

Tonight, Melissa Vandiver will share with our children the history of Noah and focus on his special relationship with God. There are many themes we could explore in his life; today, I only want to focus on God's grace which brought him through a corrupt society, the cleansing storm, and gave him favor with his covenant Savior.

Let's start by relating to you:

1. What is your relationship with our society?

- a. Do you believe our world is largely corrupt or godly?
- b. Are you hoping just to live a normal life?
- c. Are you looking for a spiritual revival in you and others?

2. How do you normally survive in this world?

- a. Do you participate in its wickedness?
- b. Do you grieve over the sins of our land?
- c. Do you look to God for grace and guidance?

Point 1: Noah lived in a corrupt age. The world was so yucky that man was continually seeking more and more evil. God regretted making man and determined to "blot out humankind" and start again; **except**, Noah found grace/favor in the eyes of the Lord.

We read, *"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. 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."* (Genesis 6:5–8)

This brings us to a great question. We know the world is dark and evil and many people thumb their nose at God. So, "How does a person find godly favor and grace in the midst of a darkening world"?

Answer: Grace is found by looking up into the eyes of God.

Grace is available to any who will look to God. It's not that Noah was more or less deserving than the world, but instead of living comfortably with the world's system, Noah looked up to God and saw grace staring back at him. Grace is found by regretting the sins of our world, and repenting from them by turning to God. Noah was not perfect. He was a sinner and would sin again, horribly, even after the flood! But, Noah kept looking to the Lord for grace, guidance, and godliness. Noah was saved and preserved because he had a relationship with God who offers grace.

Gang, are you in a relationship with God? Are you looking up at God's face to see grace staring down? I'd like you to consider God's favor towards those who trust in him: *"... He {Jesus} is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them."* (Heb 7:25) *"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* (Heb 4:16)

Application 1: The world is corrupt and getting darker every day; but you personally can be saved from the wrath to come by looking into the eyes of God and discovering his grace and favor for you.

We are instructed and promised: *"turn to God from idols... serve the living and true God, and ... wait for his Son from heaven... Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come."* (1 Thess 1:9–10)

Point 2: God sent a cleansing storm.

"Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you." (Genesis 6:11–18)

There are many who think it was unfair that God destroyed the world in Noah's day. It wasn't. It was actually merciful. The earth was given ample time to repent and turn to God. The promise of salvation was offered by God, but the people neglected the promise and continued in their evil. They had gotten to the place that their hearts were so hard they could not, they would not, repent and return to the Lord.

Think how evil our world is. It's dark and getting darker. If this world will not turn to God, the pain and misery of living here will only get worse. Why does God let evil people do evil things? Because, they refuse to turn to him. Once it gets to the place our society can no longer return to the Lord, we will experience another day of reckoning.

Jesus speaks of this as a warning, to ensure you respond and are among those saved during the coming judgment.

He said: *"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man." (Matthew 24:36–39)*

Application 2: The people of Noah's day just continued life as normal though judgment was promised and near. How about you? Jesus is your ark sent by God to carry you through the storm. Are you found in him? If not, I urge you to turn to him today. We are told to offer prayers of repentance now while grace can be found. Surely during the rush of flood waters, the people of Noah's generation wished to repent, but it was too late. They were swept away by judgement. What will come of us if we neglect an even greater salvation?

Christian, faith is more than words, it is actions of turning to God for help. We must repent by turning to God and entering a relationship with Him through Jesus. The Bible asks, *"how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will." (Heb 2:3–4)*

Yes, we must acknowledge we too are sinners in need of rescue and turn to God today, while He may be found. David wrote of timely repentance and said, *"I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Therefore, let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah" (Psalm 32:5–7)*

God will rescue, redeem, reconcile, and restore you today, if you turn to him. *"For he says, "In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Corinthians 6:2–3)*

Point 3: Like Noah, we too are offered a Covenant Savior

In grace, God promised a covenant with Noah. *“But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.”* (Gen 6:18) Consider that the Lord promised the covenant ark, before it was even built. Just as God also promised the Messiah who come and save people from their sins.

Notice: Noah’s family trusted and obeyed. *“They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in.”* (Gen 7:15–16) When the ark was ready, God commanded Noah’s family to enter, and God sealed the door. Now that Christ has been provided, we are also offered safety in the covenant of Jesus. The command is to “come to Jesus”. When you do, trust God to seal you in his covenant relationship. The Lord will keep you safely in his ark!

God not only brought them through the storm, He gave a sign of a further covenant. *“And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.””* (Genesis 9:12–17)

In the same way, God provides a sign of our continuing relationship and covenant with him. Not only do we have the cross and the empty tomb to demonstrate God’s love, we have the continuing sign of his Holy Spirit.

“In him {Jesus} we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.” (Ephesians 1:11–14)

Application Point 3: Yes, we are going through trying times, but God has already promised our rescue through Jesus Christ. Are you looking to Jesus? Have you repented and trusted in God’s great love, grace, and provisions? If so, trust in the gifts of God. Rejoice that you are sealed by the Holy Spirit who is leading you forward in your relationship with God. Do not fear the sinful society or the ways God interacts with them. Consider what God has promised you. Hold on to this truth in faith no matter how dark the days become.

Remember: God never breaks a covenant. Are you trusting in him? Then live unto the Lord. He already calls you his own. Shine out in a dark world.

Lastly, Consider: Your life is a symbol of God’s covenant for the purpose of leading others to Jesus!

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,” (Philippians 2:12–15)

““You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14–16)

I hope you enjoyed today’s study. Draw near to God and live to reveal his covenant with others. Perhaps, unlike the people of Noah’s generation, your neighbors and friends will repent, seeing the Light of Christ in you and turn to God for rescue and life. His covenant is eternal, and his promises are everlasting!

What a friend we have in Jesus!