

## Divine Fury and Favor

All right, take your Bibles this morning, turn with me to Genesis chapter 6. We are back in Genesis chapter 6. And when we embarked on our study in Genesis, it was about one year ago. And I said one year ago that Genesis is all about worldview. It's going to establish really a lot of our grounding as Christians regarding the world around us.

And in fact, if you understand and believe Genesis, you're going to understand things that many people don't have access to. And in fact, the smartest and brightest minds on earth who might understand science and math and technology and history and chemistry and medicine and physics can't access the most important questions that life offers apart from divine revelation. And in fact, here in Genesis, we get a worldview.

We understand God's grand plan for the universe, we understand the big picture, and then you're actually going to understand how you personally and individually fit within that grand, big cosmic plan. And so there are all kinds of truths that we find in Genesis that establish our worldview, teaches us reality about really ultimate reality. And all of those beliefs we kind of looked at initially are those words that end inology.

Things like epistemology, how it is that we come to have any knowledge whatsoever or sources of knowledge in the nature of it. And we learn about cosmology. It's different than cosmetology.

Cosmology is where we learn about the origins of the universe and man. And teleology, the meaning and purpose of life. Theology, the existence and nature of God.

Anthropology, man's existence and his purpose and why he's here. And then, of course, axiology, morality and value, what is good and bad and right and wrong. And so all of these truths are taught in Genesis.

As we learn them, they begin to paint a picture for us of reality. It's very defined. It's very clear.

And Genesis 6 reveals, frankly, some of the most lofty and astonishing truths about the perfections of God and also man's true and hopeless condition. Okay? So Genesis 6 fits into and informs our worldview how it teaches us theology about the perfections of God, lofty truths about God, and it teaches us anthropology, the nature of man. Entitled this morning's message, Divine Fury and Favor.

Divine Fury and Favor. Could say it perhaps another way, grief and grace. Grief and grace.

Genesis 6, 1 begins, and I'm reading out of the LSB this morning. Now, it happened when men began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were good in appearance. They took wives for themselves whomever they chose.

Then Yahweh said, my spirit shall not strive with man forever because he is indeed flesh. Nevertheless, his days shall be 120 years. The Nephilim were on the earth in those days and also afterward when the sons of God came into the daughters of men and they bore children to them.

Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. Then Yahweh saw that the evil of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Yahweh regretted that he had made man on earth and he was grieved in his heart.

And Yahweh said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky for I regret that I have made them. But Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh. I looked at this passage a couple of weeks ago and saw it really as the lead-in to the flood judgment.

And the first point that we saw two weeks ago is that this text begins with a strange union that incurs divine sanction. There are some weird and perplexing things happening in the first four verses of Genesis chapter 6. And I stated then that I think the best way to understand this text is also the weirdest way to understand this text. That angels, referred here to as sons of God, cohabitated with human women.

The text says that these sons of God found the daughters of man attractive and so they crossed boundaries and they took them as wives. And as we put together really how we came to this conclusion, we looked at the Old Testament usages of the expression sons of God. We saw that it appears in Job, it appears in Daniel there, and it would speak and indicate of not a human but rather an angelic creature.

And then we saw the New Testament witness really corroborated those details that Jude and Peter in 2 Peter speak of angels who sinned and they were punished for deviant and corrupt behavior in the same context as the immorality of Sodom. And we said that's no accident that those are put side by side in the Scripture. And so that correspondence is very strong of boundary-crossing angels juxtaposed alongside Noah in the flood and Jude in 2 Peter, and then the aberrant and deviant sexual sin of Sodom and Gomorrah right alongside that same text about Noah and the flood.

And so I mentioned it, or I didn't mention it two weeks ago, but another interesting point of correspondence regarding this view is that in Genesis 19, if you remember, two angels show up and they're interacting with Lot. And Lot interacts with them there in Sodom and he immediately calls them lords. He recognizes that they're not merely mortal men, and then the men of the city seek out those two angels so that they can do what? So they can have relations with them.

And so the men of the city call these angels men. They refer to them as men. It's a very disturbing scene, both what those men want to do and then Lot's response.

The entire story is quite vile, and yet it would seem to indicate that this notion of human and angel relations is at least probable. Angels are also said to be the same size as men in Revelation 21, where we read about an angel's cubit, that's the elbow to the fingertip, measures about the same as a man's cubit. And if you remember Hebrews chapter 13, there are some who have hosted visiting angels unawares.

Can you imagine that? They had what they thought were human visitors, only to find out in fact, honey, that couple that you were rude to last night, those were actually angels. Bible depicts then angels, although being spirit beings, often appearing in human form. Okay? So in Genesis 19, the angels show up and the men of Sodom think they're men.

Revelation 21, angels and humans are about the same size. Hebrews 13, you might even have an angel in your house and mistake it for being a human. And so whether it was actual procreation between angel and human or fallen angels that were inhabiting human bodies and empowering them, the text doesn't state.

The text does not state. We simply don't have answers to those questions. And yet we come to verse 4 and we find that the Nephilim were on the earth in those days and also afterward.

Oftentimes the Nephilim are thought of to be the offspring of this union between the sons of God and the daughters of man. I'd say that's probably the most common view that's taught. And as I said, I don't believe that's what a careful reading of the text indicates.

Rather, the text is indicating that the Nephilim were people that were on the earth before and after these offspring from the sons of God and the daughters of men. They're not the offspring themselves. And if you look closely at what the text does not say, it does not say, verse 2, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were good in appearance.

They took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. They had offspring and they were called Nephilim. That's what we would expect or they became the Nephilim or they were the Nephilim.

Instead, Moses says the Nephilim were on the earth in those days and also afterward when this event took place, when the sons of God came into the daughters of men. So, I believe the Nephilim were a distinct people group from this offspring, which the offspring of the sons of God and the daughters of men became the men of renown. We see that at the end of verse 4, they were the mighty men, the men of renown.

And so, why does Moses distinguish this? I think it's two reasons. One, it's to provide a timestamp as to when that unholy union took place. And furthermore, there was some kind of folklore regarding the Nephilim because in Numbers chapter 13, the spies are saying there's giants in the land and those giants are Nephilim.

Okay, so a couple things just to think about that. Moses is physically present in Numbers 13. When those spies come back, Moses is also writing Genesis.

So, those people, that people group was already known and being referred to. And so, I think it's quite likely that people believe that the giants were some kind of superhuman offspring that resulted from the procreation of angels with people. That's actually a common view throughout cultures of human history.

Various tales of gods coming into humans and procreating with them and producing demigods or part god, part man, kind of superhuman hybrid offsprings. And yet, there's nothing in the text that indicates that there was a superhuman offspring that was produced. And in fact, the reference to Nephilim in Numbers 13 doesn't make a lot of sense.

If there was a corrupted bloodline that was kind of part angel, part man, and God's design in the flood was to wash away those people. It's a common view that is held, but I think the challenge with that is the fact that the text states that the reason for the flood is because the Lord saw that the evil of man, verse 5, was great on the earth. And so, there's nowhere in Scripture that would at least be explicit to indicate that God's purpose in the flood was to kind of flush the human race from some kind of a superhuman hybrid people group.

Is it possible? Maybe, but there's certainly not an indication in the text. Rather, it would seem that the motive for these fallen angels was much baser than that. In fact, the stated reason in the text is, according to verse 2, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were good in appearance and they took wives for themselves whomever they chose.

So, it's just a baser desire there. They saw and they took, right? It sounds a lot like what Eve did in the garden. She saw the fruit that was pleasing to the eye, and so she took it and ate it.

And so, here it would seem we had angels designed by God, created in holiness, saw the daughters of men, saw that they were attractive, wanted to take them as wives. I think the most likely scenario there is that they were in a similar fashion to demonic possession. They were taking over natural men.

What was produced there is they were kind of looking at the gene pool and seeking to create strong humans. They were reproducing and producing men of renown, mighty men, just through normal biological procreation. That's speculation.

We really don't know. The text did not answer that question. Rather, what we do see is that as a result of this unholy union, the Lord begins to shorten the time span on earth.

And so, verse 3, Yahweh said, My spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he is indeed flesh. Nevertheless, his days shall be 120 years. And so, this is the divine sanction.

And that could be that lifespans will be shortened. They certainly will after the flood. There will kind of be that curve that begins to shorten lifespans.

And people don't live to be older than 120 today. That's certainly possible. It's also possible that this is referring to the length of time between this pronouncement and the cataclysmic flood

judgment, that there's 120 years left.

And so, from that, we come to our second point in this passage, which is really where we begin to see God's displeasure toward humanity. And we see there a sinful race, speaking of a race of people that arouse divine displeasure. And in verse 5, we read, Then Yahweh saw that the evil of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

I just want you to pause and take this in again for a moment. Then Yahweh saw. The picture here is that the Lord, who doesn't have actual eyes but is omnipresent, sees all wickedness.

Jeremiah 16, 17, the Lord says, My eyes are on all their ways. They are not hidden from me, nor is there iniquity concealed from my eyes. David would recognize, excuse me, Moses in Psalm 90, you've said our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.

So Genesis 6, 5 reminds us that God sees everything. He sees it all. He sees what man sees on the outside, and then he also sees what takes place inside of you, things that no other human knows about.

He's seen every deed you've done in secrecy. He knows your thoughts from afar. He knows every area of unbelief, every lofty opinion, every lustful craving, every bitter resentment, every angry and hateful intention, every act of hypocrisy he's seen right through to the heart.

And depending upon your relationship with God, this is either a source of great comfort or a source of great fear. See, if you're not in Christ, it means that God has seen every immorality that exists within you, and he's keeping track. And what we're going to see here is that he is displeased with it.

He is displeased by it. If you're in Christ, it's a strange comfort because you can say, God knows me and yet he still loves me. In fact, God chose me knowing not only all the sin that I'd committed prior to my conversion, but all the sin I would commit after my conversion.

He knew that too. He sees it all. There's nothing that God is going to discover about you later and say, oops, had I known that I wouldn't have chosen you.

And yet this verse is one of the strongest statements in the Bible about the sin of mankind, this original sin from Adam. God saw that the wickedness was great, it says. It reached epic proportions corporately.

So the idea is that the earth is filled with violence. We're going to see that soon. It is hard to get our minds around what this would have looked like.

I mean, I can tell you that for all of the sin that's paraded around in our nation today, and there's churches in just about every town. There's a historic Judeo-Christian heritage. There's people who know the Bible.

There's Christians all over the place. Not in Genesis 6. The Lord is looking upon the earth and the wickedness is great. You don't have a bunch of believers with salt and light in the Scriptures and churches.

And it's not only a corporate issue that God is concerned about. In other words, the wickedness of the earth being great, but it's individuals. That every intent of the thoughts of His heart was only evil continually.

It's a key verse in understanding what we call the depravity of man, that is to say the comprehensive and debilitating effects of original sin. Okay, what is total depravity? It is the comprehensive, meaning all of you is affected, and the debilitating effects of sin. It's what renders you spiritually incapable of pleasing God.

The London Baptist Confession describes man as being wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. It means your thought life is broken. It means your emotions are broken.

Your body is corrupted. You're in a body of flesh, all of it, through and through. And so, you don't merely become a sinner because you sin, rather you sin because you're a sinner and you're born with this condition, spiritually broken.

And so, we would say, naturally speaking, there's not good people and bad people, there's only bad people. And there's no such thing as a good person who just does bad things, rather bad people do bad things. And Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 7.20, surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.

And so, guys, we are all in this together, okay? I say often to individuals in our body, we sinners stick together. I mean, we are all in this together. Now, in my younger years, I had both believed and promoted the idea that surely we can't all get in trouble.

I'll tell you, first of all, you can actually, and certainly from a divine perspective. See, the fact that we're all guilty doesn't somehow afford us safety in numbers. It doesn't somehow limit the accountability.

And what we see is God piercingly sees all the wickedness on the earth, and He doesn't just see it, but He cares about it. Verse 6, and Yahweh regretted that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. And so not only does God see our sin, but He cares about our sin.

He cares about it far more than you and I can even understand. He cares not just about what happens on the outside, but on the inside. And here we read that He grieves over it.

God grieves over man's sin. It's just good to remind ourselves of that. I was thinking about it this week.

God grieves over my sinful anger. God grieves over my impatience. God grieves over my self-worship, and when I'm discontent, and when I'm grumbling, and when I'm bitter.

And so Yahweh here is regretting, and yet He's not regretting as we said as a human does, which is, man, now I found out something that I didn't know previously, and so now I feel bad about it, and I wish I would have done something different. That's a dangerous and false teaching that arises from Scripture. God is not regretting here that He ever made man in the first place, and kind of wishing that He hadn't done it because things didn't go as planned.

John Piper writes, in the mid-1990s, I was embroiled in disputes over what is called open theism. Open theism, which argues that God is open to the future in the sense that He does not have an exhaustive knowledge of what is coming in the future. One of the arguments used by open theists is that there are passages in the Bible where God regrets or repents what He has done, and therefore must not have been able to foresee what would come of His decisions.

Otherwise, He would not have done them if He really regrets them. He goes on to give an illustration to help elucidate what is taking place here when we read that Yahweh regrets. Piper goes on and says, quote, If I spank my son for blatant disobedience, and he runs away from home because I spanked him, I may feel some remorse over the spanking.

Not in the sense that I disapprove of what I did, but in the sense that I feel some sorrow that the spanking was necessary and part of a wise way of dealing with my son in this situation, and great sorrow that he ran away. He goes on to say, If I had it to do over again, I would still spank him. It was the right thing to do, even knowing that one consequence would be alienation for a season.

I approve of the spanking from one angle, and at the same time, I regret the spanking from another angle. He goes on and says, If such a combination of emotions is possible for me and my finite decisions, it is not hard for me to imagine that God's infinite mind, the infinite complexity of God's emotional life would be capable of something similar or even more complex. He concludes with this statement, God is able to feel sorrow for an act in view of foreknown evil, and yet go ahead and do it for wise reasons.

And I would add for good reasons. God is able to feel sorrow for an act in view of foreknown evil, and yet go ahead and do it for wise reasons. You understand that God has an ultimate purpose for evil in conquering it through Jesus Christ.

Jesus will be the victor who does two things. One, He rescues His people, and He pours out retribution on His enemies, and in both ways, He is exalted. And so when you come and you read Genesis 6, 6, you're not in a moment to think of God being emotional like a human.

Human emotions are fickle. I mean, sometimes, and some of us in particular can be all over the map. We change.

Sometimes we don't even know why we feel the way that we feel. Now, for a minute, read that

back into understanding God. God's emotions don't function that way.

They're always principled. They're a direct outflow of His perfections. And so when we read that God is displeased, this is speaking of His displeasure towards sin that is going to arouse Him to action.

And in so doing, it violates none of His other perfections. They are all in concert. And so the Lord grieves.

He deeply cares about the wickedness on the earth. But just as a side note, think about the tremendous comfort that that is. And some of you in the room have been sinned against in profound ways.

Don't think for a minute that God doesn't care just because He didn't intervene in that moment. Don't think that He didn't see the sin and that He doesn't care about it. He sees the wickedness.

He's grieved by the wickedness. It grieves Him into action. And what is that action? Verse 7, Yahweh said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land.

From man to animals, to creeping things, and to birds of the sky, for I regret that I have made them. I mean, this is an indication of where God's displeasure towards sin terminates. Or we could say what it produces, it produces action.

You know, sometimes we hear the cliché, God hates the sin, but He loves the sinner. There is a piece of truth in that statement. But I ask you this question, what does God punish in hell? Is it merely sin or is it sinners? God is displeased here, not merely with the corruption and the pollution on earth, generally speaking, He's displeased with the very people who are carrying out the wickedness.

He's concerned with the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And so assuredly, God shows love and mercy to sinners. We want that message central in our thinking.

We want it central in our proclamation. But that's not all that God says about His attitude toward sinners. The prophet Nahum begins his oracle in this way.

Nahum 1.2, the Lord is a jealous and avenging God. The Lord is avenging and wrathful. The Lord takes vengeance on His adversaries and He keeps wrath for His enemies.

The Lord is slow to anger and great in power. And the Lord will by no means clear the guilty. His ways in whirlwind and storm and the clouds are the dust of His feet.

I mean, He's being depicted there through the prophets as a mighty warrior who comes to seek personal retribution on His enemies. And so we struggle with this. I mean, D.A. Carson writes, the challenge for us is we think of humans as like the revenge-seeking, wrathful people, and then the merciful, loving people.



And those are like the two kinds. Then Jesus makes it pretty clear. If you seek personal retribution, what's happened? You're forgetting to have compassion towards your enemies.

And so from a human standpoint, we recognize it would be totally inappropriate for you and I to go exact personal vengeance. God is not like a man. And so He's uncompromising in His wrath and at the same time loving.

Could say it this way. When you read God's statement, I will blot out man whom I've created from the face of the land. When I wipe man off the earth, it is good and right that God would do this.

It's good and right that God would do this. Said another way, it is the very best thing that could be done. It is the most right response to what the Lord sees.

It's the most righteous. It's the perfect response to wickedness. And if we're honest, what happens? We read that and the humanist in us just winces a little bit.

It's tempted to recoil perhaps. When you consider God wiping away all of humanity, old people, middle-aged, young people, babies, men and women from the lofty and the great to the poor and lowly. And He's going to wipe out tens of thousands, likely millions and millions.

And all He's going to do is save eight people. The magnitude is overwhelming. And there's something in our hearts oftentimes that thinks, I just, I kind of want to soften it a little bit.

Maybe I want to pull back from that truth. And no doubt there are those outside the Christian faith that struggle with the flood. They'll say things like, wait a minute.

So God so loved the world that He destroyed it with a flood? That's what you teach? Or sometimes ask this, what kind of monster creates a bunch of people only to obliterate them for not worshiping Him? Does that not sound like a megalomaniac? That's the God you worship? I mean, we have major problems with human parents who would conceive of a child and then abort the pregnancy or bring a child into the world and then neglect it. And there's moral and there's legal implications of doing such a thing. And so it's not entirely inappropriate that we would ask ourselves when it comes to God, how is it that God makes people and then later destroys them? And in doing so is just.

In fact, one person online phrased it this way, you worship a God who creates imperfect people and then drowns them because they are imperfect. So how are we supposed to think about what's happening in Genesis 6 verse 7? Or more pointedly, how are we to feel about it? Are we to be ashamed of it? Are we to reject it? Are we to rejoice in it? One author writes, it is a sad thing to find so many professing Christians who appear to regard the wrath of God as something for which they need to make an apology. Or at least they wish there was no such thing.

While some would not go so far as to openly admit that they consider it a blemish on the divine

character, yet they are far from regarding it with delight. They like not to think about it. And they rarely hear it mentioned without a secret resentment rising up in their hearts against it.

Even with those who are more sober in their judgment, not a few seem to imagine that there's a severity about the divine wrath, which is too terrifying to form a theme for profitable contemplation. In other words, it's not beneficial to think about. It concludes by saying, others harbor the delusion that God's wrath is not consistent with His goodness, and so seek to banish it from their thoughts.

So we misunderstand the character of God, and then who's responsible for the guilt. If you are a worshiper of God, then you are to respond to God's wrath with worship. David in Psalm 51 says, the righteous will be glad when he beholds the vengeance.

David says he will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. And then what will happen? Well, men will say, surely there is a God who judges on earth. I think what happens is we tend to think merely of the human element, and we get sentimental.

And I understand it. It's heavy. It's heavy to think about divine judgment.

And I don't think you're being honest with yourself if you don't struggle with it. If you don't actually think about real souls, and people that you know, and people in your family who are outside of Christ, and you're not moved to some type of grief or sorrow or concern. And yet what's the alternative? The alternative is a God who doesn't judge sin.

A God who doesn't care about sin. A God who's not grieved about sin. And so the Bible teaches us that we have a God who loves salvation, and he also punishes wickedness.

Why? Because he is holy and righteous. So you don't ever misunderstand God as being a bloodthirsty, power-hungry tyrant, who delights in torturing people who don't worship him. The prophet Ezekiel said in 1832, I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies, declares the Lord Yahweh, therefore turn back and live.

The Lord offers the gospel. He offers reconciliation. And yet he's not willing to accept anyone who doesn't come to him on his own terms.

God is impartial. He's just. And so though he grieves over sin, that grief does not compromise his righteousness.

And I was thinking about this as parents, we struggle to not be compromisers at times because we're sympathetic. Do we not? Occasionally, I'll have one of my children actually admit to this. And we all do it.

I did it with my parents. There's certain things that you know, kind of mom's soft spots, you know, dad's soft spots, you know, their respective buttons. And so as you're kind of elaborating, I have a request that I want fulfilled, or maybe something I need to confess, kind of like size up,

okay? Who's going to give me the best response? Why? Because they're not trying to be impartial, but they're just, you know, kind of inconsistent at times.

And yet God is completely unlike that. He's always acting in accordance with his righteous perfections. And so he grieves over sin that's taking place, and then he either punishes it or he pardons it, but he's going to deal with it.

And so you and I are to read Genesis chapter six, verse seven, and we're to worship and praise the God who blots sinners off the face of the earth. Because we say that's what a righteous God would do. He would punish sin.

And then praise be to God. He not only punishes it, but he pardons it. Verse eight, but Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh.

But Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh. This is to be read for the remarkable contrast that it is. That Noah is in those previous verses, the thoughts and intentions of his heart are only evil continually.

And yet this man finds pardon. He finds favor. What does this mean? Well, Moses doesn't elaborate on it here.

He doesn't talk about Noah's salvation experience. He doesn't elaborate on what it meant that Noah found favor. He simply states it.

The rest of the Bible is going to explain the spiritual realities that took place in Noah's life at this moment. But soon we're going to read about what an amazing guy Noah was. And then sometimes when he was not an amazing guy.

But he is truly an example, an example of righteousness, an example of faith, an example of courage. And yet before all of that, we find that Noah finds God's grace. Noah finds God's grace.

So I ask you, what does it mean when you read Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh? And we use the term grace all the time. It gets thrown around. It's used not only inside the church, but outside the church.

And nearly every form of Christian teaching has some understanding or some concept of grace. I remember the first time attempting to engage actual Roman Catholics, and I remember stating very upfront, well, you know, I believe that salvation is by grace, and you believe that salvation is by works. And then I found I'm uneducated about what Catholic doctrine teaches.

In fact, if you read the Catholic catechisms, you find that they have paragraphs and paragraphs devoted to grace. In fact, they have categories such as sanctifying grace, and actual grace, and habitual grace, and sacramental grace, and special graces, and prevenient grace. What is prevenient grace? Well, prevenient grace is that which comes before.

So what does a Catholic believe? Well, if you and I were left in our state, that natural state that we read about, we're not saved unless God comes and acts first by His grace. Same thing that an Arminian believes. It's the same thing that a Calvinist believes.

There's some grace that has to come and first act on the human heart. What's the difference? Well, what exactly does that grace do? What does that grace accomplish? What is the role of God and the role of man? When you read, when Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh, what does it mean that God was gracious to Noah? That idea of favor is God looked upon Noah and he smiled. He approved of him.

He approved of a sinner. How did he do it? Well, of course, God had justified Noah, and it was ultimately through faith. But if you want to boil down all of the different views of grace, I would say there's one place you can go that becomes the dividing line, and it becomes on the matter of regeneration.

That is the new birth. And here's the question. Is regeneration monergistic or is regeneration synergistic? Synergistic.

How is it that the new birth takes place? Okay. Jistic means working. Mono alone, sin with.

Okay. So very simply, when a human heart is born again, is God operating monergistically? God alone? Or is it a synergistic work? That is to say it is man cooperating with God who acts first by grace. So any form of prevenient grace acknowledges that man needs God to make him able, and yet doesn't ultimately have God doing all of the work of regeneration on his own.

In fact, synergism could be easily identified that God has made salvation possible. He's provided some kind of assistance to man, but then he leaves the final decision really up to man and whether or not he chooses to accept or reject God's offer of salvation. As one author puts it, the synergistic view is highlighting the scriptural testimony that man in salvation confesses, and he repents, and he expresses faith, and monergism teaches those same truths.

And it says, ultimately, all of those actions are predicated upon the Spirit's work, the gracious work of God, and causing a dead heart to become alive. Monergism affirms that God is ultimately the one who determines. God is ultimately the one who acts savingly upon his creatures, and he saves those whom he wishes to save.

Monergism affirms the sovereignty of God over all things, including individual salvation. And so this is our testimony. If you were to ask Noah, go back into an interview, Noah, tell me how you came to saving faith.

What would he have shared? What would his testimony have been? I can tell you what it wouldn't have been. It wouldn't have been I came to the point where I realized I needed to make a big change in my life. It wouldn't have been I was tired of being enslaved to my sin, so I dedicated myself to God, or I decided to make Yahweh Lord of my life.

And Noah's testimony would be not of how he ultimately sought out God, but how God sought him out first. Just read the text. Noah found himself in God's favor.

He found himself in God's grace, and that grace brought him savingly and powerfully into a relationship with his maker. It's described in Ezekiel 36, 26 as a heart transplant, whereby God took Noah's hard, stony heart and replaced it with a heart of flesh. Peter would describe this in 1 Peter 1, verse 3, where he said, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again.

See, every Christian, even many views outside of evangelicalism, are going to affirm the necessity of grace against the backdrop of human sinfulness. But the crux of the issue is, what does that mean? Does grace merely initiate a process? Does it merely soften our hearts? Does it merely woo us? Or does that grace cause us to be born again? Verse 8, Noah, unlike all of those who will be punished by God in the flood judgment, he is pardoned. Jesus said a similar expression when he was speaking about his ministry in John chapter 8. He said, truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

The slave does not remain in the house forever. The son remains forever. So if the son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

How is it that the soul finds freedom? Well, the son comes and sets that soul free, free from bondage, free from the depravity that we read about in Genesis chapter 6. In the coming weeks, we're going to see Noah as a great example of faith and obedience. We're going to see his character on display. He has resolve.

He has faithfulness. He has courage and righteousness. And before all of that, it's a reminder of God's particular special saving grace to Noah.

Isn't that amazing? If you're in Christ, it is by God's doing, Peter says, 1 Peter 1.3. We're going to hear testimonies in a few minutes through the waters of baptism. And that's exactly what we're going to hear. I invite you to pray with me.

God, thank you so much for rescuing sinners. Thank you for not merely coming part of the way to meet us and then leaving the rest up to us. Father, for making a way that you could still be just and still be the judge and then also be the justifier.

Thank you so much for the cross of Jesus Christ. Thank you that in the cross of Jesus Christ, we can see that perfect love and justice meet. And there we can find pardon and forgiveness from our sins.

Lord, I pray that you'd humble us in these truths. Humble us to not think more of ourselves than we ought to think, to see how corrupt we really are in Adam. Lord, and then at the same time to glory in sovereign grace.

Thank you for this wonderful plan. Thank you for your specific work in our lives. We love you

and we praise you.

Amen.