



Genesis 8:1-9:29

PRAY

One of the clearest memories I have from when I was really young was almost drowning when I was about three years old. My family was living in Egypt and we were on holiday in a place called Luxor. It was the afternoon, and I was swimming about in the shallow end of the pool, when for some reason I decided I was bored with the shallow end and it was time to investigate the deep end. As I swam into deeper waters, I must have got tired, and went to put my feet down to have a rest (I was only three after all!). But being in deeper water I couldn't touch the bottom and started sinking. I then remember seeing my dad and another man through the blurriness of the water dive in to rescue me. As they pulled me to the surface of the water I was safe, but it wasn't until I was on the side of the pool breathing and crying that I was saved.

At the end of Genesis 7 we left Noah and his family and zoo full of animals floating along in an ark. They were safe. But they weren't yet saved yet. They weren't on dry land. The whole earth was covered in water, everything that was living had been wiped out except those on board the ark. The story so far has been horrifying. But now in Genesis 8 and 9 things begin to brighten up, because in these chapters we see God's grace in action again.

We've already seen God's grace which he showed to Noah by warning him about this universal judgment and by giving him instructions about how to be kept safe when this judgment came. As we look at Genesis 8 and 9 I want us to see three more ways in which we see God's grace, his kindness that is undeserved in action.

The first way, which is the first point on your handout, is that by God's grace Noah is saved.

1. By God's grace Noah is saved (8:1-19)

- God remembers Noah (v1)

Look again at Genesis 8:1: *"But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark"*.

God remembers Noah. This verse comes right in the middle of the story. We're not told whether God spoke to Noah while the rain was pouring down, reassuring him that everything was okay. But even if He didn't, we can be sure that God hadn't forgotten about him, because God never forgets. So here when it says God remembered Noah, it doesn't mean that God had forgotten about him, and then one day he suddenly remembers that Noah was still on board the ark. Rather it means that God acts on a promise He had made previously. God had promise to save Noah, and now He acts to keep that promise.

- God causes the waters to recede (v1-14)

We then see God in action, keeping that promise in Genesis 8:1-5: *"and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded. Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky. The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible."*

God acts by causing the waters to recede. He shuts the springs of the deep and the floodgates of heaven, he stops the rain from falling, and he sends a wind to blow the waters to the place that he was now going to assign it to be. As a result the water level goes down, the mountains became visible, the ark rests on the top of one them and by verses 13 and 14, the earth that was flooded had dried up.

- God calls Noah out of the ark (v15-19)

The promise God made to save Noah and the inhabitants on board the ark was almost complete. There was only one thing left to do which was for Noah and his family and all the animals to come out of the ark.

Noah and his family must have been desperate to get out of the ark and onto dry land again. They had been on board the ark for a whole year. It wasn't like being on a cruise ship with the luxury rooms and plenty of entertainment. Inside the ark it must have been dark and smelly, noisy and cramped. They also knew the earth was dry. Firstly because the dove that was sent out to find dry land had not returned, and secondly because Noah removed the covering in verse 13 and saw that the surface of ground was dry. And yet they waited.

Once again, this highlights Noah's righteousness, as he waits for God to give the all clear, the command that it was safe to come out of the ark which is what God does in verse 15. God calls Noah out of the ark. As Noah steps out of the ark onto dry land, the promise God made to Noah that He would save him was completely kept. God's Word can be trusted.

But there was a second way in which we see God's grace in action. The second point on your handout is that by God's grace creation continues.

2. By God's grace creation continue (8:20-9:17)

In order to see how gracious God is in allowing creation to continue, we first need to look at what people are like after the flood. Have they changed? When God looks at them does he see them as sinful and evil like he did in Genesis 6:5?

Sadly we see that they are the same sinful people.

- Same sinful people (8:24; 9:18-29)

Look at what God says about mankind in Genesis 8:24: "*every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood*". The flood hadn't changed anything. People were still as bad as they were in Genesis 6:5. Noah and his family were still only evil all the time. Their descendents were going to be sinners too. To illustrate this truth at the end of chapter 9 we have this strange incident, when Noah gets drunk on wine and exposes himself in the privacy of his tent.

Sin is still present, even in the life of a righteous and blameless man. Like Adam, Noah sins and experiences the shame of being naked. Like Adam, sin is also clearly present in the life of Noah's sons. Ham reacts disgracefully and disrespectfully towards his dad and jokes about his dad to his brothers. People are still as they were before the flood came.

So it would have been right and fair for God to destroy creation again, this time once and for all because of man's sin. But graciously He chooses for creation to continue after the flood.

As Noah and his family and all the animals come out of the ark, they come out to a new world, a new beginning. God wants there to still be a creation, He wants life to continue. So we see that God continues life

- God continues life (8:17, 22; 9:1-7)

Look at Genesis 8:22: "*As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease*". God is going to make sure the world continues in the ordered way he created it back in Genesis 1.

Look at Genesis 9:1, 7: "*Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth" and "As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it"*". These verses make it clear that God wants Noah and his sons to have children, and lots of them because like in Genesis 1 He wants the earth to be full of people.

Also like in Genesis 1 God gives them food to eat. Food is needed for life to continue. Look at Genesis 9:3-4: "*Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it*". Now McDonalds can open up because people are allowed to eat meat. It's because of God's grace that we can eat steak and have turkey for Christmas.

Every breath you take is because of God's grace. Every meal you eat is because of God's grace. God continues life. God also protects life.

- God protects life (9:5-6, 8-17)

Look at Genesis 9:5-6: *"And for your lifeblood [that means murdering a human] God will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from every man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man."*

In order to protect life God gives a clear punishment that is to be given to animals or people who murder a human being, and that is the death penalty. This punishment is given to protect life because people are made in the image of God, and are greatly valued by God. The death penalty is still used today in some countries in Africa and Asia to deter people from murder. So this is one way God protects life.

Another way is found in the covenant (or contract) that God makes with creation in Genesis 9:8-17. Three things to note about this covenant are that firstly it was made with Noah and all his descendants (that includes you and me) and all of creation, see this in verses 9-10. Secondly, this covenant was God's promise that He would never again destroy the earth by a flood, verse 11. Then thirdly that the sign of the covenant or God's signature that he will keep this promise is the rainbow which we see in verses 12 to 16. God protects life by promising never to destroy it with a universal flood again.

But the question is how can God make this covenant with Noah and all creation? After all, if people are still sinful, God when he looks at them will be angry and will rightfully respond by destroying them. How can he make a promise not to destroy by a flood again? The answer is a sacrifice, something dying in the place of a sinner, which turns God's anger away from them.

Between God saving Noah and God making a promise to continue creation are verses 20 and 21 of Genesis chapter 8: *"Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man...and never again will I destroy all living creatures as I have done"*

Noah, a sinner, sacrifices a burnt offering and God accepted the sacrifice and His anger towards Noah is removed and he makes this amazing promise.

By God's grace Noah is saved. Despite people's sinfulness, by God's grace creation continues. A wonderful promise is made because of a sacrifice. This leads to our third and final point on the handout; by God's grace we have a perfect sacrifice.

3. By God's grace we have a perfect sacrifice

We like Noah are sinners. God is angry at us, and one day will destroy us, not by floodwaters but by fire, and punish us in hell forever. We need to be rescued. We need to have our sin removed.

In Isaiah 54 God says: *"To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again".* He then goes on to describe a perfect world.

God is making a promise that there will be a day when he is angry no more and the world will be perfect. How is that possible? Before Isaiah 54 is Isaiah 53 where we read about a man who in verses 5: *"...was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed".*

The man being spoken of was Jesus Christ. He died in the place of sinners who trust in Him, on a cruel Roman cross. He was the sacrifice for them, he has taken the punishment our sins deserved. When God smelled the pleasing aroma he said in his heart about those who Jesus died for 'Never will I be angry with you again'. Like in the days of Noah, God makes a wonderful promise because of a sacrifice.

Two things I want to close by saying:

To those of you who are not yet Christians, God has already shown you amazing grace by giving you life. But there is more grace on offer in Jesus. Believe God's warning that he will punish your sins and trust in Jesus.

Then to those you are Christians, who are trusting in Jesus the perfect sacrifice. Be encouraged because like we can trust God's promise that he would never flood the world again in judgment, we can also trust God promise that if we trust in Jesus Christ as our perfect sacrifice, we will be forgiven and God will no longer be angry with us, and when we die we will enter a world that is perfect.