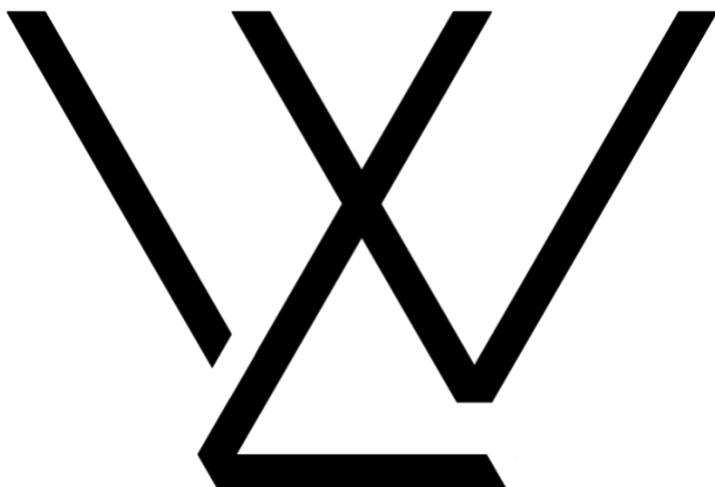




WORD TO LIFE

WEEKS 11 - 15





Word to Life's are sermon-aligned study guides, created to help the church dive even deeper into the passages we study together on Sundays.

Each week there will be five studies to help you prepare for the upcoming weekend sermon. This will also be a great discussion tool at your next LifeGroup meeting.

We hope you enjoy and grow deeper in your faith!

Contributors

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— **WEEK 11** —

- MAR. 13
- MAR. 14
- MAR. 15
- MAR. 16
- MAR. 17

— **WEEK 12** —

- MAR. 20
- MAR. 21
- MAR. 22
- MAR. 23
- MAR. 24

**BREAK INTO PALM SUNDAY
BREAK INTO EASTER SUNDAY**

— **WEEK 13** —

- APR. 10
- APR. 11
- APR. 12
- APR. 13
- APR. 14

— **WEEK 14** —

- APR. 17
- APR. 18
- APR. 19
- APR. 20
- APR. 21

— **WEEK 15** —

- APR. 24
- APR. 25
- APR. 26
- APR. 27
- APR. 28

Week 11: Genesis 5:1-32

Day 2: Beauty and Brokenness

READ: Read Genesis 5:1-32

EXPLORE:

In August of 2017, we (Lucas & family) were among the many whose homes flooded during Hurricane Harvey. We were out of town when it happened. Sofia and I left our young boys with family and arrived a few days later to survey the damage. The cars and appliances that were destroyed didn't impact us as much as the sentimental items that were lost: stuffed animals, drawings, and family photos. When we made our way to the master closet and started working through the clothes that needed to be thrown away, we came to a painful realization. Sofia's wedding dress had been badly damaged. The dress itself was relatively inexpensive, but it was invaluable to us. It was a reflection of so much that made that day special, and now it was damaged in a way that was beyond our ability to repair.

Since Genesis chapter 3, we have seen several examples of how humanity had been damaged by sin. This damage is a reality that persists today. It has affected all of God's creation. It explains why we see beautiful things in nature like a gorgeous sunset and why we see terrible things in nature like a devastating flood. Likewise, it helps us understand why humans are capable of beautiful things like the Sistine chapel and also capable of terrible things like genocide. God's beautiful creation has been damaged by terrible sin, but not destroyed. In His grace, God allows His glory to shine through the cracks of sin's brokenness.

God reminds us of this in Genesis 5 when He reiterates that man was made in the likeness of God. This did not stop being true when sin entered the world. Like the wedding dress, humanity is a beautiful thing that has been terribly damaged. As Sofia and I

processed the damaged dress and our inability to fix it, our minds immediately went to the only person we knew that could — Diane. If the dress was salvageable, this family friend and gifted seamstress was the only one who could save it and she did. Likewise, the brokenness of the beautiful should drive us to the only One capable of restoration and redemption.

We should praise God for the glimpses that we see of His beautiful design. And, when confronted with the terrible nature of sin, our hearts should praise God for the redemption that He offers to all. This process begins in each person when they put their trust in Christ. One day, those who have been made spiritually new by Jesus will be given a glorified body and live in a new heaven and a new earth. We must not, however, grow complacent until that day. We must continue to grow in Christ to better reflect His glory. We must continue to tell everyone of the only One who can make all things new.

BIG IDEA: In His grace, God allows His glory to shine through the cracks of sin's brokenness.

APPLY:

- **Question:** In what ways do you stay engaged with God's redemptive work in the world and in your own life?
- **Activity:** Read Revelation 21:1-8. What perspective does this give you into the ultimate redemption of God's creation?

Week 11: Genesis 5:1-32

Day 3: Biblical Lifespans and Why They Matter

READ: Genesis 5:1-32 and Romans 8:18-25

EXPLORE:

You don't need to be a scholar or expert to be struck by a central truth that jumps from the page in Genesis 5. In fact, it is quite possible that your initial impression of the passage has only become more solidified as you've continued to read throughout the week. It certainly has for me (Stephen). Here is the obvious truth. People lived for a very long time.

Even at an initial glance, we can see that Adam lived 930 years, Seth lived 912 years, Enosh lived 905 years, and Mahalalel died "young" at the age of 895 years. The questions that ought to pop into our head when we read interesting passages like these are, "How were they able to live so long, why did the author of Genesis choose to include their ages, and what do we do with these details today?"¹

If the ages of these early humans are understood as literal as the biblical text suggests, there are a few reasons their elongated lifespans were made possible. First, Adam and Eve were created in total goodness and without any form of genetic deficiency. Because there were no hereditary defects, prolonged lifespans were made possible. Second, there would have been no disease present within the unpolluted creation of God before humanity's rebellion in Genesis 3. Third, the limited population of the earth would have permitted longer lifespans. Finally, the unpolluted nature of God's design before sin would have formed idyllic conditions for the flourishing of human life and increase.

The lifespans of these early humans were recorded in Scripture to show us how elements of goodness in God's original design persisted after

¹ In biblical scholarship, these conversations are typically categorized in a larger and more complex conversation about the nature of antediluvian life (life before the biblical flood in Genesis 6).

the fall of humanity, even as they were marred by sin.² The Scriptures are clear that death was not original. It was introduced through humanity's rebellion against God and His life-giving power. The long lifespans both occurred and were recorded so that we could be powerfully reminded of the destructive nature of sin. This text could read like a list of difficult names and insanely high numbers, or it could have its proper effect on our hearts and lives in reminding us of how far we have fallen from God.

Although the Bible does not include an in-depth explanation of these lifespans, it leaves no uncertainty about the curse being reversed. In a deep assurance of this truth, the Apostle Paul reminded his young protégé Timothy that through Jesus the grace of God had abolished death, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel.³ May these sobering realities in Genesis 5, which are redeemed in the gospel, transform our lives daily for God's glory.

BIG IDEA: The lifespans of early humans ought to remind us of God's design, sin's effect, and how Jesus has gloriously reversed the curse.

APPLY:

- **Question:** What do you think is the common response to aging today? Do you think that aging is often looked at through a theological lens? Why or why not?

- **Question:** If you had to simply summarize why the lifespans of early humans were recorded in Genesis 5, how would you do it?

² See Romans 8 for reference.

³ See II Timothy 1:8-15 for context and reference.

Week 11: Genesis 5:1-32

Day 4: Enoch walked with God; How can I?

READ: Genesis 5:22-24, Hebrews 11:5-6, and Genesis 6:9

EXPLORE:

Today, we explore what it must have meant for Enoch to live in such a way, that he was taken to heaven by God without experiencing physical death! How can one live before God, in such a pleasing way? First, we need to answer the question, “Who was this man, Enoch?”

Enoch was a descendant of Adam as well as the great-grandfather of Noah. Enoch was an antediluvian Patriarch—who lived before the deluge of the world-wide flood. Enoch’s great-grand son, Noah, was a righteous man and the only blameless person who lived on the earth during his days. Hebrews 11:5 tells us a little about how Enoch walked with God. Most notably, he walked by faith. This type of faith pleased God so much that Enoch was caught up and taken to heaven so that he would not have even a glimpse of death! Enoch left behind a testimony that we still read to this very day—that he walked with God and God was well-pleased. The word *walk* in Hebrew indicates that Enoch “walked back and forth” with God.

Psalm 73:24 communicates this idea, writing, “*God guides me with His counsel, and later receives me in glory.*” Hebrews 11:1 indicates that Enoch participated in a God-pleasing practice of faith. He lived out a type of faith that was the assurance (*title deed, confirmation*) of things hoped for (*divinely guaranteed*), and the evidence of things not seen (*the conviction of their reality—faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses*). Without faith, Enoch could not have walked with or pleased God. *For whoever comes near to God must certainly believe God exists and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him.*⁴ By faith, Noah also had faith and walked with God.

I (Leeanna) often wonder if Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Elijah, and others walked with God so closely that they experienced their daily life as a

⁴ See Hebrews 11:6 for reference.

point of conversation with their Creator. Years ago, I had the idea from God to turn every thought into a prayer conversation with the Lord. I got this thought when reading about Eve’s temptation. I realized Eve only had to be tempted by Satan’s words and suddenly she was having a conversation with herself! She, having a conversation with her flesh, determined that the fruit was good for food and could make her wise. I thought, “How could this temptation have turned out differently?” What could have changed if Eve would have instead, turned to her God and asked, “The Serpent just told me this, but what do you say, God?”

We are told that in Christ, we are a new creation. The old has passed away and the new has come. Though we have not seen Him physically, we love Him and believe in Him and rejoice with an inexpressible and glorious joy. For in this hope, we were saved; but hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he can already see? So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen. For what we see is temporary and what we do not yet see is eternal.⁵ Our hope is not in this life but in eternity, where we will forever be with the Lord. As we live on this earth, we must remember we are not of this world. We have another dwelling place above. As we walk back and forth, in continual prayer and conversations with God, and as we study the Word of God daily—because we love Him and want to please Him—He will guide us with His counsel and later receive us into glory.

APPLY:

- **Question:** Does your life currently exhibit the fruit of the Spirit that are detailed in Galatians 5 which enable a life of walking with God?

- **Question:** How could you turn every thought into a prayerful conversation with God as a marker that you walk with Him in faith?

- **Pray:** Father, fill me with your Holy Spirit and immerse me in your truth. I want to please you and be a testimony of your grace in my life. In Jesus’s name and for His name’s sake, amen.

⁵ See 1 Corinthians 5:17, 1 Peter 1:8, and 2 Corinthians 4:18 for reference.

Week 11: Genesis 5:1-32

Day 5: A Holy Generation

READ TOGETHER: Isaiah 62:11-12, 1 Peter 1:9-10, Jude 1:14

Instructions: *We believe that Biblical study and spiritual growth are meant to be shared. This Word to Life has that exact focus in mind. For some, Day 5 might be a good opportunity to lead your family in a devotional. For others, this study might serve as a simple reminder to tactfully communicate your faith with those around you. Regardless, Day 5 of each week is designed to help you grow in your faith by sharing it with others.*

EXPLORE TOGETHER:

In Genesis 4 there is an account of Cain's descendants and in Genesis 5 we have an account of Adam's descendants. We can see that Cain's descendants were an unholy generation and we also see that Adam's descendants are a holy generation. God promised Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15 that the seed of Eve would crush the seed of the serpent. Cain's line sided with the serpent so Adam and Eve needed a new seed that would crush the head of the serpent. This was the importance of Seth being born and his subsequent calling upon the name of the Lord.

Seth was a godly man and walked by faith. He also instructed his children in the ways of the Lord as all godly men do. This line of godliness would lead to the birth of Enoch. Seth's descendants followed God, but Enoch excelled them all. We are told Enoch walked with God after he fathered his son Methuselah. It is not uncommon even today for parents to take their faith more seriously after the birth of children. Enoch walked with God, and he did not die. The first man to ever live and not die. God transported him straight to heaven. We are not told why God did so. Maybe it was because the world was not worthy of him. Maybe it was for a testimony to those who remained that there is

an afterlife for those who call upon the name of the Lord. Whatever the reason, Enoch was not the only man to ever live and not die. A fellow prophet named Elijah would also do likewise.

The holy generation of Adam continues to Noah. What is interesting is that Noah's father was named Lamech. There was a Lamech also in Cain's line. Lamech in Cain's line had a "prophecy" of sorts that communicated personal revenge. We can call it a false prophecy because it had nothing to do with godliness. In contrast, Lamech in Adam's line also has a prophecy, but his is one of God's relief. Lamech in Adam's line offers up a true prophecy and the diligent reader should anticipate its coming fulfillment. This holy generation of Adam produced prophets and the patriarch Noah. Genesis 5 is proof that God has not abandoned humanity in its sinfulness.

BIG IDEA: The holy generation of Adam prepares the way for the Messiah.

APPLY TOGETHER:

- **Question:** A holy (set apart) seed is an important story line running through all of Scripture. Why is this important and who are some following members of the holy line in the book of Genesis?
- **Activity:** Describe in detail what you think it means that Enoch walked with God.

- **Question:** What impression of God and His character are you given after reading vv. 5-8?
- **Question:** Defend your answer to the following question using Scripture. “Is God more emotional than humanity?”
- **Activity:** Ephesians 4:17-32 has quite a few connections to Genesis 6:1-8. Spend some time reading and meditate upon the biblical text. Write down what you observe.

Week 12: Genesis 6:1-8

Day 2: Sons of God and Daughters of Man

READ: Genesis 6:1-8

EXPLORE:

It probably comes as no surprise that Genesis 6:1-8 is one of the more complicated biblical texts in our study together. There are vastly different interpretations, truly puzzling expressions, and a pervasive need for humility and discernment in the study of God's Word.⁶ In short, we need help to rightly understand and faithfully apply the biblical text. This week is no different.

Before we can rightly engage with the messiness of Genesis 6, we need to be reminded of the multiplication which occurred in Genesis 5. In many ways, the procreation of Genesis 5 is contrasted with the perversion of Genesis 6. We read, *"When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose."*⁷ These verses ought to lead us to one primary and pronounced question: Who exactly are the *"sons of God?"* The Hebrew grammar found in vv. 1-2 makes each of the following views possible.

The first view is that the sons of God refer to the godly line of Seth intermarrying with the ungodly line of Cain and his daughters. This is the traditional view of Martin Luther and John Calvin and has held some credibility throughout history. This interpretation ought to be esteemed for its historical credibility, but it struggles to make sense of the Hebrew terminology used to describe children, men, women, and offspring in the passage. In short, Seth is connected consistently with daughters and Cain is never mentioned in this way. Although plausible, this interpretation is somewhat unlikely.

⁶ This biblical text is significant and interwoven into other sections of the Old and New Testaments, but I (Stephen) believe that we should be careful not to become divisive on an issue which has been consistently debated and defended within orthodoxy for millennia.

⁷ See Genesis 6:1-2 for reference.

The second view is that angelic beings who had fallen from God's presence married and produced children with human women. This interpretation is ancient, and it is popular. This view was prevalent in apocalyptic literature, rabbinic Judaism, and amongst the early church fathers. There have been two common critiques for this view. First, the resulting judgment of the flood in Genesis 6 is imposed on humanity with no mention of consequence for angelic immorality. This seems to not fit the flow of the punishment to come. Second, the procreative qualities of angelic beings are often seen as incompatible with Jesus's teaching.⁸

The third and final view is that the tyrant kings or heroes from the line of Lamech forcefully took married women from a godly lineage. This view, which find historical support in early Judaism, asserts that men of ancient aristocracy and power took a great number of women into their harems. According to this view, the men claimed deity for themselves, were potentially possessed by fallen angels, and they possessed immense forms of militaristic power. This view potentially aligns with the context of the global flood, the other reference to Nephilim offspring in Numbers 13:33, and the deviance in the line of Lamech. Regardless of interpretation, Genesis 6 is clear about the holiness, justice, power, and redemptive qualities of God through the later flood narrative.

BIG IDEA: In the face of complicated biblical texts, we ought to be assured of what we can know, humble in what we might think, and gracious in how we behave.

APPLY:

- **Activity:** Today's study only begins the conversation. For more information and study, I (Stephen) would recommend viewing the resource below.
 - a. [Click the Video Link](#) or [Search the Following Online: Were the sons of God in Genesis 6 fallen angels? Who were the Nephilim? \(Southern Seminary\)](#)

⁸ See Matthew 22:30 and Mark 12:25 for reference.

Week 12: Genesis 6:1-8

Day 3: How should we understand the Nephilim?

READ: Genesis 6:1-8

EXPLORE:

If, upon your reading of Genesis 6:4, you are struck by the peculiar nature of the word “*Nephilim*,” you are in good company. It’s an odd word. In today’s study we may enter the metaphorical weeds, but by God’s grace we can emerge from the other side better for it!

Nephilim is a transliteration of the Hebrew phonetically written in English. If the Hebrew were rigidly translated into English, Nephilim could be described as *the fallen ones*. The Hebrew root (*naphal*) literally means “to fall” and it seems to be connected to their fate.⁹ The surrounding text seems to indicate that the Nephilim were there before the cohabitation of the sons of God with the daughters of men. As we will see, however, it is not quite so simple.

In certain English versions of Genesis 6, the Nephilim are understood and even translated as giants.¹⁰ This occurred because the Nephilim were not only referenced in Genesis 6, but also in the account given by the Israelite spies later in their conquest. The descendants of the Nephilim were mighty in prowess and in stature according to the spy narrative of Numbers 13:33.¹¹ Thus, the idea of formidable, gigantic Nephilim has been readily applied to the pre-flood context of Genesis 6. This connection and our previous study of Genesis 6 ought to lead us to ask to important and interconnected questions. Who were the Nephilim and why don’t we know more about them?

First, as we discussed yesterday, it is possible that the Nephilim are the offspring of angelic beings and the daughters of men. This is appealed to

⁹ See Ezekiel 32:30-28 for reference.

¹⁰ See The New King James and the New Living Translation of the Bible.

¹¹ This and Genesis 6 are the only reference of the Hebrew term in the Old Testament.

in the second and third centuries BC in the Enochic tradition. Second, it is possible, as the text would seem to indicate, that the Nephilim were formidably powerful people present before and after the sons of God cohabitated with the daughters of men. Regardless of the specifics, the fact that the Nephilim are not given more explanation indicates that they were well-known in their given time. Genesis 6 doesn't explain more because the early readers did not need a description.

When Paul was counseling Timothy, he warned him against spending his time on silly myths rather than training for godliness.¹² The perversion and complexity of the biblical text does not place the blame on the Nephilim regardless of who or even what they were. On the contrary, Genesis 6 places the onus for sin and its chaotic effects upon humanity. We should certainly study Scripture closely and we should study it well. We need to remember, however, that our study of Scripture ought to be a training for righteousness by the power of the Holy Spirit.

BIG IDEA: A lot is debated in Genesis 6, but biblical study should not be done at the expense of godly training and spiritual growth.

APPLY:

- **Question:** Have you ever studied the Nephilim or Genesis 6:1-4 before? If so, what have you studied or heard taught about it?

- **Pray:** Deep study and purposeful action need to be held in balance and connection with one another. Spend some time in prayer about what it might look like for you to embrace both in your life and faith.

¹² See I Timothy 4:6-10 for reference and context.

Week 12: Genesis 6:1-8

Day 4: Knowing the Future. Regretting the Past.

READ: Genesis 6:1-8 and I Samuel 15:11

EXPLORE:

There are few feelings in the world as painful as disappointing someone you love. For most of us, it is not hard to recall a moment in which we deeply hurt someone who cared for us the most. Our biblical text this week gives us a window into the hurting heart of a loving God for His broken creation. We read, *“The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.”*¹³

On two different occasions in Scripture, we read the idea of God regretting something. Outside of Genesis 6, we are told that God regretted making Saul king in I Samuel 15:11. The idea of God regretting begs an interesting and profound question, “How could a God who clearly knows the future seemingly regret His own decision making in the past?”

It is important to point out initially and definitively that there is no contradiction between God’s knowledge of the future and His heartache concerning the past. This is clear for a few reasons. First, we need to recognize the complexity of a perfect God’s emotional life. For example, it is entirely plausible to assume that God could still justifiably lament over a situation which He willingly allowed to take place. If His heart is infinitely more remarkable than our own, it is possible he could grieve something and simultaneously will it.

¹³ See Genesis 6:5-6 for reference.

Allow me (Stephen) to briefly demonstrate this from an example in my own life. I was justifiably disciplined as a child for being disobedient. I am sure that my parents experienced grief over my behavior and the looming punishment even as it was necessary.

As fallen humans, we only interface with regret through the lens of sinful behavior. For God, however, His regret does not materialize on the backend of wrong action, but during human rebellion and chaos. God is depicted in Scripture with full accuracy, but we need to recognize our own simultaneous limitations in thought, word, and deed. In God's immutability, He never changes His character or goes back on His covenants, but He does genuinely interact with humanity amidst their mess.¹⁴ It has been truly said that God's character is unchanging, but His plan is evermore unfolding.¹⁵ Scripture consistently depicts God as one who is moved by our sin and grieved by our rebellion. In His response to the brokenness which preceded the flood, it is no different.

BIG IDEA: God was and is grieved because of the brokenness of humanity.

APPLY:

- **Question:** What thoughts and questions come to mind when you think about God being described as one who regretted creating?
- **Question:** In your own words, explain how it is possible for God to be both sinless and express regrets according to Genesis 6:5-6?

¹⁴ See Jeremiah 18:10-11, Exodus 32:12, and Amos 7:3,6 for reference.

¹⁵ I (Stephen) am not sure on the exact source of this quote, but I believe it belongs to David Platt.

Week 12: Genesis 6:1-8

Day 5: Prelude to the Flood

READ TOGETHER: Matthew 24:36-39 and 2 Timothy 3:1-5

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EXPLORE TOGETHER:

God told Adam and Eve and their descendants to be fruitful and multiply. They were obedient to this command but as they multiplied numerically, their sins also multiplied. I (Sabino) am not going to rehash the debate of who the Nephilim were. My objective is to focus on corruption of mankind that serves as a prelude to the flood.

Whoever the Nephilim were, we can be certain that unholy marriage was taking place. The daughters of man were seen only as objects of physical attraction. There was no honoring of God's fellow image bearers. The present-day sins of lust and objectification were alive and well in the days of Noah. They took as their wives any they chose. This seems to indicate polygamy and at the least marriage without wisdom in decision making. God's response to this debauchery was to determine that His Spirit would not abide in man forever, but that his days shall be 120 years. Remember at the time of writing mankind was living close to a millennium in years. This restriction of age was a great mercy of God as He would not allow man to continue to multiply corruption. Imagine how much wickedness evil men could multiply in 900 years! The men of renown (Nephilim) in those

days were wicked men. A society that celebrates and esteems wicked men is in grave danger.

The Lord saw this wickedness and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Man was not thinking about how he might serve and glorify God. He was not thinking how he might serve his fellow man for the glory of God. No, instead he was bent-in on himself and only thought about what he wanted. Today, we express that we live in an individualistic society where men call evil good and good evil. This is true and it has been true of every age since the fall of Adam. However, this was an especially egregious time. There was no law of God restraining evil. It was more akin to the wild wild west of immorality. For it was only Noah who found favor in the eyes of the Lord. Even Noah's brother and sisters would not make it into the ark with him. Man had forgotten God and God was sorry that He had made man.

BIG IDEA: Corruption on the earth had gotten to a point that man's thoughts were only evil continually.

APPLY TOGETHER:

- **Question:** Humanity lost all morals and wisdom when it came to marriage choices. This is an important subject for all to consider. What should Christians be looking for in a spouse?
- **Activity:** The days of Noah were godless, not too much unlike our own. Prayerfully consider and write down some ways you and your family can be *salt* and *light* to the world around you. You cannot do everything but simply doing a few things well can make an eternity of difference.

- **Question:** What is God's specific covenant with Noah in vv. 17-21?

Note: *This is the beginning of what is called the Noahic covenant.*

- **Question:** Certainly, Noah's obedience to all the Lord had commanded him must have seemed foolish to others. What is an example in your life of when you have obeyed even when it seemed foolish?

- **Question:** The Scriptures refer to Noah as righteous and blameless. If you were to be described in only two words, what would they be and why?

Week 13: Genesis 6:9-22

Day 2: How can God be good and flood the earth?

READ: Go back and read Genesis 6:1-14

EXPLORE:

The question, “why did God flood the earth” is easy to answer and is found in Genesis 6:5, 11, 13. However, rephrasing the question to implicate there is something amiss with the character of God is an accusation that every Christian should thoughtfully consider. So, let’s break down this seemingly harsh and excessive act of judgement by looking at the *when* and *who* of the story.

When: During this time in history, the Gospel of peace had not yet been introduced. There was no ‘meek and mild Jesus’ and there was no ‘love your neighbor’ mentality. Moreso, the law of Moses had not yet been given. There were no legal, much less moral, standards in most places on earth making it an exceedingly wicked and dangerous place.

Who: Let’s look at the two characters involved in the flood story: mankind and God.

Man’s character – As human beings, we have limits to what we can know. We see and experience through our small, personal, filtered lens and often only what someone else is putting forward. So, I (Cean) grew up just a mile away from Jeffrey Dahmer during the time he was carrying egregious forms of evil on others. He was able to get away with murder for so long because the people living near and even with him had no idea that these atrocities were occurring! It sounds implausible, but we don’t know what we don’t know. The truth is that humans are limited in their knowledge especially regarding other people.¹⁶ In addition, contrary to popular thought, people are not generally ‘good,’ and no matter how many charities you volunteer at or how much money you give to the poor, the Bible reminds us that no one is righteous.¹⁷ Genesis 6:5 says of humanity, *every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*”

¹⁶ See Isaiah 55:8-9 for reference.

¹⁷ See Romans 3:10 for reference.

God's character – God's character traits can be divided into incommunicable and communicable qualities. Incommunicable traits are descriptions that only belong to Him, such as His aseity (self-existence), immutability (doesn't change), and omniscience (all knowledge). Unlike mankind, God knows everything. Every thought, motive, and action you did or did not have, He sees. Therefore, while our perception of the flood is that there were probably some 'good' people that were killed, God knows better. Communicable traits are those that are reflected in mankind. For example, humans desire justice for wrong doings. This is because God is righteous and just. The victims of Jeffery Dahmer deserved justice because they had been wronged. If the judge would have let Jeffery Dahmer off on all charges, there would have been a public outcry of injustice, because a just judge seeks righteousness. God always acts in accordance with what is right and, at this point in history, it involved cleansing the world and starting fresh with a righteous man and his family.

BIG IDEA: When we struggle to understand the decisions of God, we must pause to reflect on His attributes that we do know. He is good and He is just.

APPLY:

- **Question:** What would happen in a world where God only had power to execute judgement but not all knowledge? What would happen in a world where God only had knowledge of all things but no power? Do you see how His attributes are beautifully and perfectly balanced?
- **Question:** Why is it that we cry out for justice when seeing and experiencing the atrocities in the world, yet when God executes judgment, we question His goodness?
- **Activity:** Thank God that He has stayed His hand in executing judgment against you on any given day. Reflect and confess any sins that come to mind. Moreso, praise Jesus that He has imputed His righteousness upon you so you will not have to experience the just wrath of God.

Week 13: Genesis 6:9-22

Day 3: A Unique Worldwide Deluge

READ: Genesis 6:5 - 9:19 and 2 Peter 3:3-7

EXPLORE:

As a Christian who is scientifically-minded, I (Jonathan) have often doubted whether Noah's flood was really worldwide. Now, having considered the evidence, I would like to share some highlights with you, considering both Genesis and geology.

There is evidence that all nations are descended from Noah, as traditional flood legends are found around the world.¹⁸ The scriptural flood narrative describes a worldwide reset, in which God returns the world to its primeval state, covered in deep water, and then land appears once again. As with Adam, God tells Noah to fill the earth and gives him instructions.¹⁹ The flood was too deep and lasted too long to have been confined to one region. Covering mountaintops for months, it dwarfed all other floods. God stated that no flood like it would ever happen again. Since there have been many large local floods since then, Noah's flood must have been much more than regional. The only parallel is the coming destruction of the world by fire.²⁰

If the flood were merely regional, the ark would not have been the only means of salvation for man, birds, and land animals. They could have migrated to a drier region. The size of the ark accommodated each created kind of animal, not just a few pets and livestock. The ark was a box, not a ship. It was designed to float on the waters and wait out the flood, not to sail to a dry region. Since it didn't have to sail anywhere, it had no mast and was not streamlined; therefore, it was much more stable than a ship.

¹⁸For example, the Hawaiian legend of Nu-u, and the Chinese legend of Fuhü.

¹⁹Compare Gen. 1:7 & 7:11; Gen. 1:2 & 7:19-20; Gen. 1:9 & 8:14; Gen. 1:27-30 & 9:1-7 for reference.

²⁰See 2 Peter 3:3-7 for reference.

Many rock layers (*strata*) show evidence of a catastrophic flood. The light-colored Coconino Sandstone seen near the top of the Grand Canyon reveals a stack of strata, each up to 30 feet thick and extending over 200,000 square miles. The preservation of animal tracks and lack of erosion between strata show that they were deposited in quick succession in one dramatic event. Its features are more consistent with deposition by 300-foot deep water than by windborne desert sand.²¹ Elsewhere, some fossils traverse many strata, suggesting that these strata were also deposited rapidly in one cataclysmic event.

During the flood, the mountains may have been shorter and the seas shallower than today. This would have allowed seawater to completely cover the earth. Then, as God made the ocean basins sink down at the end of the flood, “the waters receded from the earth.”²² The erosive force of receding flood water may have carved out the Grand Canyon and other such massive, rapidly-formed landmarks.²³ Although many will “deliberately overlook the fact, that... the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished,”²³ our faith is strengthened as we take God’s word at face value, and with it, correctly interpret the scientific evidence.

BIG IDEA: Rock strata and flood narratives from around the world testify to the worldwide flood described in Genesis.

APPLY:

- **Activity:** What doubts do you have about Noah’s flood? List them, and then look up <https://www.growingchristians.org/christian-evidences/was-there-a-worldwide-flood> or <https://creation.com/the-creation-answers-book-index>.

²¹See

https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1033&context=icc_proceedings for reference.

²²See Gen. 8:3 for reference.

²³See <https://creation.com/the-creation-answers-book-index> for reference.

Week 13: Genesis 6:9-22

Day 4: Noah and Baptism

READ: Genesis 6:9-22 and I Peter 3:18-22

EXPLORE:

Our commitment to Word to Life studies is both beneficial and it is complex. It is beneficial because it gives us the opportunity to engage deeply and communally in the Scriptures. It is also inherently complex because our study often unearths complicated things which would have otherwise remained unexplored. The daily study of Scripture ought to call us to study diligently through difficult texts, trusting that God's Word is true, authoritative, good, alive, and active today. May God give us grace, clarity, and humility as we study His Word.

In 1 Peter 3:18-22, the flood story in the life of Noah is connected to baptism. At first, second, and third glance, this passage may leave you with some questions. This is understandable given its complexity. In fact, this biblical passage, and others like it have been a major source of division in church history. For Roman Catholics, they see the saving grace of God entering a soul essentially through physical acts like baptism.²⁴ It could seem as though this is the right understanding of Peter's words.

Protestant Evangelicals, on the other hand, believe that the saving grace of God enters the human soul decisively through faith alone.²⁵ We believe people are saved and justified not based on their works, but because of their faith in what Christ has already accomplished on their behalf. In this way, we believe that a person is saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. As a church, we maintain that baptism does not and cannot save a person. In fairness and in order to maintain intellectual integrity we need to ask two honest questions, however. First, why does 1 Peter connect salvation and baptism?

²⁴ See the Roman Catholic Catechism in Part II, Section II, Chapter I, Article I, Paragraph 1213.

²⁵ See Galatians 2:16 and Ephesians 2:8-9 for reference.

Second, why does Peter think the flood story is helpful in the discussion?

It is so important that we read I Peter 3 in its immediate context and in the scope of the entire book. When Peter talks about a *baptism which now saves*, he immediately qualifies what he means. The *saving* being referenced²⁶ is explicitly not about being purified, but about making an appeal to God. To put it simply, baptism is not an act done in order to be saved, it is an enactment of the fact that you already have been saved. The “*appeal*” of 1 Peter is only made possible because of the grace of God made available through faith in Christ. The act of baptism is an outward sign of the preexistent reality that a person has received new life in Christ.²⁷ The physical act is reflective of a heart of obedience and faith. Notably in connection to Genesis 6, It was the recognized faith-filled righteousness of Noah that resulted in salvation.

BIG IDEA: The faith-filled righteousness of Noah is later connected to the life of the believer who is baptized in obedience to the commands of Christ.

APPLY:

- **Activity:** Remind yourself of the biblical texts below which affirm we are saved and justified by God’s grace and not by our works.
 - a. Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Acts 16:31, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5, and I Corinthians 15:1-8.

- **Optional, but recommended article:** [What does the Bible Say About Baptism?](#) by David Mathis

²⁶ See I Peter 3:21 for reference.

²⁷ See Colossians 2:11-12 for reference.

Week 13: Genesis 6:9-22

Day 5: God Sees and Judges all Things Righteously

READ TOGETHER: John 2:23-25 and Hebrews 11:7

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EXPLORE TOGETHER:

Our passage highlights a contrast between Noah and the rest of the inhabitants of the earth. God sees Noah and knows what his faith and character are really like. God also sees the world and none of their corruption is hidden from His sight. God has perfect sight and knowledge and uses it to judge righteously.

God sees that Noah is a righteous man. This means that Noah is justified (declared righteous) before God by faith in the promised seed. He was also a blameless man in his generation. This means that God's work of sanctification was active in Noah. God was making him more and more holy. Blameless does not mean sinless, but it does mean that Noah acted in sincerity and integrity before God. Noah had a genuine faith in God and was not merely acting. His faith-filled living was done in a faithless generation. It is difficult to live righteously when you feel that you are all alone. However, we are not alone, especially here in the West. Noah, on the other hand, was alone. This was a testimony to his resolve. God saw Noah because Noah walked with God as Enoch before him. God knew Noah intimately as Noah also knew God intimately.

God also saw that the earth was corrupt and filled with violence. All flesh had corrupted their way on the earth and with this corruption God had pronounced judgment. God reveals to Noah what He is going to do similarly to how He will act with Abraham. He will make an end of all

flesh, both man and animal, by bringing a flood of waters. It seems that God deemed this judgement necessary because eventually all men would have become corrupted had there been no flood. Noah is instructed to make an ark to preserve his family and the animals that God chooses. This ark is given specific dimensions in a similar way to the specificity that God will require for the building of the tabernacle and temple. How God works in the past, God will work in the future. I (Sabino) believe this is an important doctrine revealed through all of Scripture.

Noah did all that God commanded him. Noah not only had faith that God would judge the world but also that God would save him and his family in ark. As people of faith, we also believe that God will judge the world in righteousness and that He will save us if we believe in the ark of salvation, which is Jesus Christ.

BIG IDEA: God both judges and saves according to His righteousness.

APPLY TOGETHER:

- **Question:** What is the difference between justification and sanctification?
 - o *Hint:* You can utilize a catechisms like Questions 50 and 51 of *The Kids Catechism-The Westminster Standard* or Question 32 of the *New City Catechism*.

- **Activity:** List some reasons why you believe it was right for God to judge the world and save Noah.

Week 14: Genesis 7:1-24

Day 2: Attributes of God's Judgment

READ: Genesis 7:1-24

EXPLORE:

In our most recent studies through Genesis, we have been wading through the tragic ramifications for humanity's departure from God's design. In the days of Noah, evil filled the hearts of humanity continually and God had promised to respond with power. In our text this week, we are given a window through which we can see some of the attributes of God's judgment in action.

First, in the flood narrative of Genesis we are reminded that the judgment of God is not arbitrary. He is not random in His rulings or quick in His anger. I (Stephen) am tempted to embrace faulty prejudice and make uninformed judgments; God is not. He is consistent, purposeful, and right in all His judgments. Each judgment of God flows from His unparalleled holiness.

Second, the definitive and judgments of God are provided with warning beforehand. Unlike a person who is quick to unjustified wrath without explanation, there is a consistent pattern in Scripture of God issuing warnings prior to the judgment to come. One of the best places to see this pattern is in the Minor Prophets,²⁸ but it is visible in the story of Noah as well.

Third, God allows time for repentance before His judgment takes place. The time between a parent's rebuke and the actual moment of discipline provides their child with the opportunity to turn and change action. This parenting principal is perfectly

²⁸ For reference see the last twelve books of the Old Testament from Hosea to Malachi.

exemplified in the timing of God. We should rejoice in the fact that God's track record is One who is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.²⁹

Fourth, the judgments of God are definitive, and they are severe. You cannot faithfully read Genesis without concluding that sin has grave consequences. God's severity with sin is the most terrifying truth and it is also the most hopeful truth. We would not want to live in a world in which the Creator of it dealt lightly with sin and evil. It is fitting then that we recognize the seriousness of our sin in light of the severity of its consequence.

Finally, even in judgment there is still a hope to come. We will explore this concept further in tomorrow's study, but the gracious preservation of humanity, the eventual establishment of the Noahic covenant, and the conservation of animal life for future repopulation are reminders of the hope that is on the other side of a warranted judgment.

BIG IDEA: Principles of God's judgment are visible in the flood narrative of Genesis.

APPLY:

- **Activity:** Summarize the five truths about God's judgment which are visible in today's Word to Life Study.

- **Question:** Is it hard for you to embrace the idea of God functioning as a judge with punishments that are both warranted and severe? Why or why not?

²⁹ See Exodus 34:6-7 for reference.

Week 14: Genesis 7:1-24

Day 3: Good News in a Difficult Moment

READ: Genesis 7:1-24 and Hebrews 11:7

EXPLORE:

On a bright day, the light of a candle may not make too much of a difference. It may not even be visible. When the power goes out at night and the house turns dark, however, that same candle becomes something quite different. Whether it was living in Texas or Florida, my wife and I (Stephen and Shelby) have known this to be true. That same unassuming flame only increases in its visible intensity and brilliance when everything around it goes dark. The darkness, however deep it may be, cannot eliminate the light. On the contrary, it makes it brighter still.

This contrasting depiction of light set amidst a backdrop of darkness is the exact scenario that plays out in the story of God's preservation of Noah through the judgment of the flood. Certainly, God's judgment is severe, and it is definitive. Yet, in the midst of Noah's preparation for and experience of the flood we can see profoundly good news in a difficult moment. We can see it in at least three different ways.

First, God graciously preserved a righteous remnant through the flood. Genesis 7:1 records God saying to Noah, *"Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation."* Even though God is going to judge wickedness, He was able to recognize and preserve righteousness for a future-oriented hope. We need to notice that it was not just Noah who was spared, but his family also. To be clear, Noah was not sinless and the events which unfold after the flood are a vivid reminder of this truth. Nonetheless, in reading Genesis 7 we ought to be reminded that God was graciously preserving a righteousness-filled hope for humanity.

Second, when God created all things, he commanded fruitfulness and multiplication. His instructions to Noah before the flood make it clear that God was still dedicated to that original creative decree. Noah gathered male and female animals so as to secure a future hope and promised filling of the earth. This is fundamentally good news in an otherwise difficult moment in time.

Third, we need to see that Noah's righteousness was not a work to gain merit with God, but it was the outcome of his faith in God. This is a huge difference that we cannot afford to miss. Hebrews 11:7 looked back on the life of Noah writing, *"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."* The righteousness which was made so potently visible in the life of Noah was an effect of the faith that he had in God. This is fundamentally good news for us who cannot, apart from God's grace through faith, stand righteousness before the Lord God.

BIG IDEA: Genesis 7 bids us to recognize the brilliance of hope in the otherwise darkened despair of the flood.

APPLY:

- **Question:** Today's study referenced how a light can become more brilliant amidst a backdrop of darkness. In what way can your life, like that of Noah, reflect the light of Christ to the world in need?
- **Question:** Is it easier to recognize the significance of good news during a good time or a bad time? Explain your answer.

Week 14: Genesis 7:1-24

Day 4: Numbers, Numbers, and More Numbers

READ: Genesis 7:1-24

EXPLORE:

Whether you noticed it at first or in your continual reading of this passage, you have probably come to realize a consistent emphasis on numbers in this chapter. In only a few verses we read about seven pairs, seven days, six hundred years, the second month, the seventeenth day, forty days, forty nights, three sons, three wives, fifteen cubits, and a final period of one hundred and fifty days. In my (Stephen's) opinion, it seems as though the story fell into the lap of an all-too-eager auditor who couldn't wait to make a record of every detail. Today, we are going to put on our proverbial accounting hat and ask, "What is the significance of the numbers in this story?"

As a general rule in biblical study, we should resist two extremes when studying numbers. We need to fight to not look at biblical numbers as the all-encompassing "everything" or the inconsequential "nothing." The reality is that numbers in Scripture are incredibly insightful if they are studied historically and in perspective. In this passage, there are two numbers we should pay attention to first. They are seven and forty respectively.

In the ancient semitic mindset, the number seven carried with it the idea of completion and fullness. Just as the days of Genesis' creation account were brought to a close with day seven, the connotation of completeness is carried over when it is used. The number forty is consistently used in Scripture to communicate the idea of a new age on the horizon. Forty days or forty nights was used as a conventional description of a long period of time which had run its course.

When we view these two numbers in the story of the flood, it is clear that the author is being not only specific, but purposeful in his record of events. Typically, precise dates were reserved only for kings, but here they are used for the flood account. This is a reminder of the event's significance in the scope of Scripture.

We read that the day of the *fountains bursting forth* was connected to the *seventeenth day of the second month* in the life of Noah.³⁰ These details might seem oddly specific and maybe even unnecessary compared to all the information that we would love to have dated in the book of Genesis. When we see this verse in the context of Scripture, however, we can see its beauty. The phrase "*on that day*" which is used to mark the flood, occurs consistently throughout the Hebrew Scriptures to mark major events. *On that day* accompanies Israel's entrance into Sinai, Abraham's circumcision, the Passover exodus, and Moses' death for example.³¹ The flood is therefore given the same language to match other significant acts in the story of God's people.

BIG IDEA: The specific numbers and phrasing of the flood help us to understand its place and significance amongst the major events.

APPLY:

- **Activity:** What are some other occurrences of both seven and forty within the biblical text? (*You may need to use an online concordance to help you find some.*)
- **Question:** What parallels to the forty days and forty nights do you see in other areas of Scripture as you study?

³⁰ See Genesis 7:11 for reference.

³¹ See Genesis 17:23, 26; Exodus 12:41, 51, and Deuteronomy 32:48.

Week 14: Genesis 7:1-24

Day 5: A Dreadful Judgment

READ TOGETHER: 2 Peter 3:1-6, 1 Peter 3:20-21, Hebrews 10:31

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EXPLORE TOGETHER:

The story of the flood should give every human being a sober assessment of life, death, judgment, and salvation. The flood ought always to be read as a heavy passage. Many men still scoff at the idea of a flood just as they did in Noah's day. It was foolish to reject the flood back then and it is foolish to reject the authenticity of the flood today. God uses this story to point us to the final judgement and to prepare us for its coming.

God kindly told Noah when it was time for him and his family to get into the ark. As a good father, God seeks to take care of His son and his offspring. God is also gracious to the animals. He has Noah take seven pairs of animals, six that are clean and one that is unclean. The clean animals are more useful to humans, and they are useful in sacrifices. God first informed Noah that He would send the rain in seven days. There is no doubt that Noah continued preaching to a lost and dying world those final seven days. However, because they did not believe Noah the many years prior, their hearts were hardened in the final days of urgency.

Noah was six hundred years old when the flood waters came upon the earth. He was an old man. This could be viewed as a

reminder that some of our biggest tests and trials may not come until we are seasoned saints so we must stay alert. The fountains of the deep burst forth and the windows of heaven were opened. It rained for forty days and forty nights and all flesh died that moved on the earth, both man and beast. They all drowned or died of starvation. Not one was left.

We ought not rejoice at the death of the wicked. We can be certain that Noah was both moved by the cries of the wicked and thankful that grace had found him. It rained so much that the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days. During those one hundred and fifty days, one of the many thoughts of Noah's family must have been, "Holy and Mighty is our God!"

BIG IDEA: The judgement of God should make us sober and wise.

APPLY TOGETHER:

- **Question:** What does a godly response to judgement look like?

- **Activity:** List out some activities that you think may have taken place while Noah and his family were on the ark.

- **Question:** What did Noah do while he waited and how is that an example for you and me?

- **Question:** If you were in Noah's position, how do you think you would have handled the time on the ark?

- **Question:** If an aspect of your faith were challenged or refined through the Noah story, what would it be and why?

- **Optional Question:** A lot of Genesis is dedicated to the story of the flood and the family of Noah. We have seen it in multiple chapters. In your opinion, why does Genesis spend so much time discussing the flood and relatively little discussing other sections?

Week 15: Genesis 8:1-14

Day 2: Remembered by God

READ: Genesis 8:1-14

EXPLORE:

The opening sentence of Genesis 8 pivots the story of Noah and his family through the flood. The remainder of the flood story hinges on the covenant-keeping qualities of God! We read, simply that *God remembered* Noah. After Genesis 8:1, the tension of the story begins to relax and the waters begin to recede as we are reminded that God *remembered* Noah. This is no small thing. It is the remembering of God which causes hope to come forth and bids life to begin once again.

This passage ought to remind us that even and especially in the destruction of the flood, God's purposes are on display. The waters of the flood are subject to God's unrivaled will. The biblical text makes this clear. The English term "remembered" refers to a memory of something which had been previously forgotten. In contrast, the Hebrew term for God's remembering signifies the faithfulness of his actions based on a previous covenant commitment. When we read that God remembered Noah, we should not assume that He previously forgot him. No, the remembering of God is consistently tied to the unfailing nature of his Word.

Abraham was *remembered by God* amidst the difficulties of his life and experience.³² Rachel was *remembered by God* and was enabled to bear a son named Joseph.³³ The people of Israel were *remembered by God* in their Egyptian slavery.³⁴ On the opposite

³² See Genesis 19:29 for reference.

³³ See Genesis 30:22-23 for reference.

³⁴ See Exodus 2:23-25 for reference.

end of the covenant-keeping spectrum, the wickedness and rebellion connected to Babylon was *remembered* by God and judged accordingly.

The author of Lamentations would voice these same truths, writing, “Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood, and the gall! My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”³⁵

These examples and others like them are powerful reminders that there is no lasting hope for humanity apart from the covenant-keeping God who *remembers* His promises. It was just two words, “*God remembered*,” in the flood story that reverse the flow of water and instill hope once more in a tumultuous time. May your heart and life overflow with hope today as you serve the God who *remembers*.

BIG IDEA: The idea of God remembering people is not a statement of his forgetfulness, but of His faithfulness to be good on His promises.

APPLY:

- **Question:** When is a time in your life when you have been reminded of the unwavering fact that God *has remembered* you?
- **Activity:** Re-read Lamentations 3:19-24 and spend some corresponding time in prayer.

³⁵ See Lamentations 3:19-24 for reference.

Week 15: Genesis 8:1-14

Day 3: Christian Conservationism

READ: Genesis 8:1-14 and Proverbs 12:10

EXPLORE:

The preservation of Noah, his family, and animals through the destruction of the flood shows us that God was and is interested and invested in remaking things and people. In the same way that water can wash and fire can refine, God is made visible in his world as One who desires to cultivate and purify. We cannot afford to forget that, like Adam and Eve, Noah and his family will be given a continuation of the ancient command to care for the earth. Scripture makes it clear that it is God's heart to see the earth cared for and stewarded well. Christians need to care about ecology in a way that is honoring to the Lord and compassionate toward others. Let's explore this idea further from both Proverbs 12 and Genesis 8.

The writer of the Proverbs expressed it like this, *"Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel."*³⁶ We need to look again briefly at the story of Noah to see this principle in practice on display.

Noah wanted to see if the waters had subsided, so he sent out a raven and then a dove. After the dove returned, Noah received the bird with his hand and brought her into the ark. From the early church fathers to contemporary scholars, many observant students of the Bible have asked, "Why is there so much attention to the dove and how she is treated by Noah in story?"

The other portions of the story move quickly, but it slows down in vv. 8-9. In a story about a raging and destructive flood, it can

³⁶ See Proverbs 12:10 for reference.

seem rather odd that so much time and space in the writing which is spent on Noah's interaction with the dove. Historical Bible scholars have noted this break in the story. Undoubtedly, there is a special attention which is given to this specific moment. Noah stands as an example. In this simple and subtle detail of the story, we ought to be reminded of the consistent calling from God to cultivate and care for that which He has created.

We need to be reminded often that caring for what God has created is a fundamental aspect of what it means to be made in His image.³⁷ Right stewardship of the earth is not an optional activity for the Christian, it is an act of obedience and conformity to Christ. Ultimately, creation care is compelling for the Christian because we believe that the majesty of God is made visible in it.³⁸ So, with these things in mind, let us consider two questions today as we close. Does the way you care for creation reflect a God-honoring spirit of stewardship? Does the way you care for creation reflect a love for neighbors (*local, global, and the future generations to come*)? If not, be challenged today to embrace a deeply Christian value of caring for God's creation.

BIG IDEA: Caring for what God has created is a fundamental aspect of what it means to be made in His image.

APPLY:

- **Question:** As a general trend, do you think that Christians are accused of being overinvested or under-interested in ecological efforts? Explain.
- **Question:** Is a love for God and for others visible in the way you care for what God has made? Why or why not?

³⁷ See Genesis 2:15 for reference.

³⁸ See Psalm 19:1 and Romans 1:18-19 for reference.

Week 15: Genesis 8:1-14

Day 4: Waiting for the Word

READ: Genesis 8:1-14, 15-16

EXPLORE:

One of the most malicious things I (Stephen) did as a camp counselor in college was to intentionally mess with students during competitions. We would do relay races that required the coach to yell, “Go!” in order to begin. Before the relay race would begin, I would make sure to divide the teams, explain the rules, and clarify that they could only begin after I said, “Go!” It seemed simple enough, but nothing could have been further from the truth.

Instead of simply yelling go, I would proceed to yell every word which was even remotely close to go. I would yell GO-rilla, GO-pher, GO-at cheese, and anything else that came to mind. Each time a false start would occur, they would reset and listen once more. After a moment of laughter and a great deal of angst, I would whisper “Go” and the race would begin. In that moment, and much to their chagrin I might add, they learned to listen to my voice before going ahead.

In many ways, the silly story from camp is a microcosm of human waiting and listening, both of which are dependent upon God’s timing and direction. Noah knew this truth well. I am sure that the days of waiting for the waters to recede were filled with a mixture of gratitude and longing. On one hand, I am sure he was predominantly thankful he and his family were spared. On the other hand, I am sure that he was eager to be on dry ground once again.

According to the biblical text, Noah sent out birds in order to determine the viability of the land. While he waited, he worked.

He was not passive or apathetic in his waiting, but he actively worked to discern next steps. However, Genesis 8:15-16 remind us that Noah did not leave the boat according to his own understanding, but on the decisive leading of the Lord. The text reads, *“Then God said to Noah, ‘Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you.’”* Noah waited until God said to leave before he left the ark. His time on the ark serves as an example of both working and waiting in conjunction with one another.

Whether you are young or just young at heart, it can often be quite challenging to wait well. It can be hard to discern the Lord’s timing and it can be tough to wait patiently in the meantime. Yet, the Scriptures work to constantly remind us that God is active and aware amidst our waiting. We are exhorted in our waiting to create space for listening attentively to the leading and direction of God. Unlike my devious trickery of campers before a race, God is not malicious or conniving. In fact, it is the closeness of God by whom and for whom we were made that often becomes all-the-more apparent in a time of longsuffering unto the Lord. For each of us, my prayer is that our waiting would be worshipful and not wasted.

BIG IDEA: Noah’s time on the ark serves as an example of both working and waiting in conjunction with one another.

APPLY:

- **Question:** Waiting on the Lord often trains us in a difficult dependency upon the Lord. In what ways have you known this to be true?
- **Questions:** How would you describe your personal relationship with waiting? When in your life are you most tempted to wait in ungodly ways?

Week 15: Genesis 8:1-14

Day 5: God Remembered Noah

READ TOGETHER: Isaiah 54:9, Jeremiah 3:5, Isaiah 57:16

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EXPLORE TOGETHER:

God remembered Noah and all the animals with him on the ark. Obviously, God is not a man that he could forget. What it means is that God relieved Noah, brought him rest, and was merciful to him. God first made a wind to blow over the earth for the waters to subside. This reminds us of our Lord Jesus' ability to calm the winds and the waves. Next God sealed up the fountains of the deep and windows of the heavens. This causes the waters on the earth to recede continually. Finally, God caused the ark to rest on Mount Ararat. This would have been a great relief to Noah as he is now on solid ground.

Then Noah sent forth two spies for some reconnaissance work. Noah knew when the flood would come, but the Lord did not tell him when it would be over. The Lord does not tell us when our trials will be over either, but he uses this time to exercise our faith and patience in Him. The first spy sent out was a raven. The raven would return to the ark which indicated to Noah that the waters were still covering the earth. The second spy was a dove, which returned the first time empty-handed. The second time the dove went out it came back with an olive leaf, which indicated that the trees began to appear above water. The olive branch was a

symbol of peace. Instead of judgement on earth, God was communicating once again peace on earth. The final time the dove was sent out, it did not return indicating that it could survive on its own.

On New Year's Day the waters were dried from off the earth. It was certainly a time of new beginnings. It was a sort of re-creation of the world. On New Year's Day Noah was able to look and see that the face of the ground was dry. It must have been sweet to see dry ground again. It is easy to take for granted continued mercy, but it is moving to see restored mercy. This is reminiscent of Hurricane Harvey. Never was it so sweet to see dry ground after a flood. Not only did God renew the face of the earth, but He also restored Noah's troubled soul. God remembered Noah. He was kind to him. God was merciful to humanity.

BIG IDEA: God's judgement was over and He restored the earth to dry ground.

APPLY TOGETHER:

- **Question:** What is significant about the use of a dove?

- **Activity:** List out some of the many ways that God has remembered you!



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