

Don't Miss the Point!

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. Would you please keep your finger on Genesis chapter 6 and 7? We'll be referring to that passage from time to time.

Just as I said, it's a great privilege and indeed a great responsibility to sit together around the word of our living God as we hear this morning being encouraged.

So the passage we are sharing this morning comes from the book of Genesis chapter 6. It's the story that we, most of us, are aware of, the story of Noah, the story of the flood.

The book of Genesis is one of the most important books in Scripture. It is divided into two major parts, from 1 to 11, which focuses on the beginning of humankind, the beginning of the universe in general.

And the second part of the book of Genesis, 12 to 50, is the beginning of the nation of Israel. And it begins with the founding fathers of the nation of Israel, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[1 : 07] The passages we are reading this morning, chapter 6, falls in the first part of the book of Genesis, 1 to 11. It's actually the longest of that portion, the story of Noah.

In chapter 1 and 2 of the book of Genesis, we have the story of creation. In chapter 2, I mean, in chapter 3, we have the story of the fall of humankind into sin and the breaking of relationship between mankind and God.

In chapter 4 and 5, we have the story of Cain, which goes up to chapter 5. And chapter 6 is the longest. In chapter 6, 7, and 8, up to 9, that's the story of Noah.

Moses, the writer of the book of Genesis, took time to write his story. It's the most important story. It connects the story of the beginning and the story that comes after the story of the nation of Israel.

Now, suppose you are the writer of any story. You will be disappointed if the reader of your story does not come to grasp the message that you are trying to communicate through the story that you are writing.

[2 : 19] Suppose you are a director of a movie. You will be greatly frustrated if the viewer of that particular movie does not come to understand and get the message that you are trying to bring across the movie that you are writing.

And Moses, the writer of the book of Genesis, has taken much time to explain the story of Noah. And the way he has put the story of Noah together, the way he has arranged and structured together, he has put it in such a way that the reader does not have to miss the point, does not have to miss the message that he is trying to bring across.

So the story of Noah, especially the story of the flood, that goes up to chapter 9. It's divided into two halves. The first half of the story begins from chapter 6.

It goes up to chapter 7. And chapter 8, up to the end of chapter, we have the second half of the story. Moses has deliberately put together the second half of the story is the mirror image of the first, but in a reverse order.

For instance, in chapter 6, God begins by deciding to destroy humankind because of the corruption that has gone into the world.

[3 : 52] But at the end of the second half of the story, there is a reversal. God resolved not to destroy. So we have two halves of the stories in the story of Noah.

The first one is the decreation, and the second one is the recreation. They all come together and meet at one point. Where they meet is the message that Moses is trying to communicate.

He doesn't want the reader to miss that point. It comes to chapter 8, verse 1. That is the middle of the story. That's the middle of the two halves of this.

That's where they meet, and that's where Moses wants the reader to actually focus and not lose the message he's trying to bring across. Moses will be greatly disappointed if the reader of the story of the flood misses that point.

Chapter 8, verse 1. But God remembered Noah. This is the middle. This is the point. This is the piece that connects the two halves together.

[5 : 02] To tell us that the story of the flood is not primarily about the flood. The story of Noah is not primarily about judgment.

Even though we have elements of judgment in the story, we have the element of the flood, but the story of Noah is all about God remembering Noah.

It's the story of salvation. It's the story of God who has been moved in his grace to save Noah out of the lost world.

Therefore, Moses does not want to take Noah as the hero of the story. The story of Noah has got one hero, and the hero of the story is God, who has moved in his grace to save Noah.

It is about God remembering Noah. And each time we talk about God remembering, it's not a mere recollection. When remembering is associated with God, it's all about God moving toward the object of his love and act in his grace.

[6 : 13] You will remember when God remembered Abraham. He acted and saved the Lord. When God remembered Rachel, she conceived.

And this time around, when God remembers Noah, God comes to Noah and saves Noah out of the lost world. It's important when you read a story of Noah, you don't miss the point that it's about salvation.

Even though there are elements of judgment, even though there are elements of the flood, but it's basically about God remembering one particular person and his family and bringing him out of the lost world.

That's the grace of our Lord. And now that we understand this is the message that Moses is trying to bring across, the message of salvation, the message of the gracious father remembering Noah and bringing him out of the lost world and bringing him to his relationship with himself.

It's better now we know that. This story is about this kind of a man God who saves. We would like now to know the kind of a man God saves.

[7 : 22] Noah. And I'm going to divide our sermon into two major points this morning. The first one will look at the righteous man, the life of Noah. And the second point will look about the unrighteous world, the context of Noah.

And the last point of my sermon this morning will actually talk about the righteousness preached. That is the response of Noah in his time of unrighteous world.

Let's start with the first point, the righteous man. Because the story is trying to convey Noah as the kind of man God saves out of the lost world.

Let's begin with Noah in chapter 6 verse 9. We see that Moses has taken time to describe the life of Noah in three major dimensions.

Noah is described in three major points. The first one, Noah is described as the righteous man. In chapter 6 verse 9.

[8 : 30] Noah was the righteous man. Now when you read the scriptures you will understand that there is no one who is righteous in the eyes of the Lord.

It's very striking when you read the passage like this. You hear Noah being presented as a righteous man. What does that mean? Does it mean that Noah was a perfect man?

Not at all. And when you get into the book of Isaiah chapter 65. You hear the Bible says that even our righteous acts, even our righteous deeds.

They are filthy rags in the eyes of our Lord. So when Noah is described as a righteous man, it doesn't necessarily mean that Noah is perfect.

Righteousness in the Bible, especially the righteousness of God, is not something that is found in human beings. It's not something inherent in our nature.

[9 : 29] It's something that comes outside of us. It's something that comes as a gift from God. Because no one can stand rightly before God based on his or her own righteousness.

Because our righteousness is filthy rags before the Lord. Everything we do, whether good or bad, are tainted by sins. Righteousness is a word of standing.

The standing of Noah is right before God. Not because Noah was righteous, but because Noah believed God. In the first place, Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

If you see in chapter 6 verse 8, the Bible says, But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. It's all about grace. God has moved toward Noah in his grace.

And Noah believed God. And God granted unto him his righteousness. Now Noah can stand in the right standing before God.

[10 : 28] Not because he is a good man. But because he has trusted in the word of the living God. Righteousness is something that we find for the very first time here in the book of Genesis.

It's mentioned for the first time when we read the story of Noah as a righteous man. But that does not mean that it is... The concept itself is actually earlier than this. If you remember in the story of the fall, when Adam and Eve fell into sin, they tried by themselves to cover with their own righteousness.

They tried their best to cover up their own guilt and shame. They tried their best to put themselves right before God. But they couldn't. Because righteousness that is necessary to put you and me right with God does not come from man.

It comes from God alone. And in chapter 3 verse 25 of the book of Genesis, we hear that God in his mercy comes with the garments and clothes them together.

This movement of God doing that, it is actually showing how much righteousness can only come from God alone. So when Noah is actually described here as a righteous man, it simply means that his righteousness comes from God.

[11 : 47] Because nobody can stand in the right way before God based on his own deeds, based on his own righteousness. He has been granted, has been given.

I think you remember Abraham in chapter 15 of the book of Genesis and verse 6. The Bible says Abraham believed in God. So it shows very much that the righteousness that can put someone right before God does not come from man.

It comes as a gift as we put our faith in him, as we put our trust in God. This is the reason why Noah is described as a righteous man.

He is in the right stand because of what God has done. And because Noah has actually put his trust in the Lord. Not because Noah was a righteous man. Because the scripture tells us that no one can stand before God based on his or what he has done.

Actually, the right of the book of Hebrew is very clear on that. In chapter 11, verse 7, he tells us, By faith Noah was warned about things not yet seen.

[12 : 55] In holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became hear of the righteousness that comes by faith. So it's very clear that the righteousness of Noah that is being described in chapter 6, verse 9, comes from God.

It's because Noah believed God and it was credited unto him, the righteousness. He's now in the right stand before God. The word righteousness is a word of position.

So, same applies to all of us. Nobody can stand before God based on his merit. We can only stand right before God if we put our trust in what God has already done in his son.

When we believe the Lord Jesus Christ and what he has done on the cross, God is going to put us right with himself. Because he knows that there is nothing good that has been left in us that is necessary for you and me to be put right in the eyes of the Lord.

So this is the first dimension of how Noah is described in the Bible. Noah, the righteous man. Because Noah believed in God. Because he has found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

[14 : 06] And because of that, God has put him right with himself. This is not the only thing that the Bible says about the life of Noah. The second dimension of his life, Noah is also described as blameless.

Look at verse 9. B. It's very clear. Verse 9, it says, Blameless among the people of his time. Noah was blameless among the people of his time.

Just like we from saying that righteousness does not mean that Noah was perfect. Blamelessness does not mean that Noah was sinless. You will see actually in chapter 9 that Noah was also imperfect.

Was a sinful person just like you, just like me. But yet he is being described here as blameless. What does that mean? It doesn't mean that Noah was sinless. Because the scripture tells us in 1 John 1 verse 9.

That if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If Noah is described as blameless, it doesn't mean that he was sinless.

[15 : 10] It simply means that the moral conduct of Noah was above reproach among all the people of his time. It simply means that when somebody has been genuinely put right with God, and somebody has been freely forgiven, that gift of faith and righteousness is enough to motivate a person to live a life that is blameless in a corrupt society.

So the life of a believer is a life that is above reproach. The Bible is very clear. Even when you are about to elect somebody to be an elder of the church, one of the characteristics is that he must be above reproach.

He must be worthy of respect. Noah was that kind of a man because of his genuine faith and trust in God, because of the fact that he found favor in the hearts of the Lord and was forgiven and put right with God.

That motivated his life to live a blameless life. Noah was a man who lived a holy life. And the scripture tells us that the grace of God that has saved you and me teaches us to run away from ungodly things.

No one can claim to be a righteous man and yet live a life that is not pleasing unto God. If we are truly Christians and we have been put right with God, that is enough to produce enough good works that will be giving God a glory.

[16 : 55] Noah's moral conduct was above reproach. This is the second dimension of the life of Noah. And this is clear enough. We cannot live a blameless life if we are not yet right before God.

The very first aspect that we need is to be put right with God. Because the relationship between us and God was broken. We cannot live a life that is holy in order to be right with God.

Because nobody can impress God by the way they live. But in other words, when we become right with God, because of his grace, because of our trust in what God has done in his son, and that will actually change our lives.

We will be people above reproach in a corrupt world. Noah's moral conduct was blameless. This is the second dimension of the life of Noah.

But the writer Moses goes beyond that. He gives us the third dimension of his life. Noah walked with God. Noah is the second person in the book, in the whole Bible, to be described as walking with God.

[18 : 12] The first one is Enoch, who walked with God. This does not mean that these are the only people who walked with God. But I am talking about where the Bible mentions so clearly that they walked with God.

Noah walked with God. What does it mean? But we know that in the garden, Adam and Eve, just before they fell into sin, they were walking with God.

Even though the Bible does not mention that they walked with God. We know Abraham, the friend of God. We know that he actually walked with God. Even though the Bible does not mention that he walked with God.

But it is very clear with Noah and Enoch that they walked faithfully with God. Noah is the kind of man that even though he was living in a corrupt world, he walked faithfully with God.

What does that mean? It means that Noah was enjoying a close, intimate relationship with God. Noah was going step by step with his God in a time when everybody was forsaken about God.

[19 : 16] Noah was an obedient man. It is all about obedience. Noah was a man who could say yes to the word of his God, even when everybody said no to what God was saying.

If you read in chapter 7, Moses took time about four times to repeat a word, Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

That's chapter 6, verse 22. And in chapter 7, verse 5, And Noah did all that the Lord commanded him. In chapter 7, verse 9, Noah did everything as God commanded him.

It took about four times for Moses to describe the life of obedience because Noah was a man who was working with God.

Working with God is enjoying that close relationship. The relationship of Noah and his God was not a casual relationship. It was not that kind of relationship that was just far away.

[20 : 18] It was a relation that was very close, that intimate relationship, just like the relationship between husband and wife. It was a relationship that was very close to the point where Noah was believing and obeying the word of the bare word of God.

This is the kind of a man God saves out of the lost world. A righteous man. A blameless man. A man whose life was above reproach.

A man was enjoying a close, intimate relationship with God. A man was obeying God's words at every step. This is a man God saves.

And so we have a picture of what a Christian really looks like in practice. If you call yourself, I call myself a Christian or a believer, we are the people that God has put right with himself, not because of what we did, not because of what we are, because we are sinners by nature.

We have been put right with God because of not what we have done, but what the Lord Jesus Christ has done on the cross. That is enough to make God looking unto you with his favor.

[21 : 29] Out of the lost world we are. What a grace that you and me, we have found favor in the eyes of the Lord. You should always remember that the love of God is in two aspects.

There is a general love of God that reaches everybody out there, just like we enjoy the sunshine, whether you are a child of God or you are not.

Just like we enjoy the rains, whether you are a believer or you are not a believer. The love of God reaches everybody. That is the general kind of the love of God.

But there is a love of God that is special, that does not reach everybody. The love of God that comes and reaches you and makes you a member of his family.

That love of God is the one that went to meet and reach somebody like Noah in a lost world, not because Noah was good enough, but because God was gracious to Noah.

[22 : 28] We should always remember that we have found favor in the eyes of the Lord. This is the kind of a person God has actually served in the lost world. The writer of the story of Noah, Moses goes beyond describing the life of Noah.

He tells us a little bit now about the world of Noah. This righteous man, blameless man who walked with God, he was living in an unrighteous world, the world that was corrupt.

And Moses takes about two dimensions. Noah's life is described in three dimensions, but the world of Noah is described in two dimensions.

The first one is corrupt. And the word corruption is actually used about three times in the text. Look at verse 11.

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight. Look at verse 12. God saw how corrupt the earth had become. For all the people of the earth had corrupted their ways.

[23 : 35] This is how the world of Noah has been described. The world that was corrupt. It's not only one person, but the Bible is very clear that all the people of the earth had corrupted their ways.

It was a corrupt world. Nothing good was left in that society of Noah. The world of Noah was immoral, was unethical.

It was a world where people were breaking the laws. Not only breaking the laws, even making their own laws. Not following what God has actually prescribed.

This is the context in which Noah lived. If you read the way Moses describes the nature of the people during the time of Noah in chapter 6 verse 5, you'll wonder, the Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thought of human heart was only evil all the time.

This is the world of Noah. Noah, everybody was corrupted. Everyone has corrupted their ways. There was no law.

[24 : 48] Everybody was doing what was right in their own eyes. And yet this man was the only person that has found favor in the eyes of God. When you compare the world of Noah and our society today, it's pretty the same world we are in.

Our world is corrupt. We are living among the lawless people. We are sinful people. And we don't care about the laws of God anymore. We make up our own laws.

You've just heard about the Supreme Court in America endorsing the same-sex marriages. And just recently, the South African law has also said adultery is no longer a legal issue.

We are living in a world where the laws of God are being broken one by one. And people are making for themselves their own laws. It's a corrupt world.

Nobody pays attention to God anymore. We are gods on our own. Nobody can tell us what to do. We can figure out ourselves what we can do. This is the world that is corrupt.

[25 : 56] Nobody can tell where we go because we are lost completely. We don't know where we are going. We are ready to shed blood like no man's business.

This world we are in, there is no kindness. There is no generosity. So it's just for a few people that God has actually found favor in their eyes.

When you walk everywhere in the streets, you see what is being advertised. It's all about immoral stuff. Immorality has become part and parcel of our culture.

The beauty of music has been corrupted. Music is being used now to promote violence and to promote sex and all other things. The world is completely corrupted, just like the world of Noah.

We are selfish on our own, racial discrimination, on many other things. This is the world that we are in, just like the world of Noah. We don't mind about other people.

[26 : 54] Everything is about me. Everything is about me and myself. Nothing about God. Even the so-called gospel that is being preached today, many people are preaching to promote themselves.

Come to me. I will pray for you. I will give this. It's all about things and what they can enjoy themselves. The world is corrupt. Nobody thinks about a creator, the one who has brought us on this planet.

This is how the world of Noah and our world is. Corrupt. It has been described as a corrupt world. But the second dimension is not only corrupt. It is going to say it is full of violence.

Violence all over the place. The use of force to damage one's life, to hate one another. Even when we try to negotiate for our good life, negotiation happens through violence.

The only means and ways that we can get on top in our society is through violent means. Everything is about violence. Even when the wife is talking to the husband, is always using violent words.

[28 : 04] We hate one another. Violence has become something that we learn from childhood. It's part of our culture. How do we get to the top? All the people we call heroes in our time, many of them have gone to that level through violent means.

Violence is the god of our society. We enjoy to see bloodshed. We enjoy when we see somebody dying and crying.

We don't mind. As recently, you actually saw what happened in Kezedan when someone is actually put on, burning someone and people around are clapping and even enjoying when someone else is dying.

Violence has made people to be completely corrupt and far away from God. If you want to become a famous person in any field in our society, you use violent means.

You jump on people, you hate people, you use words that actually are right and you move. This is the world we are in where violence has become the god of the time.

[29 : 10] To become famous, you use violent means. For the president of the United States of America to prove that he is the best man of America is when he went on to kill Osama Bin Laden.

It's all about killing. It's all about shedding blood. To become a hero is about killing one another. It's about violence. It's about using means that are not right in the eyes of the Lord.

But it's something very contrasting when you read the scriptures you hear this is the world of Noah but here is one person that God has actually saved out of the sinful world.

What a grace. In a world that is corrupt full of violence like this one the Lord has actually looked his love did not bypass you and me.

We are his people. And the last point for my sermon let's look at the response of Noah the righteous man living in an righteous world corrupt and full of violence how did you respond?

[30 : 11] How did Noah respond in that context where violence was the God of the time? How did Noah respond in that context where corruption was actually the order of the day?

the first thing that you see in the way Noah responded is when you read the book of Peter you'll understand that just like Lot who was not happy with what was happening in Sodom and Gomorrah the first response of a righteous man living in a corrupt world you will be troubled you will be tormented you will be concerned you will be upset you will be unhappy with the immoral conduct of the people around you just like Lot Noah was tormented in his soul he was troubled in his soul because of what was happening of course God is in control no matter what is happening in the world no matter how corrupt the world has become it doesn't mean that God is not in control God is in control but that does not mean that the people of God will be happy with what is going on if you and me we are people that God has freely forgiven and has put right with himself we will be concerned we will be unhappy we will be upset with what is happening

I think you remember you remember the words of the wife of Billy Graham recently just after the Supreme Court has endorsed the same sex marriages in America she said if God does not punish America then he owes an apology to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah she may be right or wrong in the way she expressed but the point I want to make is she was frustrated if you are a righteous man a righteous person living in a corrupt world you will be unhappy with what is happening around you will be concerned you will be troubled you will be tormented because what is happening around is actually something that is not pleasing in the eyes of the Lord because of the depraved conduct of the people you will be tormented that's the first response of Noah if you are living in a society like ours even though we have peace with Jesus Christ but around us you always go tormented and unhappy because of what is happening and the second response of

Noah living in that world Noah was a preacher of righteousness he preached righteousness what does it mean when you go back in the book of Genesis chapter 6 you will not see anywhere Noah going around door to door preaching the word of God we don't know what Peter means when he said Noah was a preacher of righteousness maybe he was going door to door maybe he was organizing a campaign because it took him time for about 120 years to build the ark he believed and trusted in the word of the Lord was he busy preaching at that particular time the righteousness of God that is possible but the most important thing is his own life was a proclamation of the righteousness if you are living in a society that is corrupt your life will be a preaching of righteousness and because your life is preaching righteousness you will be suffered the life of a believer on this planet the life of a

Christian on earth that is corrupt it is a life of suffering Jesus himself promised in John chapter 16 verse 33 you will have troubles in the world but take courage because I overcame the world because he knows that believers are living in a world that is corrupt and then our stand is not to keep quiet our stand is to preach the righteousness of Christ and because we preach the righteousness of Christ which is strange and foreign to a culture that has embraced violence and corruption we will suffer but we will have peace in him there is promise there because the Bible says God protected Noah God who always protected his people no matter what is happening he is absolutely in control of what is happening so we see Noah he is the man that God has freely forgiven he has found favor in the eyes of the Lord and that has motivated him to live a blameless life the person who has enjoyed the intimacy with the

[34 : 49] Lord living in a world that was unrighteous just like our world but preaching the righteousness of God same applies to us we have found favor in the eyes of the Lord God has finally remembered you and me just like I said in the beginning it is the story of God remembering people who are lost in the world God has finally remembered you and me through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ he died on the cross so that we can be put right with him and our lives should actually be a life the life of above reproach and we should never be silenced whenever we see something wrong because we are preachers of the righteousness let us pray Lord we thank you because we have found favor in your eyes and we pray that God you will protect us and you will make us the people that you want us to be as we go out there Lord we are preachers of righteousness in a society that is corrupt and full of violence protect us

Lord for Christ's sake Amen