

Genesis 6:5-10 The Marks of a Child of God 09/24/17

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. ⁶ And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷ 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." ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

⁹ These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. ¹⁰ And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

(Pastor prays)

As a part of our commitment and accountability to one another, the pastors of your church are on a group text and every day we post our Bible reading so that each pastor knows the others are pursuing godliness in a community. We also give our prayer requests so we can pray for each other daily.

Yesterday, Mike Powers asked us to pray for him as he was going to share the Gospel with a family member who had never really given any real evidence of knowing Christ. He reported back and said the family member understood the Gospel, even affirms it, but there is no fruit, no evidence.

This can be terribly confusing, because from the very beginning in Genesis, God's people are distinguished and determined and marked out as different. I've read the whole passage today so you can see the man named Noah and how his life was radically and obviously and wholeheartedly different than (that of) the people he lived around. And, in seeing this, I'm hoping you won't kid yourself into believing you are a child of God if there is no real indication of difference in your life.

We've stayed in Chapter 6 because we would be hard-pressed to find a darker picture of man's depravity painted anywhere else in the Bible. And it is at its darkest moment, it is *your* darkest moment when grace shines through and the promise of a new day dawns. I want you to be encouraged by Noah's life and, more importantly, by Noah's God. God

set Noah up as a solitary saint who was made different by the unearned and undeserved love of God. God used Noah to show us the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a Gospel that shows to any hardened sinner, any unbeliever, any bored churchgoer or adulterer or drug dealer or racist that, in Christ, you can and will be saved, loved, forgiven, adopted and blessed.

Real Christianity Gives Real Evidence

Let's just use words. I'll pull them right out of the Bible and make them our points.

Grace

You've read the condition of the world in verses 5-7 and you get to verse 8 and it's a sudden unforeseen contrast. It's grace. Grace is a relief from pressure. It's an extraction from pain. It's a cool drink on a hot day or an air-conditioned room after a day in the August sun.

Here in verse 8, dressed up in the word "favor," is the doctrine of grace. It's the first overt statement of grace in the Bible. Adam and Eve found grace. Seth and Enoch found grace. But this is the first-time grace is explicitly mentioned, and we are dwelling here because, if you are not washed in grace, your righteousness remains filthy.

Noah didn't earn grace, he found it. Listen. We have no claim on God. We have not earned anything except the just wrath of God. We find God's grace when we are in Christ. It's important we get this right because, before we can do anything for God, we must trust in what He has already done for us. Throughout the Bible, when people's lives are changed and they are used by God, it's always God's initiative in grace.

Even in this passage, before the righteousness and blamelessness in verse 9, before the walking with God, there must be grace. Grace always comes before anything else, and everything else is a product of grace. As New Testament believers, we find that grace at the cross of Christ, where God applies mercy by putting the punishment due sinners on Jesus. And then God applies grace by forgiving sinners and adopting children of wrath and, through Christ, He makes us children of God.

Grace. I'm afraid we don't get, don't comprehend grace fully. Grace got infected in the mid-20th Century, largely through a popular preacher named Norman Vincent Peale and

his book titled “The Power of Positive Thinking.” Here’s what I mean. We cheat grace. We think God loves us because we are intrinsically good or we have such great value or He sees such great potential in us. We think of ourselves as diamonds in the rough, in the rough but diamonds nonetheless, and all we need is a little polishing up.

That’s not how grace works. You are not a diamond. You are not even coal. The Bible says we are dust! You are not an out-of-tune Stradivarius that needs tuning in the master’s hand. You are a pile of rubble that God by grace forms into a trophy He acquires at the cross. That’s what grace is. Noah found grace – unearned, undeserved. He found the love and forgiveness of our good God. You can find it too through repentance and faith in the finished work of Christ. This is the first and foundational mark of being a child of God - grace.

Righteousness

You see this in verse 9. Noah was a righteous man. You might want to note that Noah is the first person in the Bible to be called a “righteous man.” The Biblical idea of righteousness is not just the imputed righteousness of Christ that makes us right before God. It also shows up here on earth. Righteousness combines piety and ethics. It’s the pure religion spoken of in James 1:27. *Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.* That’s devotion.

In verses 8 – 9, righteousness follows grace. It emanates from and comes out of grace. We forgive people because we’ve been forgiven. We love people because we’ve been loved. We don’t work to gain grace, that’s deadly. We work out of grace. Our tanks are filled with grace and our lives run on it as a never-ending fuel.

But here’s the catch. If there is no righteousness, no right living, can there actually be grace? If right living isn’t the fruit, then grace is not the root. Isn’t that what we believe, that a Christian is a radically changed person saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone? Grace always shows itself. Just as love must find expression, grace will display righteousness. Grace and righteousness.

Blameless

Blameless – this is not a life without sin. We are not perfect people but, in Christ, we are born-again people. Remade people. People who have been made whole by God’s grace.

We are broken people who can't heal themselves. Instead we have been healed by the cross of Jesus.

Blameless is how the society around Noah would see him, that his inward change would have outward consequences, and it showed, that his reputation was such that if someone had accused him of a crime, it wouldn't have stuck. This is the outward picture of an inward righteousness. It's the earned reputation of a person living for Christ and it comes from grace. Grace will display righteousness, creating a blameless reputation that can best be described in one phrase in verse 9.

Walking With God

In verse 9 *These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.* Isn't there is a richness in that phrase? Enoch walked with God and God saved him from death. Noah walked with God and God saved him from the flood. I wonder if you would consider yourself a person who walks with God. In fact, let me ask you just a couple of questions.

What are the marks of God's grace in your life? What is the evidence you love Christ above all? Are you worshipping each Sunday? Not just showing up, but worshipping. Are you harboring some unconfessed sin, something you just can't let go of? Have you followed through with baptism and joined a body of believers, a church? Are you in a small-group for accountability and investing in other people? Do you have a daily intake of the Bible? Do you grieve over sin and repent? Are you able, in good conscience, to take The Lord's Supper today?

(Pastor explains The Lord's supper and prays)