Grace Like a Flood- Part One

# The Angst of the Ages

## (Genesis 6:1-8)

Welcome to all of you. I’m glad you’re here because we’re starting a brand-new message series this morning. Over the last few weeks, we have been talking about Grace under Fire and I wanted to continue with a similar theme but changing the backdrop, because there’s just so much more that I wanted to share with you. I’ve been studying about grace and I’ve got all these notes, little rabbit trails this way and that, and I discovered a common theme.

Today I want to talk to you about Grace Like a Flood because God’s grace is a gift that we continue to need and which God generously gives, pouring out like a flood. And so, over the past few weeks we have seen how God sometimes uses a situation, circumstance, or even our environment to get our attention. And whether we are busy, distracted, or for whatever reason, God may have to send a fire or a flood or something else just as drastic to get our attention, but then he gave this promise of grace through the prophet Isaiah.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze” (Isaiah 43:2).

That’s why it’s so important that we talk about grace in the life of the believer as it applies to our daily lives. Because often in the church, when we think about grace, we think about the forgiveness and the love of God demonstrated toward us on the cross. And that is amazing, that is wonderful, that is an important truth, but there is also grace in those burning bush experiences, in the flood and in the fire, when like Moses we need to turn aside and look. Because as the apostle Peter stepped out of the boat and walked on the water towards Jesus, each one of us find ourselves experiencing those times when we take our eyes off Jesus and find ourselves sinking in the futility of our accomplishments. Becoming discouraged, bruised and battered by uncertainty and failure, burdened by the guilt of our own weaknesses.

You know, we don’t really like to talk about that, but even though the times and the context are constantly changing, there is really nothing new under the sun, which is why I want to talk to you today about The Angst of the Ages. You see, there is grace, and there is more grace, and there is more grace. In fact, the apostle Peter recognizing our bottomless, insatiable need for God’s grace, writes to the church in Rome, to those who were saved,

“Who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood (and he says): Grace and peace be yours in abundance” (1 Peter 1:2).

Another translation says, “May grace and peace be multiplied to you.” And so, why would he say that? Because he understood the continual need for grace in the life of the believer.

You see, life is a journey and as believers we recognize that it is a journey of faith as we face the challenges and the obstacles of life. And so, we are able to overcome the fire and the flood, the mountains and the valleys, because our lives are a story testifying to the grace of God. In fact, if you are here today, it’s because you found grace. Life was unmanageable, but you found grace. Life was overwhelming, but you found grace. And so, grace is your strength, grace is your hope, grace is your power, grace is your stability, grace is your foundation, and grace is the catalyst, solidifying of every promise of Scripture.

Today, as we lay the foundation for this series, if you would turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter six, and we are going to look at verses one through eight. It’s here in the book of Genesis that we get a glimpse at the heart of God as he begins to unveil his plan of redemption, unrolling it like a scroll, lifting the curtain to reveal grace and truth. It begins in verse one, saying,

“When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years” (Genesis 6:1-3).

“The Nephilim were on the earth in those days — and also afterward — when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown” (Genesis 6:4).

“The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain” (Genesis 6:5-6).

“So, the Lord said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth — men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air — for I am grieved that I have made them” (Genesis 6:7).

The Lord was grieved that he had made mankind, the text literally says, I am sorry or I regret that I made them, which is really the closest word that would express a sovereign God’s frustration over mankind’s wickedness. And how he saw that every inclination of the thoughts of mankind’s heart was only evil all the time and God was disgusted by the depravity that he saw. But then the Bible says in verse eight that,

“Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 6:8, NKJV).

In other words, he was subject to the kindness and favor of the Lord.

We are talking today about The Angst of the Ages, and I want to contextualize the times surrounding Noah finding grace, because it’s important that we understand how God could become so frustrated by mankind’s unwillingness to seek him and glorify him as God. So grieved in fact, that he actually looked at Creation and said, “I’m sorry that I ever made you.” And that’s the power of the text before us today, because the Father is looking at his child, and this is the story of Jeremiah being played out here in Genesis chapter six.

You may remember in Jeremiah chapter 18, God invited Jeremiah to go down to the potter’s house so that he might better understand what God was telling him. And so, Jeremiah went down and saw the potter working at the wheel,

“But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so, the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. Then the word of the Lord came to me: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?” (Jeremiah 18:3-6).

And certainly, this is the story of humanity, the clay is flawed, marred in the hands of the potter. What we are feeling in this text is the angst, the torment, the feeling of anguish, the intense disappointment that God felt about the human condition or the state of the world in general. Mankind had failed to live up to his intention for their lives, and so the decision had to be made, do I try to fix it, or do I just start all over again?

What we have read here in Genesis chapter six is the coming to the end of an age, the literal end of what some Bible scholars call the age of consciousness. And so, it is the end of the era of doing according to whatever you thought in your mind, whatever you thought you should do, because at this point mankind did not have any rules, all they had was their own consciousness ruling. And so, this is a proof text showing that when we are left to ourselves, our condition only gets worse. As Jeremiah said,

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure” (Jeremiah 17:9).

And so, “The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain” (Genesis 6:6). Because he had made man in his image and in his likeness, but instead of reflecting his image, imitating him, and glorifying him as God, they rejected him. For everyone was looking out for their own interests, as Isaiah said,

“Each of us has turned to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6).

And so, mankind was trying to be like their culture, trying to fit in, trying to reflect their culture, but the culture didn’t make them, and the Lord saw this and was grieved. He said,

“You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, "He did not make me"?

Can the pot say of the potter, "He knows nothing" (Isaiah 29:16)?

You know, I believe that even today, if we would spend half as much energy trying to be like God as we do trying to be like our culture, we would solve a majority of our own problems. And yet, all around us the people are declaring, “He did not make me, I can do what I want, and I can be who I want to be,” but it’s not going to end well for them.

In our text today, Noah would bring about the end of an age, this is the period of time between the fall of man and the flood. And so, the potter took the clay and began to reshape it, what was hidden in ages past is now revealed, and the Bible says that Noah,

“By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith” (Hebrews 11:7).

Everyone say, “By faith!”

And so, if you’re not living by faith, if you’re not living a life of faith, you’re not living the life that God wants you to have, but like Noah you have the power to change it, and you have the ability to build something new. Noah found grace to make changes and I hope you’re following me because I’m laying the foundation for this series. I am building something so that we are better able to understand history in terms of divine revelation.

And so, God is going to do something new, the clay is in the potter’s hand, and he’s about to set up government and order and structure. But first he makes a promise, he says,

“Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth” (Genesis 9:15-16).

Looking across the ages, the spectrum of human history, we find God calling Abram. He gives him a promise, he doesn’t give him any details, but Abraham believes God. He didn’t know what it was going to take, all he knew was that God said,

“Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you" (Genesis 12:1).

And so, Abraham moved out on a promise, he didn’t know where, when, or how, but above all else, he had a promise from God.

There are some of you here who have stood on a promise, you didn’t have any details, you didn’t know how God was going to fix it, but you knew that if you are going to walk with him, you’re going to have to…

“Walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7, ESV).

That is so important, because sometimes God will tell you to start building, and you don’t know what it is or how long it’s going to be, but at the appointed time he will send the flood. Other times, God will tell you to pack your bags, he will send you somewhere, and you don’t even know where you are going, but you’ve got to walk by faith. You’ve got to believe and trust that whatever he has prepared for you, wherever it is, that it’s going to work out, because we know…

“That in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

And so, Abraham had been called according to his purpose and he started to move, because God said to go. He didn’t know where, he didn’t have a house, he didn’t have a job, but he had a promise. Abraham stood on the promises of God and he walked by faith.

I wonder if there are any of you here today that are standing on the promises of God?

We have seen that Noah had a promise, Abraham had a promise, but I want to go deeper, I want to bring in some more context. We’re talking about the Angst of the Ages and did you know that Adam had a promise too? In fact, his promise is the promise of all promises, this is the promise that shaped all the others. This promise is found in Genesis chapter three, verse fifteen. Adam and Eve had just been tempted in the garden, they have fallen into sin, and now God is addressing Satan, their tempter. And so, God is addressing their archenemy, who appeared to them in the form of a snake, and God said,

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers” (Genesis 3:15).

And so, this is the prophetic foreshadowing of a great cosmic battle between Satan’s offspring and Eve’s offspring. Satan’s offspring were those who shared his evil nature, rejecting the things of God, rejecting the truth of God. And then, on the other hand, her offspring would be the righteous seed passing through the loins of Seth. The descendants of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and ultimately manifested in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And we know that because the Scripture says,

“And to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ” (Galatians 3:16).

Jesus would be born as the woman’s seed, referring to the virgin birth, being born of God the Father who said to Satan,

“He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Genesis 3:15).

And so, Satan will receive a fatal blow to his head and the Lord Jesus would receive a strike to his heel. The serpent would strike his heel giving us a hint of his dying on the cross to save us all, but after three days he will rise again. And so, Satan heard this from the mouth of God himself, that our Redeemer, the Messiah, would come from the woman, and that’s our promise of redemption.

And so, from the very beginning of the age, Satan has opposed God and the people of God. As it was then, so it is now, Satan has been and remains the mastermind behind every form of wickedness among the inhabitants of our planet. And so, when…

“The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become” (Genesis 6:5).

He was grieved because that wasn’t the purpose for which he had created all of this. What he was seeing on earth wasn’t what he had imagined, it didn’t look like him, and certainly was not glorifying him. The vessel that he had made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter, it didn’t look like what he had imagined, and so he started over again.

Now, keep following me, because we had the promise given to Adam, and the promise given to Noah. The Lord takes the lump of clay, makes something new out of it, and gives a promise to Abraham. The Word of the Lord came to Abram, he took him outside and said,

“Look up at the heavens and count the stars — if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:4-6).

Abraham had a promise and he believes God even though his body is as good as dead. The son whom he was promised had not come, however Abraham’s faith was unshaken, he waited for over 20 years before he saw the promise fulfilled.

From Abraham, God brings in the patriarchs and the Law. At that time, when Moses came, God comes down on Mount Sinai to meet with Moses and gives him the Law for his people. Now, the law wasn’t given to impart life, righteousness wasn’t found through the law, but it was part of the promise, it was our schoolmaster, our tutor, to lead us to Christ. And so, God comes down on the mountain and spoke to his covenant people. He said,

“I am the Lord your God… "You shall have no other gods before me. "You shall not make for yourself an idol… “You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God” (Exodus 20:1-5).

“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God… “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy… For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy” (Exodus 20:7-11).

"Honor your father and your mother… "You shall not murder… "You shall not commit adultery… "You shall not steal… "You shall not give false testimony… "You shall not covet your neighbor's house… your neighbor's wife… or anything that belongs to your neighbor” (Exodus 20:12-17).

God gave his people the law, they were now a theocracy, they were a God ruled nation, a people with a legal system. And God was doing something new to help prevent the same problem that Noah experienced, where everybody does whatever they feel like, whatever feels good, or whatever gratifies them in the moment.

And so, God gave his people the Law, the judgments, and the ordinances for worship; but he didn’t stop there, he went even further. He said, this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel,

“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people” (Jeremiah 31:33).

And we find the promise given to Adam fulfilled through the Law when Jesus went to the cross. He did what I couldn’t do, he obeyed the law, and that’s why he is my righteousness. I am complete in him, the curse that held me back, the curse that dragged me down, was nailed to the cross with him. The Bible says it this way,

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us…” (Galatians 3:13).

Therefore, in Christ I have been set free, because he is my deliverance, my victory and my breakthrough. And so, death has no power, the grave can’t hold me, because the Bible says that every sin,

“That was against us and that stood opposed to us; God took it away, nailing it to the cross” (Colossians 2:14).

And so, our sins were nailed to the cross and we are free, because if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. And that’s why we worship him like we do, because we are more than conquerors through him who loved us and…

“I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

No devil in hell can take away my Jesus. His grace has come like a flood and redeemed his people, he has raised up a horn of salvation for us, and with his blood he purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. And so, having believed, the Bible says,

“You were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13-14).

And so, we want to praise God for what Jesus did, because no devil can snatch it away. If God says you’re saved, you are saved, and if God says you are free, you are free.

“Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 6:8, NKJV).

And I wonder if there’s anybody here that has found grace. You were a sinner, but you found grace. You were lost, but you found grace. You were blind, but you found grace. It used to hurt you, it used to upset you, but you found grace. Is there anybody here that can soar on wings like eagles, run and not grow weary, walk and not be faint, because you found grace?

When the Bible says, Noah found grace, the true bread was coming down from above, manna was falling from heaven, and he was able to tap into something that hadn’t been given yet, something before it’s time, because the Bible says,

“The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17).

And so, it wasn’t even known yet, it was just a shadow, but Noah found it, he stumbled into it.

As we close, we’re going to go deeper into grace, celebrating God’s grace, as we celebrate communion together, and so I wonder if there’s anyone here that needs some grace?

“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

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