

We're going to be in Genesis, Chapters Six, Seven and Eight this morning but if I could take you, initially, to Genesis Chapter Five, as a word to fathers on Father's Day: Genesis 5:24 has an extraordinary statement about a guy named Enoch. Enoch is the great-grandfather of Noah and it says about Enoch in Genesis 5:24 that "Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." Enoch did not die; his son died at a very old age. Methuselah was Enoch's son, he died at 969 years old, Methuselah. Grandson, Lamech, the father of Noah, and Noah, all died old men but Enoch did not. "He walked with God; and he was not, God took him."

In Genesis 6:9, the same phrase is used of Noah, "that Noah walked with God." I speculate - it is speculation - that Noah's walking with God had something to do with his family, perhaps with the men in his life. I don't know that Noah knew his great-grandfather, Enoch, there is no way of knowing that, but men, I encourage you, I challenge me with you, I challenge you to the young men in your life especially, to set a good example for them by the grace of God, to be the men that He has called you to be; to walk with God in such close fellowship that it is unbroken - a sort of special intimacy. Pattern it before the people in your life; pattern it for your kids; be an encouragement to your wife as you pattern an intimacy with God - it's my word to myself, through you, on Father's Day.

In 1779, John Newton wrote the hymn that we're going to read as we begin this morning, and this hymn takes the name from the first line of it, so it's called "See The Gloomy Gathering Cloud". Now I would like this hymn to hover over us as we read this morning, the story of the flood narrative. And what Newton, the same writer of Amazing Grace - John Newton - what Newton is after in this hymn, I think is extraordinarily important and very insightful about the passage. So listen as we read and let this be our background for what the story is going to unfold.

This morning we're going to be in Genesis Six through Eight and The Flood Story - the story that we all know very well - perhaps we'll have to unlearn some things today, I would suggest.

See the gloomy gathering cloud
Hanging o'er a sinful land!
Sure the Lord proclaims aloud,
Times of trouble are at hand:
Happy they, who love His Name!
They shall always find Him near;
Though the earth were wrapped in flame,
They have no just cause for fear.

Hark! His voice in accents mild,
O, how comforting and sweet!
Speaks to every humble child,
Pointing out a sure retreat!
Come, (he says) and in My chambers hide,
To My saints of old well known;
There you safely may abide,
Till the storm be overblown.

You have only to repose
On My wisdom, love, and care;
Where My wrath consumes my foes,
Mercy will My children spare:
While they perish in the flood,
You that bear My holy mark,
Sprinkled with atoning blood,
Shall be safe within the ark.

Sinners, see the ark prepared!
Haste to enter while there's room;
Though the Lord His arm has bared,
Mercy still (slows down) retards your doom:
Seek Him while there yet is hope,
Ere the day of grace be past;

Lest in wrath He give you up,
And this call should prove your last.

I just pray that those stanzas will be in your mind this morning as we begin through Genesis Chapter Six.

We'll begin this morning in Genesis Chapter Six, Verse Five, so maybe flip the page to Genesis 6:5. Some background: Kelly left us last week in Genesis 3. Much has happened in Genesis Four and Five and in the meantime, Genesis Four is the story, a tragic story, of Cain and Abel - if you'll allow me to say this - God's great, - God's grandchildren - His grandsons. Cain and Abel - Cain, of course, murders his brother, the famous story from our youth.

Genesis Five is the story of the generations that follow after - the generations - ten generations from Adam to Noah. So hold that in the back of your mind as well that it's taken ten generations for these words in Genesis 6:5, to be true of humanity- ten generations. Genesis 6:5, let's read together verses five through seven.

The first thing we see in **Roman numeral I** is the fact that **God is Gracious**. God is a gracious God. He is disposed to be gracious, that's his default position. The story is going to be book-ended with grace. We'll come back there in a few minutes. But God is gracious.

We see in these first few verses, **The agony and approval of God - The agony and approval of God**. Watch for the agony first. Verse five, Genesis 6: "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intention of his thoughts" - of his heart - "was only evil continually." Strong language! "And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him to His heart. 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.'" I am sorry. What terrible words.

Romans 3:23 famously says "All have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God." That assessment is still true of us today, it wasn't just true of the people living in those days, it's still true today. You'll notice after the ark what God says is exactly that He says before the flood comes - that man's condition hasn't changed. Lying within Noah's heart - even through the flood, even on the ark, all those days - evil's lurking within. The only hope for him - the only hope for us - is the grace of God.

Let's read together - back to this passage: It's a hard word to translate, this word "sorry". The Hebrew writers translated that "God repented that He had made man on the earth." It's a very interesting phrase and I won't talk with you about all the theological problems that word has - that isn't the point. It's a very sad thing to say that God's very good creation - God sees everything He's made and behold, it was very good. It took ten generations - ten generations to get to this point - that God was very sorry. God's very glad and now He's very sorry. There's no way to read that verse and not be heartbroken. It's not truly experiencing God's emotion but the really heartbreaking thing about verse 11 is that it can be translated - as we move on through this passage - that the earth was ruined. It took ten generations of people to ruin the world that God had made! Hold that one for just a moment.

Look at verse 5 - "only evil" - "every intention of his heart was only evil continually." The idea is that sin has reached its high point and that sin has reached every corner of civilization - thoroughly corrupted from beginning to end - "every intention of his heart was only evil continually". You know who's in that group? Noah! Noah's heart had every intention and was only evil continually. And everything, friends, hinges on verse 8 that we'll read now: "But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD." Noah found favor.

It says before that that God had decided to "blot out" every living thing from the face of the earth and the phrase, the word "blot out" is an erasing word. God is just going to wipe everybody out, it had gotten that bad. Children's Bibles - lots of interesting theology in children's bibles. If you've noticed, I've got small kids at home and children's bibles are not always extraordinarily helpful. In children's bibles, the story principle goes this way: Everybody in the world was really bad but Noah's good so God saved him! That's how it goes.

Friends, I suggest to you that they've missed a tremendous opportunity to communicate to us this great truth about the grace of God. If you "earn" grace, it's not grace. You cannot "earn" it by definition if the definition of grace is "unearned", "unmerited" favor. Noah finds favor in the eyes of the LORD. Everybody's thoughts are only evil continually - even Noah. John Piper suggests that Noah recognizes this, he repents, and God has favor on him. It's

interesting to think about.

This language though, friends, I don't want to get too far away from the language of these verses - "God is grieved to His heart." He's bitterly indignant; He's experiencing this mixture - some say - of rage and bitter anguish. When I get angry, I have "fits" of anger. I do things and I say things that I ought not to do and that I ought not to say. But God doesn't have "fits" - God doesn't "pout". Can I say it that way? God isn't a "pouty" God. Aaaarggg - I'll get you! That's not the way that God acts. Even though "He is grieved to His heart" and He is very angry, God doesn't have these fits. He says He's going to "blot out", He's going to annihilate every living thing on the earth but Noah and his family and the animals that are on the ark. The great take-away, folks, here, of course, is from Ephesians 2:8-9 famously: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and its not of your own doing, it is a gift of God; not as a result of what you have done of works, that no one may boast." Noah finds approval in the eyes of God because God shines His face upon him, not because Noah deserves it. Every favorable description of Noah - the Bible is thorough with its praise of Noah. Everywhere you go: Hebrews in Chapter 11, in Ezekiel, he's praised. Genesis Six and Seven goes on and on about how obedient and righteous Noah is. All that flows out of God's declaration of favor on him. Every good thing that you say about someone in your life that you admire, flows out of God's grace in their life. And if you have any sort of biblical knowledge at all and someone heaps praise upon you for how great you are, your response must always be, with C. J. Mahaney, when someone asks you "How you doing?" He goes, "Better than I deserve." That's, I pray, our attitude.

Do you ever note that Noah never says anything in his entire story? He never says a word! In counterparts of the flood story in ancient worlds, their speeches and their heroes do all these marvelous works but Noah just does what he's told - just plows away - does what he's told - listens to God - doesn't say a word. More on that later.

Verses 9 through 16 lay out for us **The savagery of man and the supply of God.** "These are the generations of Noah." - verse 9 - "Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. Now the earth was corrupt." The earth was ruined - that's the translation of that word that caught my attention this week that the earth was ruined. It took us that long, ten generations, to get to that point. This is a commentary, friends, on the ruin, on the ruination of man that left to ourselves, we are not basically good. That's a biblical doctrine that we have to hold fast to, not because we're defeatists and we like to think bad things about ourselves and we're a depressive kind of people as Christians. If your starting point is how great you are, then what need would you possibly have to reach out to God and say "God, I need you in my life." The biblical doctrine of total depravity is on display in Genesis Chapter Six. And that evil lurks in my heart as well, friends.

"The earth was corrupt in God's sight." The earth was ruined in God's sight. Someone asked me earlier if it was the earth itself or just people? I don't know. Have human beings ruined the earth, like ecologically? I don't know. "The earth was filled with violence." It reminds me of Genesis 4 and Cain and Abel. It had gotten to that point. If you read Genesis 5, it says so and so had so and so and other sons and daughters; so and so and so and so had other sons and daughters; on and on and on it goes. And this murderous spirit was just out of control - and the stench of the wickedness reaches God's nostrils - and in Genesis One and Two, God takes the land and there's the land, takes the water and there's the water; He places the water where it is. In Genesis Six, Seven and Eight, God removes His hand of protection over the water and that water just flows out to wash away that awful stench. More on that later, too.

Noah is blameless, by comparison, to his generation. Romans 6:23 says "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus Our Lord." Friends, the gospel is on display even in Genesis Chapter Six, not just in Romans Chapter Six. We deserve this judgment but God gives us grace. Noah deserved to be drowned with the rest of them but God had favor on Noah and his family. It paints a beautiful picture but the same thing has always been true and it will always be true. God's bleak assessment of humanity applies to Noah but Noah finds favor.

God's Supply - Verse 14: Look at verse 14. Here we have the description of the ark, itself. "Make yourself an ark of gopher wood." I'm assuming that the ark, that the wood was waterproof - it would be very helpful in this context - I mean a waterproof sort of wood. Nobody knows that gopher wood is; we can't find it anywhere; no one has ever discovered what kind of word this is in Hebrew - it's sort of a mysterious word but there it is. "Make rooms in the ark and cover with pitch, inside and out. And this is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits" - a cubit is 18 inches so the ark was 450 feet long- "fifty cubits its breadth" - 75 feet wide - "height thirty cubits" - so

45 feet high. The inside capacity of the ark was 1.4 million cubic feet; the total deck area was over 95,000 square feet. Basically, the ark would cover one and a half football fields. It's a very large vessel that God specifically lays out for Noah - "Make it like this; make it like this; make it like this; make it like this." - so Noah does everything like God tells him to do; step by step by step. I don't want to minimize the obedience of Noah because the bible doesn't. The bible goes on upon how obedient Noah is and that way he is very much like an example to us. But you see how God supplies Noah. Make the ark like this. Make it like this. It says "Make a roof for the ark and finish it to a cubit above - verse 16 - and set the door of the ark in its side; lower, second and third decks."

Moving on to letter C - The severity of God. The severity of God. God acts very severely. Watch what describes His actions. **The severity of God and the submission of Noah.** I don't want to sell Noah short, I just don't. Verse 17 Chapter 6: "Behold, I will bring a flood of waters" - "I" - God says, "I'll bring it." Friends, God is in control of the world. **He is in control of the world** - of everything in the world: governments, climate forces, whatever you think of - God is in charge of it - that yells out to us from this passage. **God's sovereignty.** "I'll bring the flood." When the flood waters abate, when they go away, God sends them away. "I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which the breath of life from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with you" - Noah - "and you will come into the ark, you, your wife, your sons' wives with you. And every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you." - to keep them alive - "They shall be male and female." - and on it goes. God establishes His covenant with Noah to save him before one drop of water ever falls.

So again, God's not pouting. God's not "I'll just wipe all those people out." He doesn't act recklessly. God promises to keep Noah safe and to **save** him (small 's') before the flood even starts. That's a very powerful observation, friends, in this passage. Psalm 29:10 says, "The LORD sits enthroned over the flood." God is on His throne of sovereign power watching this happen and allowing it to happen exactly as He has designed it. "The LORD sits enthroned as king for ever." - even in the 21st century! May I say especially in the 21st century.

God knows exactly what He is doing. He will accomplish Noah's salvation. Why are we so slow to trust God? And what He says is actually going to happen? Why do we do that? Are we, honestly, the only generation that has ever experienced difficult times? I wonder these things, friend. Do we have conditions to what we're going to do for Him? These are appropriate things to ask from the text. Look at Genesis 6:22: "Noah did this; he did **all** that God commanded him."

Do you ever partition off your obedience? "I'll go this far - that's about as far as I'm willing to go." Noah is clear. More than once in this passage that he does everything that God intends him to do - builds a boat. If somebody builds a boat before this, we don't know but if this is the first boat - just build a boat! Okay! I'll build the boat. It's going to rain it would seem. There's no rain before this, it seems, as well. All these things, Noah acts in faith.

The first takeaway from this passage, guys, is that God is gracious to Noah. The second point, here, **Roman numeral II** in your outline from Chapter Seven, is that **God is Just** - and He is both - gracious and just. I have talked to my students about not tying God's hands behind His back. We love that God is gracious sometimes but not that He is just - we tie behind His back. Others like to say that God is just but tie His gracious hand behind His back. What we see in the Old Testament is a two-handed God - not two faced - but two handed.

His grace and His justice are always out-stretched, no more so than in this passage. Genesis Chapter 7:1-10 lay out for us **The Lord's rule and reliability.** God says to Noah directly, "I am going to blot everything out," Noah, and unless you get in - "Go into the ark," He says; unless you get in, you will be destroyed. It's definitely in there. The only way Noah could be saved is getting into that ark. God's rule and reliability are on display. We see, here, the Lord's rule and reliability. God isn't just flexing His muscles to just sort of force His will on Noah; He is mercifully telling him "Get in the ark!" Do you ever hear people say things about how God is - He seems sort of bossy? Have you ever heard that kind of attitude anywhere out there?

I remember talking to you folks early last year in January of 08 about how why God is not an egotist. Do you remember that? Why God is not an egotist. It's an embarrassing thing even for me to say. Do you know that when God says to us that the only way to be saved is through Jesus Christ - that's a gracious thing to say? There aren't lots of ways to be saved; if there were, that would be a cruel thing for God to say - only Jesus. But because there's only one way to be saved, He says "Follow after Jesus." The only way for Noah to be saved was to get in the ark, so God says "Get in the ark, Noah." And God says to you and I: The only way for you to be saved is through Jesus

Christ and His cross. **The only way to be saved is through Jesus Christ and Him crucified.** The only way to be saved - and for God to tell us that is gracious, merciful, not exclusive just to be exclusive. It's very important.

Once again, if God had not told Noah and his family what to do, they would have been destroyed. God is telling us to do things. Did you hear John Newton's words in the hymn? There's a cloud - there's a storm gathering. Come to Jesus.

The Lord is reliable. Noah is six hundred years - in verse six - that's old. I thought you should know - that's a very big number - six hundred years. I feel old sometimes but I'm not going to live to be six hundred years old. That's very old. I just thought I would observe that with you. What happens in verse six? What came on the earth? The flood of waters came on the earth because God says the flood is coming and guess what? The flood comes. Everywhere you turn - no - everywhere **we** turn, in the bible, it emphatically declares that what God says will come to pass. Everywhere we go - everywhere we go. If God says the flood is coming - guess what? The flood is coming. If God says in the Psalms - Psalm 34:18, "That He is near to the brokenhearted and He saves those who are crushed in spirit." Guess what? He is! If He promises us in Hebrews 13 through Joshua 1 that He will never leave us or forsake us - guess what? He won't! When Jesus says to His disciples that He will be with them always - "to the very end of the age" - He will! He will! Are there circumstances so grave in our life that we would start to doubt those words? I hope not, friends.

We move on in Chapter Seven to see **The Lord's power and protection**, verses 11 through 16 Chapter Seven - **The Lord's power and protection**. Look at verse 11 - this is interesting to me. "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day," these details have no symbolic significance that I can tell. So, why are they there? News flash to us!! The flood is a children's story. I've got a picture my daughter made for me this morning for Father's Day - can the cameras get this? I don't know if you guys can get this or not. It reminded me of the flood story of all the animals coming in. I don't why - it's very abstract art here - very squiggly lines. It reminded me - I don't why it reminded me of that - maybe I'm thinking about the ark for the last several weeks - I don't know why I was thinking - see everything in the ark that way but ...

The flood actually happened. It isn't a kid's story. Stop! It happened! It really did happen. Now, was it a global flood? There's all kinds - I mean guys, there are pages of scientific questions about - I'm not a scientist - I'm not even going to go there. You can read on that if you want to but it's not my objective this morning. What is my objective is to tell you that the flood actually did happen and it was an historical event. Do I understand all the things that happened with it? No. Mountains covered by 22 feet of water? I don't understand that. But these details in verse - in Chapter 7 - about how old Noah was and what happens at this point, and all of those things - it matters, it just does.

Okay, verse 11: "All the fountains of the great deep and the windows of the heavens were opened." See, they were opened - they were allowed to open. What does it mean "the fountains of the great deep - the windows of the heavens?" I don't know. Lots of water is what it means. Beyond that, I don't know what it means, but God is sovereign even in the things that He allows to happen. So when God says "Here's the land and here's the water" - in this passage He takes the water and He says "And the water gushes forth. And rain fell upon the earth forty days".

Verse 12 - God is undoing creation. It's a frightful thing; God is reversing the created order by allowing all this chaos to ensue under His control. See, the earth was formless and void at one point but God makes it orderly and makes it the way it needs to be and now God brings that chaos back out in judgment of sin - it's a terrible thing to watch and it really does actually happen.

The windows were open, friends; I just say to you again, that God is in control of things - even these things. But God protects Noah. See, here in letter **B**, **The Lord's power and protection** - **The Lord's power and protection**. Little phrase here at the end of verse 16 - The LORD said Amen. The LORD said Amen. The ancient world has lots of parallel accounts of the flood story. There is a story called the Gilgamesh Epic which is famous as a way for people to say "Well, there's other flood stories, too, in the ancient world." The hero of that story shuts himself in - Noah is shut in - the door is closed from the outside. Six words - The LORD shut him in. "And the LORD shut him in." - that's six! It was closed from the outside. It's a very powerful message that God protects Noah; that God is the hero of the story, not some other guy. The guy's name was Utanapishtim - not him - not Noah - GOD!

Letter C - (moving right along). There's so much to say here, friends. **The Lord's awesome and awful judgment** is seen at the end of Chapter Seven. Awesome Judgment: Mountains are covered by 22 feet - 15 cubits is about 22 feet - it's extraordinary - it's extraordinary to imagine that! This judgment is awful - verse 21. And by "awful" I mean "full of awe". I don't mean "bad" in that way - I mean that the word is taken from that phrase to be full of awe - it strikes me that way. Every - look at verse 21 - "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm upon the earth, all mankind: everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground." In verse 4, God says He's going to blot out and He blots it out in verse 23. He will do what He says, for better and for worse.

Only Noah was left. Noah was left, verse 23. Do you see that? Go ahead and look in your bibles. Noah was left. Noah escapes the wrath of God because God allows him to escape His wrath. It's a passive verb - Noah was left and his family - because He's gracious. He doesn't survive because he's good enough, he survives because he's left by Yahweh, by God.

God is gracious, friends; He is just - He's both! Lastly, we see together that God is faithful. It's an embarrassing question about that we had on the screen before about is God still faithful in anxious times? That's the question that we're going to be asking all summer. I also want to come up on the stage and say "Yes" and go back and sit down. I know it's an important question for us to answer - I don't mean to make light of it - but may I just submit to you that that is the answer to the question? God is so faithful - watch this!

Chapter Eight verses one to five: "But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock" - they're all in there. How are they all in there? I don't know. I don't know but they're all in there. "God made a wind" - God made a wind - "blow over the earth, and the waters subsided; the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained." - God is the hero!

Can I go back to the first page of our outline? I forgot to tell you a couple of things that I don't want to miss telling you. **Roman numeral II letter A**. Noah is obedient with everything that says he was obedient, and the question there was under letter A - "What is God telling you to do?" I'll come back to that in a little bit.

We see letter **B** there, **The Lord's power and protection** that God is in control of all things - just by way of review - I don't want to miss those. I know how frustrating it can be to miss those points in the outline.

Letter **A** here: **The Lord remembers, the waters recede. God is the hero! Exclamation point!** Circle that on your page. Just do it for me, please. Just circle it. GOD IS THE HERO! God is the hero of this story - of every story in Genesis. May I say that again? I'll invite you to respond when I say "God is the hero of every story in Genesis. (Audience: Amen.). Every story - every great person we meet in Genesis - and there's some great people in there - God is the hero! In Joseph's life, God is the hero. It just so happens - all these things in Joseph's life - it just so happens that there's a famine; just so happens that Joseph's in the palace; it just so happens. Well, how's that "just so happen"? It's remarkable.

Aah. Noah is obedient. We've got to praise him for his obedience. I want to be careful about that but GOD IS THE HERO. Noah doesn't say a word through the whole story - I mentioned that before - it's just a powerful observation. "and the waters recede from the earth" - verse 3 - "continually."

All these things happened under the Lord's control - everything. Everything happens under His control. What circumstances do we think are outside of His control this morning, I must ask? I hope this story can redeem our thinking a little bit - I hope so. Nothing happens outside His control. There are times that things will happen in your life - maybe even today - that will confound you. Where are You? - the psalmist asked that question - don't be afraid to ask that question of God. Where are You? God, where are You in my suffering; in my marriage; with my kids? Where are You? I prayed this story would bring to your mind, powerfully, that He is in the midst of all this - somehow.

Letter **B**. **The Lord gives a place and a purpose**. There's a window in the ark at the top so the ark's is tricked out - we think there's a skylight in the ark. Can I say that? That the ark's tricked out - am I allowed to say that? It kind of like a moon-roof in the ark. And God sends birds out - a raven first and then a dove. The raven gives him no comfort - ravens are unclean - the dove gives some comfort. Noah loves this bird - I'll get into that - but he loves this bird. Check it out in Chapter Eight - he really does like it a lot, like his pet almost. The bird brings back an olive

leaf; the dove brings back an olive leaf - very interesting - beauty and fertility on display there. Do you see how specific it is there in verse 13? Look at verse 13 Chapter Eight: "In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth." This really did happen - there was a lot of water and now it's gone - an actual historical event.

Look at verse 17: "Bring out with you every living thing" - bring out, bring them all out - they came in, they go out - "bring it with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh - birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth - that swarm on the earth - and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth." It's a repeat of the command from Genesis 1:28, "Be fruitful and multiply."

God says "Go out.", so Noah went out. He is obedient, profoundly obedient all throughout. Why is he obedient? Because God was gracious to him. That's the order. Oh, friends, it's so important. God will not look upon your obedience, be impressed with you and then give you salvation. If that's your attitude toward God then I want to talk you out of it as closely as I can because you cannot merit the favor of God. Your behavior matters tremendously before Him but it will not merit His favor in your life. That's from most of the bible back in Genesis Chapters Six, Seven and Eight.

We conclude this story - it is a story; it's a true story; but it is a story - Genesis 8:20-22 - I want to read this with you and in conclusion: **The Lord's pleasure and promise.** As the stench of wickedness rises on the earth, God wipes it off with water. "Then Noah built an altar to the LORD", verse 20, "and took every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in His heart," - remarkable verse - "I will never again curse the ground because of man." The putrid sense of wickedness that God smelled in Genesis Six is replaced by the sweet smell of Noah's sacrifice.

The story begins and ends with grace, friends. Watch this! Don't miss this! Look at verse 21: Never again - "I'll never again curse the ground because of man, **for**" says the ESV "the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth." What does that mean "**for**"? That word "for" should be translated "even though". Read it again: "I will never again curse the ground because of man **even though** the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth." The flood didn't change Noah's heart and his family. They are still crooked people. He won't curse the ground even though a man's heart is still continually evil.

The story begins and ends with grace! Aren't you glad that you don't get what you deserve? Are you glad at that this morning? Oh, friends. God is merciful. The punishable will not be punished - He won't do it.

As the band comes, we're going to conclude this morning with a hymn and I'll have some very quick applications for you. "Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done." - 8:22 - "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." God's faithfulness is great. As you stand, let me read these verses to you from Isaiah 54: "This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah would no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you and will not rebuke you. For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love will not depart from you, and my covenant of peace will not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you." I pray, friends, that we would sing this hymn with a renewed sense of purpose because of Who God is and what He has done. Let's sing together:

Korban and band sing and play Great Is Thy Faithfulness

As Korban plays, three things to take with you today by way of application: In Matthew 24, Jesus says "As it was in the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man." And the passage lays out that not that Noah's days - they were evil but that's not the point of the passage. The point is what will happen when people are unaware - marrying; given in marriage. Maybe you're going to go to a wedding this Summer - a few of you will. Are you ready for the Lord's return? There will be sign's of His return that have been going on for 2000 years. They'll intensify at some point before the end but are you ready is the question. The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and the key to the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment - that from 2 Peter.

Secondly, I assume you're in your notes: Just as the ark was a specifically ordered plan for the salvation of Noah and his family, so the cross is the specifically provided means of salvation of those who follow after Jesus. The only

way to be saved is through under that cross, friends. To escape judgment, run to it.

Lastly, God's faithfulness is great, amen? Do you have your sins pardoned? Do you have a peace that endures - His dear presence to guide you? Are there questions that need answers? And, friends, I pray that they are; if they're not, that you will run to Him today as a good Father Who knows how to give good gifts to His children.

Let's pray as we dismiss: O great God, You are gracious. You are just and You are faithful. Lord, you have promised us that Your Son's return will happen suddenly and we believe that in the church for 2000 years and pray that we will be ready; that we will run to Your only way to be saved to the cross of Christ - and we would leave here solely in Your faithfulness, our sins having been pardoned, our peace enduring. And Lord, those that do not know You, we pray that they would run to Jesus. You showed us how great Your love was for us on that cross. So Lord, dismiss us now in Your grace and may we leave together, our speech having been seasoned with these things from Your word. We thank You for speaking to us in Jesus name we pray, Amen.