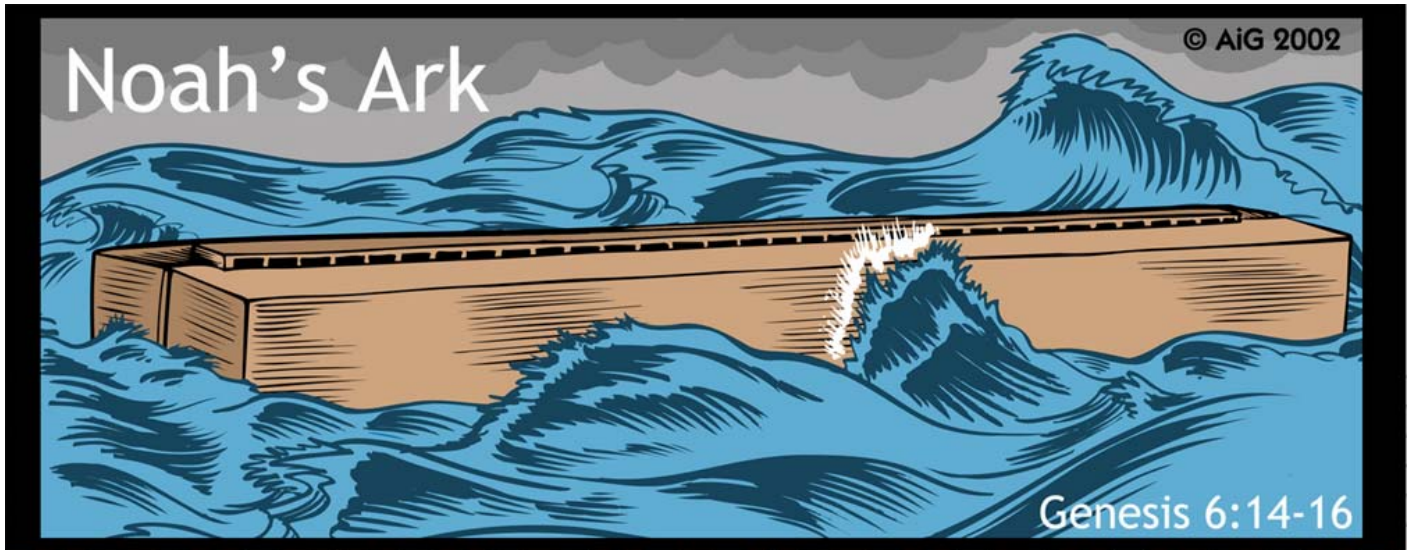


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Whereas in reality, the ark looked more like this.



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Now you don't just build something like this in your back yard and not get questions from the neighbors. So its no stretch that Noah was reputation challenged.

I want you notice that Noah built the ark by faith because he was warned by God. In Genesis, the story with Noah begins with

Then God said....<sup>2</sup>

The text doesn't tell us how God spoke. Most of us think it went like this.

[Audio Clip from Cosby –  
Noah!  
Who is this?  
This is the Lord Noah]

We don't know how God spoke to Noah. We know from the book of Hebrews that God spoke to his people in many different ways.<sup>3</sup> But it wasn't necessarily audibly. We know from our last time

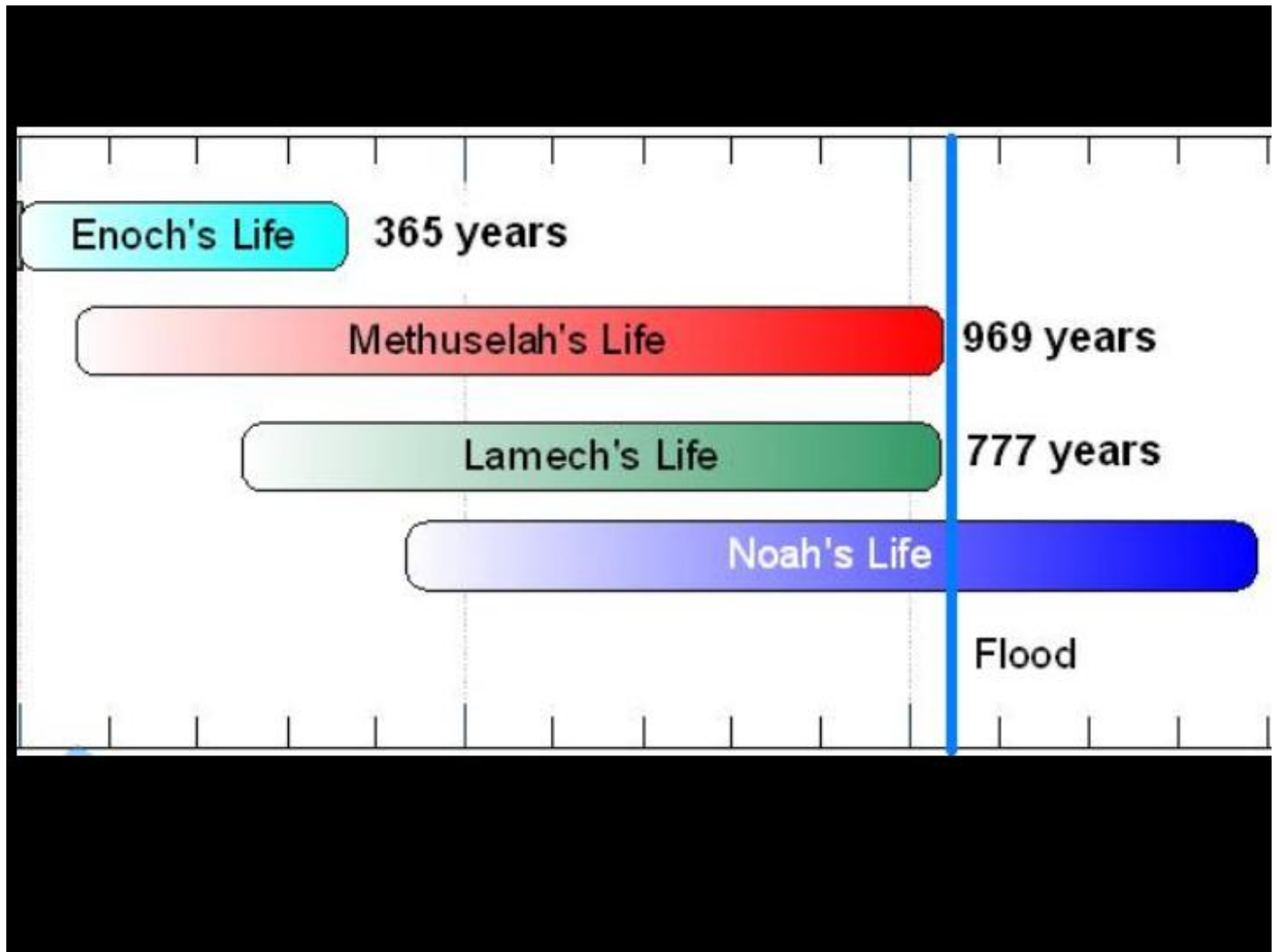
<sup>2</sup> Gen 6:13

<sup>3</sup> Heb 1:1

together, that God had spoken to Noah's great-grandfather Enoch about a coming judgment. Enoch named his son - Methuselah – which by one interpretation means –

When he's gone – it will come.

Certainly referring to the flood. The Word of God records that Methuselah died in the same year that the flood came.



So there is a good possibility that Noah had heard from his grand father about the coming judgment. But in whatever way, "Noah was warned by God"

This is in keeping with one of our definitions of faith. Faith starts by first hearing the Word of God. Biblical faith is not responding to just something we think – but what we have heard from God. Noah heard from God – and that's the starting point of all faith based actions.

But notice also that it was faith about something "not yet seen." We don't exercise our faith muscle when we are dealing with things that we see. Faith is the "evidence of things not seen." Noah acted in faith for upwards to a hundred years believing in a promise for which he had absolutely no evidence. That's amazing faith. Imagine in your own life – acting on a promise of God for 30 or 40 years without any evidence other than faith that it was true.

William Wilberforce was a wealthy lawyer in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. As a young man, God grabbed hold of him and began to call him to kamikaze faith. Calling him to take faith based actions that made him look foolish.

There is a great movie called *Amazing Grace* that just came out documenting the life of Wilberforce. In it is this great scene with Wilberforce, just after he became a Christian, laying in the dew laden grass - seeking God's face. You should see the expression on the faces of his servants as they come to bring some news to their boss. "Our boss has gone nuts." But out of those times he heard from God. He heard a call from God. In his words.

"God Almighty has set before me two great objects; the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners."

And it took 20 years to see this fulfilled. God spoke. Wilberforce heard. Wilberforce acted. In faith for 20 years - introducing the same bill in parliament. 20 years of ridicule. 20 years of not being understood. 20 years at great cost to his reputation. 20 years of not seeing the fruit of what God had called him to do?

What has God set before you? What is God stirring in you that you are holding back – because it seems impossible. Because you are wondering what people will think? How will it make me look?

"Faith is the evidence of things not seen." Noah received a warning from God – He acted on it – and he did it for upwards to 100 years – without seeing anything.

## Preparing the Ark in Reverence

I want you to notice two other things about Noah.

Notice the effect of the ark on those around him– "by which he condemned the world." It was building of the ark – not Noah's words – that spoke truth to the world. So often we think that it's our words that do that talking. But with Noah it was his actions. We live in an age where we are carpet bombed by people trying to get their message across. Noah acted upon what he heard from God. And that spoke to his generation.

But text tells us more – notice how Noah prepared the ark –in reverence – in awe – in the fear of God - in humility. All of us have been given an ark. A means of salvation against God's coming judgment. Jesus is that ark. How we present our Ark – Jesus - to the world in reverence – in holy fear – in awe – is important. Through Noah God is calling us to learn how to do that.

Let me share an example from one of our own kids who demonstrated a kamikaze heart and presented Jesus through his actions. This young man was playing a varsity sport for his high school. And as with most high school sports, there was a rule that you sit on the bench one game for every practice you miss. Each year, this kamikaze heart felt that God was calling him to participate in our annual Lake Champion weekend. So at the beginning of the season for three years he would notify the coach of the two practices he would miss. And each year he would sit on the bench for two games. In the highly competitive world that our kids live in, this was a big deal. His coach was not supportive of this. And it stood out. It made him different. He took on the appearance of not being a team player. But in reverence – without complaining – without grousing – not worrying about what people would think – he obeyed God.

## Conclusion

Last time we defined faith as believing that God is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. Noah was called to obey God's word about an unseen future – at great cost to his own reputation. Our scripture concludes its picture of Noah by telling us:

And he became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

There is a future reward for us as we stop trying to be responsible for what others think of us. As we stop using spray paint to cover up our failures. By faith, Noah obeyed God's word, practiced Kamikaze faith and received much more than a good reputation. He became the heir all of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. His reputation is now that of Jesus Christ.

You see life is like a double entry accounting ledger– filled with our liabilities – our failures and sins on one side and our assets – our good works – on the other.

	<b>LIABILITIES</b>	<b>ASSETS</b>
	All the things I have done wrong	My rags
	All the wrong things done to me	My trinkets
	All of my failures	Helped someone once
	My pride	Gave a little money once
	My critical spirit	Didn't steal once
	My arrogance	Told the truth once
	My ingratitude	
	My stinginess	
	My dishonesty	
	My lust	
<b>Total</b>	<b>A lot</b>	<b>Not Much</b>

We can spend a lifetime trying to spray paint over our liabilities and fill our assets with trinkets and dirty rags.

	LIABILITIES	ASSETS
	All the things I have done wrong	My rags
	All the wrong things done to me	My trinkets
	All of my failures	Helped someone once
	My pride	Gave a little money once
	My critical spirit	Didn't steal once
	My arrogance	Told the truth once
	My ingratitude	
	My stinginess	
	My dishonesty	
	My lust	
Total	A lot	Not Much

As we entrust our lives to Christ – trusting Him to honor us - He not only cancels out all of our liabilities,

	LIABILITIES	ASSETS
		My rags
		My trinkets
		Helped someone once
	<b>Forgiven!!</b>	Gave a little money once
		Didn't steal once
		Told the truth once
Total	Clean Slate	Not Much

He fills the other side with all of His righteousness. Our reputation can be that of Jesus Christ.

	<b>LIABILITIES</b>	<b>ASSETS</b>
	<b>Forgiven!!</b>	<b>Righteousness of Jesus</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>Clean Slate</b>	<b>More than we can imagine!</b>

The word of God puts forth a tension concerning our reputations. We are called to be men and women of character who have a good reputation with those outside the family of God. Yet at the same time sometimes we are called to walk with God in such a way that we look like fools. To learn from our brother Noah - not to be afraid of what others think about us – but to only be concerned about what God thinks of us. And God will reward us – sometimes in this life – sometimes in the life to come.

For the young man in our midst with the kamikaze heart, God rewarded him in this life. In his senior year, when the time came to sit on the bench his two games, the coach made an exception. He told him that he had seen his integrity and his character and let him play. God honors those who honor him.<sup>4</sup> But bringing honor is God’s job – not ours.

When David Livingstone was perhaps the most famous 19<sup>th</sup> century missionary. You have probably first heard of him from that famous quote: “Dr. Livingstone I presume.” When he went to Africa, he left behind a good future in Scotland as a doctor. His brother chided him – “You can bury your life in the jungles among the heathen in you want to, I’m going to stay here and make a name for myself.”

His brother went on to become wealthy. David opened the entire continent of Africa to the gospel. But at the end of his life – David’s brother, by his choice he had these words placed on his tombstone

Here lies the brother of David Livingstone<sup>5</sup>

God may not be calling you to bury your life in the jungles – but I suspect that He is calling you to places that will, at times make you look bad. He calling you to live out the good news in such a way that others may be offended – feel condemned. But we need God’s help to show us how to

<sup>4</sup> 1 Samuel 2:30 For those who honor Me I will honor

<sup>5</sup> Loren Cunningham in Making Jesus Lord

do that reverently. And we want to leave building a name and our reputation to Him. Let's take some time for confession and reflection on God's word to us today.

## Confession / Reflection

You were all given an envelope and a pen or pencil when you came in – if you don't have one raise your hand and an usher will bring you one. I want you take out the name tag and the response card. Now I want all of us to write our names on this name tag. This is your name – God wants it to be a good name. But we have been trying to make a name for ourselves rather than letting God make a name for us. We have tried to bring honor to our name rather than honoring God and leaving how others see us – up to Him.

Confession traditionally involves bringing to God both the things that we have done that we ought not to have done as well as bringing to him the good things that we have left undone.

On the back of the response card are two questions for our reflection:

Lord, what am I doing, to make a name for myself?  
Father, what are you calling me to do that I'm not doing,  
because I think it will hurt my name?

Let's take some time of silence with this? As God brings one or more of these things to mind – just write it down. [Silence]

You may be a parent – called to make in difference in your kids school – but afraid to act  
You may be a business person – God is stirring you to action that will cause your reputation to suffer  
You may be called to present Jesus – our ark to someone – but are afraid of what others will think of you.

Now I want you to flip the card over and place your name tag next to these word:

*As I honor God and walk in kamikaze faith, God will honor and make a name for:*

Now I want you take that card and place it in the envelope and seal it. As we do this – I want to ask God that the seal would be a symbol of the Holy Spirit's sealing our decision / our commitment. As we sing our closing song, I want you to bring this envelope and place it on the altar – trusting that as you walk in faith – hearing God's word – obeying God's word – He will bring you honor. If God hasn't stirred anything in you – don't worry about it – take the envelope home. Take some additional time later in the day or in the week. No one will look at these – they won't become next week's prayer requests.

So let's seal them together. Father, we place these seals on these envelopes as a symbol of your sealing our sins / covering our sins and rewarding us with your righteousness.

Amen. Let's rise and sing our closing song.