

GENESIS 6:5-13 (GRACE IN THE EYES OF THE LORD)

Grace. What is grace? It's getting what you don't deserve. Today we'll see that in a world full of evil, one man was given grace. Just like Adam, every person on earth descends from this man - Noah. His story is an amazing one on many levels and hidden within the text itself is a pattern which centers on the fact that we are not forgotten by God. Even when the world is collapsing around us, He is there.

God's eyes are always on His people and He has a plan for each of us. The hard part is to trust Him when everything else seems to be falling apart around us. The story of Noah is something we can cling to in today's world. As the forces of the wicked seem to be winning, God has secured His faithful in an Ark which will protect them through every trial.

Introduction: Today's verses, Genesis 6:5-13, show us God's great displeasure at the wickedness of man and His judgment on their sins. Unfortunately, in order to see and understand God's grace, there has to be a context in which that grace can be viewed.

This account about the pre-flood world, and many others in the Bible after the flood, are given not to depress us, but to show us that even in the midst of a world full of desperately confusing tragedies, like earthquakes or a war, God is in control and is working out a wonderful plan.

If you are just willing to stick with it, there is a ton of happy and uplifting stuff in the Bible and the beautiful grace of God is continuously evident. But the Bible is a book of truth and truth often includes painful downers.

Among Christian scholars, there's a term known as Total Depravity which attempts to describe our state as it's revealed in the Bible. Depravity is described and viewed differently by different scholars. And bringing this up isn't meant to be a killjoy, but it will help you understand what the Bible teaches.

In the book of Acts, Paul explains why these things are so important – “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.” In other

words, we need to look at the Bible from every perspective and not only on what makes us feel happy.

If you present just a little bit of error to an uninformed person, you have them in your grasp. Do you think even one of the people who started out with Jim Jones thought that in a few years they'd be drinking cyanide in a foreign county? Of course not. No one goes out looking for destruction. Instead, it creeps in and finds its place in the uneducated.

So here we go... let's review four different views on Depravity –

The first is known as Pelagianism, named after the 4th century heretic Pelagius. It looks at human beings as innocent at birth and that they can obey God. This is unbiblical and it's a heresy.

The second is Arminianism and is named after Jacob Arminius. It says humans are somewhat depraved but they can cooperate with God. Arminianism is also called semi-Pelagianism.

The third is Moderate Calvinism – a term I don't like, so I'll call it "biblical depravity." This view says humans are totally depraved and that the image of God in humans is or marred. This view teaches that humans can cooperate with God.

The fourth is known as Strong Calvinism. This says humans are totally depraved and that the image of God in humans is significantly marred or even destroyed in man. It says that humans cannot cooperate with God.

Only one is right and I believe it's the third – "biblical depravity." There's no use arguing with people who believe differently. People love to be wrong for a host of reasons and that's their prerogative, but let me give you some points on the right view so we can understand what it means to be totally depraved.

Total Depravity in fallen man is extensive but not intensive. Sin extends to every dimension of our being, including the body (we age, wrinkle up, and die because of it), the soul (our nature is sinful – we don't need to teach

children to do wrong, they already know), and also the will (we often do things we don't really want to do because sin pulls us to the wrong option – even when we know it's wrong.) These things are self-evident and very few would deny that this is the way things are.

Having said this, depravity doesn't mean we are as sinful as we could be. In other words, people all around the world do good things, like helping old ladies across the road and petting puppies. We can strive for excellence and we possess dignity.

But apart from Jesus Christ we are not as good as we should be and we are not in any way able to please God with our works – the works we do are good, but because sin infects us, they are unacceptable to God – the sin must be dealt with first.

Another thing about this fallen state is that although sin does infect us and permeate us, we aren't completely destroyed by it. In other words, we still bear God's image. If you take Total Depravity too far, it actually eliminates the ability to be depraved at all – the very definition no longer has any relevance.

Why am I'm telling you this? Because it's important. If you misunderstand what God is like, your interpretation about the things of God will be wrong. If you misunderstand what man is like, then your interpretation about the things of man will be wrong. And this includes our relationship with God.

The more wrong you are, the less right you are
This is just the way things are
Will your walk with God be one that's close?
Or will your only view Him from afar?

The Italian actress Asia Argento said this about depravity – “What you might see as depravity is, to me, just another aspect of the human condition.” I had to laugh when I read that because she's confirming what she's trying to deny. Helloooo –

Depravity is so obvious that we can't get away from it even when we try to get away from it.

What you might see as an apple is, to me,
Just a type of fruit that grows on a tree.

Text Verse: The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance; He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked, ¹¹ So that men will say, "Surely *there is* a reward for the righteous; Surely He is God who judges in the earth." Psalm 58:10, 11

May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. When Judgment Falls

Last week we talked about the Nephilim – those who came from the union between the sons of God and the daughters of men. The last thought we looked at said, "Those *were* the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown." The world went after hero worship rather than God worship.

The men of renown were probably little different than our movie stars of today. Although I'm not as political as some here, it's no secret which political party most of the Hollywood elite belong to. Politics isn't religion, but there's a progression of both which follows inevitably when power, fame, or money is introduced into the equation. It is away from God and to that which is against God.

The more we idolize these people, the more our views about the things of God become skewed. For example, the value of human life is reduced. And also, it becomes more important to protect nature than humanity. And the concept of personal responsibility is subordinated to the collective whole.

True religion is shunned and belittled and tolerance is elevated above truth. This is just the way it is. And this is the way it has been throughout history. What is wicked is called good and what is good is called intolerant and wicked.

⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה, כִּי רַבָּה רָעַת הָאָדָם בְּאֶרֶץ וְכָל-יֵצֵר מִחֲשֶׁבֶת לִבּוֹ, רַק רָע כָּל-הַיּוֹם:

Va'yar adonai ki raba ra'at ha'adam ba'aretz, vekhol yetser makhshebot libo raq ra'a khol hayiom (in 48 seconds)

When the church tries too hard to identify itself with the secular world, eventually only the secular world is left. When the sons of God had intermarried with those outside the chosen line, they incorporated their ungodly practices in with their own.

Today, instead of Sunday worship, we have Sunday football gatherings. Instead of mission work, we go jogging. There's nothing wrong with football and there's nothing wrong with jogging, but when they replace our devotion to God, then God is left out of the picture. When we leave God out, the vacuum needs to be filled with something. Jesus tells us this in a parable –

“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’²⁵ And when he comes, he finds *it* swept and put in order.²⁶ Then he goes and takes with *him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first.” –Luke 11:24-25

After only 1550 years of man on earth, things had degraded to such an extent that “the wickedness of man was great in the earth.” But even more terrible than the actual state of things was that “every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.”

In other words, not only the imagination of the people was wicked, but the purposes and desires of them were too. In the Hebrew word which is used to describe this state, the object of the thought is being distinguished from the thought itself.

This might not be too easy to grasp, but a thought might have a real output or it might not but it is really evil either way. This leads to complete condemnation of the state of man and the actions of man as well. And it's painfully evident why.

When noble and right things are set aside, like truth, dedication to God, and so on, it doesn't matter how great are the achievements or how praiseworthy are the deeds, they are void of moral good.

If you remember, the line of Cain in Chapter 4 developed into an entire culture. It had food production, arts, and industry, and yet it was devoid of God and therefore it was only evil continually. Let's compare it to America.

We have arts, like movies and music – in fact we export those to the world. We produce enough food to feed the world. We have industry – again, we export it to the world. All the things that the world had at this period in Genesis we have in America today and we even have enough to export beyond our borders. But just because we have a praiseworthy culture, doesn't mean that it's properly directed toward a relationship with God.

When the intent of our actors is to promote a secular agenda, it is evil – even though their acting may be extraordinary. When the intent of our musicians is to increase perversion, it is evil – even though their music may be complex, stimulating, relaxing, or notable in some other way.

When the intent of our government in food distribution is to promote an evil political agenda, then the fact that people are fed becomes irrelevant to the greater moral issue.

This is the state of the pre-flood world where every intent of the thoughts of the heart was only evil continually, and this is the state that America is rushing headlong into – even as we boast of the great culture we live in. The reasons behind our actions are as important as the result of them. And God knows both intimately. As Matthew Henry wisely said it, "Wickedness is then great when great men are wicked." Or as the ancient Proverb David quoted "Wickedness proceeds from the wicked."

This was the state of the world before the flood, but even after the flood, in Chapter 8, we'll read this – “I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.”

There was no expected improvement in man. However, a new interaction between God and man would exist after the flood. There are seven different ways that God is shown to interact with man in the Bible. Each is given in a logical progression to lead us to Jesus Christ.

In the end, what we have is a dichotomy between God's longsuffering patience – a cup which is very deep – and man's ability and perseverance in filling up that cup until it eventually needs to be poured out in wrath.

In Ecclesiastes 8, Solomon explains this, “Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”

Because God is patient and merciful and man is bent on evil, sin heaps up in a land until there is no remedy. Let stop and look at a few times this happened since the flood –

When God spoke to Abraham, He said, “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. ¹⁴ And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete.”
-Genesis 15:13-16

And here is the recorded fall of Jerusalem from 2 Chronicles 36 –

¹⁴ Moreover all the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more, *according* to all the abominations of the nations, and defiled the house of the LORD which He had consecrated in Jerusalem. ¹⁵ And the LORD God of their fathers sent *warnings* to them by His messengers, rising up

early and sending *them*, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. ¹⁶ But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till *there was* no remedy.

Yes, God judges sin. When the cup of His indignation is full, the only option left is for man to drink the fruit of the vine he has cultivated. Anyone who thinks God loves us more than He hates our sin, probably doesn't realize that the road we're heading down is one which intersects with the avenues of Judgment and Destruction. And both of these lead directly to the Hall of Justice, which is His great throne.

⁶ And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

This is the first time the Bible records that God was sorry about something, or that He regretted something and the terminology leads most people immediately to think that God somehow changes either mentally or relationally toward us.

In fact, very few people can see it any other way. But the force of the statement "the Lord was sorry" needs to be drawn together from the explanation "He was grieved in His heart."

In other words, God being sorry doesn't presume any change in Him or in His intent. The Bible uses a human term and applies it to God so that we can understand His feeling toward sin. It's not a changing feeling. It is His very nature being expressed in a way we can comprehend.

⁷ So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."

When God says, "I will destroy man" the Bible uses a term which is comparable to wiping a dish clean or erasing a chalk board. It's a complete removal of what was so that nothing is left. God created man and He gave

man dominion over the earth and its creatures and they would share in its destruction.

If you love puppies, this might sound cruel, but animals are not moral creatures. The animals were given to man and when man changed relationally to God, they fell under that relational change.

Think of it this way. Man and all of what he was given is on the positive side of God. When man's sins heaped up, he moved to the negative side, or the judgment side, and the life over which he exercised dominion (meaning the animals) moved with him.

It might help to explain what happened with the nation of Israel in AD 70. The Jewish people were a part of the Roman Empire. When they rebelled against the Romans, the Romans came in and destroyed not only the people, but everything in the land as well.

It wasn't Rome which changed in relation to Israel, it was Israel which changed in relation to Rome and every part of the land was affected. The emperor wasn't affected by what happened even though he might say that he was sorry Israel was allowed to become a part of the Roman state. The change was in Israel, not Rome and likewise in the Bible, the change is in man, not God.

Man was no longer worthy of the beautiful house that was built for him and so both man and house were removed simultaneously.

II. Grace is to be Found

⁸ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Throughout the Bible, there are simple sentences inserted into long narratives which are the pivots for the narrative. This verse is one such pivot – “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”

Destruction is promised and destruction is coming, but in the midst of it, God remembers His faithful children. And this isn't just a story about the past. It's relevant to us, right now, today.

The world is sliding into moral degradation and destruction is coming. We don't need the Bible to tell us its coming, all we need to do is think it through. And we personally may not be spared the troubles and trials of all of it. But Jesus is that Ark in which we are secure, even in the most violent storms.

The Bible never promises us freedom from disaster, but we are promised that the Lord never forgets us and He is abundantly faithful in His promises. This veil of tears in which we walk is only that, a veil which must be passed through. On the other side, streets of gold and the light of glory is waiting.

Albert Barnes says "Whither grace comes there merit cannot be." Noah didn't earn God's grace and neither can we. But we can receive it in advance of the time it is needed. When the whirlpool starts pulling, when the wind begins to blow, or when the tide starts to rise, those who have received God's grace will be safely delivered beyond what is an impassible calamity for those who wouldn't heed the word of the Master.

⁹ This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. ¹⁰ And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

This marks the third genealogy mentioned in the Bible. The first was "the heavens" in Genesis 2:4 when God created man. The second was the line of Adam in Genesis 5. And now we come to the genealogy of Noah. God is working, right in human history, developing an amazing plan that began 6000 years ago and which He has carefully sculpted to show us his heart.

Noah's genealogy is given here because he is now the central figure in the biblical story. And why? It's because Noah "was a just man." Of all the people on the earth, he alone was found righteous. So what made him righteous? Was it something he did?

In this case, the answer would be “No and Yes.” There’s nothing we can do outwardly to earn God’s favor. At the same time, the Bible says that righteousness comes from faith – something that springs up in the inward man.

Noah was a man of faith. He was waiting for the Messiah who would come and he believed this despite the wicked state of the world around him.

And this faith led to the second description of him, “He was perfect in his generations.” Of all the people on the earth at that time, he was the only man of faith. His perfection was granted to him by God **because** of his faith.

Just as we saw in Adam’s naming of Eve; just as we saw in Abel’s offering; and just as we’ll see throughout the Bible, it is faith which brings us into a close walk with God. And faith is an act of free will. Noah possessed this faith and the very next recorded thought is that Noah walked with God.

Like his great-grandfather Enoch, Noah walked with God. And you might remember that Enoch’s walk of faith is what resulted in his being translated directly to heaven without ever seeing death.

III. Yes, Even in Judgment

I know, I already said that speaking about judgment and wickedness might be a downer, but the Bible tells us to consider the whole counsel of God. Today’s verses simply include the fact that God hates sin, he hates wickedness, and he hates violence, and that these things don’t escape His notice.

There’s no way to sugar coat this without getting a coating of sugar all over it – so why bother. We’ll leave the sugar off.

¹¹ The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

¹² So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

In contrast to Noah of the previous three verses, the corrupt state of the rest of the world was evident. It says “the earth was corrupt before God.” This isn’t the state of the literal ground, but man who represents it. The earth, or all men, was corrupt before God, and his corruption is acted on outwardly in violence.

And this certainly included the worshipping God. They no longer “called on the name of the LORD.” Instead they worshiped the creation or false gods, rather than the Creator. And their actions spilled out into contempt of Him. They were actively and openly defying Him to His face.

As a challenge over the next seven days, go to any news site which simply links articles from other news services, like the Drudge Report, and just read the headlines. See if what you read there isn’t represented completely and perfectly in these two verses.

Paying lip service to God in general has nothing to do with true faith. Women laying on abortion tables will go home and say how much they love God moments after murdering a child. Any politician will be glad to stand up and say “God bless America” or “I am a Christian” on the same day he votes in a bill condoning open homosexuality in the military.

And any leader can tickle the ears of the people with charming remarks about God while enacting legislation which deprives Christians of the very rights they proclaim to defend. None of this is pleasing to God.

What is stated here in Genesis 6 simply reflects the world in which we live. And the result...

¹³ And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

Destruction – that is the inevitable result. This verse records, “the end of all flesh has come before me.” This end isn’t speaking of the destruction to come. Instead, it’s speaking of God’s tolerance of man’s actions which will

lead to the destruction. A good way to understand it is to think of a rebellious teen.

When they come home late, you take away their car keys. When they do it again, you take away their car keys. The third time, you say, “This is the end.” And you take sell the car. God’s buttons had been pushed far enough and He would now act.

The entire world was to be destroyed. If Noah didn’t find grace in the eyes of the Lord, there would have been no you or me. And when the world rushes into the coming tribulation period the Bible speaks of, very few will come out at the other end.

Isaiah writes about what’s coming – “I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. I will make man scarcer than pure gold...”

The Jewish historian Josephus tells us something not recorded in the Bible about God’s judgment. He says that Adam predicted that the world would be destroyed twice – once by water and once by fire. The water is coming in the next chapters of Genesis. The fire may very well be coming soon to a cataclysm near you.

IV. The Grace of our Lord is to be Found

Noah’s great-grandfather Enoch walked by faith and was translated directly to heaven. In 1 Thessalonians 2:12, Paul tells us that we should also “walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”

Two chapters later, Paul gives us immensely exciting news for those who will be alive at some unknown point in the future –

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will

descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

-1 Thess 4:14-17

Noah was carried through the flood in an ark. Enoch was taken directly to heaven. And the other eight people from Adam to Noah died before the flood. All of them were saved from God’s judgment of the flood.

The parallel for us is this – Some Christians, the majority, will die naturally before the Lord comes. But there will be some alive before the tribulation who will be translated at the rapture just as Enoch was. After that moment, the time of tribulation will come. But Israel, like Noah, will be carried through that time just as Noah was carried through the flood.

You see, even in today’s wicked world, grace is to be found. Some people say we shouldn’t hope for the rapture because there are so many unsaved people on earth. But this is incorrect thinking. There will always be “so many unsaved people on earth.”

Until the Lord comes, we need to be about His business telling people about God’s offer of pardon. But when that trumpet sounds – and may it be soon – I will be jumping to have a head start on the rest of you. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

Grace is to be found, but better you find it now, before the time of trouble comes. Looking for grace while you’re looking for enough food to feed yourself inevitably leads to hard choices that most people will fail at.

Well, I’m done with today’s notes, but I’d like to ask you to think over one of the points I gave you earlier. I said that God’s longsuffering patience is a cup which is deep, but that man’s ability and perseverance in filling up that cup necessitates that it eventually needs to be poured out in wrath.

In the Bible, there was a garden called Gethsemane. In that garden, which mean “oil press,” the sins of the world were pressed into a cup and a Man

was asked to drink it. Not just a sip, but down to the dregs. He cried out “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

The cup of God’s wrath which is filled to overflowing with the sins of our lives, was drained by an innocent Lamb so that we could have eternal life. Now we have only one of two choices. The first is to accept the payment He accomplished on our behalf, or the second is to meet God face to face on our own merits. The choice is ours and the choice is an eternal one.

The cup is an angry mixture of judgment and condemnation. Choose wisely.

Grace In the Eyes of the Lord

Ten generations is all it took
Until evil encompassed the entire earth
The Lord came down and He gave a look
And saw only one man of worth

The intent of the rest was evil always
And their wickedness was immensely great
So the Lord determined to end their days
Destruction would come; it would no longer wait

He was sorry that He had made man on the earth
And He was grieved in His heart that it was so
Man’s own actions are what diminished his worth
He acted out in evil as if God didn’t know

But the Lord spoke the word “I will destroy it all”
“I will utterly annihilate my beautiful blue ball”

But – But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD
Only this one man had cherished His word

Noah found grace and he would be secure
Because he had faith and he was just

The destruction was coming, this was for sure
The rest of men would return to the dust

Noah walked with God while evil did abound
The world was corrupt and violence filled the earth
It's happening again, just take a look around
We're rejecting the God of infinite worth

Stand fast like Noah, and have faith through it all
Your faith will deliver you when the Lord makes His call

Will you be ready to go at the rapture
Or left behind when the Lord makes that call
Jesus is coming that much is sure
Then on the world, destruction will fall

For those of us who will be gone away
In the presence of the Lord we will eternally be
I for one can't wait for that day
All I want is Jesus to see

Just as Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, the last words of the Bible offer us the same blessing – “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.”

Hallelujah and Amen...