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Genesis

Chapter 6 - Finding Grace in a Corrupt World

Greater Grace (vs. 5-8)

Genesis 6:5-8: Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

Well, it doesn't take long before you're in a conversation with people and you begin to realize that they basically

just want to do whatever they want to do. The interesting passage in Romans 1 is God goes, “Ok. So, you're professing to be wise. The problem with that is you'll become fools.” And they exchanged the glory of God for corruptible things. Scripture goes on to say that as time goes on, God gives them over to they're degrading passions. The worst thing that could happen to you is that you get what you want. In this particular passage, what we see is man getting what he wants. He goes his own way. We're familiar with the passage, “All we like sheep have gone astray.” We've each gone our own way. Where does that lead? Where do we end up? Well, the passage reads this way,

(Genesis 5:6) “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

Scripture tells us that left to our own vices, things proceed from bad to worse. Man perceives, “I think I can make my life better.” I don't think so. We have a whole history of it not working. You don't have it within you to do it. If you

don't seek God, you have no hope. You're not going to get better.

In fact, let me have you turn to Romans 1, because in Romans 1, you actually see some of the things that you reap.

(Romans 1:28) “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper.”

You go, “Well, what does that look like?” Well, he kind of gives you a list.

(Romans 1:29) “being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,

(Romans 1:30) slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

(Romans 1:31) without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful.”

Sounds like a wonderful place to live.

The way that is put in Galatians 5:19-21, there's:

“...immorality, impurity, sensuality,

(Galatians 5:20) idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

(Galatians 5:21) envying, drunkenness, carousing...”

I think we just described soap operas. People wonder, “Why aren't we getting along?” I'm going, “You just went your own way. You decided to go for what you wanted rather than doing what God told you to do, and you find yourself in this quagmire of evil.” After a while your thoughts are just that way all the time. I mean, the evil takes over. It's one of the reasons why Scripture really defines sin as like leaven. You put a little leaven as Scripture says into the lump and the whole lump goes leaven. The interesting science of leaven is that leaven basically is a kind of fermentation. It's the interesting picture of perhaps somebody getting drunk, but within bread or dough it causes rising, and what sin does is it actually inflates you. It makes you perceive yourself to be greater than you are. As Romans would say, “Don't think more highly of yourself than you ought to think.” But

Pride gets in there and it's like sin. It inflates you and after a while, you get kind of drunk with this sense of "I'm better than everybody else," and you wonder why you have so many problems with relationships. Why aren't we getting along? Why are we always fighting? Well, let's see, are you just thinking about yourself? "Yeah." Well, first of all, it's going to make you really miserable. Secondly, it's going to make you miserable to other people. So, what we have within the passage is really the result of man going on his own.

If you look back in Genesis 6, it says,

(Genesis 6:3) "Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever..."

God is saying is that it wearied him. Of course, God does not grow tired, but there are things in our life that just bring heartache.

It's hard to believe as Ephesians 4:30 says that we can actually grieve the Holy Spirit. It's hard for me to believe that that this particle of dust could grieve God. Yet God desires to have a relationship with us. So, we can grieve

God by the things that we do. This passage is telling us that God desired not to keep fighting us on this.

When you go into Galatians 5, it says that the Spirit of God wars against the flesh. They're diabolically opposed to one another. They don't get along. So, you sense the Spirit of God, and what is the Spirit of God like? Well, let's see. The spirit of God is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, kindness, self-discipline. I mean you go through the fruit of the Spirit, and you begin to realize, "Ok, that's like the opposite of hating, killing, murdering, gossiping and all these things that were listed in the passage. So, what we have is the intent of man in contrast with the intent of God and you have this battle going on. God desires us to have peace. He desires us to have joy, but we, left to our own vices just go literally the opposite way.

As we come to this passage, it starts off with God seeing, looking. God saw this. God's not ignorant about the things that are happening on the earth. Scripture tells us that He's omnipresent. That means that He's everywhere. He's omniscient. That means that He knows everything. So, it's

not like God's in the dark. What we understand is that His focus is on the happenings of the world. Here again, we have a whole universe that He can look at, but His desire is to look at us. It kind of brings us back to that Psalm in which the psalmist says, "What is man, that You are mindful of him? Why would you even think about us? I look at the sun. I look at the stars. Why would you think about us?" But God is looking on man and as He looks on the earth, of course I think man sometimes thinks, "He doesn't see what I'm doing in the dark." And that's actually a quote out of Isaiah, and Isaiah goes, "Ok. So, you don't think He understands the thoughts that you have?" That somehow if you could hide in the dark, God's not going to see you? He's everywhere. He knows everything that you're doing. He knows the thoughts of man.

In Psalm 10, it's one of the arguments there in that particular Psalm in which man in his wickedness thinks, "God hasn't done anything. So, He must not care."

As you go to Psalm 50, it actually says God was silent about the sins. He didn't do anything right away. So, He

says, "You thought I was just like you because I didn't do anything." Man sits around, and he kind of goes deeper into his sin, and after a while, he goes, "Ok. Nothing's happening. I guess I can keep going." His thought is that because he's not being judged with the bolt of lightning at this particular moment that it must be ok with God, and God goes, "It's not ok with Me, but I'm giving you time to decide not to." Unfortunately, man continues to go in his sin. He goes deeper in his sin as he begins to reject God. Sin in and of itself starts off with a passion. It ends with the possession. After a while, that sin is controlling you. Once again, I can't think of many sins that don't kind of seem to start off ok. As Hebrews says, "sin has a pleasure for a moment." But just keep following the trail because it doesn't end well and there's not one single sin that you've ever done that is actually good for you; that'll actually make you happier; that will make your life better. Nevertheless, we go after those things that are contrary to the Spirit of God. It is our nature.

We come to this passage. It starts off,

(Genesis 6:5) “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man...”

I am so thankful that His focus isn't on this because as we will follow the text through, we'll begin to see that His focus ends up with grace to one, and it is the kindness of God that does that. It is very clear throughout Scripture what the intent of God is. Isaiah says God has not spoken in the dark. It's not like God's trying to hide from us what He wants to do; what His desire is for us.

In fact, one of the great passages and Scriptures found in 2 Chronicles 16. It's actually written to a king by the name of Asa. This king had actually seemingly sought God out for most of his life. As the passage in Chapter 15 goes on, it says for 35 years that he reigned things were going pretty well. He had been following God. Chapter 16 starts off this way, but in the 36th year of his reign war started coming up from Syria. Up to a point, Asa has been trusting in God, but as time went on, he began to build great cities, he stockpiled gold and silver, and he began to trust in those kinds of things. God sends things in our life to reveal the reality of what we actually believe. I mean, we

can live almost a whole life thinking that we really know God and lying to ourselves and Asa does this. But in the 36th year, God sends the Syrians against him. Now the question is, will he call upon the name of the Lord or will he trust in himself? And the passage says that he called for help from someone else. The prophet then is sent to him, and he goes, "Because you did not rely on God, but you relied on these things, you're going to continue to have war in your life."

And then it follows the text this way,

(2 Chronicles 16:9) "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His."

One of the great texts of Scripture. Three years later, Asa Has a disease in his feet. The Scripture says even then he would not call on the Lord, but he sought the physicians. Some people are just stubborn that way. It's very clear what God wants. Isaiah tells us that God longs to be gracious to us. He waits from on high. God hasn't hidden what He wants. He wants that relationship with us. Right from the very start, as you look at Genesis 1 and you look

at the creation, “everything is good, “everything is good, “everything is good.” Then, it's “very good.” And then He takes man, and He puts man at the very pinnacle of creation, and He goes, “It's yours. I've given it to you. Enjoy life.” Is there anything at the beginning of creation that says anything about God being bad or mean? It's just God so loves that He gives and that's who He is. But man is the one that then rebels against Him and goes, “You didn't give me enough. You didn't give me what I wanted.” And God goes, “What do you want?” And man goes, “Evil. I love evil.” “Have at it.” There is a point where the Spirit of God stops striving and He gives us over, and this is what happens.

(Genesis 6:5) “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

Wow. Now, I want you to underline the words “wickedness” and “evil,” because they're fundamentally the same word. It's the Hebrew word “*ra*”. It's one of the gods that Egypt worshipped, but what it's referencing is that pain and calamity and hurt that man gravitates

towards. I know that it's our nature when we sit in church to say, "I don't like evil." I don't know. What do you watch on TV? If you think about it, most of the things that you watch are things that are hurting people, destroying people. I mean, we're even drawn to news that is focusing on those kinds of things. It's our proclivity and it's our nature to be drawn to things that hurt and destroy rather than things that build up and edify. So, the text is beginning to convey how man's thoughts are. Now, there's a word here within the text, and it is "every intent." You see that, "every intent of the thoughts...." The Hebrew word that is used here is "yēšer". Well, most of the Hebrew language is pictures. It's an oriental language. So, even like the Chinese language, you have pictures, but the picture within the text is one forming something, and that particular word is actually used and translated in other texts, "to form." It's as if you were building something or molding something. In Isaiah 29, it's used to talk about "God is the Potter, you are the clay, and He forms you." And it's that word, "yēšer" which is "intent".

It will be used in Habakkuk 2 for those that make idols for themselves. It says, “and the maker of these idols,” and it used the word “*yēṣer*,” which is the former, or the maker of the idols. It’s one that is molding this idol. Now, the question is what is he molding? That’s a good question, and that's fundamentally the question that we're dealing with here within the passage. What is the intent? What is the purpose? What are you making? What have you devoted your life to do? I think a lot of times people don't really think through the process of the result or what ultimately, they're making. It's almost like they have their hands in clay, and they’re just going, “I don't know.” I remember having play dough and thinking, “Maybe I'll think of something” and I always ended up rolling out a ball or something like that, but because I just couldn't think of anything. I think that's the way a lot of people kind of go through their life. They're hoping maybe something will come out of this, but there's no real intent and God goes, “But your intent will lead you to hurt, pain, suffering, all of these things. In fact, it will so be a part of your life that will take over your life.”

I think it's interesting when you go into the book of the Gospel of John, and you see the story of Judas in John 12, and it says it was his intent to betray Christ. Now, John 13 says, “and Satan entered Judas.” So, you start with a passion. It ultimately ends in a possession. Paul will talk about the fact that sin no longer should be master over you. People go, “I think I can handle this.” I’ve seen people with drugs and alcohol, “I can handle this.” I don't think so. It'll soon be in control of you. The things that you do will be destructive not only in your life, but in everybody else's life, and people say, “Well, you know, it's my life. I can do whatever I want to.” Yeah, but have you thought about the collateral damage? I mean, there's no such thing as you doing something hurtful and it not affecting the people around you.

That's what's so interesting about this passage, because in verse 6 it goes on to say,

(Genesis 6:6) “The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.”

We’re going to talk about that in just a minute, but then it says this,

(Genesis 6:7) “The LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.””

I remember reading that a long time ago and going, “What did the animals do? It wasn't their fault.” What Scripture is telling us is everything had been affected and infected with sin. I think about Daniel, and he's thrown in the lion's den. Isn't it bizarre that man would take the lions and use them to kill something? That man would train animals; he makes war horses? Almost everything that man touches, he begins to distort, and he uses them in nefarious ways because it's just the heart of man to do that. Scripture is telling us that there literally is collateral damage, and if you think about it, man was established as the one who would rule on the earth. God says, “This is yours. You're in charge of it.” I know we'd like to blame God, “Why are things so horrible?” Because you're ruling. You stop ruling and let God rule in your life, everything will be ok. But as you begin to make the decisions based on what you think is right and once again, as Proverbs so

clearly says, there is a way which seems right to a man. So, it's not like you're not thinking, "I think I know what's right." But the end thereof is death. Is it possible that you just might not know as much as God? Is that just remotely possible?

So, as we come to the passage, we see the forming of man's heart and forming of His desires. What is man making? And the passage is very clear, hurt, pain, sorrow, heartache. Connie and I sit back, and we go, "How do people live that way? It's like they're arguing every single day. How do they do that?" I don't know how you survive in that, but these people were living a long time. I mean, 930 years, 969 years; 960 years with even Noah. So, it's a long time and you can imagine how accentuated the evil can be the longer that you live. Within the text, we not only see man's intent and where it's taken him, but we see God's intent and His desire.

I want you to go back in Genesis 6:3, it says,

"Then the LORD said, "My Spirit..."

Once again, it's not unusual for the words to describe God in an anthropomorphic way. That is to say that Scripture

begins to put characteristics of man into God. Of course, God is not a man, so that we can understand what He's doing, how He's feeling, because who could know the mind of God? So, it's like God going, "Well, you know how you guys feel like this?" and we go, "Yeah, I know how that feels." And God goes, "Ok, that's how I feel, except much greater." So, He gives us these interesting pictures. We know that according to Scripture, that God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. The fact that He emphasizes "Spirit" within Scripture is to share with us that God has a great passion and cares very deeply. One of the reasons why the Bible says that David was a man after God's own heart is, I believe because what you see, especially in the Psalm, is the passion of David. "As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longeth after Thee," and you can't walk away from the Psalm going, "You know, I think David was kind of complacent about God." Everything about David was just he was just all in. When he fought, he just killed tens of thousands of people by himself. I mean, he was a warrior when he was a warrior. When he was all in with God, he was just all in with God. It was a heart of passion.

Scripture is telling us that God cares, and He cares very deeply about things. One of the things that is very different about man, as he continues in his sins is he becomes detached, apathetic and ultimately really psychotic in the sense that he detaches himself from any kind of care, any kind of concern for what happens to people. After a while, he just doesn't care. His heart hardens. That's just so unlike God. So, the description that God gives us is His Spirit. Now, the word that is used is “*rûah*”. If you were to literally translate it, it would be “to breathe.” What we see in Genesis 2 is that God “*rûah*” into man and gave him life. That's a great picture of God saying, “I want you to have a part of Me in you. Life. So that you can be a living being.” It's a great passage, isn't it? You see a personal touch in particular with man that he has; not with the animals as He breathes out into, but as He breathes into the nostrils of man.

When we come to the passage,

(Genesis 6:6) “The LORD was sorry...”

Once again, it's important for us to understand that the word is not making reference to the fact that, and I think

one translation says, He “repented,” but that would be inappropriate to put that word in there because it really is not describing the heart of God. In particular, it's not describing the breath of God. The word that it's used there for “sorry,” is “*nāḥam*,” which is a kind of word that relates to “*rûaḥ*”. The word makes reference to breathing hard. Sometimes it's translated in the sense of sighing. You know how something goes wrong in your life and somebody says, “Everything ok?” And you go, “(sighs) Yeah”? So, we know that you're not telling the truth, but it's a picture of God's feelings. When you get upset, you breathe heavier. It's a wonderful picture of God's emotions. Once again, I think we think that He's detached, and nothing could be further from the truth. He's involved with this. How upset is God? (Sighs) Yeah, He's upset, but He's upset because He's hurt.

Look at the passage,

“The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.”

That's a God that loves you. Though He must take the evil out, He has taken the evil out for one reason. It is to save

the one. If you read any other thing in this text, you miss the point because then it turns in verse 8,

(Genesis 6:8) “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.”

Where did His eyes turn? The Lord is searching all the face of the earth looking for a heart that's wholly His. He found him, and he zooms in on Noah and He goes, “But Noah.” Now, there's a reason why he's called Noah. Once again, it shouldn't surprise you that his name itself ties in with the breathing of God because in this particular passage, the name “Noah” is “*Nōah*”. It actually comes from a word that literally means to draw breath in. I do think it's interesting because you're actually seeing the breathing of God where He's upset and somebody now loves Him. It's a breath of fresh air. It's kind of conveyed in Ephesians 5, where it says that you and I should be imitators of God and walk in love just as Christ who gave Himself and was a sacrifice for us, a fragrant aroma to God. You can hear God breathing, can't you? In a moment of God's approval to man, His affirmation of Noah within the passage, and “Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.”

It is important to realize that Noah is not a perfect man, though the passage will say in Genesis 7,

(Genesis 7:1) “Then the LORD said to Noah, “Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time.””

When Scripture talks about one being righteous, it's not talking about perfection. It's talking about where their desires are or in this context, where the intent of the heart is. The question you have to ask yourself is, “What is it I'm wanting to do? Why do I live? Why has God given me breath?” The Bible is very clear that God wants to have a relationship with you. You need to come to the understanding of that's why you exist; it's to have a relationship with Him. The perception of righteousness isn't as much that you've done everything right, but it's that you long to do right. “*Ṣadîq*” is the word that is used within the text. I mean, even Ecclesiastes 7:20 says, “Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.”

It's to be noted within Genesis 7 that God says, “I have seen you to be righteous before Me in this time.” It is

telling us, “At this moment, you're drawn to Me.” And Hebrews will actually tell us that Noah believed God. Therefore, he revered God. Actually, the way it's put is “he was made to reverence.” He came into reverence before God.

Let me show you a passage of Scripture in Psalm 34, if you would with me. Psalm 34 begins to convey what a righteous man is.

(Psalm 34:2) “My soul will make its boast in the LORD; The humble will hear it and rejoice.”

And you begin to realize that it's the humble that begin to cry out, “God is great, not us.”

(Psalm 34:4) “I sought the LORD, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears.”

(Psalm 34:5) They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces will never be ashamed.

(Psalm 34:6) This poor man...”

How is he describing himself? As somebody that is in need.

“This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him
And saved him out of all his troubles.”

That's an interesting picture of Noah because he's got troubles. He's got a whole world that hates, and he's going to be the next target.

(Psalm 34:8) “O taste and see that the LORD is good...”

(Psalm 34:9) “O fear the LORD, you His saints...”

(Psalm 34:11) “Come, you children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

(Psalm 34:12) Who is the man who desires life
And loves length of days that he may see good?

(Psalm 34:13) Keep your tongue from evil
And your lips from speaking deceit.

(Psalm 34:14) Depart from evil and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it.

(Psalm 34:15) The eyes of the LORD are toward the
righteous...”

Now, is this a sinless guy? No, he just got finished saying the Lord looked at this poor man and He rescued him out

of his troubles. Why do you have troubles? You make your own troubles.

(Psalm 34:17) “The righteous cry, and the LORD hears
And delivers them out of all their troubles.”

(Psalm 34:18) The LORD is near to the brokenhearted
And saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

I always said to myself, “I can do that. I can't be perfect, but I can do that. I can be sorry that I hurt God. I can want to. I can desire.” And God goes, “You desire, I'll come to you.”

(Psalm 34:19) “Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
But the LORD delivers him out of them all.”

And then if you look at the end, it will actually define the righteous within the text.

(Psalm 34:22) “The LORD redeems the soul of His
servants,
And none of those who take refuge in Him will be
condemned.”

That really ties in specifically with Romans 8:1, “There's therefore now no condemnation to those who are in

Christ Jesus.” In other words, if you'll turn to God and go, “I trust You to be my Savior,” not like Asa going, “I think I can figure this out. I think I can buy us out. I think I can make it happen. I can build great things. I can rescue myself.” Not like that but just come to God and go, “You alone, I believe to save me.” I can feel God's breath; a fragrant aroma and He's pleased with that. But you know, He exhales again. Did you know that? Because when He sent His Son, His Son walks among men, and in John 20, interesting passage, Jesus comes up to His disciples and it says He breathes on them. Do you remember what He said? “Receive the Spirit.” You know what they received? The Spirit of grace. That's one of the reasons why Paul continually says, “Grace to you.” It is God's grace to you as He smells the fragrant aroma of your willingness and your desire to be with Him of your submission to Him and to trust in Him with all your heart. He breathes on you His spirit, and He says, “Now, the favor of God is with you.” Isn't that wonderful when you think about that “I can actually walk in the favor of God, and what will that merit me?”

Let me show you something, Isaiah 26, and we'll close with this particular passage. A familiar passage and once again, sometimes the familiar passages we miss some interesting little key points. Our favorite verse, we'll quote it in King James, because I think most people memorize it in King James, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee because he trusts in Thee." Right? Ok, read it with me. Watch the text, (Isaiah 26:3) "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee..."

"Yēšer" - Intent

Remember, every intent of their heart, everything that they formed? So, what's the text saying? If you will make it your purpose in life, your intent, to love God, to trust in Him alone; think throughout the day, "What is it that I'm here for? What should be my intent?" Well, your intent as Ephesians 5 says, "I don't want you to be ignorant about what the will of the Lord is, be filled with the Spirit." I can tell you when the Spirit of God is moving in my life, and when it's not. Actually, I'm sure my wife can tell me because when the Spirit of God is moving in my life, I'm

thinking of others. I'm building others up. I'm caring for them. I'm thinking of them as more important than myself. "Have this mind in you, which is also in Christ Jesus." It's the Spirit. That the things that I'm producing or let's just say the things that I'm breathing out are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness. So, if you look at the house, things begin to get peaceful; people begin to be joyful. God has called me to have a relationship with Him so close that I'm breathing with Him, and that which I'm breathing is His intent to bring peace into the hearts of all those. That's why Scripture says, "Grace and peace to you." That's me breathing out the will of God. That's quite different when you think about the world, which when they breathe is full of hostility and hatred and destructive verbiage. The rhetoric is just so destructive in people's lives, but we can breathe only such a word as is good for the moment, that's good for edification; that which builds up people. That's why you're here, to breathe with God. Great picture.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and it's our desire to walk with You, talk with you, and to allow You access to every part of our being. It's amazing that You would even knock on this old door because You created me. You could do whatever You want and yet You allow me to choose what my intent will be. That which I decide to form, to make in my life and to make my life to be.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed. What we're asking you to do is just ask one simple question, "What do I intend to do? Why am I here?" Look behind you. Look at the carnage. Look at the collateral. Have you sown benefit? If you have, then you wouldn't be reaping all of this turmoil and chaos. God has you here for a reason. Paul will even say, "and working together with Him." Where do you begin? Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, and His Spirit will come upon you, and you'll begin to think like Him. You'll begin to desire the things of Christ. Because of all the people on the face of the earth, when Jesus came, God said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. This is the

one you need to listen to. He's the one that you need to follow. He's the one that you need to imitate.” And if you will, you’ll feel the favor of God upon you.