

TEXT: Genesis 6:1-8

TITLE: Noah Finds Favor in the Eyes of the Lord

THEME: The Lord is just in His dealing with sin, only those who has been preserved by our Lord Jesus Christ can be saved.

INTRODUCTION

Beloved in the Lord, do you agree that you are living in a world that is dominated by sin? Perhaps when you turn on your TV or when you read the news, you see numerous cases of murder, robbery and drug dealing. And perhaps recently, you have also seen people marching into the street to celebrate something perverted and wicked. **You know, this is a reality because of the Fall. Because we are Adam's children by nature, the guilt of sin has been passed down to us. As a result,** instead of glorifying God and inclining to do His will, our hearts only desire to do evil things and do everything contrary to what God requires of us. And we are totally unable to do what the Lord requires of us even if we want to do His will. This is what our Reformed tradition teaches concerning our condition after the Fall, being totally depraved, meaning that the effects of the Fall extend or penetrate to the core of our being.

More than that, we know that the Bible also tells us that God is holy. **He is perfectly holy and just that He must condemn all unrighteousness.** Romans 6:23 also tells us that the wages of sin is death. In other words, because we were all born sinners, all we deserve after the Fall is eternal condemnation and death. So, the question is: is there hope for us sinners in the midst of our fallen condition? Is there still hope for you and I who were born in sin?

This morning, we are going to consider the text in three sections:

- I. Sin reigns... (vv.1-4)
- II. God pronounces judgement (vv. 5-7)
- III. But God demonstrates grace... (vv. 8)

I. Sin reigns... (vv.1-4)

Since we jumping right into Genesis 6, let me first give you a brief background to the text.

After Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden in chapter 3, they have since been looking forward to the coming of the seed who would come to deliver them from the curse of sin. Then in chapter 4, we are told that they had two sons, Cain and Abel. And we are told that out of envy and anger, Cain murdered Abel and he built a city which he named after his son Enoch. And in the same chapter, Moses also gives us the genealogy of Cain, and we see that some of his descendants were also violent murderers. But then the end of chapter 4 tells us that after Abel died, God gave Adam another son, whose name was Seth, who bore the likeness of Adam. Then chapter 5 gives us the genealogy of Seth and concludes with a description of Lamech, who with an eye of faith, named his son Noah, means rest, hoping that he would provide relief from the curse of sin (vv. 27-29). And this is where our text picks up. Moses begins chapter 6 by telling us that mankind has begun to multiply on the face of the earth, with a group called the "sons of God," who saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, so they took them as their wives. But the question is, who are the "sons of God?"

One of the interpretations that I heard growing up was that "the sons of God" were the angels of God. In that interpretation, the angels of God have come down to intermingle with mankind, and according to that interpretation, that is why later we have a race called the Nephillim, or some translations called them giants. However, this interpretation does not really fit into the overall context of Genesis. It is because we have no evidence that angels would get married. So, in order to properly understand this expression, we must consider the overall context provided in the previous chapters. Remember that I mentioned earlier that chapters 4 and 5 give us the two lines of Adam's genealogy? Remember that we are told that some of the Cainites were murderers and ungodly people? And remember that I also mentioned that the descendants of Seth walked with God and had faith in the Lord? So, logically speaking, when we take the context into consideration, the Sethites are likely the "sons of God", and the "daughters of men" are likely the daughters of Cain, who walked in the way of men and sin. We can also find the support from the Gospel of Luke, in which Luke traces the genealogy of our Lord Jesus all the way back to Adam, proving that Jesus is not only the son of man, but also the son of God.

But in light of this interpretation, a problem comes to our concern immediately. It is because **this is telling us that the people of God were not marrying within the covenant of God's people. They were marrying unbelievers!** Let me read vv.2 in the again, "the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. Remember that the Sethites were supposed to be God's people, but Moses is telling us that they were not behaving as such. Also, "pay a close attention to the verbs, "they saw...it was good...so they took" Does this pattern of verbs remind you of another chapter in Genesis? If you are thinking about chapter 3, you are right! This actually resembles what happened in Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve sinned against the Lord. Genesis 3:6 says, "*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.*" Remember what happened afterwards? Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden of Eden, away from the presence of God. **You see, this is happening again here! "The sons of Seth" were called to be holy, just like Adam and Eve, to love God and to obey His law. But here, they saw that the unbelieving women were beautiful, so they took them as wives.** This is a serious problem! It is because an unbelieving spouse often causes the child of God to turn away from the Lord. And the result of turning from the Lord will cause judgement! The law of Moses in Deuteronomy gives us what the Lord requires of the people of God in finding a spouse, Deuteronomy 7:3-4 says, "Do not intermarry with them (Gentile unbelievers). Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, ⁴for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you." So, what we see here is the people of God persistent in sin, they were marrying unbelieving spouses, as a result, a generation or two later, the holy line was being corrupted.

But what did the Lord do after He had seen the reign of sin on the face of the earth? the Lord said in vv.3, "My Spirit would not abide with man forever, for he is indeed flesh, yet his days shall be 120 years" What does this phrase mean? Let us begin with the first half, "my Spirit would not abide with man forever." This is telling us that God was not pleased with what He saw on earth. So He threatened that if

continue to walk in the way of sin, He would withdraw His Spirit of life from them. Remember how man was created, the Lord breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” **So, the Lord is saying that if they kept on sinning, He would take the breath of life from them!** But what about the second half? “yet his days shall be 120 years” Does this mean that the Lord had shortened the life of the people on earth? Actually, we know that is not true, because later on, we see people lived up to 900 years old, so this cannot be referring to the shortening of man’s life, but this is telling us that the Lord has given man a period of grace - 120 years to repent, it is because God does not take delight in the punishing of sinners. You see, what a gracious God! Although God was angry, yet, He has given the wicked a period of grace to come to repentance, and also for the people of God to come to their senses.

However, even in light of God’s grace, Moses tells us that “the sons of God” did not repent, and they continued to intermarry with the people of Cain. And this time, it seems that things have gotten even worse, it is because the text seems to suggest to us that they were having children outside of the marital boundary. In other words, the Lord was showing mercy to mankind, He gave man 120 years to repent, but the people of God refused to turn away from sin and they persisted in sin. This is absolutely serious!

Application:

1. Application: Beloved in the Lord, **this is a reminder for us that we must only look for a spouse within the covenant of God’s people. Satan is so cunning that he uses this method to lure the children of God into apostasy! This is often difficult for the children of God, and how many people have fallen into this trap. Look at Solomon! The wisest man who has ever lived...look at what happened to him?** You see, it does not matter how nice that person treats you or loves you, if he or she is outside of the covenant of God’s people, turn away! We are also not called to do missionary marriages, meaning that we marry them first then evangelize to them. This is also why the elders in the church would come to you and talk to you if you bring a young person to church, it is because they are called by the Lord to care for your soul. Remember that we belong to the Lord, body and soul.
2. By the way, vv. 4 tells us about some sort of “giants”, the text describes these men as the “mighty men who were of old, men of renown.” But the question is, who are these giants? The original word in Hebrew for the word “giants” means “the fallen ones” – that is why some translations “Nephilim.” It is impossible to say for certain who these people were, but they were likely some big people who were rulers and tyrants at the time who were oppressing and terrorizing the land. Some Jewish interpreters said that they were called the “fallen ones” because they were the ones who caused the downfall of the world. The reason why Moses mentioned these giants was for the purpose of telling the Israelites that the giants existed both before and after the flood. You see, these were the people with whom Noah used to live in his days, big evil people. But the reality is that Noah had nothing to fear, because God would not let these evil men oppress and terrorize the land forever. For who are they in the presence of a big and holy God?

II. God pronounces judgement

So, after the Lord has shown His mercy and patience to mankind by giving them a period of grace for 120 years, we would expect the people of God to put on sack cloth and turn away from their sins. However, Moses also tells us the opposite. He tells us that the wickedness of man was prevailing upon the face of the earth and “every intent of the heart was only evil continually.” It means that not only the outward actions of man were corrupted, but the mind, the inner being, the essence of the person has also become so corrupted! You see, this is not mere carelessness, but Moses tells us that man deliberately and purposely did evil. Here, Moses tells us that the Lord saw nothing good in man at all! It was in absolute contrast to what God saw when He first created man and woman in Genesis 1. Remember that right after God had finished making all the birds of the air and every creeping thing, He saw and pronounced that everything was very good. But now, all have become evil. **Everything happening was offensive to His holy eye!** And His patience was running out.

More than that, we are also told that the Lord regretted that He had made men. What does it mean? Was God troubled by sin, so He changed His mind on the basis of some unforeseen circumstances? Well, we know that cannot be true because the Bible tells us that He is sovereign, unchangeable, and immutable. We know that God works all things according to His sovereign decrees and eternal purposes, nothing could catch Him by surprise. This way of expression is called *anthropomorphism* (this is a combination of the words: anthropos means human, morphe means form), so the word means applying a human emotion or a physical trait to God. The Bible commonly uses these anthropomorphic expressions so that we may understand what God is saying to us by analogy. In other words, Moses here is telling us that the Lord was grieved by the wickedness of mankind. And God could not tolerate sin anymore! Yes, there was a delay of judgement, but His people persisted in sin, and now, He has pronounced judgement upon the world.

Lord’s Day 4, Q.10 of the Heidelberg Catechism asks, “will God allow such disobedience and apostasy to go unpunished?” Answer: Certainly not. He is terribly angry with our original sin as well as our actual sins. Therefore, he will punish them by a just judgment both now and eternally, as he has declared: Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law. And we should also notice here that God did not just want to wipe out mankind, but He wanted to wipe out every creeping thing. You see, God not only wanted to wipe out mankind, but the animals as well! **This is telling us that the sin of man does not affect humanity alone, but also the animal kingdom.** So that is why God intended to destroy everything on earth because of the dominion of sin! There seems to be no more grace anymore, because God has decided to judge the world!

Application:

Beloved, this is a reminder to us that the judgement of God is a reality! It is not a fantasy! God cannot just by pass the sins of you and I, for “the wages of sin is death,” sin must be paid for! He would not leave sin unpunished because He is perfectly just. This is a reality. This

is really what you and I deserved! It is because God really hates sin! But more than that, the Bible tells us that there will be a greater judgement that will come. You see, just as the Lord intended to wipe out everything on earth on account of sin in the days of Noah, this is telling us that He will also come again with a greater judgement! And when that judgement comes, there will be no second chance, there will be no purgatory. So, what is our hope? Let us find out! Third point.

III. But God demonstrates grace... (vv. 8)

So, the Lord has had enough with mankind. His patience was running out. The Lord has finally pronounced judgement upon the earth, intending to destroy all living thing. However, when it seems that all hope has been lost, Moses introduces a tiny glimpse of hope by saying, "but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." This phrase is coming out as if a tiny light has appeared in the midst of darkness. It is because the grace of God has reached down to Noah! What joy and gladness in the midst of a hopeless generation! But what was it that made Noah favorable in the eyes of the Lord? Was it because Noah was intrinsically better than the people of his days? Of course not! Remember that Ephesians 2 tells us that all of us were dead in our trespasses and sins, and that we were by nature children of wrath. So how? How could Noah find favor in the eyes of God if he was too a sinner? Well, God did not find favor in Noah because Noah was intrinsically better than the people in his days, but because God is faithful to His covenant promise. Remember that after the Fall, the Lord promised a seed that would come to deliver men from sin? Genesis 3:15 says, "*And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.*" This is a promise that one day, a Savior will come to deliver mankind from sin! And God is ever faithful to this particular promise! For the sake of the Seed, the Lord preserved Noah and did not destroy all of mankind. You see, if God had not promised to send the Seed, this judgement would have meant the end for mankind. God has saved Noah because this promise had not yet been fulfilled, and God is ever so faithful to His covenant faithfulness.

But who is that Seed of the woman in whom Noah was preserved? It is none but the Lord Jesus Christ. Galatians 4:4 says, "*But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law.*" Brothers and sisters, that is how Noah was saved! God found favor in Noah because God has given Noah the free gift of grace in our Lord Jesus Christ! Noah was a sinner, he deserved nothing but death. However, the Lord has given him the gift of faith to believe in the promise of the work of the coming Redeemer, who would crush the head of the Serpent! And we know that the promise was fulfilled when Jesus died on the Cross at Calvary, through which we have complete remission of all our sins. Though the event of the Cross had not yet occurred in the days of Noah in time, the Gospel in seed form was efficacious and sufficient to go beyond time and space to save Noah. It is ultimately because Noah's sins have been put upon the Lord Jesus Christ. And because of that, Noah was found favorable because he was covered in the garment of righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ! And by clothing Him in His garment of righteousness, the Lord has made Noah greater and more honorable than all the giants that were in his days. The giants in those days only found temporary favor in the eyes of man, but Noah, because of grace, was found righteous in the eyes of God! And this is the grace of God for us sinners! God's grace is when you and I were dead in our sins, but God sent His Son to die in our place, and covered us with His righteousness, so that we might be found favorable in the eyes of God! Praise the Lord! What a great Savior!

Applications:

1. First of all, brothers and sisters, this is the beauty of God's grace! The Lord has found favor in us not because He found something good in us or He foresaw faith in us. **But only because of His great love for us in Christ, in whom He brought us into the state of grace.** That is why our salvation is "Sola Gratia". By grace alone. How glorious?!
2. **After you have received this great gift of salvation, you should be living a life of gratitude and obedience.** Remember what grace is, **grace is God's unearned favor. You did not earn it, but freely given! After you have seen** the richness of God's grace towards us by offering to us the free gift of salvation, it should stir within us gratitude and a love for him. And that is why we are **to live a life set apart from the rest of the world.** Remember that we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works. So, let me ask you a question: How are your family members and unbelieving friends seeing you? Do they see you living a life reflecting your Savior? And not to mention, you should also be more motivated to preach the Gospel!

CONCLUSION

We see here in this text that when sin was reigning on the face of the earth, the Lord did not punish the world immediately, but He gave mankind 120 years to repent. However, in the midst of God's patience, men persisted in sin and became even more corrupted. In response to men's persistence to sin, the Lord pronounced judgement upon mankind to wipe out all living creatures. Yet, we see that God did not abandon the world and man completely because He was faithful to His promise, and by His grace, He preserved Noah and his family.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, the reality we are living in a fallen, wicked world. We know that the Lord is just and He would not leave sin unpunished. If we rely upon our intrinsic righteousness you and I would be immediately consumed by God's wrath. So, our only hope is look outside of ourselves. And thanks be to God, because God has indeed demonstrated His grace to us. Just as God has brought Noah into the state of grace when he was as sinful as the others in his generation, likewise, this unmerited grace of God in Christ that God brought us into the state of grace, only because of His great love for us in Christ. Remember that it was free to you because Christ has paid the cost, and the cost was the shedding his precious blood.

Finally, Noah found favor in God's sight in the midst of a perverse and wicked world because he was clothed in the righteousness of another person, the righteousness of Jesus Christ, so when the Father looked at Noah, He did not see a filthy man, but He saw a perfect child, sinless and favorable in His sight. If you are not a Christian, the reality is that your own filthy garment is not going to deliver you from eternal condemnation, only the rope of righteousness of Jesus Christ can save you. So, turn to him, and put your faith in Him today, and He will too clothe you in the rope of His righteousness and smile upon you. Amen. Let us pray.

Our Father in heaven, we thank you for your Word, we thank you for your electing grace and mercy, we thank you for the work of Christ at the Cross, we thank you for the Spirit of Christ, who worketh faith in our hearts and who gives us understanding. Help us to fix our eyes on you and rejoice in the salvation that you have graciously given through your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray this in His name. Amen.