



God's Gameplan for Filling the Earth

GENESIS 9:1-7 | PASTOR JAKE LIEDKIE

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I was thinking as we were singing that lyric, man, the new mercies are there every morning. I just don't always see them because I'm not really looking for them. So, it's an aptly stated hymn lyric there, new mercies I see.

For those of you who have never been, I know it's already mentioned, to a reformation party before you're missing out. But just so you know what that is, you're welcome to come now. You can have your very first time.

What we're going to do is we're going to have a lot of food here tonight, soups and chilies. If you haven't prepared something, that's all right. Just show up.

We eat together, which is just enjoyable to get time to fellowship and kind of engage. Sometimes you get to sit by somebody new and get to know them. That's fun.

Or maybe a longtime friend that you haven't caught up with for a while. Then we have a biography from church history. And we want to be learning as God's people, our heritage, where we came from, and what happened 500 years ago in the church at this time of year.

So, we're going to spend some time on a biography. And then there's games. We're going to be playing games in church tonight.

And it's just a grand time together. So, if you've never been, you're welcome to come. If you've been before, of course, you know what it's all about.

And I invite you back this evening. That being said, take your Bibles and turn with me to Genesis chapter 9 this morning. Genesis chapter 9. We've seen the goodness of God as he provides for his creation.

And this week is going to be no different. In fact, God is the good giver of all life on earth. He is the sustainer of all life.

And yet, God oftentimes gets blamed for all of the problems. Right? People complain against God. They complain about the issues with society.

They describe human suffering as the evidence that God is a bad God, where he's impotent, or he's somehow uncaring. Maybe ask the question this way. If God is so good, why does life hurt so much? And I would say that what tends to happen is that the tale of blame for the source of evil gets pinned on the wrong donkey.

Okay? Mankind fails to realize our contribution here to the problems on the earth, and wrongly assigns the moral responsibility away from things like man and Satan, and assigns that to God while neglecting to give him credit for his goodness. Okay? The goodness of God is to be preeminent in the minds of God's creatures. And when you picture God, when you think of God, when you imagine God, when you dwell in the person of God, you're to think of God as good, and generous, and benevolent to his creatures.

And this is not merely that as believers we have a different perspective on earth, and we just say, well, the glass is half empty and half full. Unbelievers tend to focus on the half that's unfull. We tend to look at the glass half empty.

Rather, what we're talking about here is a worship and an orientation issue where we view God as the good and generous benefactor of all creation and all life. And in fact, God graciously provides not only for his elect, but he provides even for his enemies. It's in the goodness of God extends beyond the church.

It extends to all creatures. All creatures great and small. And theologians refer to this as common grace.

Common grace. Okay? If you're not familiar with that word, you jotted down this morning. This doesn't mean common as in ordinary grace, but rather common in that it is universally experienced.

I want to read to you a couple of descriptions of common grace to kind get it in our minds as we make our way into our text this morning. Common grace, quote, is distinguished not so much from what we might call uncommon grace, but rather from what we call special grace. Common grace refers to several concepts or experiences that we observe.

On the one hand, we realize that in God's divine providence, he pours out benefits that are enjoyed, not simply or exclusively by believers, but by believers and non-believers alike. Another theologian put it this way. Common grace is the grace of God by which he gives people innumerable blessings that are not part of salvation.

The word common here means something that is common to all people. It is not restricted to believers or to the elect only. One more common grace as an expression of the goodness of God is every favor falling short of salvation.

Every favor falling short of salvation, which this undeserving and sin-cursed world enjoys at the hand of God. This includes the delay of wrath, the mitigation of our sin natures, natural events that lead to prosperity, and all the gifts that humans use and enjoy naturally. See, it is right to understand that God blesses his creation.

God blesses the earth. And he blesses the earth with earthly blessings. He blesses the earth with temporary blessings, temporal blessings.

And then upon his people, he graciously bestows eternal blessings. And so we come to Genesis 9, and we are utterly convinced at this point that the people on the earth deserve no goodness from God. Humanity made a mess of things.

In fact, we said if it were not for God's grace, then pretty soon the next flood is going to come because mankind's intent is evil even from his youth. And so we come to Noah here, and you see him in Genesis chapter 9 coming face to face with the goodness of God, the generosity of God, and the blessing of God to the earth, not just exclusively to his people. Let's read our text before us this morning.

Genesis chapter 9, beginning in verse 1, and God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky with everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea into your hand, they are given. Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you.

As with the green plant, I give all to you. However, flesh with its life, that is its blood, you shall not eat. Surely, I will require your lifeblood.

From every living thing, I will require it. And from every man, from each man's brother, I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood by man, his blood shall be shed.

For in the image of God, he made man. As for you, be fruitful and multiply, swarm on the earth and multiply in it. Entitled this morning's message, God's game plan for filling the earth.

Hey, this is God's game plan for filling the earth. And throughout these verses, what we're going to see is blessing, blessing, blessing. And guess what? You get the blessing, whether you are one of God's redeemed people or not, he bestows this gift of life upon the earth.

This is God's commitment to mankind in spite of his sinful condition. I can say this way, really, this is the sustainer's program, the sustainer's plan for sustaining life and blessing life on earth. We saw last week that God gave kind of a first pledge, if you will, a first pledge relating to how he's going to treat humanity.

Chapter eight, just reviewing in verse 21, as he smells the soothing aroma of Noah's sacrifice, says, I will never again curse the ground because of man. For the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth. And I will never again strike down every living thing as I have done.

While all the days of the earth remain, seed time and harvest and cold and heat and summer and winter and day and night shall not cease. So this here is God's grace, kind of a first pledge, if you will. I think that's a good way of putting it.

It was a first pledge. Now, today begins the new era of God starting to explain to Noah how his program for sustaining life is going to come about on the earth. And so if you're keeping an outline this morning, our first point of God's game plan for filling the earth, it's very simple.

It is this, it is to make babies. Okay, point number one, make babies. So Noah, if you want to imagine this for a moment, is stepping off the ark into an eerie, desolate, quiet earth.

I don't know if you've ever felt lonely, but I mean, this feels pretty, pretty desolate. If you've ever felt like you enjoy maybe getting out of the house, a little breather from your family, you don't have to admit it. We're not going to raise hands.

If you ever thought, man, I see a little breather from my family for a minute. There's like no one else to go talk to. Okay, this is it.

Eight of you. And so Noah gets off the boat and no doubt, I would imagine felt a little bit daunted at the idea of starting over civilization. And so God begins by reviewing the strategy that's needed for propagating life.

And the first part of this plan is very simple. As God speaks to Noah and his three sons and their wives, you guys need to move out. You get your own place.

You need to have babies and then teach them to do the same thing. Okay. That's the idea here of verse one.

It's time to repopulate. It's gonna be time to spread out, to go make stuff and do stuff and fill the earth. And so Noah's getting basically the same instruction that Adam received in the garden.

It's just Adam and Eve, just two people. So we kind of understand the reason for the instruction. The difference is Adam received that and the creation was sinless.

Noah's receiving it with the recollection of just what just happened. And there had to be this little bit of Noah thinking like, man, are we going to do this all over again? We're going to bring those little sinners onto the planet. And then they grow up and they become big sinners and we have problems in society.

But this is given here as a blessing. Look at the verse, and God blessed Noah and his sons. Phillips notes how much this blessing would have meant to Noah as he looked on a world that was marred by God's judgment in the flood.

To say despite God's anger over sin, his intention is still for the good of mankind. And even to say God has given us a second chance. God has given us a second chance.

Do you understand God is a God of second chances? God is a God of grace and mercy. And so Noah here, right as he's getting off the boat, is getting right in the front of his face a reminder that God is a God of second chances. He's a God of grace.

This is a blessing, a benediction. It's for man's benefit. It's not a punishment.

It is divine favor. And so any productivity, any fruitfulness, any benefit that you have in life always comes to you from the hand of God. And so God gets this instruction of blessing from God.

And this was a gift. One commentator put it this way, it's as if Noah would have heard God say to him, you see that I'm intent upon cherishing and preserving mankind. Do you therefore also attend to it? In other words, my plan is I'm going to take care of mankind.

We're going to repopulate the earth. And here's your responsibility to get that done. So it would have been an encouragement and not just the command to be fruitful, but the promised blessing.

Okay. So understand verse one here is an instruction. You go be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, but it's also a blessing.

The Lord is blessing. Now we need to understand this. This is a general principle in scripture.

Okay. This command is a little different than the command to will say, love the Lord, your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. You have to do that one.

And there's no qualifications. This one has a few qualifications, right? The qualifier, of course, is the providence of God. So in order to be fruitful and multiply, marriage is required.

And the only purpose of marriage is not procreation, but it is a primary purpose of marriage. And yet God calls some to singleness and that is a gift. And God calls some to have marriage, but not children.

And so this is not a universal binding command because it's contingent upon the opportunity to carry it out. And yet as believers, we recognize that this is God's good design. So here's the simple plan to recognize that it is a blessing and a gift and even a responsibility for those who have opportunity to be fruitful and multiply.

You got here saying that in spite of how sinful man is, and this is believer and unbeliever alike, family is a good thing. It's a blessing. Marriage is a blessing.

Children are a blessing. And it contributes to the strength of societies on earth to have strong families. It's amazing.

We live in a society that hates the family. I was just listening to some people banter this week. Now, they're part of a group that help people recover from their religious traumas.

Basically, people who were raised in an evangelical church and now hate God. And over and over and over, they were talking about how toxic the view of a traditional family is to their well-being. How toxic it is to think about sex in the confines of marriage.

How toxic it is to think about it being a woman's glory to bear and raise children. They view that as toxic. Here, this is part of God's blessing to mankind right off the boat.

He says, here's the benefit to mankind. I'm giving you this gift and this responsibility. And so society, to the degree that it neglects this, struggles.

Broken families, babies without dads, babies to unmarried parents, homosexual unions. And so here is this instruction that requires a male and female in marriage in order to fulfill the instruction. And I'll just say, if you're married, there's no prescription here on the number of children.

Sometimes you'll misunderstand this passage and they think, I'm required to have as many children as I can possibly have. Text doesn't say that, actually. It doesn't say be as fruitful as you possibly can.

Noah had three sons. He waited until he was 500. So, I mean, I don't know that you want to wait that long, but there's a biblical precedent here for some other options.

Family life is to be honored. It's the design of God. And so you are not to think through children in a carnal way.

How do people tend to think about children? Well, we're going to have kids when we want to have kids. We're going to have kids once we've enjoyed our freedoms. We're going to have kids so it's not an impingement upon what we'd really like to do.

Even in the church, this mindset creeps in. Listen, you don't have children for your enjoyment or not have children because you don't enjoy them. That's not really the point.

You have children because the Lord gives you opportunity. You believe that they're a blessing and a gift and it's part of his design. And so you're not to compare yourself.

So-and-so had this many kids and so-and-so had this many kids and I only had this many kids. I mean, my mom had eight kids. And if we're just being honest between you and me, I think she had three too many.

So, I'm sorry, Michael. I'm sorry, Luke. I'm sorry, Hannah.

It's just the truth, okay? But the perspective here is to view children as a blessing and a gift from God and to recognize that our culture rails against this. Feminism has sold the lie to young women that a career is far more beneficial than being relegated to the home and to bringing up children. I tell you, this is God's glorious design.

It's a gift. It's a gift that a woman would have the privilege of bringing up the next generation. And so we are to promote this view.

We're to be embracing God's design. And I would just say to single men, if you're not gifted with singleness, then get yourself ready for marriage and do not delay it unnecessarily. You ought to pursue marriage.

It's not virtuous to delay unless you have a reason to delay. You could say this, pursue it and don't delay any longer than necessary. How do you do that? Well, pursue spiritual maturity.

Be ready to lead a woman spiritually. Grow in your relationship with God. Live by convictions.

Put off life-dominating sins. Be teachable and have a work ethic. You don't necessarily have to have a career, but at least a direction where you're working diligently so you could support a wife and children and provide for their physical needs.

And you're to make yourself attractive to a godly woman by being godly yourself. By being the kind of man that if God were to give you a daughter someday, you'd be happy to hand her to in marriage. And then pursue a wife.

Too often men are inhibited by feelings of adequacy or fears of rejection. Once you're prepared and prayed up, then move toward a woman with no unnecessary delays. If you're a single woman who desires marriage, young woman, prepare yourself now for marriage.

Godly femininity. Faithfulness in the little. Cultivating a heart of self-control and self-sacrifice as you love God.

And focus not on outward beauty, but the hidden person of the heart as you use your time for God's glory. See, we come to this passage and we see this is God's good design and it is a blessing. And we are to desire or to pray for it or to recognize it is not the only calling in life, but it is the normative design and God has offered a great gift to mankind in the family.

So Noah and his sons have this instruction. You're to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. And that must have been a joy.

All right, we know the story that they start reproducing and more kids and cousins start marrying each other. Population begins to increase. God's game plan for filling the earth starts with number one, make babies.

Number two, the animals will fear you for the most part, use them. Okay, point number two on our sermon this morning, animals will fear you for the most part, use them. I had to get some help on the grammar there to make sure that that's expressed correctly.

Part two of the plan is this, use animals, they are yours. Verse two, and the fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky, with everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea into your hand they are given. It would seem in the flow of the narrative that most likely something has changed in the dynamic between how the humans and animals are relating, both since the fall and then perhaps even since the flood.

Okay, so I don't know what you picture, but when I picture the garden, I kind of picture like Snow White with the animals in the forest, everybody's friends, right, they're all getting along, they love to just help out and serve and talk. And maybe there's a little hint in scripture, if you take it literally, the idea that there will be children one day in the kingdom playing right there with a cobra, and it's just cool, like they enjoy each other. We see some little taste of this, dolphins are friendly with people, right, dolphins actually like people.

Penguins happen to not really know what to think about humans because they've never seen us, they're not scared, they're just like okay with humans being around. But for the most part, by and large, animals in the wild are what? They're afraid of us. We have a few

outliers, the predators, but generally speaking, even many of those are going to be skittish, except for a few outliers when they encounter humans.

God says that they are given into your hand, it is given into your hand. What does this mean? Well, it means that animals are to be used by man to accomplish the purpose that God has given them. You have authority over animals.

We say it this way, people over pets. And of course, you're to respect the animal life, you're not to misuse it or abuse it, but it is yours. And God has given us many, many, many, many wonderful benefits from the animal kingdom.

You know, it's interesting, our culture just loves to pervert stuff. And so we're just going to pick on PETA for a minute this morning. PETA would like to encourage you to replace outdated phrases that are harmful to animals with these fun alternatives.

So if you have more than one way to complete a task, rather than saying there's more than one way to skin a cat, it'd be much kinder if you said there's more than one way to peel a potato. So we could just kind of begin to adopt that. Or if you're trying to accomplish two things with one action, instead of saying kill two birds with one stone, you could say feed two birds with one scone.

Isn't that a lot kinder? Instead of bring home the bacon, you could say bring home the bagels. I kind of get the skin the cat one, but a few of these are just astounding. Instead of saying put all your eggs in one basket, say put all your berries in one bowl.

You would like those PDFs that you could print them out and put the posters up as a public service announcement. They're for free on PETA's website, okay? So maybe someone could send out a link to everyone after the service today. What's the problem with that? There's a misunderstanding of God's design for animals.

That they are certainly a stewardship that we're to use, but you think of all the multiple ways that mankind has been benefited from research, experimentation, the development of drugs, animal byproducts. Just this week, I was reading a list of animal byproducts that are used for everyday things that we enjoy, and it's impossible to even list. It's too many.

I mean, we have the obvious ones like wool clothing and leather chairs. And did you know fireworks use gelatin from animal bones? And there's fabric softeners that use animal fat. And fish bladders are used as a clarifying agent to make beverages delicious.

And we use heart valves from pigs in human organ repair. And so in all of this, we're to understand that animals are to be given to man for our enjoyment and for our usefulness, okay? It's obvious you've never gone to a people zoo where the animals have captured some humans and set them up to come and observe and enjoy looking at. It's obvious in the natural order that man is over the animals.

And I want you to see here that this is a great gift from a loving and generous God who provides for mankind, okay? When you think, why are animals on the earth? It's God's gracious provision for mankind's well-being, for mankind's enjoyment. God feeds the animals. We just read about that in Psalm 104.

And then the animals help man. They serve his purposes. And today, we don't need animals like we once did.

We still use them in many contexts, but transportation and construction and war and building over many generations is hardly possible apart from animals. God's game plan for filling the earth. He gives man the blessing and the command to make babies.

He gives them all of the animals and says they'll fear you for the most part. Use them. Number three, eat them along with your vegetables.

Number three, eat them along with your vegetables. Verse three, every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you. As with the green plant, I give all to you.

So, the instruction is very simple. Move out, get your own place, right? Make babies, use the animals, and if you want, put them on the menu, okay? Now, we get to eat meat. People get into all kinds of notions about foods that the human body ought to eat and ought not to eat.

There's all kinds of different ideas out there. And I would just say, like, whatever you and your dietician and your research figure out, that's fine. I just want to speak to it this way.

There are those. I've had interactions with pastors before that would talk about how the God didn't really design the body to enjoy meat. You need to just eat plants.

I'm thinking, like, just read the Bible. Like, what does the text say? The Bible teaches us very simply that all foods are clean, Acts chapter 10, okay? Well, how are they sanctified? Well,

through prayer and gratitude, 1 Timothy chapter 4 verse 5. So, as a pastor, my instruction to you regarding food would be, eat spiritually. Well, how do you do that? How do you eat spiritually? 1 Corinthians 9, you eat with self-control.

1 Corinthians 6, you eat what's beneficial and profitable, okay? You eat what you can eat with a clean conscience, Romans 14. You eat in such ways to not harm your brother, 1 Corinthians chapter 8. So, that is a biblical diet, okay? Self-control, beneficial, with gratitude unto the Lord, and a clean conscience in a way that's not unloving toward other people. There you go.

Is that helpful? Here God gives meat to mankind. Notice it's not a command that you have to eat meat, but if you want to now, you can. It's yours.

And really, with the exception of a little blip in history of Israel's time and of the Mosaic law, where there was rules about which meats you could and could not eat, other than that, we have really the full offer here of anything that you want to eat, you can. And then that's affirmed by Jesus when he says, all foods are clean. And then, of course, by Peter in Acts chapter 10.

There's only one restriction. Verse 4, however, flesh with its life, that is its blood, you shall not eat. Now, at first pass, you might be tempted to feel sorry for Noah that he's not allowed to eat rare meat.

You're kind of thinking like, what's the point of all these different varieties of meat to enjoy if they all have to be so well done that they all taste the same? Pink meat is not the issue here, okay? Rather, he's not to eat meat that has actual blood in it. Now, when you slaughter an animal, you drain the blood out, okay? So, when you're eating a juicy steak and there's that red liquid on your plate at the end, that's not blood, okay? That's water and myoglobin. Myoglobin is a protein.

It's red because there's iron in it, but it's not actually blood. So, you're going to enjoy juicy steak. Noah could have enjoyed a juicy steak.

The idea is that the blood itself needs to be drained out, okay? Blood's very different. I think, personally, it's not very enjoyable to eat. One of my best buddies is Puerto Rican.

So, one time, about 20 years ago, we went to Puerto Rico. We're driving around. We had all these little like stands, food stands that we were going to eat at that he remembers.

We're in the jungle and we're twisting around in the mountains. We show up at this little stand and what did we eat? We got served blood sausage, okay? Now, that's blood, okay? They pack the intestine with blood and rice. They cook it and then you eat it.

That's eating blood, okay? The juicy steak is not blood. The blood is drained out. Why is it that Noah cannot eat blood in the meat? It's not health-related.

It's symbolic, okay? It's theological. The point is that life is signified by blood and so Noah is to eat the meat in such a way as to honor the life by not eating it with the blood. In that sense, in a sense, blood is sacred.

It's to be viewed as sacred and so God is giving here Noah provision, okay? I want you to understand this that when you read that every moving thing, verse 3, that is alive is food for man as with the green plant. So, whatever it is, it's growing. All of the grains and the fruit and the produce, it is all a grace gift from God to sustain life.

You begin to think about all the language in scripture of the kinds of food that God gives to his people. What is Canaan called? A land flowing with milk and honey. You mean dairy and sugar are on the menu? Yes! And oil and grains and fruits and vegetables and nuts and berries.

See, God is a generous God and it shows up even in the kind of food that he would give to his people, that he's bountiful. One commendator says that man ought to eat then whatever food he's pleased to eat before God with a tranquil mind, knowing that it has been delivered into his hand by the right of donation. God is donating food to his people.

So, this is all a sign of God's goodness and his generosity and his kindness. You understand, God could have said that mankind will be sustained by crayons. I'm like, that's all you get to eat.

Different colors, but all in flavor, okay? Or Play-Doh or tree bark. Instead, God has given us a rich variety. And so, today at lunch, when you eat, I want you to give an extra heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving to God for his grace gift to you and whatever you get to eat.

That it's been provided for your enjoyment and it's a sign of God's grace and get this to all of his creatures. Understand that? This afternoon, believers and unbelievers all get to eat. They all get to shop at the grocery store.

God feeds even his enemies and it is a sign of his bountiful gift to creation. So, God is all about sustaining life on earth. His game plan is make babies, use animals, eat them.

Verse four, I'm sorry, point number four, verses five and six, execute murderers. Execute murderers, okay? So, now God is not only sustaining life, but he is securing life through this penalty. Essentially, the power to protect life, the idea that evildoers and criminals are to be punished.

So, this is part four now of the plan. Why is this given? Well, God understands it. There is evil intent in man's heart.

And so, if life is going to be protected on earth and preserved on earth, not only do you need reproduction and the use of animal life and food, but you need some way of protecting life from the bad guys. This is God's provision. He knows that the intent of man's heart is evil, even from his youth.

And so, although this is rudimentary, although this is seed form, when you come to Genesis 9, theologically what's happening is this is God authorizing the power of the sword for government. Okay, he's instituting government here. It's a key text to understand.

It's a gracious provision, okay? Everyone, say it with me. Government is a grace. Okay, government is a grace.

It's a gift from God. It restrains evil. Listen, anarchy is chaos.

Anarchy doesn't really exist because man will always revert to some form of government, even if informal. But here God is sanctioning, even authorizing people to put to death other people based upon certain conditions. This is a grace.

It says it this way in verse 5, surely I will require your lifeblood from every living thing I will require it. And from every man, from each man's brother, I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God he made man.

This is the Genesis of government, okay? The Genesis of government, the civil magistrate. And we live among the people today that are tremendously confused about how to derive ethics, how to come up with the rules that ought to govern, how to think about society and

what's right and what's wrong. I was just reflecting this week as I was encountering various ways that people come up with ethics.

I just started jotting down a list. There's ethics by feelings, ethics by pragmatism, what works, ethics by human empathy, ethics by reason, ethics by logic, ethics by consensus. And I'll just say that there really are no meaningful ways to derive ethics apart from divine revelation.

Even natural law, although we learn some things, is subject to interpretation. And mankind always comes up to the wrong conclusion. And so the perspective here that God is giving is that if man kills man, then he is to be killed by man.

In other words, you can forfeit your right to live. So everyone has a right to life, we could say. And if you violate someone else's right to life, then you violate your own right to live.

Secularists can't answer this question. Why is it wrong to kill people? It's a basic question. They'll try to come up with answers, but they don't hold up because ultimately it has something to do with like man's contribution, kind of man's uniqueness, fact that man's specials were kind of starting to get the biblical ideal right.

But if we don't kill people just because man is special, then what about the people who just weaken society? What about the bottom feeders? What about the non-contributors? What about the lazy? What about the unintelligent? What about the sick and the weak? If we're hungry and we want to be efficient, why not just eat people? There's no way to answer those questions apart from special revelation, even by observation from the natural world. And so man's intrinsic value is based upon this theological reality that man is created in the image of God. Verse 6, that's the reason.

Why capital punishment for murder? For in the image of God, he made man. So I want you to understand this, that your value is not based upon who you are, what you look like, what you contribute on the earth. You have value because you're one of God's creatures and you're created in his image.

The Bible would say that you're fearfully and wonderfully made, even uniquely designed by God, knit together while you were in your mother's womb. And I want you to understand that even on your worst day, you're still a creature creating the image of God. He said, even the darkest criminal, even the darkest criminal still receives a measure of dignity and respect and honor.

Why? Because they're a creature created in the image of God. I just tried that on for size. Next time you want to mock someone, right? This is why we treat one another nicely or with kindness or with love and care because we're created in the image of God.

And so you're that idea of lifeblood being required in verse 5. It's not that you're going to have to give a quart of blood or plasma donation, but blood is a euphemism for life. And God says what? I will require it. I will require it.

It's prior to the Mosaic covenant. This is a requirement by God. If you remember when Cain killed Abel, what happened? God graciously preserved his life.

He let him continue to live. Now, if Cain were to kill Abel, they do an investigation. They find out based upon the evidence that Cain in fact killed his brother.

Then Cain forfeits his life and needs to be put to death. And I'll tell you this, when this instruction is followed, it is a grace to mankind in two ways. Number one, it is a deterrent.

It is a deterrent. They just say public execution of violent criminals has a deterring effect on other people. Cause you to really question is doing the crime really worth not doing the time, but worth potentially forfeiting my life? It has a way of creating a safer society.

It's not impossible to solve the problem on crime. The issue with crime is not taking an appropriate approach toward it. And so the idea here for violent crime is that those criminals are to be executed.

It's a deterrent to others. Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 8.11, if you have this long sentence for an evil work that's not carried out, then people's hearts just run riot. So punishment is a deterrent.

And then secondly, it actually removes evildoers. Okay, it removes evildoers. Rather than being in and out of incarceration or rehab centers, violent people are removed from society.

And my brothers and sisters, it's a benefit to mankind. It is a grace. It's a grace to mankind.

God's design is wise here. And it is not inappropriate. It's always equitable.

In fact, the legal standard known as lex talionis, an eye for an eye, comes later in the Levitical standard it's elaborated upon, is the way that God deals with punishment. It came into law like this, Leviticus 24, if a man injures his neighbor, just as he has done, so it shall be done to him. Fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, just as he has injured a man, so it shall be inflicted on him.

Exodus 21, there's an injury, shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, bruise for bruise, wound for wound. Now, children, quick clarification, okay? If your sibling harms you in some way, principle of lex talionis is not personal retribution. So, you get punched in the face by a sibling, you're not allowed to punch in the face.

That's not what an eye for an eye is. In fact, Jesus would clarify that. Rather, even in the law, it would say, you shall not hate your brother in your heart, and you shall not take vengeance.

So, this principle is designed by God for government, not for personal vengeance, for enacting equitable punishment to serve as a deterrent and to also serve as a purge. How should we think about it? Well, think of it this way. John Calvin writes, God so highly estimates our life that he will not suffer murder to go unavenged, and it is no common proof of God's love toward us that he undertakes the defense of our lives and declares that he will be the avenger of our death.

When you read Genesis chapter 9, people get wound up all the time about how we need to be compassionate toward evildoers. You're misunderstanding compassion. God is compassionate.

He loves his children. In Genesis 9, he's saying, I love humanity so much that I want to protect them, and here's my plan. This is how I value human life.

This is God's demonstration of his care for his creatures. He's restraining evil on the earth. Noah, I'm sure, heard that and thought, all right, well, we're probably going to need that.

I mean, he'd seen the vigilante justice. He'd seen the wickedness of man, the violence of man being great on the earth. He said, all right, now we have a game plan.

This is the deterrent. This is the purge. This is how we're going to approach violence now on the earth.

This was a grace gift from God. It was his game plan for filling the earth. That brings us to our fifth and final point.

Point number one, make babies. Point number two, animals will fear you for the most part. Use them.

Point number three, eat them along with your vegetables. Point number four, execute murderers. And number five, make babies.

Verse seven, as for you, be fruitful, multiply, swarm on the earth, and multiply in it. So, part five of the plan is, repeat step one, okay? I mean, these are the bookends of this section. Swarm there, team, become innumerable.

I just want you to stop and think for a minute. Did the plan work? Did the people to eight billion on the earth? I would say that plan worked. As a side note, it's ludicrous to consider various evolutionary perspectives that man has been on earth for 200,000 years.

Even if you take into account disease and war and famine, man just reproduces at too fast of a rate. Man's been on the earth 200,000 years. There are far more people on earth than right now.

4,500 years, we have eight billion from eight. And so, when you look at the earth and its population of eight billion people, it testifies that God created the earth and made it suitable for life, that God has blessed humanity with fruitfulness and fecundity. Estimates from the Population Reference Bureau, which yes, that's apparently a real thing.

The Population Reference Bureau estimates that there have been 110 billion people who've lived on the earth. Obviously, there's no way to really estimate that. It's a guess.

It's an educated guess. But I want you to see that Noah's family did exactly what God blessed them to do, and they did so with his provision, and they did so with his protection. God provided.

He gave him the instruction, he blessed them, and then he gave them all that they needed. Even in the midst of evil and opposition, humanity continues to persevere and remain. When you look around and you see the fruitfulness of the earth, it testifies, it testifies to the generosity of God.

And it ought to silence every grumbling and complaining heart. John Murray asked this, just listen as a point of application. He asked this question, how is it that men who still lie under the wrath and curse of God and are heirs of hell, enjoy so many good gifts at the hand of God? How is it that men who are not savingly renewed by the Spirit of God, nevertheless exhibit so many qualities, gifts, and accomplishments that promote the preservation, temporal happiness, cultural progress, social and economic improvement of themselves and others? To put the question most comprehensively, how is it that this sin-cursed world enjoys so much favor and kindness at the hand of its holy and ever-blessed creator? I mean, that gets right to the heart of the issue.

It is astounding that God is so generous and gracious and good to creatures who, professing to be wise, exchange the glory of God and the glory of the creator for an incorruptible or for a corruptible image, for the likeness of corruptible man and creatures. And rather than glorifying God, they do not give him thanks, but he continues to endure with patience. Well, for those of us who are in Christ, we know God's not only common grace, but we know his saving grace, do we not? That brought us into the family.

For by grace you've been saved through faith. This is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Will you pray with me? God, you are so good, and you remind us of that. Thank you for attesting to it. Forgive us for complaining and grumbling against you, Lord, for being experts at taking your good gifts, assuming we deserve them, and then complaining about the things that we don't have.

We're just arrogant people who are entitled in our attitude and disposition to you. Thank you, Lord, for the reminders of your generosity. Thank you for your patience and your endurance.

And Lord, I just pray that we'd be those who enjoy and testify and give thanks and praise you for all of your goodness to your creation. And Lord, as we have opportunity to speak to those who are outside of Christ, pray that this would even be part of our evangelism to show them from the scriptures the wonderful God who's been so gracious to them, and yet they're still sinning against and taking for granted. We love you and praise you for all these things.

In Jesus' name, Amen.