

Ripe for Judgement

Genesis 6:1-8

Halifax: 23 November 2014

Introduction:

Today in our Genesis sermon series, we come to the account of Noah's flood.

- This begins in chapter 6.
 - In many ways, this is the conclusion of the previous section...
 - I say this because today we will be looking at verses 1-8 and it is not until verse 9 that you get the introductory statement "this is the genealogy of Noah" that opens up new sections in Genesis.
 - The passage before us today wraps up what became of both the Sethites and the Cainites whom God now purposed to destroy.
- But our passage today is also clearly the prologue for the great flood.
 - One commentator calls it the trailer for the flood narrative...
 - Let's read it...Genesis 6:1-8
 - This is the word of the living God. Let it sink into your heart to stay. May the Lord bless it to your hearing.

Genesis 6:1-8: Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, ² that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they *were* beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. ³ And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he *is* indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." ⁴ There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore *children* to them. Those *were* the mighty

men who *were* of old, men of renown. ⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* ⁶ And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Thanks be to God for His precious Word.

You can see here that the LORD tells us how the world wide flood that occurred in the days of Noah came about...

- It was God's response in judgement to the ever increasing wickedness of man.
 - I have shown you in previous sermons from Genesis that before the flood, God did not do nearly as much as He did afterward to restrain man's wickedness.
 - He left us (the human race) without much restraint to show us what would happen to us if left to go in our own way...
 - People typically lived to be in their 900s, there was almost no punishment for crime, there was prosperity as we saw with Cain's sons.

Today, many people have forgotten what happened when God did not restrain us.

- The wickedness of man became, as this passage says, very great in the earth!
 - Many people today attribute our wickedness to the things like poverty and sickness and storms and judicial punishment by the courts and such...
 - And it is true that these are often occasions out of which sin arises, but these things in fact restrain us from being as wicked as we might be.
 - We see in our text that the wickedness of man increased to such proportions that the Lord took the severe action of sending a world-wide flood to destroy man from the earth!
 - But marvellously, we also see, at the end of our text, that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord...
 - And in a way—all of us did—because if God had not preserved Noah, none of us would be here today!
 - Let's take a look at this passage under three headings...
 - First, we will look at the wickedness of man that caused the flood.
 - Next, we will look at the response of God who decreed the flood in response to the wickedness of men...
 - And then we will look at the grace of God that is the only remedy to man's wickedness.
- So let's begin with the first heading...

I. The wickedness of man (that called for the flood)

A. Here we are given the wicked behaviour that was the trigger point for judgement.

- The Lord sometimes speaks of waiting to send judgement until the cup of iniquity is full—until sin has reached a certain point...
 - And it is in our text here that we are told what it was that filled up the cup of iniquity so that God determined that He would pour out His cup of wrath.
1. It was that the sons of God starting marrying the daughters of men.
- This is unfolded for us in Gen 6:1-2:
 - **Gen 6:1-2: Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they *were* beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.**
 - Whatever does this mean?
 - It is clear that the people were multiplying in the earth as God had told them to do,
 - and it is clear that there was some kind of improper marriage that was being entered into,
 - but who were **the sons of God** and who were **the daughters of men**?
 - There are many different ideas about this, and I am not certain,
 - so I am going to present two views which both convey important application to us that can be found in scripture.

- a. The view that seems to fit the text the best is that the sons of God were angels—fallen angels or demons—who were marrying women—the daughters of men.
- 1) Really the only objection to this view is that a lot of people think it is impossible for demons to do this—and perhaps it is impossible.
 - a) The verses that are most often used to support the conjecture that this is impossible are Matt. 22:30 and Mark 12:25 where we are told that **the angels of God in heaven neither marry nor are given in marriage.**
 - That is, of course, true, but what about *fallen angels* that come to earth? They are not *angels in heaven*.
 - Is it possible for fallen angels to cohabit with women?
 - Where are we told that *they* either cannot or will not do this?
 - b) Certainly pagan cultures think they can.
 - Gordon Wenham comments:
 - “Marriages between men and the gods are a well-known feature of Greek, Egyptian, Ugaritic, Hurrian, and Mesopotamian theology. The heroic figure of Gilgamesh was held to be descended from such a union. His divine parentage endowed him with incredible energy, but not immortality.”
 - c) This was also the prevailing view of the Jews (including Philo, Josephus, the Septuagint, and the ancient book of Enoch).
 - It was the prevailing view up until the 2nd century AD when it fell out of favour...
 - d) It is also by far the majority view of the early church fathers in the first two centuries who were closest to the apostles...
 - And there is even pretty clear support for it in the New Testament which we will look at a little later.
 - 2) When you look at what the text actually says, it does seem to say that it was angels who saw the beauty of women and took them as wives.
 - First, the term **“sons of God”** suggests this because the only other place it is used is in Job (three times) where it definitely refers to angels with Satan among them.
 - Remember in the first chapter of Job how the sons of God come to appear before the Lord and Satan is among them?
 - Secondly, this interpretation commends itself to us by the very fact that all that we are told is that as men multiplied, these sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful, and took them as wives.
 - If the sons of God are angels, then we can immediately see what is wrong with this—they are leaving their proper domain that God had appointed for them...
 - They are going beyond the limits that God appointed for them.

- We know that angels had the ability to take human bodies and that they actually did so at times by God’s command.
 - There were the angels that came to Lot’s house at Sodom that the perverted men in Sodom lusted after and tried to rape...
 - There were the angels that came to Abraham and had a meal with him, eating and drinking...in men’s bodies
 - We are even encouraged in Hebrews to show hospitality because in doing so, we might inadvertently entertain angels.
- So how can we say that God would not give demons the ability to assume bodies in this way and take women as wives?
 - We know that He allowed them to possess bodies of creatures and perhaps that is what they did to cohabit with women,
 - or perhaps they were able to simply conjure up bodies the way the holy angels that visited Lot and Abraham did.
 - The Greeks held that those demons who did this were imprisoned on account of it...as a punishment
 - And interestingly, we find support for that in scripture—that the particular demons who did this were cast into prison for it.
 - **2 Peter 2:4-5: For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; *5* and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly**
 - **Jude 1:6: “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;”**

3) I am inclined to say that this is the proper interpretation...

- It certainly would show the wickedness of men that they would consort with demons in this way and give their daughters in marriage to them!
 - It would speak of a wicked, power-hungry society that was very heavily involved in the occult!
 - In 1 Cor 10:20, Paul describes pagan worship as **making sacrifice to demons**.
 - Men who abandon God seek power with the aid of demons.
 - This is, of course, reprehensible in God’s sight!
- And I would add in support of this that this may very well be what the great sin of the Canaanites was when Israel was commanded to wipe them out of the promised land...

- We know that their worship was full of sexual immorality with temple prostitutes and sacrifices to demons...
 - Interestingly, there is mention of Nephilim (giants) in connection with the Canaanites,
 - And the Greeks called the Nephilim *gigantes* and believed them to be angels who were married to humans.
 - These Nephilim (the word in the original) are mentioned in verse 4 of our text (translated *giants*)
 - and they are mentioned in Numbers 13:33
 - and of course there were men like Goliath, and Og, the King of Bashan, that are attested to be giants in holy scripture.
 - It is certain that unless they were worshipped, these demons would not have been able to gain a foothold among men.
 - This is a warning from the ancient world against all worship that deviates from God's appointed worship.
 - If you engage in such worship, who is directing the worship if not God?
 - And if He is not directing it, then who is worshipped?
 - God firmly prohibited Israel to add to the worship He appointed.
- b. But there is another view of our text that was that of Augustine and that became the most popular view in the middle ages.
- It is also the view that was held by most of the reformers.
- 1) And that is the view that the **sons of God** are the Sethites who were those who called on the name of the Lord...
- And that the **daughters of men** were the ungodly people of the ancient world
 - The great problem with this view is that there is no reason to assume that **the sons of God** refers to Sethites or that **the daughters of men** refers to the daughters of ungodly men—
 - It seems like more needs to be said if this is the meaning of the text—one would naturally suppose that the men referred to in v.1 are the same as the ones whose daughters are mentioned in v.2.
 - If it said that they took of the apostate daughters of men, or the daughters of wicked men, that would help—but **the daughters of men** in verse 2 seems just a generic term as **men** in v. 1.
 - But as so many good men hold this view, it is difficult to throw it out,
 - and it does avoid making the assumption that the pagan idea that angels can, in some way, copulate with humans is correct.
 - And it is also noteworthy that in verse 4, it mentions that when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men they bore children to them—which seems obvious if it was just men with women.

2) But one thing is certain, there is a powerful application if this is a case of men from godly families taking ungodly women as wives simply because they were drawn to their beauty!

- That has certainly been one of the surest ways to destroy the church.
 - Esau did this.
 - Moses warned against it in Deuteronomy 7.
 - What trouble came from it when Solomon did it!
 - Nehemiah rebukes this in his day and comments that it was what brought Israel eventually into exile!
- What is a believing man thinking when he takes an ungodly woman to be his wife?
 - Does he think that he will be able to glorify God in that marriage?
 - I hardly think a man like that could be a Christian!
 - It is certainly something to put him out of the church for!
 - Paul strictly forbids it when he says,
 - **2Co 6:14: Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?**
 - Don't even think about entering into such a union!
 - How will you serve God?
 - What will become of your children?
 - What harm you will bring to the kingdom of Christ!
 - And if you are in this church, you will be put out!

➤ So you see that whatever the details, there were improper marriages going on in the ancient world...

2. And along with these marriages, there were men of violence in the earth.

- This is brought out in verse 4 where it says:
 - **Gen 6:4: There were giants [*Nephilim* in the original] on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.**
- a. If we hold that demons were taking women, then we could say that the Nephilim may have been the offspring of these unions...
 - You see that it says that they were around when the sons of God came into to the daughters of men,
 - and if the sons of God were only Sethites, it is hard to explain why their children would have been *Nephilim*, *giants*, or *mighty men of old*.
 - It is interesting as well that our text speaks of these *Nephilim* being around at this time before the flood, and then again later...
 - And we know that there were Nephilim again in Canaan in the time of Moses when this account in Genesis was written...
 - Perhaps another group of angels had rebelled as the ones in Noah's day did.

- b. But in any case, the wickedness that is addressed here is the wickedness of these famous men of might—these celebrities....
 - who did not use their might for the glory of God and for His service!
 - They were rather men of violence and rage who wreaked havoc in the earth for selfish gain!
 - They had an attitude like Lamech who boasted that if anyone displeased him, he would pay them back seventy-seven fold!
 - A man is to use the strength he has to bless others, to serve them, and protect them...not for selfish gain!
 - But the mighty men of the ancient world were not like that!
 - 3. The bottom line is that we must keep to our place as men—we must keep within the bounds that God has appointed for us!
 - a. Verse 3 reminds us that we are flesh!
 - Since the fall, we aspire to be like God—not holy like Him, but mighty and powerful and in authority like Him.
 - we seek power and immortality that do not belong to us.
 - We are willful and do not submit to the bounds that God has appointed.
 - If power is to be found through demons, we run after it...
 - If through oppression, we run after that!
 - If through deceit, we employ that.
 - God will not allow such wickedness to continue in the earth!
 - He says that man’s days will be but 120 years—but more about that later...
 - b. Note also that the wickedness we are talking about here so took control of the people of the ancient world that even the Sethites were corrupted...
 - They betrayed their privileges as those who called upon the name of the Lord to such an extent that by the time the flood came,
 - only Noah and his family remained of those who feared God!
 - That is the extent to which sin will go!
 - It never says “enough.”
 - It spreads in your life and in your society until all is destroyed unless it is restrained (as God told Cain in Genesis 4).
- Our text goes on to show us where this wickedness comes from!
- B. Man’s wicked heart is the root of the problem.
1. We are told in verse 5 that God sees the great wickedness that is in us.
 - It is a very strong statement...
 - **Gen 8:5: Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**
 - He sees what we do—our wickedness in the earth that has just been described...

- But it is very intimidating to consider that God also sees right into our hearts...
 - All the things in your heart that you would be ashamed for other people to see, He sees!
 - Our outward conduct is bad enough, but God knows about all the wicked thoughts and intents and desires that are churning away in you.
 - We like to think that our sin is caused by what is outside of us, but Jesus corrects that false notion...
 - In Mark 7:20-23, He says:
 - **Mark 7:20-23: And He said, “What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”**
 - That is what is brought out here in Genesis 6:5. It is the heart!
2. The Lord sees your heart constantly churning out evil
- The words *intent* in the words *every intent of the thoughts of the heart* refers to what is formed and produced there.
 - And the LORD says that it is only evil continually!
 - The picture is that of a little sin factory, churning away!
 - It is of your heart looking for evil, craving it, dreaming about it, devising it with the skill of a genius, inventing new ways to do evil with the creativity of an artist—
 - If someone laboured half as much for godliness as for sin, they would be an amazing saint!
 - But how little we concern ourselves with pleasing God—with truly pursuing His will!
 - Instead we are just churning out evil all the time—
 - producing complaints against God, uncharitable judgements toward others, ways to exalt self, ways to defend self, ways to get revenge, wicked immoral thoughts, ways to take advantage, ways to pull others down or blemish their reputations...
 - You know about these things—and so does the Lord!
3. Paul does not hesitate to paint us all with this brush!
- We read about that in our scripture reading from Romans 3...
 - He charges both Jew and Gentile as guilty before God...
 - That there is none righteous, no not one—and none who seek after God.
 - That all have gone astray and that the poison of asps is under our tongues.
 - What awful words come out of mouths each day!
 - There is no fear of God before our eyes!
 - And God sees all of it!

TRANS> Now let's move on to look at...

II. The response of God to the wickedness of man

A. He is greatly displeased with wickedness—of course!

- Verse 6 says:
 - **Gen 8:6: And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.**
 - Isn't that an awful thing to hear?
 - God is sorry that He made us!
 - Think of it—we are so wicked that He regrets that He ever made us!

➤ Now I should explain something here though...

1. Anthropomorphic language is used here to help us understand His displeasure

a. Anthropomorphic language is language in which human qualities are attributed to God that are not properly His...that do not properly belong to Him.

- For example,
 - The Bible speaks of *the hand of the Lord*, even though God is a spirit and does not have hands...
 - It speaks of the *eyes of the Lord* being in every place, even though He does not have eyes like ours—it says that to help us understand that He sees everything...
 - And it speaks here of God being sorry or regretting that He made us...
 - yet, the Bible elsewhere tells us that God is not a man that He should repent.

➤ This language is accommodated to us to help us see God's divine response to us in terms that we can understand.

b. The ideas conveyed in this way are not meant to be discounted, but rather enlarged to divine proportions!

- For example, if you think of the eye of God—you are not say,
 - “Oh, but that is just anthropomorphic language—we know that God does not have eyes” and then dismiss the whole thing....
 - Just the opposite!
 - You are to take your human seeing and rev it up to divine proportions!
 - You are to envision eyes that see everything in the universe at all times—and—every thought and intent of your heart!
 - Eyes indeed! And much more!

2. So here in our text we see God's extreme displeasure with what man has become.

a. God is sorry that He made man on the earth.

- This speaks of emotional pain—it is a reactionary word.
 - Rev it up to divine proportions!

- This is telling us that we have become something entirely different than the very good thing that God created us to be!
 - It tells us that we are not at all what He made us to be and that what we are now is entirely unacceptable to Him!
- b. Secondly, we are told that God is grieved (offended) in His heart with us...
- He is repulsed and He is angry at the direction we have taken—
 - This word conveys a mixture of bitter anguish and rage—
 - It is the word that is used to describe the attitude of Dinah’s brothers when she was raped.
 - We, because of our sin, are entirely unacceptable to Him—
3. These words affirm the justice and necessity of God’s judgement.
- God has every reason to judge us because He made us and we turned out all wrong—we are terribly offensive to Him.

TRANS> So what is He going to do?

B. He purposes to wipe the earth clean of man!

- Look at verse 7
 - **Gen 6:7: So the LORD said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.”**
1. Note the emphasis on man (*Adam*) defiling the earth (*adamah*)
- We were made of the earth to live upon the earth, but we have shown ourselves to be entirely unfit—
 - We pollute the earth like the LORD later charges the Canaanites and then His own people with doing!
- a. So God will destroy us off of the earth!
- The word *destroy* literally means to wipe off...
 - God is saying that He will wipe man off of the earth because man is like filth on the earth.
- b. Think of a dirty dish or a baby with a dirty diaper.
- This word is used of wiping a dirty dish where God says:
 - **2 Kings 21:13: And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab; I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down**
 - God will do to the earth what a mother does to her baby when her baby has a dirty diaper...
 - She wipes off what is defiled, what is offensive, what is repulsive.
 - It would be wrong of her to leave it on—to have sympathy for it.
 - She wipes her baby clean and flushes the filth down the toilet.
 - Of course we don’t see our sin that clearly—we don’t see it as God does—but that it how it is!

- That is why God sent the flood and wiped the earth clean of its inhabitants...and that is why He wiped Canaan clean and threatened to wipe out Israel.
- But notice something—something encouraging...
- 2. There is a reluctant tone (God takes no pleasure in judging us)
 - a. We are *man whom he created*—His beautiful creatures...
 - He refers to us in verse 7 as “man whom I have created.”
 - He knows that He made us upright.
 - b. Verse 3 reminds us that He has been patiently striving with us all along...
 - But He cannot continue to do this when there is such wickedness in us without repentance.
 - c. We are like good fruit that has gone bad—
 - Something that you hate to throw out because you know what it was like before it went bad...
 - but you must throw it out—it is offensive now...
 - You must throw it out and wipe the basket clean.
 - It is totally contrary to who He is to have us remain.

TRANS> But praise God! This is not the end of the passage!

- Now I want to move to something wonderful—I want to show you...

III. The grace of God that is the only remedy to man’s wickedness.

- In verse 8, we are told very simply: **But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.**

A. Grace is the only remedy—judgement can only be escaped by grace.

1. If a man finds grace, it means that God blesses him instead of judging him.
 - a. You see that there is a contrast between Noah and other men—
 - God will wipe man off the earth, *but* Noah found grace in His eyes.
 - b. Grace points to God taking action to save us—
 - It is what He does that saves us.
 - It is not what we do, but what He does.
 - We are not the Saviour but the ones who need to be saved...
 - He is the only Saviour!
 - And if we find grace in His eyes, we will be saved!
- But now we must ask an important question about Noah...
 - If we peek ahead, we will see that it says that Noah was a just man who was perfect in his generations and who walked with God...
 - So this raises an important question...
2. Did Noah find grace because he was righteous and walked with God, or was he righteous because of God’s grace?
 - Which is it?
 - Well in fact, in a certain way, both are true!

- a. God dealt with him graciously because he was a godly man.
 - He was not engaged in the idolatry and the violence and immorality of his day—he was not because we are told that he walked with God.
 - And it is on account of this that the Lord did not wipe him out with the rest of the world.
 - If there had been others, God would have spared them too, but it was only Noah and his family.
 - So Noah received grace because he was godly...
 - But we must not stop there!
 - He was godly...
 - b. But the only reason he was godly was because of God’s prevenient grace.
 - 1) Prevenient grace is grace that goes before our actions and produces those actions as fruit...
 - It is grace that works in us so that we do the good works that God has prepared for us to do.
 - It is grace that enables us to be godly.
 - 2) That prevenient grace had overtaken Noah and preserved him in the Lord.
 - It is the grace that had kept him from departing from the Lord when those around Him had done so...
 - We have seen what a marvellous thing this grace was that was able to keep some of the Sethites when the whole world had turned away from God.
 - It is a very powerful grace that can preserve one family when all others have forsaken the way of the LORD...
 - But it is the very same grace that works in the elect today.
 - You are sealed by the Holy Spirit if you are truly in Christ, and God will keep you for salvation.
 - At some point—perhaps from birth—this grace had overtaken Noah and it had kept him through all those years in a wicked world of perversity and ungodliness.
 - 3) So in the end, grace is, as Derick Kidner says, “sheer bounty.”
 - It is God’s working in us that brings us to his salvation.
- So as the world moves toward judgement, Noah is safe in God’s grace!
- B. But how could Noah find grace?
 1. In Romans 3, Paul showed that we are all guilty before God—
 - He said that there is none righteous, no not one—that both Jew and Gentile are guilty...that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.
 - a. Noah was guilty too.
 - Why did God bring grace to him when by nature, he had the same sinful heart that all the rest have...

- Without the very grace that we are talking about, Noah would never have walked with God.
 - He could feel the pull of his sinful heart even as God kept him...
 - How could he find grace and how can we find grace?
- b. Finding grace does not mean that we are not guilty—it means that God deals graciously with us despite our sin—that He does not judge us, but justifies us.
- But how can God do this when we **are** guilty?
- How can He say that we are not guilty when we are?
2. Romans 3 tells us precisely this.
- It tells us how God can be just and justify the ungodly.
 - Turn to Romans 3:26 for just a moment...
 - You can see that it talks about this very problem of how God can be just and justify sinful people—say that they are righteous when they are sinners too...
 - Romans 3:26—it says that He did something, and I quote:
 - **to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He [God] might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**
 - So what does it say that God did that He might justify sinners?
 - Look at the previous verse—verse 25... It says that...
 - a. He set forth Jesus as a propitiation for our sins!
 - Jesus as set forth in a very public way on the cross as propitiation by His blood—it was shed to turn away God’s wrath from His people!
 - Jesus took the punishment so that His people could be justified freely by His grace—fully pardoned and accepted as righteous.
 - b. Romans 3:25 explains that that is how God could overlook or **pass over the sins that were previously committed**—before Jesus came!
 - Do you see how that applies to Noah?
 - God could pass over his sins and be gracious to him on account of Jesus and the cross on which He was to die.
 - That is how God could accept Noah, and all the others whose sins He passed over before Jesus came...
 - And that is also how He can pass over our sins today and accept us and be gracious to us!
 - It is all of His grace!
- C. Grace is the only way out for you.
1. God must cleanse you—He must restore the rotten fruit to freshness! Only He can do that!
- Allen Ross says:
 - A close study of the word for grace will support the idea that it signifies unmerited favour. If the word is given its proper meaning, it meant that the recipients of grace actually deserved judgement too. Here, Noah received

sovereign grace and escaped catastrophe. No one escapes divine judgement apart from grace.

2. It is for you to look to God—for grace!
 - Don't pretend that you are okay—you are not.
 - Don't pretend that you can fix yourself—you cannot.
 - Look to Him for forgiveness in Christ and to remove your corruption.

Conclusion: As the world moved toward judgement, Noah was safe in God's grace. Are you???