

Pentecost 10 – July 28, 2024
Text: Genesis 9:8-17
Theme: Look for the Rainbow

When you see a rainbow in the sky, is it just a scientifically explainable phenomenon caused by light being refracted by various gasses, or is it a miracle? If you believe our Old Testament text for this morning, you know that it is a miracle. God puts that rainbow in the sky to remind us that the rainstorm will not end in a world-wide flood that destroys the earth. Can the rainbow be explained by science? Yes, of course. God rarely works outside the parameters He has created. Even miracles like baptism use plain water from the tap and the very body and blood of Jesus comes to us through plain old bread and wine. God uses physics and chemistry, biology, and math. He created all of it. Of course He uses it, but that in no way reduces the miraculous nature of it all.

Don't become jaded. Miracles are all around us every day. That car wreck where you walked away alive was not luck. It was God. That delay of a flight that irritated you to no end as you sat on the tarmac in a steaming plane was not bad luck or someone's incompetence. It was God delivering His children from a disaster unknown to you. When it rains but the world is not destroyed, it is not because of a lucky weather system, it is God and He put the rainbow in the sky to remind us that He is with us all the time and

there is no such thing as luck. Every time something as seemingly ordinary as the rain stopping occurs, it reminds us that God is in control of everything.

This promise from God is not a promise that God will do something IF we do something else. This promise is a one-way promise from God to us. God wants us to know that He will never destroy the earth by flood again. He does not want us to be afraid when it rains. But this promise also mirrors His promise to be our God no matter what. Our relationship with God is never dependent upon us. There is nothing we must do for God to love us and care for us. That is the greater meaning of the rainbow. Every time we see that beautiful arc in the sky, we are reminded that God loves us beyond everything else.

God's promise to us was reiterated during Jesus' ministry in our Gospel for today. In one of the most well-known accounts from the Gospels, Jesus comes walking to the boat on the water in a wind storm. He steps into the boat and the wind ceases immediately. Like God assures us of His love for us through the rainbow, Jesus assures us of His love for us when He says to us, "Do not be afraid." No storm in this life is greater than the power of God and no one loves us more than God. It does not mean that we will not have to weather storms. That is part of living in a broken world. We suffer loss. We

lose people. We lose money. We lose position. We lose purpose. Sometimes it can seem to us that our world is unraveling. When you are in one of these times, look for your rainbow.

Remember Jesus' words to you, "Do not be afraid!" This is not a polite greeting. This is a command that takes your fear away. This is your personal rainbow arcing over your head 24/7. He is not speaking some sniveling platitude, like "it's really for the best." Or, "don't worry, everything will be okay." No, sadness and pain are never for the best. Sadness and pain were never part of God's plan for this world, and because of sadness and pain everything is not okay, in fact, many things are opposed to God's will. But whatever your personal storm, He is calming it! He is commanding the wind to cease and He is reaching out His hand and He is holding yours. That's the sign of the rainbow. God is sealing His gift to us with a big, beautiful bow. He speaks into our storm, "I love you and because I love you, you need never fear again."