

Genesis 9:18-29 Sin is Hard to Kill 11/12/17

The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹ *These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed.* ²⁰ *Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard.* ²¹ *He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent.* ²² *And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside.* ²³ *Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness.* ²⁴ *When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him,* ²⁵ *he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers."* ²⁶ *He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant.* ²⁷ *May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant."* ²⁸ *After the flood Noah lived 350 years.* ²⁹ *All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.*

(Pastor prays)

Sin is hard to kill. So far in Genesis, humans have been banned from paradise, brother has killed brother and moral depravity rose to such a degree that God brought about a worldwide flood and, in the watery holocaust, He wiped out every living person except Noah and his family.

And Chapter 9 is a beautiful picture of starting over as God extends grace and blesses Noah and his sons with an everlasting covenant. He even caps it off with a rainbow that we still see from time to time today. What a great place to end the story of pre-history!

Then, there's this strange and sordid tale of Noah's later life and the complete dishonor of one of his sons. Why on Earth did Moses record this story? Why not end it with the high note Noah as faithful...God's covenant of grace and a rainbow to seal the deal?

Instead, here he is the protagonist, laid out in a drunken stupor and grossly immodest. He sobers up enough to curse his son, then he dies. The End! This part of the story really does bring the tone down.

Paul said in Romans 15:4, *For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the*

Scriptures we might have hope. And in 1 Corinthians 10:11 Paul said, *Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.* If that's true, then we have to ask the question – What do we learn from this story? And, more importantly, how does this story point us to Christ and our need for the Gospel? One thing is certain after reading this story:

All of Us Are in Need of Grace

We learn from Noah first.

You Are Not As Strong As You Think

Even if you think you are weak, you are actually weaker still. Here's what I mean.

Any way you cut it, Noah is a hero. You know the Hall of Fame in Hebrews 11. The first three listed are Abel, Enoch and Noah. Noah is set up as an example to follow. When we meet him in Genesis 6:9, listen to how he is described: Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. That was said about Noah when the rest of the world was so bad that God wiped every one of them out.

For 600 years Noah did what was right. He withstood temptation when everyone else was joining in. He was obedient when it wasn't popular and built an ark by hand. He organized the animals, gathered his family and patiently endured all that God put him through. The Noah of Chapter 6:9 is described as righteous, blameless and walking with God.

Now contrast that description with what we see in Genesis 9:21. *He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent.* And look down at verse 28-29. You see the description of the last third of his life. *After the flood Noah lived 350 years. ²⁹All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.* That's a sad ending to an otherwise heroic life. That should be a reminder to us. I am not as strong as I think I am. You are not as strong as you think you are.

Allow me to suggest a few things we learn from Noah's life.

We Are Subject to Temptation

Noah walked with God, obeyed God, trusted God, worshipped God, covenanted with God, was a godly man and now in the tent he is laid out naked and in a drunken stupor. If Noah can sin, then anyone can sin. It's why we place our faith in the righteousness of

Christ who was tempted in every way but was without sin, who not only died in the place of sinners but lived in a way that neither Noah nor I can live. It's why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:12, *Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.* It's why we claim the active obedience of Christ and don't rely on our own strength.

We Have the Great Ability to Ignore Consequences

Think about who this is now that is laid out drunk and naked. Noah is like a sole survivor. He built the ark that saved all living things from the unstoppable wrath and judgment of God. He was an eyewitness to God destroying all of his friends because of their sin and yet here he is in complete disregard to God's holiness.

You would think that after watching the flood kill everything and everyone he knew, you would think that Noah, and Ham for that matter, would be afraid to sin so grievously. Why weren't they terrified? Because the evil that was in the world that called forth God's judgment was also in the heart of Noah and his family. And that sin, our sin, tricks us into thinking we can get away with it, or, better yet, we rationalize, forgetting what Jeremiah 17:9 says. Don't follow your heart. You know what God's word says about your heart? *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?* As sinners, we need God, by His grace to give us a new heart in Christ. Let me give you something else to consider from this story:

Age is Not a Factor in Sin

Sometimes we think we grow *out* of sin. We don't grow *out* of it. We just learn to *manage* the sin. Take a look at Noah. Noah was strong when he was young. He fell into sin when he was older – late in life. Moses struck the rock late in life. David sinned with Bathsheba in his 50's. Solomon departed from the will of God when he was old. Paul was at the end of his career when he said in 1 Corinthians 9:27 *But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.* Age is no guarantee of saintliness. After walking with God for years and years, George Muller would pray, "Lord, don't let me become a wicked old man." Past faithfulness is no guarantee to future obedience. We throw ourselves on the active mercy of Christ. We seek His face, trust His word and cling to the cross. There are other lessons to learn

like the foolishness of drunkenness and not to trust a faithful man but a faithful God. But let's turn our attention to Ham. If the first point is you are not as strong as you think, then the second one is...

Your Sin is Worse Than You Think

My first reaction when I read what Ham did and then the punishment he receives is that it seems harsh.

Let's read it in verses 20-24. *Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. ²¹ He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent.²² And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. ²³ Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. ²⁴ When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him,*

Our tendency is to think, "What did he do that was so bad?" There is lots of weird commentary on speculation about what Ham's sin was and this passage has been misused to condone things from homosexuality to racism. But most likely it contrasts the actions of Ham in verse 22 that the first thing he did was go tell his brothers but in verse 23 the first thing the brothers did was to honor their father.

This probably has to do with honor which will be a breach of the 5th Commandment that Paul repeats in Ephesians 6:1-3. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise),³ "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."* So as we look at Ham and then the curse that's really more of a prophesy. What are some lessons from this?

Sin Can Have Generational Effects

A trickle of sin in a parent can turn into a flood of sin in descendants. Ask our counselors. It happens especially in the three areas of divorce, alcoholism and abuse. All of those affect the family and impact the kids. They can grow up dealing with sins in that cycle.

We Can Become Callused to Sin

We read this and think: “What’s the big deal?” ...so much so that we don’t think we sin so much that we need a Savior. We forget the purity, holiness, justice and cleanness of God, that without the cover of Christ, we cannot be in His presence. We forget that our depravity is total, and that means that every part of us, of our thoughts, emotions and actions, all of it is tainted with sin. We are accustomed to it. The TV is like a 50-inch sewer pipe, spilling filth into our house every day and we get used to it. And that numbness tricks us into thinking our sin really isn’t that bad. We are much worse than we think.

There is No Hope Without Christ

When Noah was born back in Chapter 5, he was named Noah because his father said, “This one will give us rest.” But the truth is Noah was just a man like everyone else and even the best most reliable person among us is bound to fail.

There is only one who can give us true rest. Jesus said it like this in Matthew 11:28-30. *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

(Pastor shares the Gospel, extends the invitation and prays)