

**GRACE NOTES RADIO PROGRAM
THEME: LESSONS FROM THE ARK
SONGS: COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS
GOD IS FAITHFUL**

INTRO: Welcome to Grace Notes. On our last program Barbara Sandbek began a series entitled, ‘Lessons from the Ark’. We learned that in Old Testament times, the ark of the covenant was the holiest sign of God’s presence and power. Whoever had possession of it was blessed. It represented the first covenant made between God and man. But according to Hebrews 8, a better covenant was established that doesn’t depend on man’s obedience, but rather on Jesus Christ’s completed work of salvation for man on the cross. The ark is no longer needed. Jesus, our great high priest serves in the true sanctuary in heaven. When we receive Him as Savior, he unites us with Almighty God and our hearts become His sanctuary. His presence brings power and blessing into our lives.

On our program today, we’ll take a look at the contents of the ark and see what lessons we can learn from them.

If you’re like me, you probably have a box in your house where you store mementos. You pull it out from time to time to reminisce. It may contain awards, letters, pictures of people or special occasions, and even some articles that tell of lessons learned. They are visible reminders that help you recall things that have served to form your life.

God has used visible reminders throughout history to help commemorate past events or confirm future promises – all of which were intended to build faith. Such was the case with Abraham. God had promised that He would make a great nation out of him, but Abraham as yet had no children and was growing older by the minute. So God met with him a second time and reassured him that indeed a son from his own body would be his heir. He then gave him a visible picture to remind him of His promise. Genesis 15:5-6 says...

He (God) took him outside and said, “Look up at the heavens and count the stars – if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

This was just what Abraham needed to continue to believe in the promise that would not take place for yet another 13 years. He CHOSE to let God do His work in His time. He believed and held fast to that promise - just like we need to do. Because...

YIELDING

**God is faithful to His word -- He never fails.
He promised He would be right by our side.**

**Through all life's problems, toil and strife - we can prevail
For He is always there to be our Guide.**

**He said He'd show Himself to be our Dearest Friend
But we need to be still so we can see.**

**His working in our life we'll never comprehend
Until we give Him reign to set us free.**

**A prisoner I will always be if I don't choose
To let Him have His perfect way with me.**

**So help me, Lord, to walk Your path so I don't lose
The chance to be the person I should be.**

Maybe God has given you a promise yet unfulfilled. I bet if you take time to look, you'll see He's probably added a visible reminder to go along with it. Don't let satan make a prisoner of doubt out of you and rob you of the blessing God has in store. If your faith starts to wane, just remember..GOD IS FAITHFUL.

*** **GOD IS FAITHFUL** ***

Yes, God knows we sometimes need a little sight to go along with our faith – we forget so easily, especially in the middle of a crisis.

The Israelites were a prime example of this. They'd seen the devastation of Egypt through the plagues, and had not been affected themselves. They'd left Egypt, rich with gold silver and raiment from their Egyptian Masters, crossed the Red Sea on dry land (all 3 ½ million of them), saw the Egyptian army drown behind them, and were visibly directed by God by a pillar of cloud. That's a pretty incredible display of God's power and provision. You'd think they'd have learned to trust God, wouldn't you? But then they entered the wilderness and were thirsty. The only water they can find was bitter – so did they pray? No, they grumbled and Moses prayed for their situation. God overlooked their murmuring that time, sweetened the bitter water and later gave them 12 springs and 70 palm trees to camp by (in the middle of the desert!)

God continued to provide visible reminders all throughout their journey. According to Hebrews 9:4, the ark of the covenant contained three such reminders - the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the Law of Moses. God had instructed Moses to have these placed inside to remind the people and their generations to come of the lessons they'd learned in their journey to the promised land.

To understand their significance, we need to know the story behind them. Let's take a look at the manna first.

After their oasis experience, the Israelites set forth on their journey and once again found themselves hungry. So what did they do? You got it. They grumbled. Exodus 16:3 records their words...

"If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.

Aren't we like that, though? God pulls us out of a lousy situation and if we feel a bit uncomfortable in our new environment, we revert back to thinking about the few good things we had in the old one.

Well, The Lord said to Moses, "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.'"

The people called this bread from heaven, manna.

Why did God provide the manna? - certainly not because they deserved it. He did it for many reasons, but first and foremost – because he loved them. Manna was a visible reminder of His love and grace. The Israelites couldn't survive without it. And we can't survive without the love and grace of God, either. He gives us life though we don't deserve it, too, because Romans 5:8 states...

God commended His LOVE toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Jesus, is the visible reminder of God's grace to us. In John 6:35 Jesus said...

I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

The Israelites journeyed in continual need – dependant on God – yet seeing those visible reminders all along the way. After a while though, they took the manna for granted. Do we do the same? As Believers in Christ, we are being saved every day for eternity. We have a RISEN SAVIOR, A PERFECT LOVE, and

a HOLY PROMISE. Unlike the Israelites, Job learned through his trials to count his blessings. Let's be like Job, not like the ungrateful Israelites and count our blessings.

***** COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS *****

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Join us on our next program. Until then, let your grace notes be a song of praise!

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