

The sermon

Intro

When I was a Metals Inspector, I had to follow written procedures. Instructors and Examiners preached verbatim compliance. Zero deviation. Follow the written standard. No exceptions.

I lived in a world of up to date manuals on hand, magnetic powder batch ID cards, daily bath inspection for particle concentration, calibration dates, calibration standards, calibrated measurement devices, approved cleaning materials, time waits after surface preparation, dwell times, relevancy checks, time limits in radiation zones, measurements to 1/64 of an inch, etc.

No creative license. By the book. All the time. Do everything just as commanded in the written procedure.

Likewise, God issues commands and expects verbatim compliance.

Why is verbatim compliance hard? Why do people, why do we, want to do things our own way? What's the antidote?

READ PASSAGE

Body

Passage Focus

Why Noah was preserved. Why God flooded the earth. Preparations to preserve lives to re-populate the earth.

Point 1: One righteous exception (6:9-10)

RECAP

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. – 6:5

“the wickedness of man was great...every intention...only evil...continually” Wickedness multiplied. Zero godly desires, only evil. All of the time. This was Noah's world.

So God decided:

“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.” – 6:7

But not every life would be blotted out.

“But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.” – 6:8

One exception. Noah was different.

“favor” means God's goodwill. God's face is toward Noah, not against Noah. God looks at Noah differently than his contemporaries. Why?

Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. – 6:9

“Noah was a righteousness man” = his life conformed to God's moral law written on the hearts of all men (Rom 2:14-15). Elsewhere, the righteous are those who delight in God's law and meditate on it day and night (Ps 1:2, 5-6). Those who are teachable (Prov 9:9). Those with edifying lips that give wisdom (Prov 10:21, 31). Those who are kind to animals

(Prov 12:10). Those who hate falsehood (Prov 13:5). Those who think before they speak (Prov 15:28). Those who delight in justice (Prov 21:15). Those who are generous (Prov 21:26).

Habakkuk 2:4 says, *“the righteous shall live by his faith.”* The righteous keep God’s word because they trust God’s word.

“blameless in his generation” = used of unblemished animals suitable for sacrifice = morally unblemished, blameless. Job *“was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil”* (Job 1:1), yet Job was not without sin (Job 7:20-21; 13:26; 14:16-17). Both blameless and a sinner.

“Noah walked with God” = Noah did life with God by faith.

Unlike those around him. Conscious of God throughout the day.

And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. – 6:10

Because of Noah’s offspring, the hope of the snake crusher, Eve’s offspring, lives on. Noah’s genealogy is interrupted for the flood event.

Application

Even though we remain sinners plagued by a sinful nature (selfishness, pride, hatred, unforgiving, sinful anger, favoritism, covetous, envious, deceptive, enslaved by money and stuff and entertainment, etc.), we can be righteous/blameless in God’s sight. We can walk with God by faith. We can please God.

God knows our weaknesses. God knows our temptations. God knows our divided passions. God knows the pull of the world. God knows the spiritual fruit that still lacks in our hearts. God knows our remaining ignorance, blindness, lack of wisdom. So he bears with us.

Despite our lack, despite our sin, he’s pleased when we trust him. When we fight temptation. When we reject the peer pressure. When we obey what we know to be true.

Big picture? Noah didn’t imitate the evil around him. He walked with God.

Practical question: am I following the patterns of the world around me, or am I following God’s word?

Point 2: Mankind ruined by universal wickedness (6:11-13)

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. – 6:11

When God looked down on the earth, he saw corruption. **“corrupt”** has two general meanings: corrupt/spoil or destroy/wipe out. The moral corruption of those who say there is no God (Ps 14:1). The moral corruption in Isaiah’s day (Isa 1:4). The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire (Gen 13:10; 19:13-14, 29). The destruction of trees with an axe (Deut 20:19-20). The destruction of buildings when Babylon invaded (Lam 2:5-6, 8). Somewhere in between is the meaning ruin. The land of Egypt ruined by a plague of flies (Exod 8:24).

The idea here is a morally corrupt human race: **“every intention...only evil...continually”**

Corruption within the hearts of men resulted in an earth **“filled with violence.”** The picture is mankind turning against one another, inflicting horrific pain upon one another. Murder throughout the land. Not a few isolated instances. Pervasive, widespread violence everywhere. Not a safe place to live. Not an environment to bring your baby into. Shouldn’t God be grieved?

Why was the earth so corrupt?

And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. – 6:12

“for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth” explains why they were corrupt. They corrupted themselves. Self-inflicted corruption. God didn’t do it. They ruined themselves. Self-destruction if you will.

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.” – 6:13

God shares his intentions with Noah. All flesh will come to an end, with eight exceptions. Why? *“for the earth is filled with violence through them.”* The far-reaching violence requires a flood. Here the word *“destroy”* is the same word for *“corrupt.”* Because they’ve corrupted themselves and filled the earth with corruption, I will destroy them. Because they’ve destroyed themselves and destroyed the earth, I will destroy them. **The punishment fits the crime!** Nothing outrageous is being done. The severity of the offense demands a severe response from a good, wise, holy, just God.

How did it get this way?

Paul says, *“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man...For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners”* (Rom 5:12, 19). When Adam ate from the forbidden tree, sin came into the hearts of men. Ever since that day, *“sin is crouching at the door,”* sin seek to rule over us/control us, so we *“must rule over it”* (Gen 4:7).

Cain failed. Cain’s evil nature and his distaste for Abel’s righteousness led Cain to kill his brother (1 John 3:12). Then came the godless line of Cain, culminating in the polygamous Lamech who boasted of murdering a youth (Gen 4:19, 23-24). As human civilization developed and expanded (Gen 4:17, 20-22), humanity spread out. As they spread out, sin spread with them.

There was the godly line of Seth, Abel’s replacement (Gen 4:25-26), but the sons of God married the daughters of man. The sons of God were likely fallen angels (= demons) who took on bodily form and married human women, creating an evil influence upon the women and their offspring, further spreading evil within God’s world.

Then there were the Nephilim: strong, valiant, mighty, famous warriors. Given the massive corruption and violence of their day, the Nephilim were likely warriors who committed acts of violence that prompted God to flood the world.

So, with the spread of Cain’s line, with the demonic union of the sons of God and daughters of man, with the renowned Nephilim, corruption spread throughout the inhabited world.

Over time the corruption intensified. The sin crouching at the door ruled over mankind. The lust for sin increased. New forms of evil were invented. The wickedness intensified. Parents with wicked desires raising children to follow in their footsteps. Over time the knowledge of God and the fear of God were eradicated. The conscience of mankind was seared. They did what was right in their own eyes: *“every intention...only evil...continually.”* Both nature and nurture. Sinful hearts living out sinful desires without restraint. Sinful parents modeling godlessness for their children. Corruption everywhere.

Culminating in violence, murder, injustice, an unsafe place to live. Had to be a fearful time to be alive for good portions of the population. A world where sin was left unchecked. So God’s going to start over!

History repeats itself

This isn’t the last time God starts over by removing corrupting and destructive peoples! God clears the promised land of Canaan for the people of Israel. God clears the land of Judah by exile to Babylon, starting over with the returning exiles. At the end of the age, Jesus will remove the wicked and relocate them to hell to make the earth a safe place for God’s people.

Application

God is serious about sin. And God is good and right to be serious about sin. Corrupting, destructive influences must be removed for God's earth and its people to flourish. This was a horrific world for children to be born into. **Do you see why the flood was a good decision?**

Sin is always crouching at the door. Always waiting to corrupt and destroy the next generation. Always waiting to multiply evil and ruin human lives. Sin must be ruled over, or it will rule our hearts. That's our duty to the next generation. To help them rule over sin by repeatedly, over and over again, pointing them to rescue through faith in Jesus.

Big picture? Mankind was really evil and dangerous.

Practical question: what am I doing to help those who follow after me rule over sin?

Point 3: Mankind preserved by obedience (6:14-7:10)

First the details. Then Noah's obedience.

1. Covered with pitch (6:14) to seal and prevent water from entering the ark.
2. 300 cubits by 50 cubits by 30 cubits (6:15) = 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, 45 feet high.

A cubit is 18 inches long.

3. The roof is 18 inches above the walls (6:16) to allow for light and to let the stench out.
4. Three levels (6:16).
5. After the flood is over, God will institute a covenant with Noah (6:18).

Every living creature that dwells on the earth (human and animal) will die (6:17; 7:4).

6. Eight humans will enter the ark: Noah, his wife, his three sons, each son's wife (6:18; 7:7).

Of the entire human race, only eight people are preserved.

7. To preserve the animal population, pairs of male and female are brought into the ark (6:19).

These included birds, animals (domesticated animals like livestock; wild animals of the land), creeping things (smaller animals like rodents and reptiles that move close to the ground; 6:20).

For the clean animals and clean birds, seven pairs, male and female, were brought in (7:2-3). And of the unclean animals and birds (not stated), one pair, male and female, were brought in (7:2-3).

Why more clean than unclean? For the sacrifices that would offer after the flood.

8. To keep the humans and the animals alive, Noah gathered every kind of food to accommodate the varying species (6:21).

What about predators? What about meat-eating animals?

Suggestions include:

- a) Animals ate plants, not each other, prior to the flood. There were no carnivores at this point.

Doesn't seem likely because curse lifted results in the end of predators (Isa 11:6-9; 65:25) = predators and prey began at the curse.

b) The various kinds of food included meat from dead animals stored for the carnivores.

Fish, eggs, etc. too.

c) God supernaturally intervened.

Carnivores were satisfied with a vegetarian diet. Predators didn't go after their prey. Or they hibernated.

9. Noah's told to enter (7:1) seven days before the flood (7:4). Noah was 600 when the flood began (7:6).

Noah's obedience

The big picture is Noah's obedience.

Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him. – 6:22

And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him. – 7:5

As God had commanded Noah – 7:9

Noah did what God said. Verbatim compliance. Not the spirit of God's instructions. Not in the ballpark. Noah followed every last detail.

Why is obedience hard?

1. Ignorance.

Sometimes we don't keep God's commands because we don't know about them. There's a lot of commands a new Christian isn't aware of. When we don't know our Bibles well, we're an easy target for deception!

2. Habit.

Character hasn't been formed, fruits of the Spirit are lacking, so our habits aren't godly.

3. Peer pressure/evil influence.

My friends won't be happy with me if I don't do what they're doing. They might not like me if I live like a Christian.

4. Fear of the consequences of obedience.

I might get fired if I tell the truth. People might laugh at me or get angry with me if I don't join in. I guess I'll have to make lewd comments about women. I guess I'll have to slander my husband. If I don't, I'll have to tell them why: I'm a Christian. I'll have to get preachy.

5. Lust, covetousness, controlled/enslaved by our lusts.

Sometimes forbidden things have our heart. I can't stop getting drunk because alcohol rules me.

We might neglect duty (prayer, Bible reading) because something else (video games, the news) has our heart.

6. Angry with God; don't think God loves me.

We might get angry with God or conclude he doesn't love us because something bad happened to us. Job's wife told him, "Curse God and die" (**Job 2:9**).

7. Revenge.

A child wronged me so I'll take it out on them.

There's a multitude of reasons why we violate God's commands. What's the antidote?

The antidote

We're not told about the temptations, etc. Noah faced. But we are told why Noah obeyed.

By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear 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. – Hebrews 11:7

Noah trusted that obeying God is good for me. Obedience is good for us. We've got to believe this!

Noah believed that rejecting God would do more damage than good. Sin corrupts us, ruins us, destroys us. We've got to believe this!

Why do we read our Bibles? Because we want to learn what's good for us. Why do we resist/fight sinful desires? Because we desire what's good for us.

Confidence that God's commands are good for us moves us to want obedience, not corruption, ruin, destruction.

Big picture? Noah obeyed God by faith.

Practical question: do I believe God's commands are good for me?

Conclusion

In the flood, if we learn anything, we learn that sin ruins us and subjects us to God's judgment! We also learn that trusting God protects us from God's punishment.

Jesus gave his life as a ransom for many so that all who believe would have eternal life. Jesus died to rescue sinners from the power and penalty of sin. Do you believe this? Do you believe God's commands are good for you?

If you aren't a follower of Jesus, if you haven't been born again, if you haven't experienced the forgiveness of sins, turn from your sins by trusting in Jesus' death and resurrection.

Tell us if you do.