Drinking Cursing Fathers — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 9:18–29 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, June 18, 2023 · *Living Right*

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Wonderful singing this morning. They say the only people who like a full room are the people on stage. And there's probably a little bit of truth to that, but a full room of voices singing to the Lord is just really encouraging. I hope that you were encouraged by maybe truths you've known many, many years, but something about other people singing them in your ear, the Lord uses it to really encourage your hearts. And so thank you for singing well. If you have your Bible, we're going to be in Genesis chapter 9.

You can go ahead and turn there. If you don't have a Bible, we'll have the verses up on the screen, but I encourage you to bring one or you might find one under your seat. Our church typically preaches through books of the Bible, and right now we're preaching through the book of Genesis, and it's been a wonderful study of just kind of seeing the foundational questions of life being raised and answered in some very fundamental ways. Questions like: How did we get here, and what is here, and who am I, and what's my purpose in life?

We've seen all of those questions raised and answered in the book of Genesis. And the last couple of weeks we've answered the question of what is wrong with the world and how do we fix it. We've been looking at how do people live right in a world that has gone wrong. And our world is certainly not much different than the world of Genesis chapters 6 to 11. It's similar in a lot of ways. And so the question that we're asking is the question probably that they were asking back then. When we last left the book of Genesis, we had seen God destroy the world through a flood.

He saved one man and his family from that flood. That man's name was Noah, and his family was saved, him and his three sons and their wives. And when they get out of the ark in this brave new world, God gives them some new rules. And we called that the Noahic Covenant, brave new rules for a brave new world. And the sign of that covenant was the rainbow. And

we were really, when we last left Noah and his family, we were kind of left with the question of what's going to happen now.

God has kind of remade the world. He's kind of reinstituted the project. He's got a new man, a new woman, a new family, a new creation. Are they going to end up any differently than God's first attempt with Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden? And for those of you who want to skip to the chase, the answer is no. They do just about the same exact thing that Adam and Eve do. And it's really a tragic, tragic story. In fact, this passage this morning is a tragic story. I wanted to save it for Father's Day because it is so sad and depressing.

I thought it'd be really encouraging to our dads. And it's one of the reasons I love the Bible and one of the reasons I believe the Bible is the Word of God, because it deals so honestly with the human condition. It's not trying to like pretty things up or pretend that things are better than they actually are or these little platitudes that we sometimes tell each other to make ourselves feel better about how bad things are. It deals absolutely honestly with the human condition and it presents even the great men of God warts and all.

And on one hand that's really encouraging for us if you're a dad because it means that God can use you even though you're not a perfect man. He used Abraham even though he was at times in his life marked by more marked by cowardice and fear than he was faith. He used David to prepare for the temple,[1] even though David, as we just read in Psalm 51, committed adultery with Bathsheba and then had her husband murdered after the act. He uses imperfect people. He used Solomon, who had great wisdom but was foolish and sinful in his dealings with women like father, like son.

And he used Samson, who had great strength, but even though that was true, he let lust become his downfall. We could go on and on. Peter had great faith, but at the end denied Christ three times. God does not need perfect people to advance his perfect will. You can be an imperfect person and be used by the plans of God and for the will of God. But that being said, even though all that's true—you don't have to be a perfect person to be used by God—the consequences of your moral failures cannot be escaped.

Whatever a man sows, that's what he's going to reap. So even though God uses imperfect people, imperfect people have consequences for their sinful actions. And this is one of those passages where we just see the chickens come home to roost. And it's a very tragic story that I think we can learn a lot from. So let's pick it up in Genesis chapter 9. We're going to start in verse 18. It says that "the sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan.

These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed." So I think what Moses, who wrote this book, is doing here is he's kind of giving us a backstory for explaining the world as they saw it. This was written, you know, thousands

of years after the fact. The Israelites had come through Egyptian captivity. They were coming into the promised land. They were discovering God's word to them and the history that they had kind of come out of. And he's saying, it started with Adam and Eve in the garden, they messed up, the whole world messed up, so God destroyed it and started over, and now the whole world is originating with Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives.

And every people, every tribe, every clan that you see around you was dispersed from these boys. And you're going to see the outcome of those nations and those people groups are dependent on how these three boys respond to a pivotal moment in their life. If you've ever had children, more than one child, you know that every child kind of grows up a little bit differently. And you're certainly going to see that in this passage. Well, I think what's interesting is the way that they're listed. He says it's Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

That's not the birth order. Shem, even though he's listed first, he's actually the second born. Ham, even though he's listed second, he's the thirdborn or the lastborn child. And Japheth, even though he's listed last, he's actually the firstborn son. And usually when you're listing out names in a genealogy, you list them in order, but not in this case, a little bit interesting. I think strategic on the part of Moses who's writing this. And the other thing that's interesting is the mention of a guy named Canaan, who is the son of who?

He's a son of Ham. Now, Ham had more than one son. He had four different sons, but only one of them is mentioned, and his name's Canaan. He was the lastborn son as well. Why is that? Well, that's something you need to ask yourself as we go into this text. He's setting up the tension, if you will. He's kind of previewing the chaos that's about to transpire. And so if you're taking notes, Shem is secondborn, Ham is thirdborn, Japheth firstborn, and Ham's the father of Canaan. Here's the setup to the story starting in Genesis chapter 9, verse 20.

"Noah began to be a man of the soil"—King James Version said he's a husbandman—"and he planted a vineyard." I somewhat think that's funny. If you've spent most of your life building an ark, 120 years, preparing for the day when it was going to rain and not stop raining until it flooded the entire earth. If you were going to have to pick your next occupation, I would imagine my next occupation would be I want to play with dirt for the rest of my life. I wonder if every time Noah went out to water his yard if he got a little bit triggered and a little bit weepy-eyed because of what his past experiences were.

It's not surprising to see Noah want to be a man of the soil. It's not surprising that he would plant a vineyard. Grapes are very delicious, but grapes are not just something you can eat. Grapes are also something you can smash and when you smash enough grapes and you let 'em sit around for a while, you can make this thing called wine. And so Noah began to drink the wine. Chapter 9, verse 21. He drank so much wine that he "became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent." You might circle that word uncovered.

It's going to become important later on in our story. Now, a lot of people talk about the sin of Noah. I think it's important to point out that the sin of Noah was not in drinking the wine. The Bible never prohibits wine per se. You see Jesus make wine, he served wine, he even drank wine on the cross, maybe at other occasions. The sin of Noah was not in drinking the wine. The sin of Noah was in drinking too much wine. The sin of Noah was in getting drunk. And the Bible, when it talks about alcohol, a lot of the times that the Bible talks about alcohol, it does attach it to a warning against drunkenness.

And it attaches it to a warning against addiction because drunkenness is sin. Usually when people get drunk, they do even more sinful things, and addiction is a snare into which many people fall, especially when it comes to alcohol. And in this case, Noah had gotten so drunk that he passed out in his tent butt naked. Now, was this a one-time thing by Noah or was this a habitual thing? There are people who argue either way. In the original Hebrew it's what's called the imperfect tense, which sometimes means continual ongoing action, sometimes it just means an instantaneous action.

It could mean either one. I wonder if Noah had not kind of devolved into a man who just sat around in his garden and started to drink too much and every night would get drunk and go into his tent and lay uncovered in his tent. You'll see a little bit later that the word uncovered maybe means more than just taking your coat off. And so maybe Noah had devolved into a sadder state than his original state prior to this when he was being used by God in these magnificent ways. So here he is laying uncovered in his tent, and that lifestyle of sin, if it was indeed a lifestyle, if it was just a one-time lapse of judgment, then it was just a one-time lapse of judgment.

But that sin of Noah set the table for the curse of his grandson. And I think that's instructive for us as dads in particular on a couple of different levels. That your sin, even though you think your sin only affects you, it doesn't work that way. Your sin is actually setting a table; it's creating a context in which the people that you love can actually be hindered and hurt as well. Had Noah not done what he did here, had he not kind of become this type of person, set that kind of table, then Ham might have never fallen into the temptation that he fell, and Canaan, who is Ham's son, Noah's grandson, might not have ever received the curse that he did.

It just is a reminder for you as dads and for myself as well and any parent. But the point is you can love the Lord, you can go to church, you can even give a tithe and be absolutely surrendered to God—doesn't mean you're not susceptible to sin. You can love the Lord, you can pray at night, you can read the Bible. It doesn't mean you're not susceptible to sin. And I think there can kind of be sometimes a Superman syndrome where some guys are—they're choosing the Lord, they're pursuing the Lord, they're doing everything right.

But do not ever take your eyes off the fact that you are still a mere mortal and that even though you've been set free from sin, you've been set free from the penalty of sin in Christ, you've been set free from the power of sin in Christ, but you have not been set free from the presence of sin until Jesus comes and removes it completely and forever at his second coming. You still have to deal with it in your heart, in your mind, out and around you, the books that you see, the movies that you watch.

The sin and the flesh and the devil are always at work trying to create a snare. And they got Noah in a snare. It's why Jesus said, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Pray that you don't enter into temptation." That's why David said, "I've hidden your word in my heart so that I might not sin against you." The Bible constantly encourages us to keep a close watch over our heart, for from it flow the streams of life. That's point number one. Point number two for dads in particular, is that it is extremely convenient to sin in the home.

But just because it's convenient to sin in the home doesn't mean it's not costly. The home is the easiest place to sin, I think, because those people are going to put up with you in ways that no other people will. And maybe you even think that. You probably wouldn't say it out loud, but implicitly you're thinking to yourself, "Well, I know I lose my temper a lot in the house, but they ain't going anywhere." Or, "They can't do anything about it." Or, "They'll understand. They know I'm stressed." Or you know you've gotten into patterns of speaking to your spouse in a certain way, speaking to your children in a certain way, that you know deep down—it's just not good, it's just not right—but you think to yourself, "Well, it's the house.

I mean, no one else is ever going to really find out." And to a degree you're right. You know, they are going to put up with you in ways that other people won't, and they probably won't leave unless it's just an absolutely egregious sin. But it doesn't mean it's not having an impact. It doesn't mean it's not setting the table for something worse to happen. It doesn't mean it's not doing damage to their heart and to their soul and to your soul. And it goes both ways: for dads, the way you talk to your children, moms, the way that you talk to your children; children, the way that you treat your parents.

You treat them and talk to them in ways you had never talked to your teacher, you had never talked to your boss in that way, and yet you think it's permissible to speak to your mom and dad. That action, even though it's convenient in the home, doesn't mean it's not doing damage to them. Doesn't mean it's not doing damage to you. Doesn't mean it's not doing damage to your marriage or to your family. That certainly wasn't the case for Noah. It was setting the table for something really, really bad to go down.

So what happens? Look at chapter 9, verse 22. It says that Ham, who's the father of Canaan, again notice that, that's interesting. Why just Canaan? Why are you mentioning Canaan only? "Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers

outside." I remember walking in on my parents naked. My life has forever been traumatized. It's been seared into my memory. I did not go tell my brothers about it. I just kept that to myself until today when I told all of you guys. But that's not what Ham[2] does.

Whatever he does in there, he goes and he tells his brothers. And then what do the brothers do? "Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders"—I love this —"and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father." Not looking, not looking, not looking, you know, that kind of deal. "Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness." And then, "When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him." Not just what his youngest son saw, but what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers."

Now, if you're new to the Bible, or maybe this is the first time you're reading this, you read this and think to yourself, did I miss something? I mean—maybe you're like me. I accidentally walked in on one of my parents naked. They didn't say, "Cursed be Blaze," you know. They weren't cursing my children. They weren't cursing their grandchildren. Aren't you being a little bit overreactive here, Noah? Talking. And it would be natural to think that unless there's something more going on in between the lines. And if you read this phrase, what he had done to him, I think you pick up on the fact that it was not just seeing Noah naked that was the problem.

Something happened in that tent. Something that's not being stated explicitly, it's maybe being stated in an idiom or a kind of a nice way of talking. Now there's all kinds of theories about what this is. Some people say that it was just a dishonorable act of voyeurism. Some say that Ham went in and he castrated his father. I'm sure he would have woke up from that, but that's one of the theories out there. Some say that Ham engaged in some kind of sexual misconduct, some kind of sexual abuse. And this is more where I lean, whether it was sexually abusing his father or sexually abusing his mother.

And whenever you have a thorny knot like that—like, what is going on in here?— one of the things you want to do as a Bible interpreter, and I'm going to nerd out for just a minute, so if you don't like deep Bible study, just hold on for just a second. But when you come into thorns like this, one of the things that you want to do is to ask the question, has this phrase ever been used anywhere else in the Bible? That's particularly true if it's the same author. So this author is Moses.

What else did Moses write? He wrote the first five books of the Old Testament. So has Moses ever used this language of covering or uncovering nakedness? Does he use it anywhere else? And the answer to that question is yes, he does. In fact, he uses it in the book of Leviticus on several occasions when he's talking about the sexual codes for God's people under this

Mosaic covenant. And if you go to Genesis, I'm sorry, if you go to Leviticus chapter 18, I think that I put these down in your notes.

If you don't have a physical copy of your notes, you can go to broadview.church/notes and keep up that way. I think this is fascinating. Leviticus chapter 18, this is the Lord speaking, and he's saying against incest, he's creating rules against incest, and he says, "None of you shall approach any one of his close relatives to"—what?—"to uncover nakedness." Now that's just a nice way of saying, don't be doing that. "I am the Lord. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father"—interesting here—"the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness."

Now we all just kind of take this for granted. Well, of course you wouldn't sleep with your mother, but you've got to remember there's no one else around back in those days, and there was all kinds of sexual immorality in the other nations where that was not as taboo as it is to us. And so here's the Lord saying, "We don't do that. That's actually bad for you. It's bad for you. It's bad for the people who follow after you, the people born out of those unions. You're going to get all kinds of defects in your genetic code.

So don't do that." If you go to Leviticus chapter 20, verse 11, this just makes it as plain as day, in my opinion, of what's going on in Genesis chapter 9. He says, "If a man lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall be put to death; their blood is upon them." Now the phrase "his father's wife"—maybe this was not the boy's mother, maybe it's like a stepmom or something like that, so he thought, "Well, I guess I can do it. It's not as bad."

And here is the Lord saying, "It is bad. And it's not just bad because of what you're doing to her, it's bad because of what you're doing to him. That is his wife." When you look at the scripture, when it talks about sex between married people, 1 Corinthians chapter 7 says your body doesn't belong to you when you get married. Your body belongs to your spouse and their body belongs to you, and there's this sacred sexual union that happens in marriage where every other person is off limits. And you're off limits to every other person.

And so you don't uncover their nakedness, which is a way of saying don't have sex outside of marriage. Don't have sex outside of that one-man, one-woman, one-lifetime union, because when you do you're deviating from God's design and you're sowing disaster for yourself and your family. Now, if you take that into perspective and you read Genesis chapter 9 and say, okay, Ham goes in and he sees his father's nakedness. He doesn't uncover it, but he sees it. But then he did something to Noah. One of two things happened. It had something to do with sex, and either he sexually assaulted or engaged in some kind of sexual behavior with his father.

Or he engaged in some kind of taboo sexual behavior with his mother. I lean more towards the latter than the former, and I wonder if that's not why Canaan is mentioned every time Ham is mentioned. Because Canaan is the child that came from this unholy act of sexual debauchery. Whatever the case was, Ham does not stop there. He then goes out to his brothers and he begins to brag about it. Now, why is he bragging? I'm sorry, I think I skipped a blank if you're taking notes. Uncovering nakedness is a sexual act that leads to some kind of sexual shame.

Some kind of sexual impropriety took place and then Ham goes out and he starts bragging about it to his brothers. Why is he doing this? I think he's doing this perhaps because he's not happy with his station in the family. Maybe him and his dad started to have a beef, and that beef kind of grew and grew and grew. Maybe Ham was thinking to himself, "Noah is not the man that he once was. He's turned into a drunk. He's drunk every night. He's not taking care of the family. The inheritance is going to go to Japheth, the oldest, or maybe the other part of the inheritance is going to go to Shem, the secondborn.

What's for me? I'm the third born. I get nothing. Maybe I should take it by force. And so I'll just become the father. I'll become the patriarch." That could be what's happening. There's actually a precedent for that in the Old Testament. If you look at the story of King David, one of King David's children—his son by Maacah[3]—his name was Absalom. And he tries to dethrone his father and take it by force And when he makes that attempt, David runs from Jerusalem, and Absalom asks the counselors, "What should I do to kind of seal the deal, to make sure that everyone knows that me and David are done and that this is my throne from now on?"

The rulers tell him, "Well, you need to take David's concubines"—which were not wives, but kind of like—they were women under David's purview, I guess you'd say it that way. It was not a good thing, it was a bad thing, but it's like David's girlfriends. And he says, "You take those concubines and sleep with them on the rooftop in front of all of Israel. And then everyone will know you have shamed your dad. You want nothing to do with your father. And those who are with you will be strengthened because of that shaming of David.

David will never show back up here ever again once you shame him in that way." And maybe that's what's going on with Ham. He's trying to shame his dad. I really don't know. The text doesn't say explicitly. You have these little clues that there was some kind of sexual impropriety, and whatever the cause was, the outcome was the opposite, right? If Canaan's attempt—or I'm sorry, if Ham's attempt was to try to get power and authority in the family, the opposite took place, because as soon as Noah comes to and he realizes, I don't know if it was the next day or maybe nine months later, I don't know exactly when he kind of figured it all out, but he says, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers."

And so whatever sin Noah committed in getting drunk that day, or however many days it happened, the sin of Ham in dishonoring his father was even worse. He was giving an act of dishonor instead of honor. And this is the backdrop for what the Bible teaches about honoring your father and your mother. Exodus chapter 20, verse 12.[4] There's ten big commandments, you guys remember this? Number five on the big Ten list is about honoring your father and mother. And it says, "Honor your father and mother so that it may go well with you in the land, so that your days may be long" in the land "that the Lord your God has given you."

It's not just saying this in kind of like a principle fashion. The death penalty was attached to dishonoring your father and mother in the Old Testament. So when it says honor your father and mother so that you don't die, it's literally saying so that you don't die. It is that big of a deal. Choosing to honor your parents is a big deal. And when you dishonor them, you're inviting a curse down onto your life. You're inviting a danger and discipline from the Lord into your life. And when you choose to honor them, you're inviting a blessing.

Ham chooses dishonor, his brothers choose honor. They walk backwards. They take pains to not look upon the nakedness of their father, and as a result, they are blessed. If you look at the Old Testament, there's some Proverbs that I think apply to this. Proverbs chapter 10, verse 12 says that "hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses." So you kind of see the way of Ham right here. His anger, his hatred, his jealousy was stirring up strife. "I'm going to tell my brothers. I'm going to revolt against my father."

But the other brothers, they say, "No, we're going to cover this up." And love covers a multitude of sins. "We're not going to shame him. We're going to cover his sin." Proverbs chapter 17, verse 9 says, "Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends." You see the way of the brothers up here, they're covering the offense because they're seeking to love their dad and honor their mom. But the one who repeats a matter, in other words, the gossip, the loose lips, begins to separate close friends.

Over and over and over again, the Bible teaches this principle: that as a child you are to honor your parents, even when they're not necessarily honorable people. You may—and many of you in this room probably do—have a father or a mother who is dishonorable in every way. Maybe they are alcoholics, maybe they're addicted to some kind of substance abuse, maybe they beat you and mistreated you and did all sorts of evil against you. It does not mean you cannot show them honor. And the reason you're showing them honor is not because they're honorable people.

That's not what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches you honor them for the Lord's sake. You honor them. Another example, Ephesians chapter 6 says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." In other words, God is the ultimate authority, and as the ultimate authority, he's established other authority in your life. Sometimes that's your parents,

sometimes that's your boss. Sometimes that's the government. Doesn't mean there's great governments and great bosses and great parents. Sometimes they're terrible, but that does not excuse you from obeying and honoring and submitting to them.

It's one of God's principles. Don't ask me to explain it. It's just one of the ways that he's designed the universe. And when you can learn to respect authority that's disrespectful and submit to authority you disagree with and honor authority even when they're not very honorable, God will do a special work in your heart and in your life and you'll invite the blessing of God unto you in the next generation. You choose to dishonor your parents, you choose to dishonor them and to sin against them and to shame them. It may feel good in the moment, but you're bringing a curse down onto yourself and onto the next generation.

And that's exactly what you see in Genesis 9. Ham—this prophecy—look at chapter 9, verse 25 again. Noah says, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." He wanted power, he got the opposite. "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant." Again with Japheth: "May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant." The sins of the father become a curse on the next generation. Now, was every child in the line of Ham cursed?

I don't—some people argue that. Some people argue that Canaan was the birth baby, or the left child, of the situation between Ham[5] and his mom. Some people say that Canaan—that there wasn't some kind of sexual impropriety between Noah's wife and Ham, but that for whatever reason God just chose Canaan to be cursed. However way you want to slice it, however way you want to interpret it, the point is the same. The sins of the father get passed on to the son. The sins of the father get passed on to the next generation.

The curse that one wears gets carried out to the next generation. And this is not just true here. There's other examples of this in the Old Testament, if you go back a couple of chapters in Genesis chapter 4, you hear the story about Cain and Abel. What happens to Cain and Abel? Cain gets jealous and he murders his brother. Because of a fit of anger and rage, he says, "I'm just going to kill him." And you see that same demon of anger get passed on to the next generation. In fact, when it gets to the seventh in the line of Cain, it's a gentleman by the name of Lamech.

And Lamech is so bad that he says, "If Cain's revenge was sevenfold, mine's seventy-sevenfold." In other words, 70 times seven. He says, "If somebody strikes me, I'll kill them. Somebody talks trash about me, I'll beat them to a pulp." Where is that coming from? It's coming from this lineage of anger and demonic rage that got passed on to the next generation, the next generation, and the next generation. When you choose to dishonor your parents, you're inviting a curse onto your life. Now, don't misunderstand me. Can you throw the Exodus passage up there?

This is Exodus chapter 20, verse 5. A lot of people read this passage and they think that God is holding children accountable for the sins of their father because he says, "You shall not bow down to" these false gods, "you shouldn't serve them. I'm the Lord your God, I'm a jealous God. I visit the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me." So he's talking about a spiritual dynamic and a lot of people say, "Well, that's just wrong for God to hold children accountable for their father's sins."

That's not what's going on here. What's going on here is the Lord is saying when you have a spirit that despises God, you want nothing to do with God, you're spiritually disengaged and apathetic or hostile to God, that doesn't stay with you; that gets imparted to your sons, to the third and the fourth generation. You, your sons, your grandchildren, they're going to see that hostility, they're going to feel that hostility against God, and they're going to embrace it for themselves because you have incredible influence over your children, for good or for ill.

You assume the gospel in one generation, you should not expect for the next generation to say, "Oh, let's discover the gospel." No, you assume it, the next generation loses it, and the next generation loses it even more so because the influence of the father gets passed on to the next generation. You have tremendous power as a dad to bless or to curse, and the sins that you let go unchecked, especially sins against your own father, will shape, positively or negatively, the next generation. It's almost like a prophecy Noah speaks over his son Ham and his descendants.

And we don't have time to get into the deep Bible study of this, but if you do kind of a sociology study on what happens with the line of Ham, it is crazy. All of the big bads of the Old Testament, like I mean big bads like in a video game, like the big, big Bowser. The Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Egyptians, Pharaoh, all the big bads, they all come from Ham.[6] All of them. If you go to Genesis chapter 10, you see that these sons begin to form nations and that these nations, some walk with the Lord and some don't.

You see the war between the serpent and the woman re-inflamed in Genesis chapter 10 with this table of nations. And the Canaanites are the most wicked, evil people in all of the Old Testament. They combine politics, demonic spirituality, sexuality, and child sacrifice everywhere that they go. These are the people, the Canaanites are the people that Solomon interbreeds with and he ends up building a high place for Molech[7] because of the influence of this evil that started with a dad who made a terrible choice. And that choice became a curse on him and his children.

So your actions are not neutral if you're a dad. Your words are not neutral. Your sins can become a curse on the next generation. But it's not just the curse, it's also the blessing. Read again chapter 9, verse 26. "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem. May God enlarge Japheth; let him dwell in the tents of Shem." Then at the end it says Noah lived 350 years, and all the

days were 950 years, and then he died. The blessing to Shem is a blessing on his God. This is the Lord God.

This is the covenant name of God. So Abraham, the Israelites, that whole deal comes out of Shem. Japheth, some say the guys like Alexander the Great and the big conquerors, warriors in human civilization have come from the line of Japheth. The point is that the blessing is passed on to the next generation, both blessing and cursing. It goes either way. So real quickly, what does this mean for us as dads? Number one, you have tremendous power over your children, for good or for ill. For better or for worse, as a dad you have power to shape them.

And so you need to be extremely intentional and strategic in the words that you say, the way that you say them, the actions that correspond with the words that you say, because they are shaping the next generation. Don't be casual, don't be complacent. Be strategic in the words that you speak. Number two, what takes years to build can be destroyed in a moment. Noah spent 120 years with his sons building the ark. I'm sure they had some good times. I'm sure they had some kind of relationship, some kind of an intimacy.

And then in one moment, it was all destroyed. Now I don't know if it was a one-time got-drunk-passed-out or if it was like a death by a thousand cuts. The point is it was there one day and gone the next. And some of you dads know what I'm talking about because you're living it right now. You thought your children would never speak to you the way that they do. You thought you would always have access to your grandchildren or to your children, but you did something. Something happened. And what was there one day was gone the next.

And so be wise how you live. Number three, when it comes to raising your children, there's some things you can control and some things you cannot. And the story of Noah is a powerful illustration of that truth. There's the Serenity Prayer. A lot of the 12-step programs talk about it. I think it's helpful here. Reinhold Niebuhr says, "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, and the courage to change the things that I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." There's some things you can control with your kids and some things you can't.

When you think about Noah, every one of Noah's kids saw the great things of God in his past. Every single one of Noah's kids saw him walk by faith and live obedient to the commands of God. They watched him build a boat for 120 years. They watched him stand strong in the face of criticism. They watched God's miraculous provision and faithfulness every step of the way. If anybody's children had a chance for becoming a believer and God using them greatly, it was Noah's kids. Two of them did, one of them didn't.

Because you can control some things, but you can't control others. You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink. You can teach your children the Bible, you cannot

make them believe it. You can teach them all about the gospel and about the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot make them receive him as a personal Lord and Savior; that's something only God can do by his grace, through his Holy Spirit. And so when it comes to being a dad, you have some things you can control, and on the things you can control, you better be strategic and wise and all in.

But when it comes to the things you cannot control, you throw your hands up in the air, you put your knees down on the ground, and you ask for God to do what only he can do. You are dependent. You can't control everything. So you should pray like you can't control everything. Be strategic in what you say, be wise in how you live, be dependent in how you pray. And then finally, the ultimate point is that this story is not about Noah and his children. It's easy to get wrapped up in Noah's failures and Ham's gross sin.

But if you're not careful, it can kind of devolve into this moralistic Sunday school lesson that comes across, "Be like Shem and Japheth and not like Ham." But that's not the point of the story. Everything in the Old Testament is preparing us for the new. The Noahic covenant is preparing us for the new covenant in Jesus Christ. Noah's failures and Ham's failures are good for one thing. It's good to remind us we're just like them. I could be a Noah. And you might not sleep with your mother, but you could do something just as maybe not just as grotesque, but you can imagine yourself sinning sexually and cursing the next generation because of your sexual sins.

We're just like them. And as fathers and sons, we will never deliver what we need to deliver. We will never be perfect. We will always be imperfect as fathers and sons, but there's one father and son who will never fail. And that's our heavenly Father and his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so these tragic stories in the Old Testament are a way to deal honestly with the human condition that we all suffer with. Your righteousness is like a polluted garment before the Lord. It is not sufficient. And so this is an invitation for us as weak people, as sinful people, to say to the Lord Jesus, "Would you forgive me of my failures as a father?

And would you give me the wisdom to speak well and to live well, and to shepherd well my children, so that I can ultimately entrust them to your will and to your kingdom and to your fatherly care from here on out?" You have a little window as a dad to give that ultimate care of them to the Lord. And this morning is a fresh reminder and invitation for you to do just that. And so as we close out our time and we enter into a time of invitation, I want to offer a couple different ways to respond.

Number one, if you're a dad and you don't know Jesus, this morning is an invitation for you to put your faith in Jesus Christ, to be forgiven of your weaknesses and sins as a dad. And to find forgiveness and grace and cleansing from your sin and a new hope and a new future and a new power to lead your family as God's designed you to lead it. You will not do it in your

own strength. You will only do it in the strength of the Spirit of God and that can only come through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

And so if you don't know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, we're going to have a time of response. You can come to the front and say, "I need to give my life to Jesus." You may want to scan that QR code and let us know through the email that you want to have that conversation, you want to make that decision. But today's the day. Maybe today's the day when things change. You may be a dad that you lost everything. It's too late for you, and you're despairing because you think it's all gone.

But what the enemy has taken, the Lord Jesus Christ can restore. And it may be this morning that he's inviting you to a new hope and a new future and regaining some of what you lost because of the sin that was in your life. Some of you this morning may have dads that are bad, or you may have parents that hurt you and abused you. This morning it's an invitation for you to, out of reverence for the ultimate heavenly Father, release them from the hurt that they caused you. To forgive them, to reject the spirit of Cain, to reject that anger and bitterness and say, "I choose to honor, even though they're dishonorable.

For God's sake, I forgive them. I'm not going to hold it against them any longer." It doesn't mean you have to give them access. It doesn't mean you have to trust them. It doesn't mean that your relationship has to become super friendly. It just means that you no longer let that bitterness control you and shape the way you're treating your children and your spouse. You give it to the Lord and allow the Lord to make you new. Others of you maybe this morning are a little bit complacent and comfortable in your fatherly role, and this morning's been a fresh reminder for you that the enemy is like a lion seeking whom he will devour.

There are no neutral moments. There is no neutral territory. Every moment is significant. And so this morning, maybe just a wake-up call for you to say, "Lord, would you help me to have eyes to see and ears to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to me?" However the Lord leads, you can respond now as Taylor leads us. Father in heaven, we thank you for this morning and this passage. It's just such a compelling reminder of your sufficiency as our ultimate dad, of your grace and dependability and faithfulness. And it's also a stark reminder of our weakness and our need for your grace and mercy to cover up where we're lacking.

And I know that there's people in this room with whom this message and these truths are going to fall differently. And so I just pray, Holy Spirit, that you would be our teacher, that you would be our counselor, that you would right now, in this moment, speak to our hearts to lead us in a path that is straight and that is good, that is going to bring life and blessing, hope and healing, to restore maybe what's been taken from the enemy. And then, heavenly Father, would you make our church, Broadview Baptist Church, a church full of men and dads who walk not in their own wisdom nor in their own strength, but in the strength that God provides, and the wisdom that is a gift from heaven.

Because they're not walking in their own power, but they're walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, who's been given as a gift. The fullness of his Spirit given as a gift when we will repent of our sin, surrender to you, and ask for you to fill us. And so in this moment, would you do that for every man who's willing to pray that prayer? And we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to take just a few moments. If you're new to church, it's called an invitation. It's a time of response.

So you can respond to the Lord however you want. There's an altar for you to pray. I'll be happy to pray with anybody that wants to pray. You can scan the QR code and communicate with us that way if you're more comfortable. A couple of different ways for you, those moms, grandmoms, ladies in the room, children in the room. You can also spend some time praying for the dad in your life, the grandads. Maybe this morning would be an opportunity for you to encourage them and to bless them. Certainly as a church we want to pray for all the present fathers and future fathers that our church should be characterized by the love and faithfulness and righteousness of our heavenly Father.

Lord, we thank you for your word. We thank you for your spirit. We thank you how your Holy Spirit uses your word to transform us and to change us, to wash away the old, to put on the new. And so would you do what only you can do to change our hearts and to change our behaviors and to give us the kind of lives that are going to glorify you and advance your kingdom in our families and in our church, around the world. And we pray it in Jesus' name. God's people said, "Amen."

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "He used David to build the temple"; God told David he would not build the temple, and Solomon built it, though David gathered materials and made preparations for it. Source: 1 Chronicles 22:5–10; 1 Kings 6:1, 14 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "that's not what Canaan does"; in the text it is Ham who sees his father's nakedness and tells his two brothers. Source: Genesis 9:22 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩
3. Transcript note: spoken as "which also came from an adulterous affair with Bathsheba"; Absalom was David's son by Maacah, daughter of Talmai king of Geshur (Bathsheba's sons included Solomon). Source: 2 Samuel 3:3; 12:24 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩
4. Transcript note: spoken as "Exodus chapter 20, verse 5"; the command to honor father and mother is Exodus 20:12 (Exodus 20:5 is the verse about visiting iniquity to the third and fourth generation, cited later in the sermon). Source: Exodus 20:5, 12 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩
5. Transcript note: spoken as "between Cain and his mom"; the theory being described concerns Ham (Canaan's father) and Noah's wife. Source: Genesis 9:18–25 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩
6. Transcript note: spoken as "they all come from Canaan"; in the Table of Nations, Egypt and Cush (whose son Nimrod founded Babel and built Nineveh) descend from Ham, not from Canaan, and Asshur is listed among Shem's sons. Source: Genesis 10:6–12, 22 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩
7. Transcript note: spoken as "he ends up sacrificing babies to Moloch"; Scripture says Solomon "went after" Milcom and built a high place for Molech, but does not record Solomon himself sacrificing children (later kings Ahaz and Manasseh did). Source: 1 Kings 11:5–7; 2 Kings 16:3; 21:6 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩