

**Sonoraville Baptist Church**  
**Sunday, October 9, 2011 – 11:00 AM**  
**Rev. Steve Skates, Pastor**

**Building Your Boat - Hebrews 11:7**

**Introduction:** This morning, I've been led to preach on the subject of family. The family is the oldest institution of society, and is the backbone of all that we are and know in terms of human relationships. However today, the traditional and biblical family is coming under heavy scrutiny and attack, and if it is not defended and promoted in its original Godly design, then society as we know it will crumble, and the fallout will be devastating. It's that simple and it is that serious.

So today, this message will center around making sure we are providing the right foundation and framework for our families to survive the storm that is brewing – the framework that God intended when He established it *“in the beginning.”* I've entitled this message, ***“Building Your Boat”*** because in **Hebrews 11:7a (NIV)** we read, *“By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family...”*

Do you want to save your family today? Do you want to provide your family with a safe and sound environment in which to live? Then by faith and with a holy fear, let's make sure we're building our family boats according to God's plan. But in order to do that, we must first know what God had in mind when He established the family, So let's first look at the Biblical background of family as designed by God Himself.

In the Old Testament, we see that God established the family as the context in which humans can live. Interestingly, the family was also the vehicle through which God's Word would be transported from generation to generation. God intended for the family to preserve and communicate God's eternal truths and His revelation of Himself to each other and to others.

The idea of family not only included the parents and children but, according to Hans Walter Wolff in his *Anthropology of the Old Testament* *“included the men, married women, unmarried daughters, slaves of both sexes, persons without citizenship, and sojourners, or resident foreign workers.”* The Old Testament family reached out and touched persons in a larger circle of influence and from various and different walks of society.

God's blessings were passed down through the family. God told Abraham in **Genesis 12:3 (NASB)** *“... in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*

In **Deuteronomy 12:12 (NLT)**, God commanded that families honor and follow His leadership: He said, *“You must celebrate there with your sons and daughters and all your servants in the presence of the LORD your God.”*

God gave His law (the Ten Commandments) to be first passed along to families. **Deuteronomy 31:12 (NIV)** *“Assemble the people, the men, women, and children, and the aliens living in your town so they can listen and learn and fear the Lord your God, and follow carefully all the words of this law.”*

God's grand purpose for the family carried over into New Testament ideology. The Word for family is the Greek word *“Oikos”* and it is used throughout the New Testament to refer to the larger context of the family as the primary means of communicating the gospel.

For example, in **Luke 19:9**, Zacchaeus was told that salvation had come into his house that very day. In **John 4:53**, we read where a Royal official's son was healed by Jesus and as a result, he and his household became believers. In **Acts 16: 31 (NIV)**, Paul told the Philippian jailer, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.”*

Throughout the New Testament church, the family is seen as the primary means of gathering people to worship and celebrate. In **Luke 15**, two stories are told about people calling together their friends and neighbors to celebrate. - One about a man who found his lost sheep and the other about a woman who found a coin she had lost. In **Acts 10**, we read where Cornelius gathered his household together to hear Peter preach, and afterwards, they all received the gospel. So we see that the family was not only central to society, but also central in God's plan to reveal Himself to the world and save the world in and through His church.

But what about the impact of family evangelism today? Well, a few years ago in a report from an organization called *“Church Growth America,”* said that : Following a Billy Graham Crusade in Seattle, WA - 83% of crusade converts became church members through the influence of a family member.

A Baptist survey revealed that: 53% of persons who were saved were influenced primarily by a family member, friend, neighbor, while 80% of the persons involved in a church's Bible Study program were brought in initially by contact through a family member, friend, or neighbor.

So even today, in spite of the barrage of attacks on the traditional family cannot be underestimated as the major source of influence in a person's spiritual life.

Getting back to our text, when we think of Noah and the ark, we usually think of the ark as a big boat that was built to preserve all the species of animals. But that was only part of it. The primary reason God had Noah build the ark was so that his family could be saved. Furthermore, Noah's family was saved so that the next family could be saved, so that the next family could be saved, and the next, all the way down you your family and mine.

In Genesis 6, God gave Noah instructions on how to build the ark. He gave him the blueprints with specific dimensions; He told him what kind of wood to use, where to apply the tar and pitch, where to put the door and windows, and how to corral up the animals. God gave Noah His plan for saving the family, and in retrospect, the entire world!

But the question is, "*How did Noah save his house?*" Noah was able to save his family because he refused to seek other refuges. **Genesis 7:1 (NIV)** "*The LORD then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation."* And in vs. 7-9, Noah obeyed.

Now look at all the other resources Noah had. No doubt, someone in the crowd suggested that Noah and his family should seek higher ground to escape the flood. That sounds like a logical plan doesn't it? I mean, when the flood waters come upon us, don't we all seek higher ground? Sure we do. However, there was one thing wrong with this plan for Noah. It wasn't what God told him to do. And had Noah simply escaped to higher ground, he and his family would have drowned along with the rest of the people.

No, Noah believed God and he refused to listen to all the other plans. Noah obeyed God and built the ark just like God commanded, and when the rains came, He and his family went into the ark and they were saved.

No doubt, somebody in the crowd told Noah that he was building the ark all wrong. Don't you just hate it when someone's looking over your shoulder – telling you to do it their way?

But listen, if you're going to save yourself and your family from the devastation of sin, you're going to have to follow God's plan and build your boat God's way. You're going to have to get in the boat God told you to build and refuse to listen to all the other plans. Listen, somebody will try to tell you that their ark is just as good as God's. They'll say, "*God won't let a good person drown so rest in the ark of your own goodness.*" But that is a leaky boat. Yes, God is good, but He's also just, and His salvation is not based on how good we are, but how righteous Jesus is!

People say today, "*Just rest in the ark of morality, of education, or even religion*" But those are leaky boats as well. In fact, anything that comes from man's own thoughts or ideas is a leaky ark, and we must avoid them.

The truth is, God has a plan for building your boat. His plan has been the blueprint for healthy and strong families from the beginning of time and if you will follow it, His plan will make your family strong, and will save it from destruction. Let's see how we can biblically build our boats. First God wants us to:

### **1. Look In Our Homes**

An honest self examination of your home is important in determining how sturdy and safe your boat is. So let's take a step back and see some things that we might otherwise overlook. There are three things that we need to examine in our homes:

**A. Examine the Way We Live.** If we want to understand why our families seem to have relationship problems, we might want to examine the way we live. Is your family all together? I mean, just because you might live under one roof, doesn't mean you live together. A lot of homes are fragmented, with everyone living in separate "*cells*" with a TV in every room.

When we talk about building our boats as places of safety, we need to start with how we live. Homes are supposed to be places where close ties are established and maintained. That cannot happen with everybody going in separate ways. Also, we need to:

**B. Examine the Way We Love.** If you want to understand why our families have trouble communicating, then we might want to examine the way we love. Do we just say it or do we actually do it? One day an old

man and his wife were riding down the road, and the wife looks over at her husband and says, “*Honey, do you remember how we used to sit close together? People used to say that it looked like it took both of us to drive the car. What happened? Why don’t we do that anymore?*” The man looked straight ahead and replied, “*I’m not the one who moved!*”

Sometimes that self-examination may reveal that we’re the one who has moved. That is why it’s important to see what our love looks like. Do we show it or simply imply it? Do we prove our love with our words and actions or do we disprove it?

Dr. Gary Chapman calls this speaking the same love language. He wrote a book called “*The Five Love Languages*” and the premise of the book is that we all learn a certain love language of how we receive or feel love. He says that there are five primary ways of speaking love and receiving love and depending on how well we communicate, that love is either felt or not felt. He says that love is communicated and received through the personal touch, giving gifts, performing acts of service, saying words of affirmation, and sharing time with each other. And often, the way we feel love is the way we tend to show love. However, my way to feel love may not be the same as my wife’s, So, I have to learn her love language in order to make sure she feels loved by me. Do you know what love language your spouse speaks or hears? How about your children. It is important that we examine how we express love and the way we live, but also we need to:

**C. Examine the Way We Laugh.** If we want to understand why there is tension in our families or why so many problems seem to be surfacing, then we might want to examine the way we laugh. Every home needs to be filled with laughter. By that, I mean that the home should be a happy place and a fun place to hang out. It may be that the tension came in the home when the laughter went out the door! So as you’re building your boat, shore it up with a lot of laughter. Make the process fun!

Examining our homes in this way and working on the problem areas will help you see what kind of family boat you’re building. Second, building our boats properly will require us to:

## **2. Look Up to God.**

Looking in our homes is important, but more importantly, we must also look up to God and focus on the spiritual aspect of our family. The reason this is so important is because it is the foundation of successful family building. It is one of the most basic of principles, yet it is often the most neglected. For example, I’ve done a few weddings, and I’ve observed some couples who spent a lot of money and energy on just their wedding alone. It seems like they spared no expense in making sure they had the best wedding dress, the best looking tuxedos, the best decorations, the best music, the best caterers, the best photographer, the fanciest honeymoon, etc. They put a lot of money into the wedding but precious little thought was put into the marriage.

The first priority in any home should be a spiritual priority. Making God the head of a home is not just a cute slogan, it’s an absolute must if the family is going to make it. And the reality of that slogan will be evident in our worship

Is worship a priority in your family, or is there a question on Sunday mornings as to what you’re going to do that day? Is your home a place where prayer and Bible reading are practiced? Is it a place where your children can get a spiritual education?

Too often people think that spiritual education is the church’s job. But God designed the home to be the place where spiritual principles and moral values are taught and passed along.

You know it’s really not surprising that our children are growing up today thinking that the home is not relevant. We send our children to the playground to play, to the school to learn how to make a living, to the restaurant to eat, and to the church to receive their religious instruction. We’ve got to get back to putting God and Christ at the center of our homes. We should never let our children grow up and miss the experience of seeing their Mom and Dad worshipping and praying together in the home. Worship is vital to a family’s health and well being, and the benefits are well worth any time or sacrifice one must make to make it a priority. Those benefits include knowing God’s Word so you can better face the challenges of life; Growing in your reverence for God and your prayer life; becoming more conscious of the spiritual aspect of life; and one’s faith becoming a daily affair instead of “*Sunday only.*” By making worship a priority on your home, you will experience an enriched and more together home, and the Church will be strengthened.

So while you're looking in at yourself, be sure you look up to God because He designed the family in the first place, so He ought to know what it takes to make it strong and keep it safe.

Third, building your boat properly will require you to:

### **3. Look Out for Danger**

We must also look out for the dangers that are out there trying to tear families apart. They are many; they are strong; and they are a united force. Satan is marshalling his forces daily to attack our homes through lies and deception. And he's doing a pretty good job too. He's got people believing that divorce is an acceptable answer to complicated problems. He's got people believing that abortion is a viable solution to an economic hardship. He's got many people falling for the lie that sex outside of marriage is normal behavior, and that it is unreasonable to wait for marriage. All this is destroying our homes from the inside out. We've got to see these things for what they really are: dangerous and deadly attacks on the sanctity and sacredness of the home and family.

But while we're looking out for the dangers, we must also be looking out for opportunities to strengthen our homes. For example, how often do the opportunities present themselves for you to share a biblical principle or to share Jesus with your children? More often than you might think! When their team doesn't win, or when they strike out, that's a good time to let them know that their self-worth is not based on their performance, but on who God made them to be. Whenever there is a sickness or a death in the family, or when we observe special days such as the Lord's Supper or Baptism, those are times when spiritual principles and evangelism are at their highest. Look out for those opportunities and seize the teachable moments. Finally:

### **4. Don't Look Back!**

When Noah set out to build the ark, there had to be times when he thought to himself, "*What am I doing? I've never seen it rain. God was wrong. I'm going back to my regular job and earn a living for my family.*"

But what if he had listened to himself? He would've died, His family would've been gone with him, and we wouldn't be here either!

So when you decide to build your boat God's way, just know that there will be times when you'll question yourself. There will be times when the going will be difficult, when the task will seem impossible and futile. There will be times when people will question your sanity and challenge your convictions. And in those times, you will be tempted to throw down the tools and quit. Or you'll be tempted to try another approach, or use another boat.

But I urge you today to keep on doing it God's way and consider the alternatives. Picture your family outside of the ark of safety – drowning in a flood of trouble and splashing around in a sea of sin without Christ and without hope. Do you want that?

**Conclusion:** Author Mark Short writes in one of his books about being attacked once by a bird – a black-capped chickadee. He said that bird lovers will recognize this as one of the smallest of birds. Mark said he saw and heard this bird fussing at him from a low limb of a tree. He walked over, not noticing that he was also getting close to a fence post with a small hole in it. As he approached, the chickadee chirped furiously and dove at him, actually hitting him on the shoulder. As he retreated, a second chickadee emerged from the hole in the fence post. As he continued to retreat, he could not help but be impressed with the courage and determination of the chickadees to protect their home and family at all costs and against all comers.

Preparing your home in the nurture and admonition of the Lord greatly enhances your home's ability to stay together, grow closer together, and together achieve the purposes of God for your family. If the chickadees care that much for their home, surely we should have a greater concern for our families well being.

This morning, I'm asking for parents to come and use this time to pray for your family. If you're kids don't know the Lord, come and pray for their salvation. Come and make a commitment to put your family in God's hands and make it your top priority. God has only given you a few years to be together, so use it wisely. Ask God to help you build your boat sturdy, safe, and seaworthy to face the storms of life.

And Children, I'm asking you to come and use this time to ask God to make you the best child you can be. Come and give honor to your parents and commit yourself to be obedient. Come and give your heart to Christ.