

FOUR CHOICES EVERY SPIRIT-FILLED BELIEVER SHOULD MAKE

Choice #2: Seeking to Make Grace-Prompted Obedient Responses Like Noah

GENESIS 6

I would like to introduce the great Biblical doctrine of God's grace this morning. To do so, we need to look and see the context in God's Word for the very first time God uses the word "grace" in the entire Bible. Do you know when God first explains His grace to us? It is at the very darkest days of the history of this world.

As we open to Genesis 6, we are opening to the most evil time of human history, from God's perspective. God who sees all things, and who can never lie, said that in the times of Genesis 6: **every** intent and **every** thought of humanity was **only evil** constantly.

The chapter before us describes the time when it was the hardest time to seek, follow, or obey God. So, we are opening to the very darkest moment in Earth's history until the final, demon-induced darkness of the great tribulation at the end of days. But, even in this dark chapter of the Bible, we always find that:

Grace Shines Brightest In the Darkest Times

In the Flood promised in Genesis 6, God decided to scour the filth of humanity from the face of the Earth. This is not a pretty picture; nor a nice topic to consider. But, after all that hopeless multiplication of sin, in v.8, God introduces us to the word "grace", perhaps the most beautiful word in the whole Bible.

Please stand and follow along as we read God's Divine, inspired, flawless record of the darkest days of humanity, Genesis 6:1-8.

Genesis 6:1-8 (NKJV) Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of god saw the daughters of men, that they *were* beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. 3 And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he *is* indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." 4 There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore *children* to them. Those *were* the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown. 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. 6 And the Lord was sorry

that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 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." 8 But **Noah found grace** in the eyes of the Lord.

Pray

In the first seven verses of Genesis 6, God says that humanity had descended to such depths of sin and evil that He had to destroy them. In only nine generations from Creation mankind had become too evil for God to even allow them to go on. But:

Noah Found Grace in The Eyes of the Lord

In Genesis 6:8 we find God revealing what happens when He sees the depths of evil that our fallen, sinful lives get trapped by: He offers His grace. If you want to note something monumental in your Bibles, circle that word "grace" (KJV, NKJV) or "favor" (ESV, NAS, NIV). This is the Old Testament word for God's unmerited favor, the word we love to hold dear in the New Testament. (In the ESV, NAS this same word is translated "grace" in Zech. 12:10.)

Think about what we just read. When all of humanity was hopelessly doomed to destruction: the grace of God is first seen. The world facing doom in Genesis 6 is so much like Paul's words in Ephesians 2. Listen as I read of the same loving, saving, gracious God in Eph. 2:1-9 (NKJV):

And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. 4 **But God**, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (**by grace** you have been saved), 6 and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of **His grace** in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For **by grace** you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Paul also summarizes this type of grace we see here in Ephesians 2 and in Genesis 6, by these words: "where sin abounded grace abounded more" (Rom. 5:20). The grace shown by God at the world's darkest hour is even seen in the method of saving Noah, the ark. As you turn onward to Genesis 6:14, notice how:

The Ark Portrays our Eternal Salvation

One of the great pictures of salvation is also found here in Genesis 6, where we found the first mention of grace. The Ark that Noah built for the Lord, is one of the most beautiful Old Testament reminders of the salvation by grace, through faith, that each who get to inherit life eternal have been given.

Here is a brief outline of the blessings of our salvation seen in the ark.

1. The ark pictures our eternal salvation because both: **were totally planned by God** (Genesis 6:14a).
2. The ark pictures our eternal salvation because both: **are covered with atonement**. God says in Genesis 6:14b that the ark was covered inside and out by pitch, Heb. **kaphar**, translated everywhere else by the word "atonement", or "covering sacrifice".
3. The ark pictures our eternal salvation because both: **have only one door** (Genesis 6:16).
4. The ark pictures our eternal salvation because both: **are only by the invitation of God** (Genesis 7:1).
5. The ark pictures our eternal salvation because both: **are kept secure by the Lord Himself**. Once all were in the ark, God Himself shut the door, sealing them inside; and once the raging waters were gone, all of them safely came out of the ark into the new world (Genesis 7:16; 8:19).

Again notice the lessons that God gives about grace with Noah, the ark, and all the world around him:

God's Grace Does Not Demand: God Graciously Offers and Waits

Yes, grace means that God does not demand: He offers. Think of all the offers of grace at the time of the flood.

- Noah preached a *one-hundred-year-long* sermon about the righteousness of God and the doom facing humanity.
- The ark door stood open *seven long days* as a stream of animals came in pairs: seven pairs of clean animals and two pairs of unclean animals. Think of that procession winding its way across the face of the Earth all entering by that one door.
- During *100 years and seven days*: God's grace was offered, the doorway to the only escape stood open, and God's wrath waited. But not one rebellious, wicked, continuously evil human took the offer.
- Then, bang. The open door of the ark swung shut, closed by the Hand of God Himself. The only escape exit was sealed, and became impossible to open for all on the outside.

Noah and the ark, and the world that perished in the flood are great reminders about

the wonders of our salvation in Christ.

All humanity was under the condemnation of God for destruction. In v. 1-7 we see God's record of a time when humanity was so evil, so completely darkened by sin: that God decided He could not allow them to go on, and He destroyed even human but eight, and scrubbed the Earth clean of their evil activities, giving humanity a fresh start. No one was exempt from sin.

When humanity was hopelessly lost and headed for destruction: God introduces the very first mention of grace. In v.8 we see the theme of our songs of praise to our God. Don't miss the fact that Noah found grace from God that empowered him to: live and not perish with the world; and also to rescue his family from destruction; and finally, God's grace empowered Noah to obey and serve God with his life even in that dark hour.

God's Grace gives us everything we need to experience powerful results in our lives. In v. 9 we see that when Noah received God's grace he experienced three powerful transformations. Look at them with me in v.9

Gen. 6:9 (NKJV) "This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God."

There are three powerful truths that God's saving grace brings to our lives:

1. **"Noah was a just man"**. This is the same word that occurs in Gen 15:6 when it says Abraham was justified by faith. With Noah it is an adjective describing Noah's condition; and with Abraham it is a noun that tells us what God graciously gave to Abraham. Noah's faith allowed him to be justified by God. Noah was could know that in a doomed world of lost sinners, he was justified in God's sight.
2. **"Noah was perfect in his generations"**. This word perfect means "complete, all there, fully functioning, with integrity". Noah was not sinless, no one but Christ ever will be. But, God's grace empowered Noah to live a mature, obedient life before God as the text says. God described Noah as "perfect" or literally "mature" and full of the fruit God wants.
3. **"Noah walked with God"**. Noah went in God's direction, even in the darkest culture ever. The Hebrew word "walk" used here is not about the actual process of walking, it is rather about the direction taken. Noah pointed his life in God's direction. Even though demons had intruded into the world more than at any other time, Noah walked with God. Even though Noah was the only one who stood up for God in the whole world, he did not quit. Noah walked the direction of God.

If those three truths don't excite your spiritual heart I am not sure what else ever could.

In the very darkest of days, Noah was able to live for God. That means that His grace is sufficient, and no matter how hard it is at school, home, or at work: God is able to make all grace abound towards us (II Cor. 9:8).

That means that God's grace is not diminished even when we live surrounded by filth, sin, evil, demons, and rebellious people. That means God's grace can keep you in the dorms, in boot camp, on the road traveling, or anywhere else we go as Spirit-filled and led believers. Which brings us back to our theme for this series:

By God's Grace We are Spirit-Empowered

God has offered to each of us by the wonder of His grace, to have the power of His Spirit to change any surrendered element of our personal lives, our marriages, and our families.

How does God transform us by His grace? It is through the Holy Spirit within. Remember that key New Testament passage?

Ephesians 5:18 (NKJV) And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

The Biblical life God expects from us is not subjective. It isn't up for discussion. God has given His pattern. He has clearly expressed His desires. We are left with the choice to respond and become instruments that carry out His plan.

Remember, God's plan works even when your husband, wife, children, or parents are NOT in step with His will.

All we are asked to do is personally respond to God's plan. He does not force us. God invites us. Once we "log on" to His power through the Spirit, He fills us, leads us, and empowers us to be all He designed us to be.

We Are Asked by God to Choose to Make Spirit-Prompted Choices

So what do Spirit-prompted believers look like? The pages of Scripture are devoted to displaying these heroes of the faith, who were empowered by the Spirit.

What should we do? Follow the examples of the good choices that show up in the lives of Spirit-filled believers in God's Word!

We saw last time:

Choice #1: Spirit-Filled Believers Are Given to Godly Praying Like Job

Now, from our passage in Genesis 6 we can find:

Choice #2: Spirit-Filled Believers Are Given to Godly Responses Like Noah

As we go through these verses, ask yourself if you are living at the capacity God has given you. Each of us can operate the way Noah did, because each of us has the same grace poured out upon us.

Notice these elements in Genesis 6. As we look at the darkest days of human history so far, we know the bad news is: even darker days are coming. They are not here yet, but they are directly ahead of us.

If you think of it, everyone but the eight “believers” were gone, and the post-flood world was a fresh start. For us, this passage is a lesson in grace-prompted responses to God that we are capable of giving Him.

What are the results of God’s grace in our lives? We each are given the power to say yes to God! Noah was able to hear what God asked for, and say yes, and obey God. That is the same result grace has in each one of us. When grace empowers us:

1. **We can choose to live godly in the most ungodly and wicked settings.** In v. 10-12 we see that Noah lived, raised his family, and served the Lord in the most corrupt times there’s ever been.
2. **We can choose to hear God’s voice.** In v. 13 Noah heard what God wanted him to hear. The Lord reveals His will, His plan, and His expectations for Noah.
3. **We can choose to follow God’s plan:** even if it is hard to do; and even if it is hard to understand why; and even if it is hard to even explain (like a 450 foot long ocean liner in your back yard)! In. v. 14-16 we see Noah doing what no one else had ever done, and doing it for over 100 years.
4. **We can choose to trust God’s promises even when it seems like it may never happen.** In v. 17-22 God lays out a very frightening plan, and then after He finished speaking in Gen. 7:1, God is silent for more than a year. The Flood came in the date 600.02.17. The Lord does not speak again until the date 601.02.27. That means over 370 days of silence. God speaks in Genesis 7:1, and then is silent until Gen. 8:15. Noah learned to trust God even when He is silent.

God’s grace empowered Noah to obey and serve God with his life even in that dark hour. Which reminds us that whenever sins abound, grace abounds even more. That is just how the hymn author Julia Harriette Johnston, 1849-1919 expressed it. Choosing a life of singleness, this woman served in the same church here whole life, teaching Sunday School 41 years, writing and publishing a book of Sunday School lesson for David C. Cook Publishing, a book of 500 hymns some published and used by Moody Bible Institute, and a book of missionary biographies.

But her most remembered work was the hymn:

Grace Greater Than Our Sin # 201

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured--
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold,
Threaten the soul with infinite loss;
Grace that is greater--yes, grace untold--
Points to the Refuge, the mighty Cross.

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide,
What can avail to wash it away?
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide--
Whiter than snow you may be today.

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,
Freely bestowed on all who believe!
You that are longing to see His face,
Will you this moment His grace receive?

Refrain:

Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!

Today, the same grace that empowered Noah to live in the wickedest world there has ever been: that grace is ours today.

The same grace that allowed Noah to serve God, raise his family, and save them from become like the world and getting destroyed: that grace is ours today.

Choosing and Encouraging Grace-Empowered Choices to Obey God

So, when we stay in step with the Holy Spirit's plans for us, we saw last time that like Job, we are deeply involved in pursuing and praying for our own spiritual reality; and for that same spiritual reality to be the lives of those we love and serve.

That means that secondly, we pursue and pray for personal integrity in their lives. What does that look like? Again, if you have a copy of the small pocket sized card or the matching booklet, you can see the prayers that flow from the second choice we can make in following the Lord. Here is the second section of that resource. It says:

Getting Started with Spirit-Filled *Praying*

For Personal Integrity in Our Lives

2. We must pray for Personal Integrity in our life, and the lives of those we love:

What does personal integrity look like in our own lives? And, what do we pray for when we are seeking to encourage personal integrity in the lives of those we love?

Personal Integrity means that we Maintain a Clear Conscience (which involves constant vigilance in avoiding anything that grieves the Holy Spirit). Acts 24:16 "This [being] so, I myself ***always strive*** to have a ***conscience without offense toward God and men***. (NKJV); 1 Timothy 1:5 Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, [from] ***a good conscience***, and [from] sincere faith, (NKJV)

Personal Integrity means that we Learn to Stand Alone (which means a conviction that my character is more important than my popularity). Daniel 1:8 But Daniel ***purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself*** with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. (NKJV)

Personal Integrity means that we Seek to Stay Pure in Mind & Body (which means a strong resolve to not fulfill a legitimate desire in an illegitimate way). First Thessalonians 4:3-7 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should ***abstain from sexual immorality***; that each of you should ***know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification*** and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For ***God did not call us to uncleanness***, but in holiness. (NKJV); 1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul (NKJV).

Personal Integrity means that we Evidence a Servant's Heart (which means a choice to clothe myself with Christ's attitude of humility). Mark 10:44-45 " And whoever of you desires to be first ***shall be slave of all***. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, ***but to serve***, and to give His life a ransom for many." (NKJV); Philippians 2:5-7 ***Let this mind be in you*** which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, ***taking the form of a bondservant***, and coming in the likeness of men. (NKJV)

Personal Integrity means that we Don't Become Bitter in Trials (which means a steadfast faith that God is in control). Ephesians 4:30-32 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. (NKJV)

Appendix

Choice #1: Spirit-Filled Believers Are Given to Godly Praying Like Job

What is the key truth about Job? Job was a man of prayer.

The Book of Job is perhaps the oldest book in the world. It is also perhaps the clearest view into the spirit world, the spiritual side of parenting and the cosmic proportion of conflicts we face as we parent and lead as dads. Look at Job 1:5:

Job 1:5 So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings [according to] the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." **Thus Job did regularly.** (NKJV)

"Regularly" He started following their lives. He started to offer prayers for his family as their intercessor, and wouldn't stop. He was ready for the unexpected death of his children. He prepared them for it every day!

A Godly parent, full of the Spirit, and in tune with the Scriptures will: know his children deeply, personally and directly; get involved in making sure they keep pure; stands ready to seek their repentance and restoration; looks at heart attitudes; and won't stop!

Getting Started with Spirit-Filled *Praying for Spiritual Reality in Our Life*

1. We must pray for Spiritual Reality in our life, and the lives of those we love:

Spiritual Reality starts when we see them genuinely SAVED. Acts 26:18 (NKJV) to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.' (NKJV)

Spiritual Reality continues when we see them loving God's Word. Job 23:12 (NKJV) I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary [food.]

Spiritual Reality also involves seeing them living in Victory. John 8:32, 36 (NKJV) "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Spiritual Reality also involves seeing them thinking of Heaven. Colossians 3:1-

2 (NKJV) If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Spiritual Reality also involves seeing them Finding Sin Repulsive. Psalm 38:18 (NKJV) For I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin.

Spiritual Reality also involves seeing them stay tender towards God. Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart -- These, O God, You will not despise. (NKJV)

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