

Noah: The Captain & His Crew

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[0 : 0 0] But if we could, this evening, for a short while, and with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read. Genesis chapter 6. Genesis chapter 6. And I just want us to focus on a few verses from verse 7 to 10. Genesis chapter 6 at verse 7. So the Lord said, And so on.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. go down with the ship. But because the captain is in charge and in command and ultimately in control of his ship, the captain has the solemn responsibility for his crew and for his cargo.

[1 : 3 5] The captain has the solemn responsibility for his ship and also all the souls that are on board, which is why the phrase, the captain goes down with the ship, it's often connected to one particular man, Captain Edward John Smith, who as you'll probably know, he was the captain of the Titanic. And as you know, on her maiden voyage, the Titanic, she struck an iceberg just before midnight on the 14th of April, 1912. And within two hours, the ship, the ship that was deemed and even declared to be unsinkable, it had sunk to the bottom of the ocean. It was one of the worst maritime disasters when over 1,500 souls were lost in the icy waters of the North Atlantic.

And numbered among those lost at sea was the captain, the captain of the Titanic, Edward John Smith. Maritime tradition has it that the captain is either the last to leave the ship if it is sinking, or as the saying goes, the captain goes down with the ship, which only emphasizes and explains the role and the responsibility of the captain of a ship at sea. And you know, when I was thinking about this, I was reminded that, well, we have a couple of captains in our congregation. We have Captain Ian Smith, and we also have a new captain. We have Captain, he's next door, Captain Martin Graham. And there are many other captains in our community who have spent their life at sea, traveling the oceans of the world.

But you know, thinking about it, a captain has a huge role and a huge responsibility to take command of a ship and to take care of the souls on board the ship, which should only emphasize and express to us that when God chose his captain, when God chose the captain to take command of his ship and take care of the souls on board that ship, the captain that God chose had to be different. He had to be distinct from the context and even from the culture around him, which is why God chose Noah. He chose Noah, this man who found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

And so this evening, as you know, we're continuing our study of the days of Noah, and we're looking at, in particular, we're focusing our attention on the person of Noah. Who was Noah? That's what we're looking at this evening. But as we study the days of Noah, I want us to keep in mind Jesus' statement.

As we're looking here in the beginning of our Bible, in the book of Genesis, I always want us to have in the back of our mind what Jesus said about the days of Noah in Matthew 24. Because what Jesus said in Matthew 24 was, as in the days of Noah, so will it be with the coming of the Son of Man. As in the days of Noah, so will it be with the coming of the Son of Man. And so Jesus, he makes Noah's day not only real to us, but also relevant to us. Because Jesus shows us that Noah's day was, well, similar to our own day. Noah's day was a day like our day. And as Jesus says, as in the days of Noah, so will it be with the coming of the Son of Man. But as we focus our attention on Noah this evening, I want us to consider just two things tonight. I want us to see, first of all, the captain and then the crew. So the captain and the crew. So first of all, the captain. What do we read about the captain? We'll read there in verse 7.

[5 : 23] 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, I prefer the word grace, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

Last Lord's Day, we began our study on the days of Noah, and we looked at the context. Because Noah and the ark, it's not a legend, it's not a myth, it's not a tale, it's history. And it's a history, a very dark history. It's a history of darkness, destruction, devastation, and death. It's a history of darkness, destruction, devastation, and death. But as we said, it's into that darkness and destruction and devastation and death that God brings deliverance. And at the time, which wasn't long into our Bible, because, well, we were working it out last week, we worked out that according to the biblical narrative, the earth was only 1,556 years old when God called, commissioned, and commanded Noah to be the captain of his ark. And Noah was to be the captain because, as we said, the context and the culture of Noah's day was one of intermarriage. Where, as we read there in the early part of Genesis 6, the sons of God took as their wives the daughters of men, which resulted in this contaminated and confused culture. A contaminated and confused culture that was completely and continually corrupt, which ultimately created concern. The greatest concern was the Lord's concern, because the Lord regretted what, as the AV puts it, he repented that he had made man. And as we read, the depravity of humanity was so bad that God was grieved in his heart. He was sorry that he had made man, so sorry that

God decided and determined to blot out humanity by bringing it to an end. He wanted to bring judgment. But Noah, we're told there, and you know it's a great phrase, but Noah. Verse 8, but Noah. God wanted to bring judgment. God wanted to bring an end to humanity. But Noah found favor. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And you know, I believe that it's no accident that this is the first time in our Bible that the word grace or favor is to be found. Because in comparison to that confused context and contaminated culture of Noah's day, Noah, this man Noah was different. Noah was distinct from his confused context. Noah was different to his contaminated culture. Noah was different and distinct in his character, his conduct, and his conversation. Noah was so different. Because rather than conforming to the confused context and the contaminated culture of his day, Noah was someone who had found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was being reformed and redeemed and renewed by the grace of God. My friend, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. What a statement to have written about you. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. I mentioned last week that, I don't know whether rightly or wrongly I can say it, but I believe that Noah was a Calvinist. And I said, and I still hold to it, but I think he was a Calvinist, I said that, as you know, Calvinism, it's a term based upon the theology of John Calvin, summarized by the acrostic, the five points of Calvinism, tulip, total depravity, unconditional election, then you have limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints. And as I said, I believe that Noah was a Calvinist because, well, when Noah would have looked around just like we look around today, when Noah looked around and considered the confused context and the contaminated culture of his day, Noah could see that it was completely and continually corrupt. Noah could see what the Lord saw, because we're told there what the Lord saw in verse 5.

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the air, that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. And so Noah could see what the Lord saw. Noah could see what the Lord saw, that the wickedness of man was great in the earth. And for that reason, Noah believed in the total depravity of humanity. Noah believed in the total depravity of humanity, that we are corrupt to the core. We are in ruin and in need of a remedy. We are imputed with the sin of the first man, Adam.

And that as our catechism teaches us, that because of the fall of Adam, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression. And our depravity, it is total and complete that the misery into which we fell, as our catechism teaches us. And don't you find it amazing? Our catechism has seven questions about sin, emphasizing how serious our sin is.

[11 : 09] That all mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God. We are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. My friend, Noah was a Calvinist, but not just because he believed in the total depravity of humanity. Noah was a Calvinist because he believed in the irresistible grace of God. That's what we read.

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Now, as you know, Noah didn't find grace in the eyes of the Lord because of who he was, or what he did, or how he lived his life. No, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, all because of the Lord's irresistible grace. In other words, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord because the grace of the Lord found Noah.

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord because the grace of the Lord found Noah. And you know, I love the name grace. I often think, and maybe I've said it before, if we'd had a girl, we've had four boys, but if we'd had a girl, that's not that we're going for a girl. Don't they ever think that? If we'd had one, she would have been called grace because I haven't discussed this with Alison either, but she would have been called grace because, you know, every grace I meet, I always, well, I always pray for them. And the words I often pray is what is written here, that grace would find grace in the eyes of the Lord. So if you know a grace, pray for that grace, that grace would find grace in the eyes of the Lord. Because as you know, the name grace or the word grace, it means favor.

It means gift. Because that's what grace is. Grace is a gift. Grace is a gift. For those of you who have attended Christianity Explored, you might remember that session six, it's all about grace, grace. Where it shows the illustration, I think it's a great illustration, it's an illustration of a Christmas morning. And there's a little girl, she's probably about 10 years old, and she has all these Christmas presents around the Christmas tree, and all these gifts are there, and she comes down, and her parents are watching her as she opens all the Christmas presents, and she looks at what she has received, and then she takes a big sigh. She turns to her mom and dad, and she says, all right, how much do I owe you? And of course, you'd never do that. You'd never say to your parents, how much do I owe you? Especially on Christmas morning. Because the whole purpose of a present is that it's free to the one who receives it. It's a gift. It's all of grace. Because grace can't be earned or established. Grace can't be manufactured or made up. Grace can't be won or even warranted. Grace can't be produced or paid for. Grace is a gift. And for Noah, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, not because of who he was, not because of what he did, not even because of how he lived his life.

No, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, all because the Lord's grace, irresistible grace, found Noah. And that's what our New Testament teaches us. That's what the whole Bible teaches us.

[14 : 41] Paul tells us in Ephesians chapter 2, by grace you are saved. By this wonderful gift you are saved through faith. It's not of yourselves. It's the gift of God. It's not of works. And it's not of works so none of us can boast. No one can boast tonight that they're a Christian because it's all according to the grace of God, the amazing grace of God. And you know, you come to the Old Testament, you come to Noah, the first man who's ever described, whoever have found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And you see here that the grace that saves sinners tonight is the same grace that saved Noah. The grace that saves you and I is the same grace that saved Noah. You know, my Christian friend, the irresistible grace that drew you from darkness into the marvelous light of the gospel. The grace that saved you is the same grace that saved Noah. Because it's all of grace. It's all G-R-A-C-E,

God's riches at Christ's expense. And that's the glory of God's grace, is it not? That grace is receiving what you do not deserve. And mercy is not receiving what you do deserve.

And you know, for Noah, this man Noah, surrounded by a confused context and a contaminated culture around him. You know, I like to think of him as one of the first people in the world to ever have sung amazing grace. Although it wasn't written till the 16th century by John Newton. And yet you look at Noah and you think, here's a man who would have sung amazing grace. How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now I'm found. Was blind, but now I see. And you know, the interesting thing about Noah and John Newton is that even though they lived and served the Lord thousands of years apart, they were both saved by the same grace. And they were both captains on different ships. They both had the role and responsibility to take care of their crew.

Which is what I want us to think about secondly, the crew. So we see first of all, the captain, Noah, and then the crew. Look at verse 9. These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God, and Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

[17 : 51] As you know, it's often asked, what's a captain without his crew? What's a captain without his crew? Because a captain, as we said, he's the commander-in-chief. He's in control of the ship. He's in charge of his crew. But as a captain, he has to earn the respect of his crew. He can't just demand respect.

He has to earn the respect of his crew. Otherwise, well, what's a captain without his crew? A captain is nothing without his crew. So what's a captain without his crew? And as we said, God assigned, he appointed Noah as the captain. He's the captain of the ark. And God had given him the role and responsibility to take command of the ship and to take care of the souls on board. But as you know, and as we read earlier, there were only eight souls on board Noah's ark. There was Noah and his wife, and then Noah's three sons, and then their wives. So Noah's three sons, as we read there in verse 10, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives. It was a small crew. And we don't know much about this crew.

We just really know their names. But you know, what we do know is that they were a crew who respected their captain. They were a crew who respected their captain. And I say that they were a crew that respected their captain because, as you read, Noah not only found grace in the eyes of the Lord, we read on into verse 9, and we're told that Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation, and Noah walked with God. So Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was a righteous man. He was blameless in his generation, and he walked with God. And you know, you look at this captain, and you think, well, there's no way that you don't show respect to a captain like that. There's no way you don't show respect to a captain like Noah, because Noah was a captain who found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was a captain who was, you could say, been reformed by grace, redeemed by grace, been renewed by grace, to the point that Noah was not only a gracious captain, he would have been a good captain.

He would have been a godly captain. And he would have taken his role and his responsibility seriously. And we'll see that as we go through our study. And you know, I say all this because, like every Christian, everybody who has found grace in the eyes of the Lord, grace has an impact on them. Grace has an influence upon their life, just like it had an influence upon Noah's life, so much so that that grace not only worked in his heart, but it worked its way into his workplace. It worked its way into his workplace. And that's what we can't miss or mistake about this man, Noah. He was a Christian. He was saved by the same grace we're saved by. But he's a Christian captain. The grace of God in his life had worked its way into his workplace. And you know, I read this and I think, well, is that not how we should be? Because, you know, there shouldn't be conflict or a contradiction in our Christian character, conduct, or conversation. There shouldn't be a conflict or contradiction between what we are in church on Sunday and what we are at school or work on Monday. Sadly, that's often what lets Christians down. There's a conflict or a contradiction in their character, conduct, or conversation between Monday, what they are on church on Sunday and what they are at work on Monday. But my friend, there shouldn't be a conflict. There shouldn't be a contradiction in our Christian character, conduct, or conversation.

Because if grace is at work in our lives, then grace should work its way into our workplace. Grace should work its way into every area and avenue of your life. That's why it could be said of Noah, grace. He had found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was a gracious captain. He was a good captain. He was a godly captain. And he took his role and responsibility seriously. So seriously that we're told there in verse 9, he was a righteous man. He was a righteous man. He found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And he was a righteous man. But what made Noah righteous wasn't his gracious conduct.

[22 : 37] It wasn't his good works. It wasn't his godly character. What made Noah righteous was his faith. Noah was righteous because of his faith. Noah was, as every other Christian is, Noah was justified by his faith. Which again is what Paul tells us, what Paul teaches us in the New Testament.

We're saved by grace through faith. It's not of ourselves. It's the gift of God. Not of works lest anyone should boast. And we're justified, says Paul in Romans 5. We're justified by faith.

You're made righteous by faith. And you have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Or as our catechism puts it, which is a great document. If you want to grow as a Christian, read your catechism. Justification is an act of God's free grace, where he pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone. My friend, Noah was a righteous man. You're a righteous man or a righteous woman.

Because like Noah, every Christian, every child of God is saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. And it's all, all of it is to the glory of God alone. My friend, Noah was a righteous man because of his faith. And as you know, in Hebrews 11, Noah's faith is exemplary. It's emphasized in that hall of fame or those heroes and heroines of the faith in Hebrews 11. We read in Hebrews 11 that faith, well, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

And without faith, it's impossible to please God. And so what does it say about Noah? It says that by faith, Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen in reverent fear, he constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this, he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. He became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was a righteous man and he was justified by faith. Therefore, we're told, follow the verse, he was blameless in his generation. He was blameless in his generation. Not that he was perfect, because as you know, nobody's perfect. But then in comparison to the confused context and the contaminated culture of his day, Noah lived his life differently. Noah lived his life as a Christian distinct. Noah was a disciple of the Lord. And what made him stand out? Noah didn't walk with the world. Noah, we're told,

[25 : 42] Noah walked with God. Noah didn't walk with the world. Noah walked with God. That's what we're told. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. And what's interesting about this is that it seems that when you look at verse 9, it seems that Noah didn't learn to walk with God as an individual and someone who was living in isolation. No, Noah learned to walk with God by learning from the experience and from the example of those who walked with God before him. Noah learned to walk with God by learning from the experience and example of those who walked with God before him.

And I say that because, boys, if you're still awake, Noah's great-grandfather was Enoch. And we're told, previous chapter of Genesis 5, what are we told about Enoch? Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him. So Noah's great-grandfather Enoch was a man who walked with God. Unfortunately, Noah never met his great-grandfather. Enoch was taken to heaven about 70 years before Noah was born.

But Noah learned to walk with God because this experience, this example of walking with God, it had been passed down. Passed down from generation to generation. And don't you find it amazing that Noah learned to walk with God because that experience of walking and that example of walking with God had been passed down from generation to generation. Which ought to show us and stress to us in our day of how much of a covenant role and a covenant responsibility we have as Christian parents and grandparents. That we teach and train the next generation not to walk with the world, but to walk with God. And you know, I say to myself, as a Christian parent, as Christian parents and Christian grandparents, as Christian men and Christian women, with covenant children in our congregation, we have been given the serious and solemn role and responsibility to teach and train our children and our grandchildren. And we're to teach and train them not to conform to this confused context and contaminated culture all around us, but we're to teach them and train them to conform their Christian character, conduct, and conversations to that of Jesus Christ. Because that's what Noah did. That's what Noah's father did. That's what his grandfather did. That's what his great-grandfather Enoch did. That's what they all did. And Noah learned from the experience and the example of a previous generation and passed it on to his children and his grandchildren. Noah followed covenant theology. He followed the idea that the promises to us and to our children, who were his crew, that's why Shem, Ham, and Japheth, although we don't know much about them, the one thing we do know is that they respected their captain.

They respected their captain. They followed in the footsteps of their captain. Because, well, what's a captain without his crew? What's a captain without his crew?

And as we'll see next week, this captain, he needed his crew for the construction of the ark. But, you know, as we conclude this evening, having considered the captain, Noah, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And the crew, although we don't know much about them, they respected their captain. They respected the captain who was righteous and blameless and walked with God.

[29 : 49] You know, it reminded me of that beautiful hymn. The hymn about the gospel ship. I'm sure you've heard it before. It's a hymn. It's a very interesting hymn when you actually stop and think about what's written. Because there's a conversation going on in the hymn. You often find that in many different hymns. There's a conversation because it begins with a question and then there's an answer. Then there's another question and another answer. There's another question and another answer. So the question is, what ship is this you're sailing in? This wondrous ship of fame. And the answer, the ship is called the Church of God.

And Christ, the captain's name. What wages do you get aboard the ship that you command? We've love and joy and grace and peace and glory in the end. And what's the crew that sails with you aboard this ship so grand? The saints of God, all washed in blood and under Christ's command.

And you'll know the chorus. Because there's this great call to come into the ship, to come aboard the ship. Come join our happy crew. We're bound for Canaan's shore. The captain says there's room for you and room for millions more. What a great call to come aboard. The captain says, not Noah, the greater than Noah, Jesus Christ. The captain says there's room for you and room for millions more.

Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks for reminding us this evening of what grace is and what grace does. That thou art the God who reveals thy grace to us, who draws us with that irresistible grace. And sometimes we can't see it. Sometimes we can't even explain it.

That we are being drawn to the Lord. But Lord, we pray that we would know grace. And that we would know grace in the eyes of the Lord. That we would be righteous in thy sight. By faith and by faith alone.

[32 : 15] Blameless in our generation. That we would be those who walk with God day by day. Knowing, O Lord, that it is not of ourselves. Truly it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any of us should boast. And help our boast then not to be in self, but to be in the Saviour. The Saviour who loved us and gave himself for us. The Saviour and the captain who calls us to join his happy crew. Because we're bound for cane and shore. And the captain says there's room for us and room for millions more.

Lord, bless thy truth to us, we pray. Lead us and direct us in the week that lies ahead. That thou, O Lord, wouldst go before us in everything. And help us to know that thou art the one who keeps us. Who keeps our going out and our coming in. From this time forth. And even forevermore.

Take away our iniquities. Receive us graciously. For Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Well, we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening. We're going to sing in Psalm 107.

Psalm 107, page 384 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 107.

Psalm 107. Psalm 107. Psalm 107. Psalm 107. Psalm 107. Psalm 107. Psalm 107. Psalm 107. We're singing from verse 23 down to the verse Mark 29.

[33 : 52] As you know, and as I've said many times before, Psalm 107, or these verses in Psalm 107, they remind us of the sailor. This is the sailor's psalm. It's interesting, the owner of Carpet World, we were, I was in there recently, and the first thing he said to me when I went in was, he said, the sailor's psalm. Psalm 107. And so, so next time you're in Carpet World, ask the owner, what's the sailor's psalm? And he'll tell you. Psalm 107. It's good to know this psalm, but it's good to know the captain. It's a wonderful psalm.

Who go to sea in ships and in great waters trading be. Within the deep these men God's works and his great wonder see. For he commands and forth in haste the stormy tempest flies, which makes the sea with rolling waves aloft to swell and rise. And we'll sing down to the verse Mark 29. The storm is changed into a calm at his command and will, so that the waves which rage before now quiet are and still. So these verses of Psalm 107, verse 23 to 29. We must stand to sing, if you're able, to God's praise.

God's praise.

God's praise.

God's praise.

[36 : 34] God's praise.

CHOIR SINGS The storm is changed into a calm, a discordant will, so that the rivers which wait before the Father yet are still.

Amen. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore.

Amen.