



"A New Beginning"

Genesis 6-9

From the beginning, God is a God of grace when it comes to His work of salvation (6:1-8)

Sin had quickly moved men and women so far away from God's intent for their lives that God had come to the point where judgment had to come. No longer could He patiently endure man's sin against Him. No longer could He patiently endure their continued rejection of His Will for their lives. While God doesn't change and doesn't change His mind, God's Word often attempts to capture in human terms the emotions that God experiences. God was in grief over the sinful condition of the people on the earth that were failing to reflect His glory. He had to act. Judgment had to come for sin. It could no longer wait. In the midst of judgment, however, God is still a God of grace. There was one man who found favor in God's eyes, and his name was Noah. In other words, Noah found undeserved and unmerited grace from God. God didn't have to save Him, but God desired and decided to save Noah.

1. There are different opinions over what verses 1-4 are talking about, but the clear message is found in verse 5, which says that human wickedness was great and that every intention of mankind was evil. Have you every felt that the world is still somewhat like this today? Why?
2. Have you ever made something (constructing, cooking, etc.) that just didn't turn out good? Can you remember the feeling of frustration and disappointment? Discuss the reality of God's frustration and disappointment when humans don't fulfill what they were created for.
3. Read Ephesians 2:1-10. How is God still a God of grace when it comes to His work of salvation today?

From the beginning, walking with God is connected to obeying God in our lives (6:9, 6:22; 7:5, 7:7-9, 7:16)

God's Word says that Noah was righteous and blameless, but this doesn't mean that Noah was perfect. What it means is that in contrast to the unrighteous that destroys relationship with God, Noah still had a right relationship with God. What it means is that in contrast to the blame that sinners deserve for unrepentant sin in their lives, Noah must have been honest in confessing and dealing with his sin before God. Because of all of this, Noah walked with God. Noah had a relationship with God in his life because Noah had a heart that was surrendered to the Lord. We see this in Noah's life. In all that God commanded Noah to do, Noah did it! Noah built the ark. Noah gathered the animals and led them into the ark. Noah took his family and entered the ark. Noah did all that God commanded him to do. This is the key to walking with God in life: Obeying God in life!

1. Read Hebrews 11:7. How do these words, related to Noah, help us to understand the righteousness of Noah in this passage in Genesis?
2. Read John 8:31 and 14:15. What do words of Jesus connect obedience to in terms of our relationship with God? Discuss each of these issues in your group, sharing what the reality of your friendship or discipleship to Jesus looks like based on your obedience to His Word.

From the beginning, God reminds us that He is the Sustainer of life (7:17-24)

The flood came and covered all of the earth with the purpose of destroying all life on the earth. This seems extreme because it was extreme. It's what creation deserved because it had rejected its Creator. It's what mankind deserved because they had completely rejected God's purpose for their lives. God could have ended it all. God didn't owe mankind or the earth anything, but God didn't end it all. Through Noah and his family, God saved and sustained the life on this earth that He had created. While this passage does show us

that God is the rightful judge of life on this earth, it also shows us that God is the Sustainer of life! He is the one with the power to miraculously sustain life for His purpose and glory in creation.

1. Read 2 Peter 2:4-9. This is a difficult passage to understand, but focus on verse 9 and discuss the simple truths that this verse presents related to God's sovereignty over judging life and sustaining life.
2. Read Romans 6:23. Do you believe what this verse says about what we earn for sin in our lives? If this is true, then discuss how God's judgment of sin in the flood was just.
3. Thinking about God's power to sustain the life of his people, how does that give you hope in your life today? What is the ultimate reminder that God is the Sustainer of life? Who can you share this reminder with in the coming week?

From the beginning, God shows us that He is faithful to save those who follow Him in faith (8:1, 8:15-19)

The flood had done the devastating work of judging the sin of the world. It had completely destroyed all life that lived on the land, except for Noah and his family and the animals that were with him in the ark. However, Noah must have had some days of wondering if and when the flood waters would go away. There must have been talk every day of the hope of seeing dry land and getting off the boat. There must have been days when they were concerned and anxious about whether or not they would have enough food to make it until their boat found dry land. There must have been moments where they wondered if God was still there and if He still knew that they were out on the boat. In the midst of all of this, Genesis 8:1 speaks these beautiful words: "But God remembered Noah...." God remembered Noah, and in a miracle as incredible as the flood, God began the process of bringing the flood waters down in order to bring Noah and the ark safely to dry ground. Just as God was faithful in His promise to bring the flood, God was faithful in His promise to bring Noah and his family through the flood. All Noah had to do was follow God in faith, which allowed God to show His faithfulness in saving Noah's life.

1. In moments in our lives when we feel lost or concerned or wondering if God is still there, what does Genesis 8:1 remind us of when it comes to God? Does anyone feel that way right now? Share and pray together to the God who remembers His people.
2. Read Philippians 1:6. God doesn't change. Discuss the unchanging characteristic of God that Noah discovered and that Paul was confident in when he wrote to the believers in Philippi?
3. Take time to pray for each other and for others that you know who need to be reminded of and to experience the faithfulness of our God who remembers his people and is faithful to save those who follow Him in faith.

From the beginning, worship and commitment to God are the only right response to God's grace in our lives (8:20; 9:1-3, 9:9-17)

Appropriately, as soon as Noah's feet hit dry ground, his first priority was worship. He didn't first build a house for him and his family to live in. He didn't first take time to find food for them to eat. The first thing that Noah did was to build an altar and to offer sacrifices in worship to the Lord! Noah's priorities in the new creation started out right. Worship and his commitment to God took first priority in His life, and God responded not with grief but with pleasure! Noah's worship and commitment to God was exactly what God desired for Noah's life. In response, God blessed Noah. God blessed the new start to creation, and God established a covenant with creation that promised that He would never again end all life in creation with the waters of a flood. With all of the grace that God showed Noah, the only right response for Noah and his family was to worship and to be committed to the God who gave them life!

1. When was the last time that you experienced God's Word being fulfilled in your life? Share that experience.
2. On a scale from 1 to 10, rank where worship of God is as a priority in your life. Discuss why you ranked worship the way you did, and answer this question: If worship isn't the highest priority in your life, what would it take to make it the highest priority in your life?
3. How did God respond to Noah's worship and commitment to God in his life? What does this tell us about how God still responds to the worship and commitment of His people today?