

## September

### *From the Vicar.*

The look on the shop assistant's face was a priceless mix of unexpected delight and utter disbelief. That kind look you see in the films on the lunatic villain, part smile, part chuckle part twitch, part dangerous kind of look.

There we were standing in Wyevale Garden Centre, the rain thrashing down and bouncing off the car park tarmac - just like any day this summer really. But what set us apart from all the normal people, what made us stand out from the sensible folk was that while they were buying plants we were buying garden furniture. You could see in the salesman's expression a bizarre confusion of joy at selling a patio set in the midst of the bleakest summer season for a century and the insane hilarity of selling out door furniture in a tropical down pour - a down pour that had lasted since early July and was forecast to go on until, well, next July!

There we stood like Mr. and Mrs. Noah - only in reverse.

Many times we said to ourselves, "We must be mad!" Every time we have thought about balmy summer evenings spent sipping wine on the terrace with friends we have looked out and seen the water cascading over the steps on either side. Every time we have taken the rare opportunity to put up the parasol and eat alfresco we have ended up realising that it is not a parasol but an umbrella with all the winter weather connotations that that carries.

"I'd like to buy some patio furniture, please!"

"Are you serious? Have you seen the weather? Do you not know the forecast? You're just wasting your money."

So much more than that must have been the barrage of ridicule and abuse suffered by Noah and his family, after all how ridiculous must it have been to have said that it was going to rain for 40 days and 40 nights (as it happens it doesn't sound that ridiculous at all at the moment) but then in that climate it must have been the most outrageous joke of the whole community for hundreds of miles around.

"I'm going to build a great big boat!"

"Are you serious? We live miles from the sea in the middle of the desert. Have you seen the weather? Do you not know the forecast? You're just wasting your time."

But Noah was not that daft. Noah and his family had already faced one flood and survived and so when the warning that a second was on its way he listened and acted as God told him.

Noah and his family had seen the world overcome with a flood of disobedience towards God. People had forgotten the God who made them and loved them and they had become overwhelmed by all kinds of thoughts and actions that took them further and further away from being in a wonderful relationship with their loving Heavenly Father. Just like the flood that was to come, this first 'flood' drowned the people and took away their life with God - only difference was they had jumped right into those waters like foolish kids who ignore warnings at reservoirs.

When it came to following the Lord Noah and his family kept their heads above the swell and their eyes upon Him and swam against the tide of a world drowning in sadness and wickedness and forgetfulness of God.

So when the call came to face a real flood, when no one else was ready to listen to God, when the call

came to make a stand for God, only one family was left to follow.

While news of a mad man travelled faster than the farthest camel traders, Noah kept building.

While the neighbours talked behind their curtains, Noah kept building.

While friends and colleagues stopped associating with him, Noah kept building.

When we look around, never mind the weather, the flood of the world's values and compromises is threatening to wash us away. We need to hear God and start building our faith.

A prayer: Dear God. Already I feel like the ways of the world are up to my knees, but when it surges it's up to my chest. I'm sorry for not listening to you or following you. Help me to build a Godly life and ride the waves below. Amen.

*Yours in Christ*

*Rev. Rob Hinton Vicar of All Saints.*