

Before the Rain: Genesis 6:9-22

Main Idea: Faith learns to order life around God's Word rather than what can presently be seen.

I. Determined End | Genesis 6:9-13

Genesis 6:9-22 is the beginning of the flood account. We first see Noah described as "righteous," "blameless in his generation," and a man who "walked with God." It's important to note that Noah first "found favor in the eyes of the LORD." Noah's life doesn't explain why he received grace. His life reflects what grace produced in him. By calling Noah "blameless," it does not indicate that Noah was sinless, but rather that he had a life that wasn't divided. There is consistency between Noah's faith in God and the life Noah was living. That kind of integrity is worth thinking about in a culture where it is easy to divide ourselves into different versions of the same person. We can have a church version, a work version, an online version, and a private version, each with slightly different standards. **Biblical integrity does not allow Christians to be comfortable maintaining parts of their lives where Christ is denied entrance.** Grace brings all aspects of our lives under submission to God who is Lord over all.

Moses then changes focus back to the world at large after looking at Noah. The earth is "corrupt" and "filled with violence." Verse 5 exposes the root in the human heart, it is only evil continually. Now we see that root produce fruit in the world people have sinned in. **Sin rarely remains contained within the person committing it. It affects those around the person committing sin bringing disorder, pain, and loss into the lives of others.** An angry person doesn't simply have an anger problem; the people close to him experience the fear, tension, or hurt produced by his anger. Genesis 6 shows this on the largest possible scale. Hearts turned away from God have formed a world in which violence now fills the earth. The corruption within people has become corruption between people. Eventually people stop identifying the problem as sin and describe it as personality, family culture, stress, or "the way they are." That is one reason unrepentant sin is so deceptive. We don't just become accustomed to engaging in sin, we can become comfortable living in a world filled with sin.

That also helps explain why Scripture functions as a mirror rather than a window through which we scrutinize everyone else. A corrupt culture should grieve Christians hearts, but cultural wickedness can become a convenient distraction from personal repentance. It is much easier to point out what is wrong "out there" than to ask what our own anger, greed, bitterness, lust, pride, or selfishness is doing to those around us. James describes the person who hears God's Word but does not act upon it as someone who looks into a mirror and immediately forgets what he has seen (James 1:22-25). The goal of addressing sin properly is not self-condemnation, but holiness. **God exposes the damaging nature of sin because His people are no longer supposed to make peace with what Christ came to save them from.** Repentance also includes identifying where we have gotten used to our sin and stopped treating it like something that needs to be put to death. Christians should refuse to make peace with what God calls sin and continually bring those areas of their life under His authority.

Verse 13 is the first time Noah hears God's plans that He has, "determined to make an end of all flesh." Until God spoke to him, Noah lived in a world that appeared permanent. People wake up, work, marry, eat, and assume tomorrow will generally resemble today. But now Noah knows that God's determined judgement of sin is coming. That does not mean ordinary life is meaningless. It actually helps put ordinary life into perspective. **We are able to enjoy created things without needing them to last forever, and we are free to lose things without succumbing to the belief that all is lost.** God determines the beginning and end of all things.

To Ponder:

1. Noah's "blamelessness" describes integrity rather than sinless perfection. Where are Christians most tempted to compartmentalize life into sacred and secular pockets? How can a believer practically avoid this practice?
2. How should an awareness of the effects of sin on others change the seriousness with which we address sin? Why are we usually quicker to notice how someone else's sin affects us than how our own sin affects them?

II. Promised Future | Genesis 6:14-22

After God tells Noah about the coming judgement, he gives him detailed instructions on being preserved through it. The ark begins with God. Its dimensions, purpose, occupants, and provisions are given by Him. **The ark serves as an important picture of what Scripture will continue to make clear: sinners do not save themselves.** Human designed religion directs people in the opposite direction. In the face of guilt, death, or wrongdoing, other world religions encourage self-help or self-development by means of morality, achievement, or clarity of thought. All of these solutions depend entirely on man's efforts. Noah is saved through the judgment because God provides what Noah could not provide for himself. His obedience is absolutely necessary, but it is obedience based on what God has already revealed.

This truth helps us think more carefully about the statement, "God has a plan." Christians say it because it is true, but Genesis 6 gives the concept more substance. God commits Himself by His Word: "I will establish my covenant with you." A covenant gives Noah something to depend on. God has spoken, and Noah can build his life around what God has promised. We need that kind of trust because it is easy to mistake what we want God to do with what God has said He will do. We may pray for healing, a restored relationship, financial stability, or some other good outcome, and there is nothing wrong with asking God for those things. The problem is when we begin to treat our hopes as if they were promises. **Faith does not mean we believe that God will give us every outcome we desire. It means trusting Him where He has spoken plainly, while continuing to depend on His wisdom in the places where He has not revealed every aspect of His will.**

Noah is given real responsibility. He has to build the ark, gather provisions, and do what God commands, but the final outcome still belongs to God. **Faithfulness means taking seriously what God has made us stewards over without acting as though everything depends on us.** We are responsible to obey, work, and care well for what God has entrusted to us, but we are not responsible for controlling every outcome. Anxiety is often associated with trying to control the things God never asked us to. Trusting God frees us to be faithful with what God has given us while leaving what we cannot control in His hands.

The closing statement of the passage carries weight with it, "Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him." Hebrews 11:7 explains that Noah acted "concerning events as yet unseen." In the face of increasing wickedness, Noah structured his life around God's revealed Word. Every person shapes their lives around some anticipated future. Noah's building of the ark was more than preparation for the flood. Every act of obedience showed that he believed God's promised future was real enough to reorient his present life. Christians are called to live with that same perspective. **Much of what God promises us has not yet been fully seen, but resurrection, judgment, Christ's return, and the restoration of all things are real promises with great relevance for how we live today.** They are realities that should determine what we value, what we pursue, and what we are willing to obey God in now. This is why the new covenant matters so deeply for Christian obedience. Jesus says, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20). Christ has already acted, and God has bound our hope to Him. We know that Christ will keep His people, that resurrection is coming, that sin and death will not have the final word, and that Christ's kingdom will be fully established. Like God's word to Noah, those truths are meant to rearrange how we live today.

To Ponder:

3. What happens when Christians say they believe God's promises but organize their lives around the same fears, priorities, and expectations as everyone else? What does a life shaped around God's word practically look like?
4. Where are you most tempted to delay obedience until circumstances feel safer, clearer, or more favorable? What would it look like for you to begin obeying now regardless of potential outcomes?