

02.16.25

Genesis

Chapter 6 - Finding Grace in a Corrupt World

Grace Measured in Cubits (vs. 13-17)

Genesis 6:13-17: Then God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. “Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch. “This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. “You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks. “Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.

Well, how many times have we read the story of Noah and the ark? There's even a place you can go to see it. I think you have to pay money for it, but that's ok. I thought it was interesting that it was actually closed one time because of rain. Nevertheless, God saves us.

As you come to Genesis, this passage as God begins to reveal to Noah just how to build this ark. There are so many wonderful truths throughout because we know that God is gracious and He's merciful, full of loving kindness. Unfortunately, oftentimes man will read a passage such as this, and the only thing that he sees is the destruction of the whole earth. But he misses the point of God's love all the way through. We begin to talk about the very beginning, the grace of God in all of creation. As Paul would say, the god of this world has blinded our minds that we would not see the glory of God. But God is

certainly gracious throughout the pages. As soon as man sins, God immediately goes into work with reconciliation. It's not man trying to reconcile himself to God, but it is God desiring to reconcile man to Himself. Paul will talk about this specifically as he will say, "We are ambassadors for Christ to reconcile you to God. We beg you therefore," he actually uses the word beg, "be reconciled to God."

Then he goes into 2 Corinthians 6:1,

"And working together with Him..."

What an interesting picture. That we actually as believers now begin to work in the process of this reconciliation and call others to the reconciliation to God. God's desire is to give grace and as we talked about, you go through all the epistles, one of the things that's said in almost every one of them, especially at the introduction is "grace and peace to you." Another way of putting that would be "may the favor of God and well-being be upon you in every area of your life." What a wonderful gift that God desires to give us, and what's also strange is in the midst of all of this corruption; we call it copious corruption

because it seems to be literally everywhere; the passage actually reads that way in 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.”

That's hard to believe. Isn't it? But that was that which brought in this malevolent behavior to such an extent that what you see is a corruption that generates violence. And we talked about the word last week. That's where we get the word “ Hamas ” which fundamentally is that violence and it's not just a sense of violence, but that the word itself actually means a violence with a design for cruelty and injustice. So, the very fact that we have an organization that identifies with that though they would define it in the Arabic as “ zeal ”, we understand it to be exactly what they're doing, that they seem to have no rest until they are destructive in the lives of people.

This text is revealing to us that God saw the result of this wickedness and let me emphasize this, that the more you continue in sin, the more cruel and violent you become. There is no such thing as a good sin and as Paul will say in

Romans 6, there's no such thing as a sin that benefits you. So, the sin that comes into your life and the more that you not only harbor that sin, but you begin to live out that sin, the crueler you become because sin in and of itself is not being like God; missing the mark of God. Which God is loving, He's kind, He's generous and you think of all those. You start moving those things out of your life and what do you have left? And it's that selfishness and the selfish desires that you pursue that cause you to see man as just an object that gets in your way of the things that you desire. So, you become hostile towards anybody that gets in your way of the things that you crave.

Therefore, if you look,

(Genesis 6:13) “Then God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me...”

That's an interesting word in the Hebrew; “Come in My face” would probably be the best way to describe that.

“...for the earth is filled with violence (ḥāmās)...”

It's everywhere.

“...because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.”

Because really, the assault is to the earth and you say, “How can that be?” Well, man came from the earth. God had raised up man as literally the crown of creation from the earth. You see man killing man and destroying one another. This is what you do with the best of the best? This is what you do with God's crowning glory? You slaughter everybody. You murder everybody. You hate everybody. Every thought you're thinking of is to destroy, kill, murder, rape. Is that your only thought? That's our only thought. Well, then He uses the earth to bring the retribution upon them.

The passage starts off by actually giving us that pattern of God's grace in the midst of this. I oftentimes think of that Romans 5:20,

“... where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.”

And you see in this interesting setting of which man is seeking to do harm, God is seeking to save. The passage says in the midst of all this mayhem, Noah found Grace in the eyes of the Lord. I would say, “You mean You found

somebody in all of this?” and God says, “That's the one I'm looking at.” So, the whole dialogue from here on out is about saving Noah. It's not as much an issue about destroying the world. That has to be done to save Noah. But the focus is on the salvation of this family, and that's where He goes. That's the grace of God that is seen throughout the pages.

If you look in verse 13, he starts off with an interesting phrase, and it's that phrase that I want you to kind of underline. The phrase begins this way,

“Then God said to Noah...”

What the passage is referring to is a kind of grace that we oftentimes take for granted and that is God's desire to inform us, to reveal certain things to us. He doesn't have to. If you were to see certain things, certain conditions, “I'm not going to tell them what's coming. They're just going to get it.” But God says, “I'm going to tell Noah.”

You see that same mindset in Genesis 18 where Christ comes to Abraham at the oaks as he's sitting underneath them, and the passage reads,

(Genesis 18:17) “... “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do...””

As Isaiah will go on to say, “Because he is My friend.”

John 15 emphasizes this as well as Jesus tells His disciples, “Because you’re friends and no longer My servants, I'm going to tell you everything that My Father has for you. I'm not going to hold anything back.” And you realize it really is a privilege.

Amos puts it best if I can quote Amos,

(Amos 3:7) “Surely the Lord GOD does nothing Unless He reveals His secret counsel To His servants the prophets.”

The Lord does nothing unless He reveals His secret council to the servants, the prophets. It is God's grace that would communicate with us, “This is what I'm going to do.” And I'm so thankful for the word of God, because we don't have to guess what's going to happen. I mean, I go into the Book of Revelation, I know what's going to happen. I don't know exactly all the details, but I don't need to. I just need to know how it's going to turn out. It's God,

virtually saying, "It's going to be ok. We're going to win, and we've got this thing" and there's great comfort in this. Grace starts off with God informing us of things; God literally revealing to us things that are going to happen. This brings a great peace.

When Jesus is talking to His disciples as you come to the end of John 15, one of the statements that He makes in Chapter 15 is "The world hates you. It hated Me. What do you expect? It's going to hate you."

But then He goes on in Chapter 16 and He says, "And this is what's going to happen, they're going to deliver you up. They're going to do it in My name. All sorts of bad things are going to happen with people that are religious. They're going to attack you. He says this, "I've told you ahead of time so you wouldn't worry." Because if you think about it, being attacked by religious leaders, you will almost think, "Maybe I'm doing something wrong here." But the fact that He begins to reveal these things, you realize that "God has given me a peace." There is a peace that I'm not only doing something for a reason, but I'm right on target. I'm on the right path, and He's got me. So,

there's a great peace in the informing and a great grace that God gives. His favor upon us is Him telling us what He's going to do. When you open up the word of God and He begins to reveal truth to you, that's His favor upon you, and you can sense, "Wow, You really love me to reveal this wonderful truth to me." And you can just feel the comfort that comes from that.

The other thing that you see as far as the grace to you is concerned is the very fact that God is promising that He's going to eradicate evil and corruption.

The passage reads in verse 13,

"...the earth is filled with violence... behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth."

The emphasis, of course, clearly within the passage is that God is going to end all of that violence and destruction that's there, and ultimately all those who hate and destroy and bring ruin upon the earth, God is going to deal with. I think that's one of the greatest promises in all of Scripture.

Even though Romans 12 says, “Don't take your own vengeance; leave room for the wrath of God”, it then turns and says, “But God is going to do justice.” And to think that we would always have to live with evil and hurt and pain and sorrow. I mean, think about one of the greatest promises in all of Scripture. In Revelation, “He’s going to dry every tear. No more sorrow, no more crying. No more pain.” It's the grace of God that would do this.

As you look in verse 14, we now get into the construction of the ark, and this is an act of grace as well. It's an act of grace specifically, because what God is promising through this ark is well-being; a sense of safety; security. It is interesting to be noted that the ark in some cases can be actually translated as “coffer” or we would translate it as a coffin. So, as you look at this long, interesting box, there is an interesting picture of perhaps a man going into a state of death and then coming out as being resurrected when he comes out.

If you look with me in Isaiah 26, God begins to reveal that Babylon is going to come. In fact, the children of Israel are

going to be dealt with, but those that are His, He's going to protect. His goal of course, as it states,

(Isaiah 25:2) “For You have made a city into a heap,

A fortified city into a ruin;

A palace of strangers is a city no more,

It will never be rebuilt.

(Isaiah 25:3) Therefore a strong people will glorify You;

Cities of ruthless nations will revere You.”

In other words, “I'm going to wipe out all of this treachery that's on the earth.” But before that happens, God's going to deal with His people through the treachery of the people. But as He then turns to the people, He goes, “Now you know that the cities of the world are hostile, and you feel like a stranger in the midst of them.” In fact, one of the statements that He makes is, “They're cities of chaos”, which is a pretty good description of cities for the most part.

He says, “But you have a city.” And that's where He begins in Isaiah 26,

(Isaiah 26:1) “In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

“We have a strong city;

He sets up walls and ramparts for security.”

You go, “What is this city that He's talking about?” He goes, “Me.”

And that's why He says,

(Isaiah 26:2) “Open the gates, that the righteous nation may enter,

The one that remains faithful.”

We'll quote according to King James, which you know best,

(Isaiah 26:3) “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”

The point of the passage is, by virtue of you putting your trust in Him, He will keep you in perfect (peace) well-being. He will give you perfect well-being if your focus and your trust are on Him. The way He ends is very interesting because of course He talks about the fact that death and all these things are going to come and they're going to be

all around you. Of course, that's an interesting picture with Noah. Death is going to come and literally surround him. Yet, as we read in Psalm 91, "But it won't touch you." How could you be surrounded by death and it not touch you?

(Isaiah 26:20) "Come, my people, enter into your rooms
And close your doors behind you;
Hide for a little while
Until indignation runs its course."

The same picture that you're seeing with Noah. We're going to put you in a box. We're going to close the door until the indignation runs its course, but we're saving you. So, as you go back to Genesis 6, what we're going to see is God actually giving the plans for well-being. What are the plans for well-being? How do you find peace in the midst of the storm?

Paul will write in Ephesians 4 that we're no longer to be like the world driven and tossed by the wind and every wind and wave of doctrine pushing us around. Well, how do I keep safe? Well, we're going to build an ark, and God is going to show you how He's going to keep you safe in

this. Now, I just want to emphasize this is God's plan. These are His plans. So, the way to build the ark has to be done exactly the way He's telling you to do it because this is the way that He's going to save. This is His plan to save, not yours. "Maybe I can build a submarine." Not going to work. So, just go with His plan. We'll go with His plans. So, if you look with me in verse 14, it starts off this way, (Genesis 6:14) "Make for yourself an ark..."

I like the way it starts off, "Make for yourself an ark". Who is God saving? Noah and his family. It's not like God didn't have anything to do, and He goes, "Maybe I'll work on building an ark." It's that He desires to save, and He wants Noah to be a part of this. Now, the fact that Noah's going to be a part of the building doesn't take away from God saving. It just brings him in on the process and causes him to own. You know, the more you and I begin to obey what God tells us to do, you begin to realize just how powerful God desires to save. You see His saving in everything. The thankfulness really, at many times is in the details. He says, "Make it this way." And you go, "Wow. Now, I wouldn't have thought about this." And God would say,

“Yeah, you would’ve sprung a leak there.” So, all these things are so Noah can see the hand of God in His saving in his life.

So, He starts off by saying, “Make yourself an ark.” Now, I want to emphasize the word “ark” here within the passage, which is only seen in one other place beside making reference to Noah's ark, and where it's seen again is in Exodus. In Exodus, it actually refers to the basket which Moses was put in, and it actually uses the same word. In fact, I just want to remind you, as we're going to see within the text, pitch is put around the ark. It'll be pitch that would be put around the basket. So, there is a clear analogy, and it becomes analogous within the text that is revealing to us this picture of warmth and care. This basket that was made by a mother and God is in one way kind of conveying that wonderful desire to rescue, to save from the hands of the pharaoh in Egypt, from killing the babies; from the hands of the wicked, from killing those that are righteous. God is preserving. So, you have this interesting picture of the ark. It can sometimes actually be translated as a treasure chest. Which once

again, God is in some way conveying the great treasure that He has in one that He looked upon and Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and God has favored him. So, the process of the ark is going to be now the favor of God upon them, and the desire of God to literally build something that would give security and safety. He starts going into some detail, and He starts off with gopher wood, which even today, people are still debating, "What exactly is that wood?" So, I'm not going to try to tell you I know exactly what it is, but I will say this, that it has to be conducive to the floating. It has to be conducive for the water. The fact is that God gave a specific kind of wood to use, and this is the key point of the text; not as much in the word itself, but the emphasis is that God is very specific about what kind of material to use. Now, this actually begins what I would say the beginning of the grace of the process of you actually, if we can put it this way, inheriting well-being for God is actually building us something for you to have a place of comfort, of well-being, of rest in the midst of storm; in the midst of all the death. The world offers us a lot of pain and a lot of sorrow, doesn't it? But God offers us well-being in the

midst of all of this. Where does it begin? Well, it begins by listening to God, and as He begins to canvas the right kind of material to use, this is a key point.

Let me just, if I can, jump to the New Testament and give you kind of an analogy of that. In 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 in particular; actually, in the beginning of that chapter, Paul was talking about, "We're fighting a war. We're fighting a battle." Now, the world has a way to fight back. So, "You push me, I push you harder." That's the way the world fights back, and Paul turns, and he says, "But we're fighting with different weapons." He actually uses the phrase "different weapons". His point obviously is that you're not going to win the battle if you use different weapons than God. God is going to tell you what to use. You need to use it. Otherwise, it's not going to bring you safety. It's not going to bring you security. It's not going to bring you well-being. So, if you fight evil with evil, you're going to drown in the evil, but if you fight evil with good, you'll win every time. We know that Christ defeated evil on the cross and rose from the grave. You're going to win,

but there's no other way to win. You've got to use the same kind of material that God tells you to.

Let me give you another example; 1 Peter 3 talks about a woman that maybe has a marriage where her husband's an unbeliever. Maybe she can win him over by really dressing really well. Well, there's nothing wrong with that, but that's not going to win the battle. Let your adornment be the hidden person of the heart, the gentle and quiet spirit. Now, what woman really thinks, "Ok. Gentle and quiet spirit that's going to win him over. Are you kidding me? What I need to do is tell him what to do and have a fit if he doesn't and that's how I win him over." And I suppose you could drip him to death, but the ultimate answer in the change is to use the right material. It's with a gentle and quiet spirit with humility and having the right heart towards God. Doing all these things for God, that God is going to begin to work. Because once again, God's the one that's constructing this thing. So, God's the one that's going to save. God knows what it takes to save, and you need to obey Him in the material. Now, in the process of you using the right material, each

step that you take begins to reveal just how gracious God is and allows you to participate in this. But you're going, "Wow, I feel better already." Once you put this thing in place and once you put that thing in place, and the more you're putting in place, the more you feel, I would say, secure. You have to use the material for the right purpose. I do think it's to be noted that he was not building a battleship. You notice that?

But if you look at the passage, it reads this way,

(Genesis 6:14) "... you shall make the ark with rooms..."

I know that's kind of general, but here's the point, we're trying to save. Our desire is not to attack; our desire is to rescue. So, we've got to build a lot of rooms. That's what we're trying to do. Sometimes, you're just not on the same page. Paul talks about this to Timothy. He goes, "Look, you want to correct people that are in opposition, but you need to do it gently because our desire is to see them repent and come to the knowledge of the truth." That's our goal. Sometimes, I think, "Stop, stop. Gary, stop. My desire is not to nail him. My desire is to see him saved." You kind of have to stop there.

Paul writes about this as well when you go into the end of 2 Corinthians, if you look with me. Very interesting way that he puts this in 2 Corinthians 13.

(2 Corinthians 13:8) “For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth.”

(2 Corinthians 13:9) For we rejoice when we ourselves are weak but you are strong; this we also pray for, that you be made complete.

(2 Corinthians 13:10) For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I need not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me...”

Now, what we know is that what the Lord gave him as an apostle, talk about material, is authority, right? Why do you have authority? Read the passage.

“... for building up and not for tearing down.”

That's an epiphany, isn't it? That's why I have authority. It has nothing to do with you going around oppressing people and getting your way and getting what you think you want. The whole reason you have authority is to build

up, to build something, to build something that would rescue, and that's clearly what's being said in Genesis 6, “Make for yourself rooms”.

Now, underline the word “rooms”, because everywhere else besides this place it is actually translated “nest”. So, once again, you read in Psalms, the bird has its nest. It'll use this particular word. So, all the way through Scripture, it's almost always translated that way, which is conveying the sense of a place of comfort. “Make rooms that enhance and give comfort” is basically what He's saying. God is desiring through this process to give you and I comfort, as well as those that we minister to. God is desiring to give us a sense of security and stability as we're going to go on and see.

“... make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.”

Take the word “pitch” and the word that you saw earlier, “cover.” It's basically the same word. The words “pitch” and “cover” have been tied together, and strangely enough, in the Book of Exodus as well as Leviticus, almost always translated in terms of redemption. You wouldn't

think of pitch being redemption, would you? In Psalms it's actually translated as the word "forgive". So, "Cover the boat with forgiveness" would be an interesting picture. "Cover the boat with redemption." God is desiring to cover our sins. He's desiring to forgive us. It's one thing that if you think about it, makes us feel the safest in the turmoil of this world because the world is full of accusers. I don't know if you notice it or not, but the world will point its finger at you twice as hard as you would ever point it at them. You may be remotely guilty of anything, but they're going to find it. They'll dig it up. The only thing that's really going to give you a peace in all of this is a sense that God forgives, and He completely forgives. Does He forgive inside? Well, inside is a picture of inside the dwelling place or in your home and outside is a picture of outside your home. Sometimes the accusations come from within, sorry to say; sometimes the accusations come from outside. But God is wanting to give you comfort all the way around, and you need to know that it's His forgiveness that will do that.

Now, He goes into verse 15, and He takes us even to a higher level in the building of the ark.

(Genesis 6:15) ““This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.””

You'd be hard pressed to find something throughout Scripture that would have those dimensions. However, these are nautical dimensions.

It was interesting a number of years ago, I think it was 1993 from what I read, a Korean and world class ship builder, who's actually not a believer, sat down and tried to figure out an equation of what would be the perfect dimensions for a seaworthy craft. How big would a craft have to be and how wide would a craft have to be in order to be able to deal with large waves? What they found is that the dimensions that are here and specifically what you have is a six to one ratio. And the six to one ratio they have found to be the perfect ratio for three things. The three things are stability, comfort and strength. If you take those three things together, there is no better ratio for a seaworthy craft. They found if you

made it shorter you had certain problems; if you made it longer, you had certain problems; if it was wider, you had certain problems. Nothing was better than these dimensions. Scripture is giving this sense of what God desires to give to us, and it is that stability in the midst of storm; it is that sense of comfort in the midst of storm and I would say, comfort in both ways in which the craft would not be hitting the waves hard. They actually felt like this particular craft with these particular measurements could easily take 100-foot waves. We know according to what was going on with the flood, that there was great wind, there was waves that were going on, but God says, "We're going to make it smooth sailing for you in the sense of comfort, and we're going to make you stable in the midst of the storm, and we're going to cause this craft to be strong. Or more specifically, where you are to be strong." Now, all of those, if you think about it, are very gracious acts of comfort that God has given us, and certainly it is the grace of God that is orchestrating this.

If you look in verse 16,

(Genesis 6:16) “You shall make a window for the ark...”

Once again, the word “window” is probably not like a little window that we would think, but it seems to be actually something that had a covering, and we won't go into the details of that because we're going to see it a little bit later on. But I think it's in Genesis 8:6 and 8:13 where Noah actually pulls back what is called the window, but it's probably more accurately, a skylight. The picture is, of course, that God is having man keep his focus on the heavens. The word “window” there is not window, it's light.

So, “You shall make a window (or light) for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top...”

Of course, that's where you're going to be looking.

“... and set the door of the ark in the side of it...”

The Hebrews believe that it was on the east side, which is the side of which the Christ was to come. The picture is not unlike as we know, in the Gospel of John, where Christ had His side pierced for you and for me, and it was through the piercing of His side or Adam actually having

his side opened up that the woman, that life would be born. So, it's an interesting picture of God providing not only a way to look towards the heavens, which is a wonderful picture of hope, but it is God that is going beyond that and saying, "And I'm going to give you a way to come here." So, you have the way and the light, and it's a great picture that God has given you.

All of these are the pictures, and you have the three decks, which the Hebrews actually felt like were the three heavens. The one in our world and then of course, bringing you ultimately to the throne of God.

(Genesis 6:17) "Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven..."

Now, there's a parallel of this in the New Testament. There are a couple places in which Noah is mentioned in the New Testament. One is in the gospels where it talks about in the last days. It's going to be very similar to the time of Noah. But then as you go into the Book of Hebrews, it will talk about "By faith, Noah did this," and it describes Noah's building of the ark an act of faith, which

is what you're doing really, when you think about it, but where it all comes together is really in the Book of 1 Peter. So, if you turn there with me, we'll see just how God begins to demonstrate to us through Noah, His saving power.

This passage that we're going to be looking at, and once again I don't want to go into all the details which could easily bog us down and just bring more confusion than comfort, but as we look at this 1 Peter 3, it's one of the most debated texts of all Scripture because of the way perhaps it's written or because of the way that perhaps people are looking at it. Oftentimes, we don't take in the context of why Peter would talk about this, but Peter is going to be dealing a world in which we live in, full of trials and tribulation; full of bitterness and hatred and people abusing you; wrongly treating you. Peter's going to be talking about this; things that we suffer. The picture, I believe, and the reason why the association is during the days of Noah, it was just Noah. In fact, we really have no strong inference that his three sons, their wives or his wife, we don't even know Noah's wife's name, was on

board in the sense of walking the same way. Scripture says, "You alone have I found to be righteous." So, it's a very interesting point, but it's the grace of God that would say, "But we're not going to end humanity." And This is why he brings his sons and their wives on board. I mean, do you realize how close we came to not existing? All God had to do was go, "Get in, Noah. That's it. Close the door" and you wouldn't have existed. But the grace of God, in which He opens up, and He says, "Make room" and you begin to see God working in our life. I would say that one of the things that make our life more stable, make our life more comforting is the fact that we're working together with Him.

So, you come to 1 Peter, and in 1 Peter 3, we kind of already quoted some of the passages in this in which we're dealing with a woman that has a husband that's unreasonable, and she, by her gentle and quiet spirit; I would say that she might have had some similar thoughts as Noah; that is to say, when God turns to Noah, He goes, "Build an ark." And Noah goes, "Right. What's an ark?" So, God has him build something, as Hebrews will say, he's

actually looking at things that he had never seen before. So, here's the woman going, "Ok, right. Gentle and quiet spirit. That's going to work?" And God says, "Believe me. Believe me."

So, as you go into the passage, he's going to tie that together. Now, if you look with me in verse 8, one of the hardest things to do in the midst of all the trials and tribulation and the hatred of people is to remain humble in the sense of once again, not dealing out retribution or reciprocity; going after the person for doing something or coming after you. It's hard not to get angry at everybody. I mean, you find yourself just steaming and fuming, and going, "I hate those people." And God goes, "Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. You know the reason I'm saving you is because on the face of the earth, you're the only one that's not hating."

So, the passage reads this way,

(1 Peter 3:8) "To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;

(1 Peter 3:9) not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead..."

Now, Peter has already clarified the example that we have in the person of Christ.

(1 Peter 2:23) “...while being reviled, He did not revile in return...”

This is the One who committed no sin. He didn't do anything wrong, but they hung Him on the cross. In the midst of this, while being reviled, He didn't revile in return but kept entrusting Himself to a faithful Creator, doing what is right. You too do that. Now, I know in this regard that God is having you build an ark, and it doesn't make any sense to you. I know that He's having you put certain things together in your life and He says, “Now, you've got to let go of this. You can't bring that on board.” All these things that He's telling you to do, you're saying, “I don't know how that's going to save me.” But God is saying, “Trust Me. I'm building something safe and secure for you.”

So, the way it reads is,

(1 Peter 3:9) “not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.”

It's actually for you.

(1 Peter 3:10) “For, “THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS...”

“I'd like that. Yeah, I'd like that.” Well, ok. So, stop talking against people. Stop tearing people down.

The way it reads is,

“... MUST KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL...”

That would be injurious things.

“... AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT.

(1 Peter 3:11) “HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD;

HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.

(1 Peter 3:12) “FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD THE RIGHTEOUS,
AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER...”

Now in the text, he's defining the righteous. Who are those? You're not speaking against people. You're not tearing people down. You're trying to help people. You're doing good. So, you're not focused on the evil around you, like God. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

"We're going to build an ark." "Well, God, aren't You sitting around fuming?" "No. We're constantly concentrated on building an ark. We're concentrating on doing good." And that's where God wants us to have our focus.

Verse 13, "This is going to protect you." I like the way it reads,

(1 Peter 3:13) "Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?"

Won't God take care of you?

(1 Peter 3:14) "But even if you should suffer..."

And there will be some suffering, things that will happen in your life, but God still has you. Now, the main point of this is going to be your faith in God which is part of the building of the Ark, because you're wanting to build a sense of well-being; some sort of stability in your life. So, grace really stabilizes you in the midst of the storm. How do I get stable? What he says is, "You do the right thing." And there are going to be times that it's going to be difficult. You're going to have times of suffering. You're in

the world. Welcome to the world. But what is going to happen in the midst of this is you'll be safe. You'll be stable, you'll have comfort, and you'll be strong all the way through.

The passage goes on and says,

(1 Peter 3:15) “but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

“I just want to be right with God” is ultimately the picture.

Verse 16 is going to be one of the key words that Peter is going to hang on, and that is “keep a good conscience”.

Now, what he's talking about with “good conscience” is literally being right with God and only desiring to please Him. That's a good conscience and let me emphasize this fact that oftentimes a good conscience is nothing that anybody sees. So, you're not going to get accolades from everybody else but the greatest protection that you're going to have, the greatest source of security and stability comes from God. So, the one thing that's going to protect

you is doing what you do because you love Him and because you trust Him.

Now, the passage goes on and says,

(1 Peter 3:16) “and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.”

In other words, you're going to win this battle if in fact you stay right with God.

(1 Peter 3:17) “For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.”

(1 Peter 3:18) For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust...”

In other words, He did the right thing even though everybody else not only misconstrued it but saw it as a as a heinous thing. He was totally misunderstood, wasn't He? So, in all of this, He continued, why? To please the Father. This is building something stable. Look, if you and I are looking around at what everybody else is doing and how they're reacting to what we're doing, you're going to

be a very unstable person, and you'll have no comfort in you. But one of the statements that Peter will go onto make is," if you're reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed because the spirit of glory rests upon you." That's what happens when you have a good conscience with God. God's favor is upon you. So, it's better if you're going to suffer at all, you need to do the right thing. You need to focus on your heart being right with God. Then he throws in what would seem to be a very confusing text. He throws in Noah, and that's where we're getting this from. If you drop on down, it talks about those in which Christ proclaimed to the spirits down in prison. We won't go into all of that.

(1 Peter 3:20) "who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark..."

This is interesting. I mean, why is he emphasizing the construction of the ark? Because what he's talking about is there was a building of stability that was going on by Noah. He was involving himself in this.

“... God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few...”

Which is telling us that you're going to be doing things that God is going to tell you to do that's not going to be very popular.

In fact, if you look in Chapter 4, the Gentiles are doing all this.

(1 Peter 4:4) “In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation...”

They go, “What are you doing? Are you crazy?” And you're going, “A little bit.”

(1 Peter 3:20) “who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons...”

If you count them all, that's his three sons and their wives and his wife.

“... were brought safely through the water.”

Now, he's going to equate this to a baptism.

(1 Peter 3:21) "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you..."

There's a number of ways that this is actually affirming this point. Obviously, the initial one is that humanity was saved, and you were saved in this baptism when God took these eight through because humanity itself was saved, but He's taken it beyond that realm. Now, the picture is you have this coffin of sorts that goes through the water of death and the promise is that He'll bring you safely through. Keep your eyes on God and look for ways to rescue, but it is God that is going to take you safely through the waters. That's a promise in which it actually says at the end of verse 20, they were brought safely through the water. The correspondence is that there's a baptism equation here in which the baptism is a removing of flesh. Now, one of the statements that's made when you go back to Noah is, "I will destroy all flesh." The picture specifically is that all flesh has to go in order for you to walk according to the Spirit. In other words, all of you has to be out of this. You have to die. The analogy is very strong in Romans chapter 6, whereas Christ died to

sin, so we too die with Him and are raised in newness of life. This is a baptism that he talks about in Romans 6. The picture is that this old flesh has to die in order for newness of life to come.

“... baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh...”

This is a very interesting point. Of course, the Jews would be all on any kind of baptism. “Ok, we’ve got to do more washing.” And Peter goes, “No, no, stop. It's not about you doing more hand washing.”

“... but an appeal to God for a good conscience...”

It is that which Noah did when he came to God.

If you look with me in Hebrews 11, it gives us a great picture of Noah. Hebrews 11, and just a reminder,

(Hebrews 11:6) “And without faith it is impossible to please Him...”

Right? So, what is a good conscience trying to do? “I only want to please God.” People can't see that. It's not necessarily a physical thing that is being done externally. True faith is that which I’m just right with God, and that's

all I want to be. Building an ark was not a popular thing to do, and it was not something that everybody would look at as an act of wisdom, but who cares? I'm doing it for God. So, it was an act of conscience before God. "If I'm pleasing You, if I'm using the right material, if I'm doing it in the right way, if I'm doing it for the right purpose, if I'm doing all those things, I know that in me You're building security, strength and comfort. I know that You're doing this and You're going to give me that stability that I need."

(Hebrews 11:6) "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

That's that conscience, right?

(Hebrews 11:7) "By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen..."

He doesn't even know what He's talking about. "A flood? What's a flood?"

"... in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and

became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”

In other words, why was he deemed righteous? Because he believed God and he trusted God and did exactly what God told him to do. He used the material that God told him to use. He built it for the right reasons and God revealed Himself. So, what's the result of this? Well, Peter will emphasize that by virtue of this good conscience that is agreeing with God's standards; look, everybody wants to do the right thing according to the way they think the right thing is, but God says, “No. Use My material. Do it for the reasons I tell you to do it and do it in the way that I do it and everything will be ok. So, by virtue of a good conscience, there's a resurrection. Why was Christ raised from the dead? God says, “This is My beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased. I will not abandon this One to undergo decay.” So, you know you're going to come out of this ark ok. It's the hope. It doesn't matter what everybody else is doing.

Now, I want you to drop on down to 1 Peter 5. I just want to remind you, in 1 Peter 4:11, that it's going to be by

God's strength that He supplies. So once again, the emphasis is clearly in that, and you and I shouldn't be surprised if we go through fiery ordeals because Christ was called for this purpose as we were, to not only see salvation for ourselves, if that were true, then we could just be taken up like Enoch, but to actually see others saved as humanity as eight go in the ark.

But if you drop on down to 1 Peter 5:5, just a reminder especially to younger men,

(1 Peter 5:5) “...likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”

Maybe that's why Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

(1 Peter 5:6) “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

(1 Peter 5:7) casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

(1 Peter 5:8) Be of sober spirit..."

Look, the enemy, the lion is roaming around and he's looking for somebody to devour. How does he devour? Well, he comes in hate, and he wants to get you in hate.

(1 Peter 5:9) "But resist him, firm in your faith..."

(1 Peter 5:10) "After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you..."

I can almost feel the top coming off of the ark, and saying, "The waters have subsided."

"... the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen..."

And literally make you immovable in all of the things of life. It's hard to imagine but building the ark is for us. The process of doing what God tells you to do is God equipping us for strength, it's God equipping us for stability. I have found the more I simply do what He tells me to do, the stronger I am and the more confident I am. Look, the world is ebb and flowing. I mean, there's all kinds of strange and bizarre things happening almost every day; some good and some horrible, but it doesn't

seem to touch us. God is still showering His grace upon me. Am I in the midst of a storm? Yeah, but we're walking on water. You have to use the right material, though. This doesn't work if you just go this alone according to your own thoughts. It was through obedience that Noah found salvation, and the greatest obedience is, what? Well, 2 Thessalonians 2 says, "This is the commandment of God, that you believe in His Son, Jesus Christ." There's no other way. Go according to His way. Do things His way. He'll give you stability, comfort and security and stabilize you in all things.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before you today and we ask you to work in our hearts. Lord, we see the trials and tribulations and the hurts and pains that surround us, that so easily beset us, the world's sins and even our own. Lord, we come to You, and You tell us, "It starts here. Take this material. Use this. Learn from Me. Come all who are weary and heavy laden, and I'll give you rest. Learn from Me." And we become a wise craftsman, a builder that

builds goodwill and salvation rather than destruction and mayhem. We come to You in simplicity, and we say, "Lord, make me like You."

Dearly beloved, oftentimes I know that you're weighed down with your own cares and concerns and more specifically, maybe even your own sins. There's a reason why God said, "Take some pitch and cover it." If you don't sense the forgiveness of God, if you don't come to Him and believe that He forgave you, you will never have safety. That box that you're in will spring leaks all over the place, but if you'll come and believe that if you confess your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive you, you'll start floating. It is in the process of this floating that you then begin to adhere to everything else that He tells you, and you begin to serve Him. You begin to find all these wonderful things that bring comfort and joy. You come to the Lord in simplicity. Maybe the reason why you're not feeling safe is because you haven't been building safe.