

## *Genesis 6:5-8 Judgment and Grace 09/17/17*

*The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. <sup>6</sup>And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. <sup>7</sup>So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." <sup>8</sup>But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.*

*(Pastor prays)*

If there ever were a poignant and poetic passage in the Bible, it's right here in Chapter 6 of Genesis, right before the worst, most tragic disaster mankind has ever seen. We are headed into the darkness of God's wholesale, unmitigated, unhinged wrath being unleashed on Mankind.

Before I cut the grass yesterday, Connie, Nate and I were picking up limbs that had been blown down from the weather we had last week, and Connie said that, with every limb, she was thanking God that we didn't suffer more damage like that of people who lived in the path of the storms. As I reflected on how the downed limbs in my yard should produce thankfulness, I thought about the flood in Genesis 7 & 8 and how every hurricane or earthquake or natural disaster must serve in some way to remind us of His mercies that are new every day, and how every bad thing or destructive thing that happens is a reminder, a tap on the shoulder, a preview of ultimate judgment that will descend onto all of those that on that great day are found not in Christ.

I've been reading a little book entitled "Conversion" by Michael Lawrence and it's a great, quick read. One of the things he warns against is the "therapeutic Gospel," the one that teaches that Jesus has come to fill the void in your heart. That, of course, is true, but in Biblical Gospel, Lawrence asserts that Jesus has not come to fill the void in your heart. He's come to establish His lordship over your life and to save people from the impending wrath and judgment of God. And if we don't pay close attention to the Bible, we end up with churches that are filled with people who are saved from purposeless, unfulfilling lives but are not saved from God and His judgment. That's

what this story is about and that's what the Gospel is about – showing us that God is Holy and man is a sinner.

In grace, God provides a Savior, Jesus, and your response to that grace makes all the difference in life and in death. Last week we looked specifically at verse 5 and how we don't bring anything to salvation but the sin that makes it necessary. This week, we turn our attention to God and, more specifically, to what God does.

## **God Is Our Great Provider in Life and Death**

Today, I'd like to give the points in short phrases and let you do some of the work of applying them.

### **God Sees**

Let's just read verse 5 and not spend too much time with it except to be reminded of a sobering truth. *The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

Later in Genesis 16, Hagar will call to the Lord "El Roi" – the God who sees. And that brings some real comfort to know He sees your struggle or suffering or pain. In 2 Chronicles 16:9 it says, *For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.* This is tremendous encouragement, but in our context, that is not what the Lord sees. In the context and in real time, God sees the current state of our hearts and our lives. He sees.

By God's providence, yesterday my devotional reading included Psalm 53:2-3 that says, *God looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all fallen away; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.* He sees you in secret, in sin, and in your heart. Every last one of us, without the direct intervention of God, deserves the judgment of hellfire. But the history of God seeing our sin is the history of God giving us grace. The reality of sin and the truth that He knows us, should drive us to the cross of Jesus, not just for comfort or healing or fulfillment but because we need a savior – Jesus. God is our great provider in life and death and He sees.

### **He Grieves**

Let's read verse 6, slowly. *“And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.* Is there anything more poignant in the Bible than this phrase? Here is the pain of love when love is not returned. Someone has said that the tears of God are the foundation of history. If you ever have a child whose life came off the rails or loved someone who only gives you pain in return, then you've had just a whisper of what is expressed here. God is obviously sovereign over us yet genuinely affected by our sin. Let's be clear here. God's regret or His grief is not the kind of sorrow we might have after making a tragic mistake. God's pain has its source in the perversion of our sin. The making of man is no error, it's what man has made of himself. It's not what God has done, that's not the problem. It's what we have done. We read verse 6 and we are reminded that our God is not some dispassionate divine accountant that just makes calculations and balances accounts. Verse 6 reminds us that He feels sadness and grief and it expressed in human terms so we can understand it. John MacArthur explains that God is not sorry in the sense that he was getting information he didn't expect or sorry things hadn't turned out like he expected. His sadness is not tied to the surprise that He's disappointed and can't believe that we have done this. His sadness is tied to the fact that, because of His pure holiness and eternal justice, He must judge sin. God sees. What does He see in you? God grieves. Does he grieve over you?

### **God Judges**

Let's go to verse 7 and see His judgment. *So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.* Let's not forget the holiness of God. His holiness demands a judging of sin. It is necessary and inevitable. God's judgment of sin is consistent with who He is and an outworking of His holiness. God's holy nature has no choice but to punish sin and that brings Him grief. Ezekiel 33:11 tells us that God takes no pleasure in the death of the evil. As New Testament believers, it's good for us to think of the cross in the framework of judgment. And as you think of it, consider the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus, the son of God, agonizing in prayer over the separation that being the sin-bearer would create. Think of the scourging, brutal beatings that Jesus took. Think of Golgotha and the cross where Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin so that whoever believes in Him would gain His righteousness as He took the punishment for sinners.

There are a couple of things to consider about the how and why of God judging.

Everything that is wrong in this world, is wrong because of sin. God created all things good and by sin we have befouled them all.

God is patient before He brings judgment. He is so patient that you sometimes can feel like you are getting away with it. But God sees, God grieves and God judges.

All calamity in the world – natural disasters and manmade disasters – it's all a preview of the ultimate calamity on Judgment Day.

The first major message of the Bible after God as creator is God as judge. God *must* and *will* punish sin.

Watch the sequence. God sees, God grieves, God judges and

### **God Gives Grace**

You see this in verse 8. *But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.*

As we read this we need to realize that the Ark is a foreshadowing of Christ and verse 8 is the doorbell of grace. That phrase, “found favor,” is grace. You must read verses 7 & 8 together, and when you do, you realize there are only two possible responses of the Lord to sin. They are judgment and grace, because the long history of sin is the history of judgment but it is also the history of God's grace. And the only way to understand the Bible, human history and your life story is to see the reality of sin in your own life.

So, let me slow down and think this through with you. Are you willing to admit that you have sinned and are rightly called a sinner? Are you willing to say there is nothing you can do, no good deed you can perform to atone for your sins, and are therefore under judgment? Do you trust the work of Christ, His life, death and resurrection? Will you repent of your sin, by faith trust Jesus Christ and throw yourself on the grace and mercy of a good God?

*(Pastor prays)*