

GENESIS: THE BEGINNING IS NOT THE END

Finding Grace In Desperate Times

TEXT: Genesis 6:4-8; Ephesians 2:8-9

INTRODUCTION: It is a beautiful Easter Sunday morning, and you look so beautiful yourselves in this place of worship. But outside, who can argue with the statement that we live in desperate times.

Times have often been desperate – times of extreme difficulty and without hope.

- In early earth – Gen. 6

Genesis 6:5-7 5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."

- Throughout OT history – Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Kingdom Period, Exile, Remnant
- In NT times – Roman authority, State enforced paganism
- In history since then – state church without regeneration
- Even during the Great Awakening and other times of revival – vast seas of lostness in the ocean of humanity.
- And right into today
 - On the world's political/military front – N. Korea, Syria, Russia, Isis
 - Moral Crises also rage around the globe
 - Divisiveness inside of nations, including our own
 - Spiritual decline around the world

I. THE REASONS FOR DESPERATION

- A. The unrelenting attack of wicked, demonic spirit beings
- B. The impact in our lives from the sin and evil of other people
- C. The consequences of our own personal sin and iniquity
 1. Sin often brings immediate pain, hardship, and sorrow into our lives.

2. But **sin always brings God's judgment**. For those without God's remedy, which I shall describe shortly, it brings ultimate and final separation from God in hell.
3. Sometimes times are desperate, and we do not even know it.
 - A man lies on his deathbed, content to remain the atheist he has been all of his life, confident of the arguments he has believed against the existence of God, secure that the pain he experiences at the moment will all end when his existence terminates with death.
 - But in a moment death will come, but not annihilation, not a state of suspended animation, not a cessation of his existence. Instead, eternity has begun – an eternity he immediately recognizes is full of the proof of an altogether holy and righteous God whom he has rejected and from whom he is forever separated in the searing flames of hell.
 - And this is true desperation.

II. GOD'S RADICAL RESPONSE TO DESPERATION

A. God sent His Son Who has all power and authority over the spirit world.

B. God sent His Son Who cannot be defeated by the most wicked and powerful men.

C. God sent His Son to be the substitute Who would pay the penalty of the sins of those who would trust in Him.

1. That is what happened on the cross.

- a. When Satan bruised the heel of Jesus by having Him executed on the cross, the evil one actually brought the crushing blow of defeat down upon his own head from the crucified Christ, because the only thing, the only thing, that could keep men and women from spending an eternity separated from Holy God because of their sins was for a perfect substitute to die in their place.
- b. If the devil had truly understood God's brilliantly, radical plan to deliver mankind from the desperation that comes as a consequence of sin, Satan would have tried to keep Jesus alive at all costs. He would have done his devilish best to prevent the death of the Son of God.
 - For Jesus to be the once for all sacrifice for sin was the plan of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit from before the foundation of the world.
 - Death for the sins of the world was the reason Christ came to this earth.
 - The cry of our Lord from the cross, "It is finished!" was the shout of victory that the sin debt was forever paid for those who would turn to Him in repentance and faith.

2. That is what is validated by the resurrection.

I recently heard a man say in essence,

“On the cross Jesus wrote a check to pay the penalty for our sins. At the resurrection, the check cleared the bank!”

It was proof the Jesus really is the eternal Son of God, and therefore He could do what He said He did.

III. THE UNIQUE REMEDY FOR DESPERATION – GRACE

A. What is grace?

God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense

God’s Remedy At Christ’s Execution

Grace is God applying what Christ did on the cross to my sin debt.

1. Grace has been the only remedy for the desperation cause by sin since the beginning of time. And that is why all through the Bible we read
 - **Noah** found grace in the eyes of the Lord.
 - **Job**, whose name has become synonymous with desperation, said,

*Job 19:25–27 25 For I know **that** my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; 26 And after my skin is destroyed, this **I know**, That in my flesh I shall see God, 27 Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. **How my heart yearns within me!***

- **Abraham** believed God and it was accounted to Him for righteousness.
- **Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph**
- **Moses, Aaron, and Joshua**
- **David, Nathan, Hezekiah**
- **Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel**
- **And a host of others** as well

Found rescue from desperate times caused by their own sin and the sin of others, men and fallen angels alike. But **they found God’s remedy,**

- **not in their ability to refrain from sin,**
 - **nor in their ability to do more good than evil,**
- but in the wonderful, miraculous, indescribable grace of God.**

2. The same is true of the New Testament personalities as well.
 - **John**, whom we know as the apostle of love, was not always so. He was a self-serving fisherman with a temper to match the unpredictable storms of the Sea of Galilee where he sailed his

- ships. He was rescued from eternal desperation and condemnation by grace.
- **Peter**, the impetuous, foot in mouth disciple, had no righteousness of his own, but came to possess the righteousness of Christ. How? By grace!
 - **James, the half-brother of Jesus**, was a scoffer and a mocker. His life of desperation was transformed and he became the pastor of the first church in Jerusalem. How? By the matchless, wonderful grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - **Paul**, his change of life from desperation to confident hope in Christ was so sudden and dramatic it warranted a change of name for Saul the Jesus hater and persecutor of those who followed Him, to Paul the apostle of grace because he found grace himself.
3. And on and on we could march through history naming people whose desperation was exchanged for help and hope, whose eternity was changed from hell to heaven.
- Not by the works of men.
 - But by the glorious grace of God.
4. And that is my own testimony as well.
- I have tried to follow and love and serve the Lord since I was an 8 year old boy. Looking at me tells you that's been a lot of years. I was called to preach when I was 16, and I preached my first sermon within a month, and I have been preaching the Word of God ever since.
 - But my friend, I tell you honestly: I have no desire to take a set of scales and measure the weight of my good deeds against all of the sin of which I stand guilty before God Who is holy, holy, holy. I know the best of my righteousness in the flesh would be no more than filthy rags in His sight.
 - The only thing that brings an end to desperation in my own life and a confidence that eternity itself shall not be a forever and ever time of desperation is grace: God's remedy at Christ's execution. God's riches at Christ's expense.

B. So how can we have grace?

Ephesians 2:8–9 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Noah was a sinner, like all the other men and women of his time. But Noah believed the testimony of great granddaddy Enoch about the promise of God. Noah believed and found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

And Abraham sinned multiple times against the Lord, but the Bible says that he believed God. He trusted God and believed that God would keep

His promise of the provision of One to pay for his sins and be a blessing to all the families of the earth, and that faith was accounted to him for righteousness.

And so on with each one I have named and all the others.

We receive the grace of God when we put our trust in the Son of God.

We trust Him when we in all sincerity of heart invite Him to become the Lord and Savior of our lives.

Romans 10:9-10 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Worship Folder Notes: [Jennifer, put the yellow highlights below in my notes above.](#)

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