

# Corruption and Consequence

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Date: 22 March 2026

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please turn in your Bibles to Genesis 6. We'll be reading 1 to 8 this morning. And if you don't have a Bible, there's some on the back welcome table. And if you need a Bible, please take that as our gift to you.

Okay. Genesis 6.1 When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the Son of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive.

And they took as their wives any that they chose. Then the Lord said, I'm sorry, I'm not on. Okay. Then the Lord said, My spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh, and his days shall be 120 years.

The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man, and they bore children to them.

And these were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown. The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

[ 1 : 32 ] And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals.

And creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them. But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

I'm supposed to say something. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Amen. Heavenly Father, your word, the word of God, is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

God, no creature is hidden from your sight. All are naked. All are exposed to the eyes of you to whom we must give account. Father, I pray that this word would do just that.

God, that it would pierce our hearts. And that it would affect change in us, Lord, by the power of your Holy Spirit. Lord, we are unable to do that. Your word does that through your spirit.

[ 3 : 02 ] And so we place ourselves under the authority of your word this morning. And we ask that you would do these things for Jesus' sake. In whose name we pray.

Amen. Good morning. My name is Mike. I'm one of the pastors here at Shoreline. I just want to welcome you all to being with us this morning. Have you ever been hiking on a trail and wondered whether you were really going to reach the destination?

Anybody? Now, I'm not talking about when you take a wrong turn. I mean you know that you're on the trail. You've been following all the trail markers. But it's just taking forever to get where you're supposed to go.

Has anybody experienced that before? You know, you start to... Yeah, well, we got hands raised even. Yeah, some of you have experienced that before. Poignant memories in your mind.

It's taking forever to reach the summit. And so oftentimes what happens is you start to doubt that you're actually ever going to get there. When I first moved out to Connecticut and I experienced for the first time rugged New England hiking, not in Connecticut, but up in the White Mountains.

[ 4 : 09 ] There is some hiking to be had in Connecticut, but more like a walk in the woods. But I had been out west a decent amount and experienced some of the hiking that's out there.

But then you come out to New England, you go into the White Mountains. And let me tell you that elevation in the White Mountains is very deceiving. Distance at elevation. You know, a trail might say you have half a mile to go.

Awesome. Half a mile, that's like five minutes. And then half an hour later, you're still trudging over boulders and up tree roots. And you start to wonder, okay, am I really on the right trail? Am I really going to reach the summit?

And it's easy to doubt that that's actually going to happen. Now, kids, you might have also experienced this on a road trip. Are we ever going to get there? You know you're on, you know, we drive to Chicago on I-80.

It's the same route every time. It just feels like we're never going to get there. The thing is, though, if you set off on the trailhead for Mount Washington and you stay on the path towards the summit, you will eventually reach Mount Washington.

[ 5 : 11 ] Now, our text for you might have wondered, what does this have to do with our text for today? Our text for today covers a far more grave topic than hiking in the whites. I've titled the sermon, Corruption and Consequence.

You see, in the Garden of Eden, God made clear that to walk the path of sin leads to the destination of death. That's where it goes.

But it's easy in the course of what seems to be a lengthy life to convince ourselves that walking that path of sin won't actually lead to death. Now, all the more with these giant lifespans that people apparently had in the first generations of humanity.

Now, I'm not talking actually about physical death, though maybe they did doubt whether they would really ever die physically. No, no, no. I'm talking about spiritual death. I'm talking about eternal separation from God.

What I mean is that people were walking a path of sin with a destination that God had marked, spiritual death, but they likely scoffed at that thought as they lived these godless and prosperous lives centered on themselves and on their glory.

[ 6 : 23 ] And this passage today reminds us that if we're on the trail, we will surely reach the destination, even if it takes longer than we thought. Now, these eight verses are broken up into two sections, and so here's the first thing that we see in the first four verses.

We see mankind's rebellion and God's just response. Now, I want to reread verses one through four of our text, so open up your Bibles if you haven't already.

We're in Genesis chapter 6, verse 1, and Moses writes, You know, we walked through 1 Corinthians last year as a church, and we tackled some of the most controversial passages in the Bible, but this text might actually surpass all those.

Now, before we talk about what all this means and what it means for us, class this morning, that's the interpretation application. Before we do that, we first have to deal with this elephant in the room, and that is, Who in the world are the sons of God, the daughters of man, and the Nephilim?

Okay, those three groups of people here, the sons of God, the daughters of man, and the Nephilim. Now, someone in my community group pointed out on Tuesday that this sounds like something that you would hear in a Greek mythology class.

[ 8 : 07 ] This sounds like the stuff of legend. Now, Francis Schaeffer writes this in quite insightful quote here. He says, Now, we're likely going to talk more about this in the flood account in the next, well, we're not next week's Palm Sunday, then Easter Sunday, then it will be beginning of the flood account.

We'll probably talk more about that. But I just want to ask now, Is it coincidence that many ancient mythologies contain elements of what we see here in Genesis? They're contorted, they're different, but so many of the ancient mythologies contain elements of what we see right here.

Is it any wonder? This is the Word of God. He spoke this. This is reality as He sees it, which is the real reality. We've got to approach this text, as we do every text, as the divinely inspired Word of God.

Now, that doesn't mean that it's easy to understand what the text is saying. When it comes to answering the question of who exactly each of these three groups of people are, there's not an obvious answer.

But there are generally three lines of thinking that we arrive at by just reading the Word of God. Here's the first one, and I'll have this on the screen. The two lineages view.

[ 9 : 27 ] One possibility sees the sons of God as referring to men in the godly line of Seth, that we looked at in chapter 5, and the daughters of man as women from the ungodly line of Cain, that we looked at in chapter 4.

And so right here, that godly line is intermarrying with the ungodly line. Now, throughout Scripture, God's people are commanded not to intermarry with unbelievers.

And so this interpretation seems to make sense of the context, since we just read about the two lineages. However, there's really not any more support for this beyond this in Scripture.

But in this view, the Nephilim, even more of a mysterious entity, are not necessarily the result of the intermarrying, but are a separate group of people referred to sort of as an aside by Moses.

Now, this text doesn't require us to see the Nephilim as the mighty men of renown. They don't have to be the same group of people. Now, just a little bit, since we're talking about the Nephilim, the only other time that word, the Nephilim, appears in Scripture is Numbers 13.33.

[10:37] Now, Numbers 13, the spies, the 12 spies have been sent off to the Promised Land. Ten come back and give a bad report. Two come back, Joshua and Caleb, and give a good report. And the ten bad spies who return from scouting the land, they say this, the land through which we have gone to spy it out is a land that devours its inhabitants.

And all the people that we saw in it are of great height. And there we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, who comes from the Nephilim. And we seem to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seem to them.

Now, the spies here might be speaking with hyperbole. They might be fearfully exaggerating what they saw, comparing the inhabitants of the Promised Land to these Nephilim.

But whether or not there's exaggeration or not, what's clear is that the Nephilim were a people of imposing size, which is why the word is translated sometimes as giants.

But the word literally means fallen ones. Now, some see this as referring to their fate, that the mighty will fall by the hand of God.

[11:44] This brings me to the second view, which is the ruler view. Okay, a second possibility sees these sons of God as referring to powerful rulers who greedily took for themselves whichever women they wanted.

Okay, they used their power to express, oppress, and to exploit others for self-gain. Now, this view gains support from passages like Psalm 82, which Brad preached on last year, in which God is seemingly addressing human rulers as gods.

He calls them gods, sons of the Most High, all of you. Now, the Nephilim in this view are the ruthless and powerful offspring of these marriages, and very likely the same group of people as the mighty men.

However, the term sons of God is far more commonly used in Scripture to refer to angelic beings. Now, that brings me to the third view.

This sees the sons of God as referring to angels, and the daughters of man simply as human women. In this view, angels greedily came to earth in human form and took wives to themselves.

[12:59] Now, not only does Scripture more commonly refer to angelic beings as sons of God, but passages in the New Testament, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude, all refer back to the days of Noah, and all seem to make better sense when viewed from this perspective.

The Nephilim, in this case, are likely the offspring of these marriages between angels who came down as men and then human women, and probably then the same group of people as the mighty men.

Now, this is all sounding very bizarre, isn't it? To our modern ears. These are the three most common views. Now, if you ask me, Mike Lusa, what do you think personally?

What I think is personally the most compelling combines the second two views. It sees the sons of God as men who are controlled by fallen angels.

I'm not saying this is the right view. I'm just saying this is the one that seems most compelling to me. Because what this view does, it honors the context in Genesis. We've been talking about humanity here. God is concerned with humanity.

[14:06] But it also honors the usage of the sons of God throughout Scripture. It honors the New Testament passages that I just mentioned. It's also consistent with how we see demonic possession within both the Old and especially the New Testament.

Now, this is by no means conclusive. But I do want to emphasize here something. Because again, this sounds bizarre. This sounds a little bit crazy. I want to emphasize that there are spiritual realities that exist.

There is a spiritual dimension that we cannot see. There is an unseen battle going on in the spiritual realm that is being waged continually. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6.12. So, I just want to say to the Christians here, this interpretation should actually not seem far-fetched. Christians who believe and understand in the spiritual realm that there is a battle, that there are angels and demons, that there's a very real presence of them.

Christians who have read Genesis 3 and saw how Satan commandeered a serpent to deceive mankind. However, this is not an area where I have a strong conviction, nor do I think that anyone should have a strong conviction, because we simply lack clarity.

[15:20] And because regardless of what we believe about the identity of the sons of God and the daughters of man and the Nephilim, the purpose that they are mentioned here is abundantly clear.

So, okay, some of you are upset right now. Some of you wish that I had talked more about the Nephilim and who in the world they are. Some of you are upset because you're like, why did Mike even go into all that?

But let's just move forward together, okay? Let's seek to understand why this is in the text. And so the question I want to ask is, what is the point? What is the point of verses 1 through 4? Look again at verse 2. And I want you to consider what it reminds you of.

I'll help with my emphasis here, okay? What does it remind you of? The sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive, that is fair or good, saw good, and they took as their wives any they chose.

Anybody, can anyone think of what that reminds them of? The tree, the garden. So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, she took of its fruit and ate.

[16:21] Genesis 3, 6. The sons of God, whatever their identity is, they are, as Bruce Waldke, one commentator, writes, driven by lust, not spiritual discernment.

Right? Just like Eve. They see something that's forbidden. They declare it good in their eyes, and they take it in defiance of God and his moral law.

And so we have here the sin of chapter 4, Lamech. Remember, there's two Lamechs, one from Cain's line, one from Seth's. Chapter 4, Lamech. That sin of Lamech, who took two wives to himself, it's multiplying.

It's spreading. Now that comes, verse 2 comes before verse 3, before God's response. I want us to look after God's response and then come back to it. We're told in verse 4 that the Nephilim were on the earth in those days.

We're told that the offspring of these corrupt marriages between the sons of God and the daughters of man, whether they are the same people as Nephilim or not, we're told that they were mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

[17:22] This similar terminology is going to get used in a later genealogy, and it's never a positive thing. This is a group of men known for, the thing that characterized them was their power and their might.

This is a group to be feared, a group who probably oppressed and dominated others. Now recall that the legacy of Seth and his godly line was what? It was worship.

They called upon the name of the Lord. The legacy of this group, like Cain's line, by contrast, is human might. Now so what's the point?

Here's the point. Mankind has reached a new stage of rebellion against God. That's what the text is showing. Mankind has achieved a new stage. It's not a good stage.

It's more rebellion against God. And then right in the middle comes God's response to the proud and arrogant rebellion of men. Then the Lord said, verse 3, My spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh.

[18:23] His days shall be 120 years. Friends, who stands here in absolute, unflinching control over the realm of men?

Yahweh, the Lord God. You know, the spies of Israel felt like grasshoppers in the presence of giants. Well, to the Lord, the nations are like a drop from a bucket and are accounted as the dust on the scales.

Isaiah 40, 15. The sovereign king of creation, he sees the rebellion of his creatures, and just as he commanded his breath into Adam's nostrils, giving him life, so now he restricts the life-giving breath of his spirit.

He's reminding men that they are but mortal flesh. They are powerless before the infinite and immortal God. Now, the 120 years here could be referring to one of two things.

On the one hand, it could be the period of time between God's declaration and the flood to come.

On the other hand, it could be referring to the lifespans of those to come after the flood.

[ 19 : 32 ] We're going to go through the next genealogy and see decreasing lifespans that seem to approach this number 120. Perhaps it refers to both because both seem to make perfect sense, but either way, the point is clear, not only of verse 3, but of these four verses.

Mankind has reached a new stage of sinful rebellion against God, so God, the just, the sovereign king, responds in judgment. Now, what does this mean for us today?

Right here in Genesis 6, 1 through 4, is a warning to the unjust of this world. It's a warning to the proud and the arrogant, to those who oppress others for self-gain.

They can be sure that God sees and God will ultimately hold them accountable, even if it seems like that destination is taking a while to get there. For the Lord is a God of recompense.

He will surely repay. Jeremiah 51, 56. Now, this same word of warning, it's also a word of comfort. It's a word of comfort to victims of injustice, to victims of oppression.

[ 20 : 40 ] God sees, God knows, God will write the scales in the end. God will not allow the guilty to go unpunished. That is a word of comfort to those who have experienced injustice.

But more than this, these verses are a warning to all sinners and an urgent appeal to fear God.

God alone resides in supreme authority as the Lord, as the judge over mankind. You know, Jesus would later tell his disciples, don't fear those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul.

You don't need to fear them. Rather, fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. You see, another day of reckoning is coming in which each of us will appear before the Lord and give account of our lives.

Anybody from you and me to Putin, everyone is going to appear before the judgment seat of God and we will have to give an account of our thoughts and our words and our deeds. You say, well, I don't want to be there, I'm not going to be there.

[ 21 : 44 ] You're going to be there. You're going to be there, friends. You're going to be appearing before the Lord God, the judge, before his soul-piercing gaze. What then will you say?

What will be the accounting of your life? These verses reveal a pattern we've already seen in the garden. Mankind's rebellious ways are followed by God's just response of judgment.

Now, the second half of the passage parallels the first but has a slightly different emphasis. Next, we see this, mankind's wickedness and God's just response.

Let's look at verse 5 together. The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Note this, mankind's corruption is pervasive. It's pervasive. There could scarcely be a more strongly worded statement indicating how evil mankind has become.

[ 22 : 52 ] You know, when I was in high school, Buffalo Grove High School, one of everyone's favorite parts of the school yearbook was the superlatives at the end.

I don't know if you guys had this in your high school. You know, best athlete, most active in the school, most popular, most likely to be president of the United States, things like that. I didn't make any of the superlatives just so you know.

well, in this ancient edition of the yearbook, one of the superlatives would be most wicked. And the answer is everyone.

Notice the great reversal that has occurred here. At the end of Genesis chapter 1, what did it say? And the Lord God saw everything that he had made and behold, it was good.

It was very good. Genesis 1, 31. Now God sees, but it's not good. It is superlatively bad. Now notice this corruption is first external.

[ 23 : 54 ] It's external corruption. It's sin with the hands. The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth. Humanity was supposed to do what?

They were supposed to be fruitful and multiply. They were supposed to be spreading the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. Through spreading image bearers to the ends of the earth.

That's what they're supposed to be multiplying. God's glory, God's goodness, God's life. What have they multiplied instead? Sin. This is external corruption. It's sin with the hands. It's sins of the body.

But the corruption is not just external. It always begins internally. We saw, we walked through this in the temptation in the garden. There's internal corruption, sin in the heart.

The Lord saw that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Now the phrase, the thoughts of his heart might strike us as odd because in our modern use of the word heart, we're typically only referring to people's emotions.

[ 24 : 59 ] Now again, we talked about this in Genesis 3, but the biblical use of the word heart is far more comprehensive. The heart is the command center of a person.

It's the seat of one's thoughts and desires and commitments. As those who have been made in the image and the likeness of God, it all goes back to the Imago Dei. We're made in the likeness of God.

That means that we are thinking, feeling, willing creatures. And so those are the functions of the heart that are going on. And so the phrase intention of the thoughts of his heart actually makes logical sense.

It refers to the things that people form and frame in the mind. It's what people imagine and conceive. The same Hebrew words are used to describe a potter forming a clay pot.

This is what we do in our hearts. And so it makes perfect sense, but it is also perfectly appalling that every intention was only evil continually.

[ 26 : 00 ] Mankind's wickedness, mankind's corruption, it has become total. Externally, humanity does evil. Internally, humanity conceives that which is evil.

How far humanity has fallen from their glorious state in the garden. So how will God respond to this pervasive wickedness of men?

Look at verse 6. Moses' words are jarring. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.

Just take that in for a second. God responds to man's corruption first with regret and grief.

Now this is a very troubling verse. God regretted making man. man, does God make mistakes? Does God wish that he could go back and do things differently?

[ 27 : 06 ] Because when I have regrets, I don't know about you, when I have regrets, that's the reality, right? But is that the kind of regret that God has? Now we are greatly helped in our understanding of this by the account of 1 Samuel 15.

So I actually want you to turn there in your Bibles. 1 Samuel 15, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel.

That's how you get there. 1 Samuel 15. The nation of Israel was a bit tired of only having God as their king and so they want to be like all the surrounding nations and they ask for a king and God gives them King Saul.

And then we learn that King Saul, though he looked like the right guy, he's tall, he's handsome, he's proud, and he's foolish, and he disobeys the Lord.

Now look in your Bibles at verse 10 and 11 of 1 Samuel 15. The word of the Lord came to Samuel. Samuel is a prophet, priest in Israel at the time he was judging Israel.

[ 28 : 11 ] The word of the Lord came to Samuel, I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments.

God says that he regrets making Saul king. The same word is in Genesis 6. 6. But now jump down to verse 29 of 1 Samuel 15.

Verse 29. Samuel is now speaking to Saul. And Samuel says, and also the glory of Israel, talking about God, talking about Yahweh, the glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man that he should have regret.

So which is it? Does the Lord regret? Does the Lord not regret? Okay, now go to the last verse in the chapter, the very last phrase. And the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel. So does God regret making Saul king or does he not regret making Saul king? Yes. The answer is yes. He does and he doesn't.

[ 29 : 21 ] He does regret making Saul king, but not in the way that we regret things. This is the point. Okay, just like God does get angry, but not in the way that we typically do.

get angry. So when we regret things, we say, I wish I hadn't done X, Y, or Z, right? If we could, we would go back in time. We would change what we had done. We would do things differently.

Our regret is typically accompanied by guilt, by shame, by a sense of failure. God's regret is not like that. God is not a man that he should change his mind, Numbers 23, 19.

God never wishes that he could go back and do things differently. God always accomplishes what he sets out to accomplish, Isaiah 46, and all over Isaiah. God does not feel guilt.

God does not feel shame. God never errs, right? God is never encumbered by a sense of failure, for he makes no mistakes. So we have to realize here that the regret of God is something outside of our human experience.

[ 30 : 27 ] He regrets in a very different way than we do, perhaps in a way that we can't even understand. But the biblical authors are seeking to speak in a way that we might begin to understand. God's regret means that he feels sorry, but not in an apologetic way.

God feels sorry in a way in which he is grieved. His heart breaks. These verses are, as Wayne Grudem articulates, expressions of God's present displeasure toward the sinfulness of man. Friends, we have a God that does not stand aloof from the people that he created. He is intimately involved with humanity. Even at some level, affected by us, by the state of our hearts and our lives lived before him.

There's no getting around the fact that this remains a bit mysterious to us. Because we, at the very same time, we uphold God's absolute sovereignty over all of history.

What this means, just think about the implications here. God is willingly subjecting himself to pain in order to accomplish some greater purpose that he has.

[ 31 : 40 ] In the end, that purpose will display his glory to the universe. He is choosing, in Genesis 6, he's choosing to subject himself to this displeasure. God made mankind knowing full well that mankind would fall into sin.

knowing full well that the corruption of mankind would spread throughout the world. Knowing full well that this would involve his own pain and displeasure. Regret and grief, though, are not his only response, are they?

God also responds to mankind's wickedness with resolve to destroy. You feeling the weight of this passage yet?

Verse 7, So the Lord said, To blot out means to wipe out, to destroy.

God is declaring here his resolve to remove humanity from the earth. And in connection with humanity, because humanity, they're representatives of God ruling over creation.

[ 32 : 55 ] Creation's fate is sort of bound up with mankind. So in connection with humanity, other creatures, they will also be blotted out. And all of this in judgment for sin.

Now I want to ask, does this sound extreme? Does this sound over the top? Sort of like a tyrant just reacting in unrestrained rage towards those who challenge his authority.

See, it's so important, it's so important that we have a proper perspective as we read Scripture.

See, from our fleshly, finite viewpoint, we read this verse and think, Wow, God, seriously?

Shouldn't you just, you know, take a deep breath, count to five, and then reassess? I mean, where's the grace? Where's the grace in this? And I just want to say, friends, if we're going to question God like this, we had better prepared for God to turn from Job to us and say, Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

Shall a fault finder contend with the Almighty? Job's 38 and 40. See, we need to see the Lord rightly, and then we need to see ourselves rightly in light of Him.

[ 34 : 12 ] And we've learned some things about the Lord in our study of Genesis. We've learned that God is the sole creator God who spoke all things into existence by the word of His power.

You know, therefore, the psalmist writes, in light of God as creator, in 33.6, Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. Isaiah declares, The Lord is our judge. The Lord is our lawgiver. The Lord is our king. Isaiah 33.22. And not only is God the sovereign king who reigns supremely over all, but He's also unfathomably good.

Right? God, under no obligation, made a very good world, and He gave humanity everything needed for humanity to live joyful, fruitful lives in relationship with Him and with one another and with creation.

But mankind rebelled. Mankind rebelled against God. Mankind cast off His loving rule. And here in Genesis 6, we see that humanity has become superlatively evil.

[ 35 : 21 ] The ordered world that God made out of His overflowing goodness has been corrupted by the sin of men. Right? Image bearers are being murdered.

Women are being taken advantage of. God's wise decrees are being transgressed. So let me ask, is it over the top for the infinitely holy, superlatively loving, almighty God to judge humanity for their total rebellion against Him, for their destruction of His good world?

Is it not rather perfectly righteous, perfectly just for God to do so? Is it not exactly what mankind deserves?

Is it not the appointed destination of the journey that mankind chose? Friends, here's the lesson that the Spirit needs to drive into our hearts from these dark verses.

All of humanity is corrupted by sin. This grievously offends a holy and loving God and incurs His just and righteous judgment.

[ 36 : 35 ] Friends, we need to see this morning that the vileness, the ugliness of our sin and how the fruit or the consequences of that sin, the destination of that sin is the judgment of God.

Now you might say, well Mike, this passage is not talking about me. It's talking about those who lived in Noah's day. But friends, I'm afraid the Bible leaves us no out on this.

So here's some homework for you if you want. Read Romans 1-3. In Romans 1-3, Paul demonstrates with logical precision how all of humanity, Jew and Gentile, both the religious and the irreligious, are sin-stained and therefore stand condemned before a holy God.

Now quoting from all over the Old Testament, Paul says, none is righteous, no not one, no one understands, no one seeks for God, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

The Bible teaches that we are born into this world stained with sin. We are born with a sinful nature that then works itself out in sinful thoughts and attitudes and desires and motivations and words and deeds.

[ 37 : 47 ] Paul describes us in this state as foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.

We are, as he says in Ephesians 2, 3, by nature children of wrath, by nature corrupt. The seed of the serpent, it's what we talked about a few weeks ago, children of the devil and therefore under God's just judgment.

And that's a very different message than the world likes to give, isn't it? It's a very different message. And yet we look around at the evil of this world. We look around, we look inside and see it in our own hearts. We can't deny it.

The world says, no, no, we're basically good and then we do bad things. No, no, God's word, the mirror of God's word looks into our hearts and says, no, we're actually evil. We can't do anything bad.

The flesh is hostile to God. It cannot please God, Paul says in Romans 8. And what is the judgment then? Brad said it earlier, for the wages of sin is death.

[ 38 : 55 ] Right? That judgment is eternal death. It means eternal separation from God. God who is good, God who is life itself, God who is the fount of joy, the fount of living water.

It's separation from Him eternally. You see, right now, because the journey feels like, well, the destination is not really coming. Right now, God's wrath is actually restrained.

And it's restrained by common, what's known as common grace. God allows, in His goodness, He allows all of mankind, whether believers or not, to experience goodness.

Right? He gives life and breath and health and food and all kinds of things. That's His common grace and He's restraining right now His wrath. But one day, He's no longer going to restrain it. His goodness is going to be utterly removed. And that is, friends, that is the definition of hell. It's the absence of God and His goodness. It's the presence only of His wrath.

[ 39 : 57 ] And that is the eternal destination of sinners. sinners. This is the lesson of these dark verses. That all of humanity is corrupted by sin, which grievously offends God and deserves His wrath.

that's not the whole lesson, is it? There are actually more jarring words that come next.

More jarring than, and the Lord regretted, is this, but Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

You know, we said that God responds to mankind's wickedness with regret and with grief, with resolve to destroy. Well, He also responds, friends, with grace.

With grace. Now, this is so incredible that it actually needs to be its own main point. And so, here's the third point here. Mankind's salvation in God's gracious response.

[ 41 : 03 ] Now, typically, when we read through Genesis, like in a yearly Bible reading plan, we immediately move on to verse 9, which makes sense. Verse 9 says that Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation.

Noah walked with God. And so, we might wrongly conclude, well, of course Noah found favor in God's eyes. He was righteous. Right? Everyone else was wicked. He was godly. So, God showed him favor.

Is that the gospel? Be righteous, and then God will love you. Brad pointed out last week that when we see the phrase, these are the generations, generations, or similar, we're to recognize those as being like chapter headings.

It's Moses' way of starting a new section in his narrative. So, that's how verse 9 starts. These are the generations. Now, it's significant that this verse, Genesis 6, 8, it ends a section that began in chapter 5, verse 1.

It ends with, but Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord, even in spite of the fact that every intention of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually.

[ 42 : 11 ] Even in spite of that. Right? That resulted in God's resolve to destroy humanity. But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. That word favor, it also is translated as grace.

And God's grace, by definition, is unmerited. It's a gift given that we could not earn. A writer at Ligonier Ministries defines grace as God's generous disposition by which he lavishes us with good things that we do not deserve.

Now, I want to ask, did God show grace to Noah because of his righteousness? A surface reading seems to indicate so. Right? But the attentive student of scripture sees a deeper reason still.

Now, the Israelites who were first hearing these words from Moses, they would have freshly on their minds what the Lord had told to them. You know what God told Israel? He said, I have not chosen you because of your greatness, right?

But simply because I love you. In other words, he's saying, I have, God chose Israel simply because of his electing love. He chose to set his love on them because he did.

[ 43 : 25 ] God chose that of his own free will. God tells them, you're not going to possess the promised land because of your own righteousness. You're going because I made a promise to you. That's why.

I made a promise to your forefathers that I am going to fulfill. In other words, God had chosen Israel out of his own free grace. And so with Noah, God sovereignly chose of his own free will to lavish grace upon Noah.

And that led to Noah and his family's salvation, even as the rest of his generation was wiped out in the flood. In other words, in grace, God took Noah off the path he was on and he put him on a different path.

That path is the path of faith and the path of righteousness with a different destination. Salvation. Right? Eternal life with God. And if that is not the gospel, then I don't know what is.

Friends, we've heard the utterly bad news today. Right? That we are all sinners who stand justly condemned before a holy God. His judgment is deserved. But now we've heard the good news and it's right here in Genesis 6.

[ 44 : 32 ] That God of his own free will chose to lavish unthinkable, inexplicable grace upon mankind. Humanity, humanity's pervasive evil incurs God's wrath yet in grace he saves those who trust in him.

Whoops. That is what I think the message of this text is. Humanity's pervasive evil incurs God's wrath yet in grace he saves those who trust in him.

And we need to ask though, how could both be true? How can God judge sinners yet show grace to sinners? And you know the answer, Christians.

It's the cross of Christ. You know the answer. On the cross, God's judgment for sin was poured out in full. His wrath was absorbed in the crucified body of Jesus.

And think about this. God is willingly subjecting himself to pain here in Genesis 6. Jesus willingly subjecting himself to ultimate pain, ultimate displeasure for our sake. The result is that all those who acknowledge their guilt, all those who look to Christ in faith, no longer stand condemned before a holy God.

[ 45 : 52 ] They're full, fully, and freely forgiven. There on the cross, God's justice, God's judgment, it kisses grace and mercy.

There they meet, justice, mercy, judgment, grace. They meet at the cross of Christ. If you have not today, I urge you to receive God's grace in Christ. God's grace covers your sin.

You cannot free yourself from sin, but in Christ Jesus, it is taken away, it is removed forevermore. Receive God's grace in Christ. Now Christians, for those of us who have received God's grace, this passage urges us to live in light of God's grace.

We see here with renewed perspective the awfulness of our sin, the pervasiveness of our sin. We experience it daily, and yet we see here the overwhelming generosity of God to bestow His favor upon us.

Now how do we live in light of that grace? How do we live in light of it? Well first, we rejoice in it. We rejoice in the grace of God. David writes, you have put more joy in my heart than they, he's talking about the ungodly, when their grain and wine abound.

[ 47 : 12 ] God has put joy in our heart because of His grace, because of His mercy. To rejoice in that grace. This is cause for worship and for praise. This is the eternal song of the saints.

Rejoice in it. Here's the next thing, receive it again and again. And we talked about a few weeks ago the need to repent, rehearse, and receive.

We repent of our sin because we keep battling that sin nature. We repent of our sin. We turn from it. We confess it before the Lord. And then we go back and we remember the gospel of Jesus Christ. We remember that, yes, I was angry towards my spouse, towards my children, but God in His kindness has taken that sin.

He has nailed it to the cross of Christ. It no longer stands as a word against me. I am free from it. We rehearse that gospel. Say, Jesus has saved me by His grace.

That sin does not need to define me. My guilt is gone. I don't need to wallow in shame and pity. That's what it means to rehearse the gospel. We receive God's grace again.

[ 48 : 17 ] Not only in our sin, we need to do this when we fail. Sometimes we don't measure up to our own expectations that weren't even imposed on us. We feel like failures. We can't do anything right. But we remember that God sees us by grace as a child who is approved, who has the merits of Christ, who doesn't need to perform to earn anything from Him.

He has given us His love. In our suffering, we need to receive God's grace again and again. His presence is with us.

It abides with us no matter what we're walking through. Our greatest problem is solved. And now He walks with us in the valleys of life. So we, in our suffering, remember His grace.

We remember that for eternity, Paul says in Ephesians 2, God is going to be showing us the immeasurable riches of His grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Now that is a hope to cling to in the midst of suffering. Here's what else we do. We extend it to others. We extend God's grace to others. Love covers a multitude of sins.

[ 49 : 25 ] It has covered our sins in Christ. And so now God calls us to extend that same grace to those who have offended us. You know, Lamech, in chapter 4, he called, he took hold of vengeance as always, 70 times 7.

May, may, may, may, when people heard him, Lamech's going to take vengeance 70 times 7-fold. And Christ says in the Gospels that we're to forgive others 70 times 7.

Right? Peter asks, how many times should I forgive my brother if he sins against me? Seven times? As if Peter was like this great guy, and he's, no, you're close. So 70 times 7. We don't stop forgiving. Right?

And that's what the grace of God does. It changes us so that we can extend that grace and that forgiveness towards others. Here's the last thing. Invite others into it.

Why were those who have been shown grace, saved in the, oh, we're going to get to the flood story, saved in the ark that is Christ.

[ 50 : 26 ] This is the destiny of sinners. Right? All around us. All around us. Working beside you in your jobs. Living beside you in your homes. Maybe in your homes.

Driving by us on the road. All around us are sinners who are perishing. They're on the other trail. The trail that leads ultimately to death. That's the path that they're on. And God's word has told us that the gospel of Jesus Christ is power unto salvation.

We preach the gospel in word. We preach the gospel in deed. We show others the gospel. God, the spirit, uses that gospel to grab a hold of people's lives and to save them by grace. We need to be proclaiming that gospel and inviting others into the grace.

Get off the trail that you're on. It's leading to death. You might not think so. God's word says it is. Here's the path of life. Here's the path of being with God forevermore. And you know, saints, the

journey that we're on now, it might feel long.

At times, it feels like we're never going to reach the summit. But be encouraged and rest in this. Our trail, it leads not to death. It leads to everlasting life with Christ.

[ 51 : 42 ] That is the destination that we are headed towards and it is going to come. And every single step of the way towards that destination is a step of grace.

We have a permanent standing in grace. And let that encourage your hearts this morning. Heavenly Father, what a weighty passage we have here in Genesis 6. the pervasiveness of evil and sin.

Lord, we see it every day in our hearts, in our responses, in our words, in our actions, in our motivations. Everywhere, Lord, we see the corruption of our hearts. We know that that is true.

And we also see your immeasurable grace. That grace has been poured out onto us, lavished upon us in Christ. And so we are thankful we are thankful, Lord, that you have transferred us from the domain of darkness and you have brought us into the kingdom of your beloved Son.

That is a total work of grace. God, we did not do it. We could not earn it. We receive it by faith. And we thank you, Lord, for giving us faith and giving us life. God, I pray that you would use the preaching of the gospel through these sayings, through your servants that are gathered here.

[ 52 : 58 ] Use the preaching of the gospel in word and in deed. God, to get others off that path of destruction and onto the path of life. God, all of this, all of this results in your glory.

We don't fully understand all of the things we see in scripture or in our lives, but we know that all of this results in your glory. And you deserve all the glory, Lord.

So we will sing that now. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.