



Sermon – 07/10/2022
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Verses Covered This Week

Genesis 9:18 – 29

Romans 6:1 - 2

Let's open our Bibles together back to Genesis and we'll be in chapter 9 this morning. If you're a guest with us whether in the room or catching us online, welcome home. And I also want to say a word of welcome to any of our Central family that might be traveling this week and catching us via the live stream. We're going to be finishing the story of Noah this morning. What we're going to find at the end of Genesis 9 is that the ark is not the only thing that after the flood has a crash landing. What we're also going to find is there's a crash landing in Noah's life himself. He finds himself set free from the judgment of sin and then plunge right back into the middle of it. If you remember, as we've worked through the story of Noah over these four weeks, every week we've had a framing question with the sermon. And the first one as we saw the judgment coming, the question that we raised is, are you on the boat? Have you found salvation? And then the second week, we asked the question, who are you bringing with you on the boat? That's evangelism. And then last time we saw this powerful text about the image of God and we asked ourselves the question, will you stand for life? And now, as we come to this final segment in Noah's story, we're faced with another question. The question before us this morning is how will you fight sin? And let's see that sin come to life right here beginning in verse 18 of chapter 9 in the book of Genesis. The text tells us,

¹⁸The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed. ²⁰Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. ²¹He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. ²²And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. ²³Then 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. ²⁴When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." ²⁶He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. ²⁷May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant."

²⁸After the flood Noah lived 350 years. ²⁹All the days of Noah were 950 years, and he died.

Let's pray together now.

Father, Your word, even in these challenging texts, it's truth. It's life. It's living waters. And I pray that as now, we come face to face with the sin of Noah that we will come face to face with the sin in our own lives and the ways we so easily turn away from You. And I pray that You would strengthen us in the Gospel. That You would remind us of the rescue that we have in Christ. You would help us to pray on in the faith in a way that pleases You as we fight against sin in our lives. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

Have you ever had one of those moments where you do something and then right after it, you wondered to yourself, what was I thinking? Why did I do that? I had one of those moments yesterday, as a matter of fact. We got this heatwave going on and for some reason, I thought it'd be a good idea to load our boys up and go to HEB on a Saturday afternoon when everybody in Bryan/College Station is there at the same time. It's a kind of situation where you get out of the car and before you can even go from the car to the store it's so hot radiating off that blacktop that your Bluebell would melt into whole milk before you got there. And then you walk inside and it's just a sea of people everywhere. And for those of you that are missing football, it will be back in a few months. But if you're ready to watch some full contact sports, that's where you need to be on Saturday. And the reason that I so rarely am at the grocery store is because Cami knows if she sends me with a list, I may come back with some of those things but I'll also come back with things that weren't on the list at all. Am I the only family where that's an issue sometimes? No, I see some nudging going on there. And see, what will happen is I go and I see something, it catches my attention, and I'll put it in the cart, and we check out it. It ends up in the bag and when it makes it back to the house, something that's unwanted, unneeded, unnoticed, shows up in an unexpected way.

And in a similar way, that's what we find happening here with the story of Noah at its conclusion. That is, the ark comes to rest on the ground. Can you imagine that moment? You want to talk about a full-contact sport? All those animals wanting to get off the boat. And that race to get out of there and as each one, you wonder if they're checking 'em off the inventory list as they go. Here go the kangaroos. Here go the raccoons. Here go the elephants. And they're watching them leave. But what they don't notice in this moment is that there's something unnoticed, unwelcomed, unwanted comes off the boat along with them and with the animals. And you know what it is? It's sin. The sin that brought God's judgment on the world through the flood, he faced it in the judgment, he brought condemnation upon it, but that sin was not completely eradicated. Because God's promises had not yet been fulfilled. See, Noah escapes the judgment of sin but he does not escape the presence of sin. You see, this is the first time we have in the Bible the opportunity to come up close, face to face with sin outside the Garden of Eden. And what we're going to find this morning is that yes, Noah is a great sailor but he's also a great sinner in need of a great Savior. And as we watch this story play out, it's going to give us a window into several dimensions of sin that's going to empower us to be more effective in fighting sin in our life.

And here's the first one I want you to notice. Coming back in verse 18, the first thing we see is a familiar pattern of sin. So, think about it. This ark finally comes to rest and Noah and his family get off the boat. And now, look at the second half of verse 19. It says,

¹⁹ from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed.

So, in other words, as they exit the boat, Moses is highlighting the global impact of this moment. That they're not just going to make a local settlement but the people that come off this boat will spread to the entire world. And with that spread of the people comes the spread of sin. In fact, we start to learn about that sin right there next to this in verse 20. What we find is that Noah steps into a new job but he's still the same sinner. So, notice what verse 20 says,

²⁰Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard.

And so what we find here is that even though he had spent decades building a boat, he now has a new vocation. He's working the land. He's planting this vineyard. And yes, he's a first-time farmer but now we also learn that he is a first-time drunk. Notice back in verse 21.

²¹He drank of the wine and became drunk and laid uncovered in the tent.

It's as if for Noah, it's five o'clock somewhere. He's out in Northgate. He's had so much to drink. He has now passed out, uncovered, unconscious, may not even know what's happened to him in this moment. And what we see here is a re-introduction of the same pattern of sin we saw back in the garden with Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. Remember, Adam and Eve, they take of the fruit and then the fruit takes them. They reject God's design and embrace their own desires. And as a result of that, Adam and Eve are left naked and ashamed. And isn't that what we see here with Noah? That same pattern where sin takes us away. And I want you to notice back on the screen a diagram that we used back in Genesis 3 called the "Sin Cycle" where we saw this pattern in the life of Adam and Eve. And it shows up here with Noah where the way that satan leads us towards sin is it starts with suspicion. We begin to doubt God's goodness. And then it overflows into seduction as the enemy's deception speaks into our lives and tells us that God's way is not best and draws us towards sin. And what happens as a result of that is submission. That act of sin. That disobedience. What we see right here taking place with Noah as he partakes of the fruit and becomes drunk. And then in the aftermath of that submission to sin comes the shame. You see Noah laying there. That shame overwhelming him in ways he doesn't even realize yet because he has passed out. And as the culmination of that sin cycle, it leads to a sabotage. It disrupts, it destroys, it subverts everything in our life including as we'll see in the story of Noah, it subvert his relationship with his own family. There is a brokenness to the family that results from the brokenness of sin. But one other thing you want to notice about this pattern, you see, when did this sin occur for Noah? It occurred right after God had made the covenant with him. And that's not a one-time thing in the Bible. I mean, just think about how often the people of God received the promises of God and then they turn away in disobedience to God. It happens with Adam in the garden. He receives God's promise. He turns away with the fruit. It happens here with Noah. He receives God's promise. He turns away with drunkenness. It happens with Israel in the giving of the Ten Commandments and the Mosaic Law. They receive God's promise. They turn away with the golden calf. It even happens with Jesus's own disciples. They're in the upper room, in the last supper. He is giving a foretaste of the new

covenant to come and that promise is followed by disobedience. It shows up both in the betrayal of Judas and the denial of Peter. And there's a warning that the New Testament gives us in Romans 6. I want you to see it here on the screen that that same pattern can show up in our lives. That when the people of God receive the promises of God, there can be a temptation to respond to His goodness with sin. So, this is the way Paul says it.

¹What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

In other words, he's warning us that we might fall into that same familiar pattern of sin after our salvation. That our justification in Christ allows us to justify our disobedience right now. That more sin means more grace. That we can live in the way that we want to. And if we want to find lasting victory over the fight against sin, we need to see Satan's pattern. We need to see how he's at work here in Noah because it's still happening in our day. Have you ever thought about why it is that Genesis 9 records this sin from Noah? I mean, think about it. Moses is writing to the people of God right before they enter the promised land. He's telling the story of this hero of the faith in Noah. It would be so easy for him to just skip right over this dark moment in his life. Why does it show up? What seems to me that part of the reason is the Bible is repeatedly showing us that there are no perfect people in the people of God. There are no heroes of the faith apart from Jesus. And maybe to put it in a finer point, part of what God is doing, both here with Noah in the sin and then right after this in the genealogy that comes that points ahead to Jesus, is that when the Bible shows us the sins and failures of our spiritual forefathers, it's reminding us that the people that Jesus came from is a foretaste of the people He came for. That Jesus comes from broken, sinful, messy people, in broken, sinful, messy families, and broken, sinful, messy situations, and He comes for just that type of person today. That the Gospel isn't for those who are healthy, it's for the sick. Jesus tells us that it's not the healthy that need the doctor, it's the sick. He meets us in that mess. He calls us to more and that's the way that we find a foundation for fighting the sin that's in our life.

Which takes us to the second part of this passage. Look down with me beginning in verse 22. The second thing I want you to notice is that we also see a rivalry of seeds. A rivalry of seeds; the seed of the woman, the seed of the serpent. And so, how do Noah's sons react to this moment in his life? Well, you notice that it, while it's not exactly clear exactly what takes place with Noah, it's very clear how his sons respond in two different ways. So, notice the first one, back in verse 22, we see what Ham does. It says,

²²And Ham, the father of Canaan saw the nakedness of his father and he told his two brothers outside.

So, notice what happens. Ham sees and then he shares. He gazes and then he gossips. He takes the shame that Noah has encountered from his sin and he multiplies it. He amplifies it. He calls the attention of others to it. But what about his other brothers? Shem and Japheth. Look back at verse 23.

²³Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backwards and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward and they not see their father's nakedness.

In other words, instead of exposing what was uncovered like their brother Ham, they cover what was exposed. And this is the first instance where we see this contrast in the Bible. Where Ham is the first one to fail to follow the command to honor, father, and mother in the way that he treats his father, Noah. But here with Shem and Japheth, we see the first example that we find over and over again in the New Testament calling us to bearing with one another in our burdens and in our sins. What they do here in this moment is they don't condone his sin but they cover it. They don't shame him; they shelter him in this time. And think about what this might mean for those times, we might find ourselves in a similar situation today. Because I imagine that for some of you, this is already true. And for others, it may be true in the future that you find yourself uncovering unthinkable sin amongst people you love. You walk in and discover a family member doing something unthinkable. You catch a friend or a coworker in a lie. That thing that they thought was going to stay secret forever, you now know it. And as you come face to face with their failures, you come eye to eye with their shame. You're faced with the choice. Will I respond to this in the way of Ham or in the way of Shem? Will I, will I gossip or will I give grace? Will I condemn or will I cover? And what I don't want you to hear me saying is that we should just minimize and dismiss the sin as if it's no big deal. That's not what they're doing here in the moment. But what they are doing in covering over his shame is creating the space, the opportunity for God to confront him himself in his sin. And that's the way we can come alongside others in these moments as well. And I want you to notice as we come back to the text that these two reactions lead to two rivals in the wake of Noah waking up to the situation. You'll see the way it starts back in verse 24.

²⁴When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵he said, "Cursed be Canaan; the servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." ²⁶He also said, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. ²⁷May God enlarge Japheth and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant."

You can just imagine this moment here for Noah. Passed out drunk, naked. He comes to, he doesn't even know what's happened. He's not sure what's taken place. But somehow and in some way, he learns what occurs. And part of that as he becomes to know what his youngest son, Ham, has done to him in amplifying his shame. And he responds to that, how? With both a curse for one and a blessing for another. And right here in this moment, we see a reemergence of something that's begun all the way back in Genesis 3. Remember that first promise of salvation in the Bible, that Genesis 3:15 gives us, that one day, God would raise up an offspring, a seed of the woman who will crush the head of the seed of the serpent and crush the serpent himself. And from that point on, there's this rivalry that takes place between the the woman's offspring and the serpent's offspring; between the kingdom light and the kingdom of darkness. And it reemerges right here. This dividing line takes place again. And what will happen is it will not just take root here but bear fruit all the way through the Old Testament as we anticipate the coming of Christ. But I want you to notice something. Who is it specifically that is this cursed seed of the serpent? It's not Ham as you would actually expect. Look back at verse 25. Cursed be who? Canaan. Canaan is the one that's cursed. His own son, a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers. Now, why is that? Well, the text doesn't tell us why Canaan is the one that received the curse for his dad's sin. But we know why Moses would have drawn attention to it at this time. It's because right here, as he's writing the story of Genesis, they're on the cusp of

entering the Promised Land. They are preparing to encounter their enemies, the Canaanites, and Moses wants the people of God to understand how this rivalry began and how far it stretches back. And what we see is that in this moment of sin, it leads to a rivalry of seeds. A seed of the serpent emerges. This man, Canaan, from whom the biggest rivals of the people of God in the Old Testament comes. And what we find is that that warfare between the kingdom of light, the kingdom of darkness, it goes all through the story of Israel. That they war against the Canaanites. They seek to find victory. And what we know is that as we come into the New Testament, here Jesus comes. And he comes as the fulfillment of the covenant to the nation of Israel. He keeps the covenant demands. He receives the covenant promises. And what Israel failed to do in defeating these enemies that received this curse from Noah, Jesus accomplishes through His death and resurrection. He crushes the enemies of God. He puts sin and Satan and death to shame. And what that means for you and me is that when we trust in Jesus for our salvation, we're set free from that reality so that the apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 6 that our battle in this world is no longer against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces. If you will, spiritual Canaanites who war against us. That's one of the reasons why I find myself coming back over and over again to a quote from the British preacher, Charles Spurgeon. Here's what he says,

Labor with yourselves to drive the Canaanites out of your hearts. Spare none. Let no petty lust escape. Go after pride and laziness, and lust and unbelief and you will have a battle before you which will keep you busy, and more than busy. Oh! Cry to God for your strength, where your help comes from, and then fight on again, and as each sin is overcome, as each evil habit is broken, as each lust is denied then go and search out others and keep on destroying them, until all are subdued, then your body, your soul, your spirit will be consecrated to Christ as a living sacrifice, purified by His Holy Spirit.

You want to find victory over sin? You need to fight the Canaanites in your life. You want to find deliverance from the enemy? You need to recognize the curse that comes here doesn't just affect those in the moment. It's still showing up in the spiritual strife and rivalry that we face today. Which is going to bring us to a final thing I want you to notice in this text as we start back in verse 25. The third thing we need to see this morning is that we need to see a familiar legacy of slavery. So, there's one more thing we need to notice right here because as the passage recounts the death of Noah, it also recounts the birth of the institution of slavery. So, notice how it starts back in verse 25. We just read it. He said, "Curse be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." Now, look at the end of verse 26; and let Canaan be his servant. And now the end of verse 27; and let Canaan be his servant. And so one of the questions I want to ask you this morning just by show of hands, how many of you have ever heard of a false doctrine called the Curse of Ham? Just raise your hand where you are if you've heard of it. Okay, maybe a quarter of you in the room. And I know some of you are thinking, I've experienced a curse of ham every time I go to my grandmother's house at Thanksgiving holidays and she overcooks it. That's not what we're talking about. What's the curse of Ham? And why do you need to know it if none of you ever heard of it? It's because the Curse of Ham is a false doctrine that comes from this passage right here that's had some of the most devastating and toxic consequences of any false doctrine in the last hundred several 100 years. So, what is it? Back in 2018, our Southern Baptist Convention passed a resolution condemning the Curse of Ham and it provided this definition. It says, the Curse of Ham incorrectly claims that in Genesis 9, "God ordained descendants of Ham to be marked with dark skin and be relegated to a subordinated status based

on race. Or if we're going to just put it simply, the Curse of Ham suggests that your skin color determines your destiny and that the destiny of people who have dark-colored skin is that of slavery. So, what's happened is that over the centuries, especially in America, during the time period of slavery and segregation, people have wrongly used this text to provide a theological justification, cover, and support for racism, for slavery, for segregation. So, what it means is that people look back at this text and they saw the word Ham there and it has got some similarities to the original language word for dark. So, they assume that this must mean these are the dark-skinned people and they believe that they migrated to Africa and that those that were born of dark skin and in Africa that God is giving a biblical basis for the institution of slavery. Not just of the Canaanites in that moment, but for all those of dark skin from that point forward. Wow! So, what's the problem? Why is this an issue? Well, for one, just on the face of it, the Curse of Ham is a misnomer. It's the wrong name. Because the curse didn't come to Ham; it came to his son, Canaan. And more importantly, the problem with this is God is not giving an institution for all time; He's giving a judgment for a specific people for a specific period. And Moses is calling our attention to that here in the story of Genesis as his people are on the precipice of entering the Promised Land so that they can understand why it is that they're in rivalry with these people. But the legacy of this false doctrine, make no mistake about it, is almost impossible to fathom. So, if you were to rewind the clock back to the launch of the confederacy, just listen to the words that come from Alexander Stephens who was the vice president of the Confederacy. Here's what he says about slavery. He says, "With us, all of the white race, however, high or low, rich or poor, are equal in the eye of the law. Not so with the negro. Subordination is his place. He, by nature, or listen to this, by the curse against Canaan is fitted for that condition which he occupies in our system. Do you see him using the Bible to justify things that are contrary to the Bible? And this theological justification, even though you might not have ever heard of it today, has showed up in damaging ways over the centuries right here in our country. In the 1800's when there was race-based slavery in our country, this Curse of Ham helped to justify it. And what we find is in the 1840's when the Southern Baptist Convention split off and formed to separate from other Baptists so that we could appoint slave holders as missionaries. They use this Curse of Ham to justify it. And after the Civil War, when Texas became the state that carried out the third most lynchings against black people in our country, they used this text to justify it. And then when you step into the 1920's and studies show that half of pastors in the state of Texas were supportive of the Klu Klux Klan that used this Curse of Ham to justify it. Or when you fast forward to the 1950's and even after the Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court ruling happened ending segregation and you still had Southern Baptist leaders such as WA Criswell defending segregation. They use this Curse of Ham to justify it. Or when you look at 1963 and a study of pastors at Southern Baptist churches in Texas said that only 20% of them would allow African Americans the membership into their church. This Curse of Ham justified it. Can you see the pain? Can you see the wounds? Can you see the damage that this false doctrine has done in true ways? We see this legacy of sin emerge here that even if you've never heard of it, we are still grappling with the fallout of it today. And what can we learn from that reality?

Well, the first thing that we can learn when we see such a blatant false doctrine emerging from a text that has nothing to do with it is we learn and are reminded of the danger that can come when we twist scripture. That twisted desires twist Scripture in ways that leads to twisted outcomes. And we see that not just here in Genesis 9, you can go back to the garden. That's what the serpent is doing. He's twisting the word of God to cause Adam and Eve to go against His design. You can see it right here in this text in the way that it's been misused. Or you can fast

forward into the life of Jesus when he's there in the wilderness temptation and Satan is quoting Scripture to him, twisting it, trying to tempt him to pull away. One of the most dangerous places we can find ourselves in is when we might be tempted to do the devil's work by twisting God's word. And that's what we've seen over the centuries as a result of this false doctrine. But it also is a reminder to us that as a church, we need to continue to do all we can to be welcoming to every person in our community. Just look back with me, Genesis 9:6, we saw it last time we were here in Genesis. I want to remind you what God declares at the end of this verse. You'll notice there where it says, God made man in his own image. We talked about it last time. What that means for how we stand for life and stand for the unborn. But it's also true in what it means for how we stand for people of color and those that aren't like us, on the margins, the way we love them. We care for them, we reach them, we disciple them. Our heart has been, and I wanted to continue to be a heart grounded in this reality. That every man and woman is made in the image of God. They are worthy of dignity and respect. And we reject the false doctrine of things like the Curse of Ham. The things that would divide us. And instead, we stand on the reality that the Gospel that reconciles us to a Heavenly Father from our sin is the same Gospel that can reconcile people of different races today. It brings us together as one. And I'm so encouraged at the ways I've seen that happening in our Hispanic Ministry, in our inner city outreach this summer through our Student Ministry, and in so many other places. We're seeking to take the Gospel to everyone in our community and coming face to face with the damage of a false doctrine like this can help us be recommitted to that reality. As we fight sin not just in our own life but in the world around us. And this text reminded me of another trip to the grocery store. Wasn't the one I took by mistake yesterday. It was actually one that a friend of mine told me about from years ago. I've got a friend. His name is Afsheen whose family is originally from Iran. And they came to America. And obviously he looks different than many of us do. He's of Middle Eastern descent. And when he married and they began to have children. Uh his wife took one of their children to the grocery store. Have you ever had one of those moments where a young child says something too loud and too blunt that you wish you could just crawl in a hole and die? Afsheen's wife was in one of those situations. They're walking through the grocery store and they're walking down the aisle and a nice African-American lady is coming the other direction and Afsheen's daughter points at the woman and loudly says in a way that she and probably the whole store can hear, "Mom, why is she a different color than us?" What would you do in that situation? I mean, everybody stopped. They're all kind of waiting to see what you say in that moment and her answer is one that I'll never soon forget. She said, "God made us different colors because God is so glorious. His glory is so great that it couldn't be captured in only one color. It needed a full expression to be seen in every color." And when we come face to face with our own sin. When we come face to face with the sin that happens at the hands of false doctrine. We become face to face with the glory of God. It reminds us of that one question we need to be wrestling with this morning here in this text. "How will I fight sin?" And the answer that's not the way of Noah. Who turns away from God and his drunkenness and his shame. The answer to that is not the way of Ham who magnifies that shame and exposes it to others. It's not even in the way of Shem and Japheth who go on to sin and to die. The way that we fight sin is through the way of Jesus Christ. That by the power of His blood and by the strength of His Spirit, we drive the Canaanites of sin from our hearts. We stand for the truth in the community around us so that we can honor God with our lives.

Let's pray to that end now as we close out our time this morning.

Father, You know the end from the beginning and every word of Scripture that You've given us is truth, is profitable for teaching, training, correction, and rebuke. And I pray that You use it right now to do exactly that. That if there are people of who have reached a rock bottom in this room, God, that You would give them the hope that this could be a turning point in their life if they turn to Jesus. If there are people here that have become complacent in their fight against sin, satisfied with a little victory but not giving themselves over to doing whatever it takes by the power of Your Spirit that You would move and call them back by the strength of Your grace to see lasting victory that only Jesus can provide. And as we seek to love and to care for our community even in the wake of the pain that false doctrines like the one we see today have caused in our midst. Lord, would You help us be a beacon of light in the midst of darkness? And we ask these things in Christ's name. Amen.