

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Walking in the Favor of God – Part Three

KEY PASSAGE: Genesis 6:5-14 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Genesis 7:1; 8:20-22; 9:11-13 | Romans 10:9, 13

► SUMMARY

After reading the account of God's beautiful creation in Genesis 1, we may wonder why He later destroyed the world with a flood.

It happened just 10 generations after Adam and Eve. What had changed during that time? The answer is that sin entered the world, and the effects of evil are still being felt in our world today.

► SERMON POINTS

For us, a generation is about forty years, and in only one or two generations we've already witnessed the degeneration in our culture. Prosperity and materialism have increased, and reverence for the Lord's day and respect and care for others has decreased. To see how much can change in 10 generations we must look back to the year 1620. The world we live in today bears little resemblance to that era.

The Conditions of the Ancient World

By the time 10 generations had passed since Adam and Eve were created, earth's condition was corrupt.

- **God's Evaluation:** "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5).
- **God's Heart:** "The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart" (v. 6).

- **God's Decision:** "The LORD 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 am sorry that I have made them'" (v. 7).

One Righteous Man

In spite of the dismal and discouraging state of the earth, there was one man who was different from everyone else: "But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD . . . Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God" (vv. 8-9). Although he was not sinless, Noah had three essential characteristics that set him apart from the rest of his generation: He listened to God, trusted Him, and obeyed Him. Therefore, the Lord told him about His plan to destroy the earth and commanded Noah to build an ark (vv. 13-14). Through one obedient man, God would save human civilization.

Challenging Questions

Since we, too, live in a sinful world that is rapidly changing and becoming increasingly wicked, we must ask some searching questions:

- Does God see you as righteous and blameless?
- Could your lifestyle be described as godly and holy?
- Are you different from the culture around you, or are you caught up in all the pursuits and pleasures of this world?
- According to the way you are living, could it be said of you that you walk with God?
- Are you listening to Him, trusting Him, and obeying His commands?
- Would you rather be viewed as classy by the world's standards or holy in the eyes of God?

The Lord wants us to live in a deep, intimate, and obedient relationship with Him rather than in conformity to the world around us. This means that sometimes people who are living in sin will not want to be in our company because we make them feel uncomfortable. This is inevitable because, like Noah, we are walking in light, while those in the world are walking in darkness and want to avoid the light that exposes their sinful deeds.

Living in a Doomed World

Although Noah was confident that the Lord would save him and his family in the ark, at the same time he knew that God was going to destroy everything around him, including the people. Therefore, he probably experienced a mix of thoughts and emotions as he was building the ark in the midst of that wicked society and warning the people of coming judgment.

The same is true of us today. We know that apart from Christ, there is no hope for the world. Wickedness will increase. Security cannot be found in a country but only in a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Locked Safely in the Ark

When the ark was finally finished, God sent the animals to Noah. Because he had listened, trusted, and obeyed, he and his family were locked into the ark by the grace of God. After the Lord shut the door, the rain began, and it continued for forty days and nights. The water not only poured from the sky, but it came up from the great deep below until the entire earth was covered.

Like Noah, we never know when God will close a door, requiring us to turn our backs on everybody in order to be faithful to Him. Obedience has sharply defined edges. We have no right to alter what He has commanded, change the timing, or opt for partial obedience. That's why it's so important to listen to God, trust what He says, and do it. These three simple practices will spare

us from countless heartaches and troubles and may even save our lives.

A New Beginning and Promise

Noah, his family, and the animals were in the ark for a little over a year as they waited for the water to recede. God accomplished what He set out to do and rescued Noah from the flood. After God told him to leave the ark, one of the first things he did was build an altar to the Lord and offer Him sacrifices in worship. In response, God made a covenant with Noah, his descendants, and every living creature on earth, saying, "I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth" (9:11). And as a sign of the covenant, God set a rainbow in the sky (v. 13).

Life today isn't exactly like that ancient world, but in many ways it is. And like Noah, we must listen to God, trust Him, and obey. We can't afford to be like the people in Noah's day who failed to recognize that their time was short. Their wicked rebellion was blatant and extreme, but even though we may not be guilty of such evil, our more sophisticated rebellion is still sin. Without dependence on Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, no one will escape God's judgment.

Today God offers salvation, not by means of an ark but through His Son. In Romans 10:9, He gives this promise: "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

► RESPONSE

- How have you seen the culture change in your lifetime? How are you different from your society? In what ways have you conformed to the culture?
- What is the destiny of this world (2 Pet. 3:5-7)? How should this motivate you to live (vv. 8-16)?

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