

God Weighs the Heart

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[0 : 00] That principle of Christian living is something that is, I think, neglected and ill-taught today in Christian circles, that we are supposed to come to whatever our final day is.

None of us know what that is. And we're supposed to be spent. I don't know what my day is going to be, but I know that I want to approach my final day out of gas. I want to have given all of it to Christ.

And I think that's your heart as well, as you are part of this church family, weary with the cost of what? The cost of serving Jesus Christ as we deny self and take up our cross and follow him. The cross life is not for the weak of heart. It's for the faithful in heart. And I just wanted to bring that to our attention as the verse goes on to say, I see the triumph of the cross. Our triumph is not that we will have all of this great success in this life and be rich people and necessarily even people who are great influencers in society on society's terms, but influencers for Jesus in calm ways and probably behind the scenes. Right? No one will maybe know your name beyond your circle across the globe and that kind of thing. Well, God calls us to faithfulness so that we run in the shadow of the cross till we complete the work begun. That's our calling. And I want you to be encouraged this morning as we labor together to understand the word of God and take it into our hearts. So we're in Genesis chapter six.

Continuing our expositional ministry verse by verse through this wonderful book. And as is people who are, who've been here for a while, we'll tell you this is typical of me.

I'll run through some stuff and then I'll hit the brakes and we're hitting the brakes today. I'm going to read the passage, but we're going to focus on just one little section of it because there are some things here that I want to draw out doctrinally for you.

[2 : 25] So Genesis six, beginning in verse one. Now it happened when men began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them. This is population explosion. God is blessing. Many things are happening in the lives of people. God is blessing the wombs of women. And he told them be fruitful and multiply. And so God is behind this explosion of the populace. This is a sign of God's blessing on the people. Unfortunately, they don't honor God in that blessing. They're taking advantage of that blessing for self. In verse two, he says that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were good in appearance and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. Then Yahweh said, my spirit shall not strive with man forever because he indeed is flesh. Nevertheless, his days shall be 120 years.

The Nephilim were on the earth in those days. And also afterward, when the sons of God came into the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Now, those were the mighty men of old men of renown. Then Yahweh saw that the evil of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And Yahweh regretted that he had made man on the earth and he was grieved in his heart. And Yahweh said, I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things into birds of the sky, for I regret that I have made them. But Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh. We're going to zero in in just a moment on verse five and some of the doctrinal aspects that verse five present to us. Look all throughout

Genesis up to where we are now in five chapters, we have covered so many critical foundational doctrines of the Christian faith. I'm not going to list them all for you today because of time constraints. When we talk about doctrines, we're talking about the teachings of scripture about life, about God, his ways, how we're to understand who we are and why we're here. So doctrines concern the teachings of scripture and by inference, then the beliefs that you and I will have as God followers, as Christ disciples. That's what we mean when we talk about the doctrines of scripture.

This passage is teaching us that Satan is making a calculated attempt to thwart God's promise of Genesis 3:15. Look, I never you may have come in here in the last weeks or a few months since I've been teaching through Genesis three particularly and now into six. And you may be thinking, boy, I have I have never considered this particular understanding before that. That's not because people haven't written about it. You just may not have been familiar. I'm not teaching anything novel up here. All right. I don't need to get the big hook and you pull me out of the pulpit.

This is stuff that people have taught and have written about in orthodoxy for centuries. Unfortunately, the Christian church went to sleep about it through liberalism. Well, we could get into that another time. What we're talking about this morning, though, is something that should shade, something that should inform the way that you understand scripture and read scripture from now on out.

[6:12] Anytime you're in the Old Testament, the New Testament, wherever you're reading, you should be thinking in terms of Genesis 3:15 and everything that's been laid as a foundation for what God is now doing as a result of what he says in Genesis 3:15. The rest of the Bible is dealing with God's promise from Genesis 3:15 and Satan's attempts to corrupt it. All right. Everything because Genesis 3:15 is about Jesus. Genesis 3:15 is about salvation. Genesis 3:15 is about how Satan is going to set himself to thwart what God has promised in redeeming mankind in Jesus Christ. So if you turn to Genesis 3:15, I'll read it and then I'll put it up here on the on the front for you, too, as well. Oh, let me put up my God weighs the heart is the title of my message. That's what we'll be dealing with thematically. God weighs the heart. Genesis 3:15. I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed.

He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel. This is all said within the context of God cursing Satan. And then how God is going to deal with the woman and then with Adam in the way of the consequences for their fall into sin and rebellion against the Lord while they were still in paradise in the garden. So let me put this up here for you and highlight the parts that I want you to emphasize. And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed.

He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel. Now, when I preached through this, I was very careful to unpack this for you. You can go back and listen to that sermon to get greater detail about this. But enmity here refers to hostility or warfare. So this war, this hostility will be between the seed of Satan and the seed of the, as he says, the woman. Now look up here and we'll break it down just a bit for clarity's sake. The woman's seed is notice a he, he that is Jesus shall bruise you, Satan on the head and you, Satan shall bruise him, Jesus on the heel. I'm just going to leave that up there for you to see and get clarity. This is what we're talking about. And we're going to see this warfare throughout the remainder of the Bible. This is God's promise to use a woman to send God's savior to rescue mankind from the power of Satan and sin. Did Satan understand this prophecy? Yes, he did.

Did Eve understand this prophecy? Yes, she did. She understood it well enough to think that when she had her next child, it might have been the one that God had sent as the savior. And I didn't work out too well with her. But anyway, we went through all of that when I preached it. Just take note here that he, he or him in this verse is this special promised seed, the Christ, that is, he is no ordinary man. He is the anointed one, the Christ. That's what that means. This special person will not come then. Notice friends, this special one will not come from a human father. He will be born to a human mother, but without a human father. He will be born to a human mother, but without a human father.

This is the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus. We find it right here. He will be born to a human mother who is a virgin in the sense that she has never known or been intimate with a human man. So the child that she will conceive will not be of a human being. It will be a child conceived of the Holy Spirit. God will be his father through the miracle of the Holy Spirit. And let's take note of why that's important for us to understand moving into this passage. Here's a quote from Jonathan Sarfati, one of the commentators that I am reading as I reference this material and think through it, the insights of other people. And here is the valuable role of women that Satan hates. One of them would bear the one who would doom him. Satan understands that the promised one who's going to break his power over humanity. This special seed is going to come from a woman. A woman's going to bear him.

[11 : 21] Now, he's not going to have a human daddy. God's going to be his father through the power of the Holy Spirit, but nevertheless, it'll come through women. But here's the thing. Satan doesn't know which woman. Satan doesn't know at what time God will do this. Eve doesn't know that. There's nobody that knows this except God the Father. The church reformer Martin Luther said of this verse, and I quote up here, the promise and the threat are both clear and obscure in Genesis 3 15. It left the serpent in the dark about which woman should give birth to the seed of the woman so that he had to think of every woman as possibly becoming the mother of the blessed seed that is Christ. On the other hand, it gave our first parents, Adam and Eve, great faith that from that very hour they expected a Savior. So Adam and Eve expected God to send this Savior, and it could have happened in their lifetime. They didn't know. Nobody knew. Satan didn't know which woman would bring this special offspring into the world that would doom him in terms of his power over them through sin. That's the beauty of this. Now this this lack of knowing has a dark side. He knows it's going to happen. But this lack of knowing which which woman prompted say about the woman and which woman it would happen to spurred Satan to immediate action. He wasted no time as he heard this promise about now what he wants to do to thwart it and to corrupt it so that he concocted this vile, vile plan that in my estimation and understanding and judgment of what we see in this passage in Genesis 6, he then sent demons to possess human men to defile the daughters in both the lines of Seth and Cain. Those were the two men who headed up these lines. Cain's line represented those unbelievers who would rebel against God. Seth represented the line of promise from the line of Seth. I will maintain an unbroken line until we come to the Messiah, the one that I promised. And I am not going to let anything or anyone corrupt what I'm doing in that line. Now there will be many unbelievers in Seth's line. Not all the people who are born under Seth's lineage are going to be believers. Most of them will be unbelievers. But he will remain maintain a remnant of people in that line. Not so with Cain. There can be believers that will come out of the line of Cain, but they're not going to be in the lineage of bringing in Jesus. Do you understand now? Am I making that clear? Okay. So over here is what we're tracking in the way of the lineage that God is going to preserve unbroken until Jesus Christ is born. And we have those lineages expounded for us in scripture, don't we? We read in the Christmas story every year. We'll turn to Matthew and Luke and we'll read about all of these people in the line of Jesus Christ. It goes all the way through Abraham and into King David and moves through the book of Ruth in an astounding and beautiful way. God doing things you'd never think he would do with people that you'd never think he'd do it with. Well, that's

God. Right up until the time that Jesus himself is born and of course born of a virgin and a woman.

And that was the time. And the star marked that for us and we celebrate that each week each year. Here in our passage, we're dealing with something to this point unprecedented in the life of human beings and in the history of the world in Genesis six, something totally unprecedented.

And I preached about that the last couple of the last couple of Sundays. But this is a sickening, vile plan of immorality where these demons are possessing human men. And these men are then taking on wives, whomever they choose out of that means what I understand that to mean is out of the line of Seth and Cain, not just one line, whomever they wanted to choose out of any of these lineages, they grabbed them. And now these women come under the influence of these demons possessed, these men possessed by these demons. So this is a tremendous satanic ploy plan with lots and lots of pressure and influence on the people who are being affected by what's going on. It's unprecedented, hard to get your mind around, but nevertheless, true. This is what Satan is doing to try and corrupt God's promise because he doesn't know which woman is going to be the one. So the more women he can corrupt through these means, the greater the chance that he's going to thwart God's plan. Well, of course, we know that God's grace is greater than sin. God is sovereign. Satan is not. Satan cannot thwart the promise and plan of God ever. He cannot do it in your life. He couldn't do it in these people's lives. He can't do it in history and he can't do it now. He can't do it in the future.

[17:01] Only God will bring forth what he has promised. So this immorality was taking place just before, time reference, just before God commissioned Noah to begin the ark. And it continued in a time reference afterwards, after Noah started on the ark and while he was building it. So this satanic lewdness that I'm alluding to here came to define society so that it progressively dehumanized and enslaved these people in their deceitful, degrading desires. The people were drunk with lust from greedy hearts. It's very important for you to understand that while these people are under the influence of satanic forces and while they're being tempted, et cetera, these people's hearts have given way to rebellion against God to such a point and to such a level that they have opened themselves to demonic possession. I want you to be clear that this is this is not something that they can turn and say, well, Satan made me do it. And now they're off the hook before God and won't be judged.

The flood's going to show us that. That's not the way God sees this at all. They can't point fingers. Well, he made me do it. Well, she made me do it. Well, the devil made me. No, no, no, no.

The flood's coming and the flood's going to wipe them all out because they're all culpable. They're all guilty. Why? Well, that's what we're talking about. This is why I put the brakes on because this doctrine is so critical to understanding the sovereignty of God and salvation. If you will get this doctrine today correct biblically, it will open up the floodgates of understanding God's sovereignty and salvation for you. It will make total sense to you why we have to have a sovereign God doing a very gracious and powerful work on our souls, in our souls, because we would never choose him. So you really need to pay attention and get this one right. You need to pay attention all the time, but still.

And you do. You're a great, great group to preach to. So what we have going on here now, then, is we have what I preached last time. We have these sons of God that I understand to be fallen angels. These are the demons that constitute those angels that were cast out of heaven with Satan.

And so some of these demons have left their domain and they have possessed these human men because such is the vileness of men in their rebellion against God that they have opened themselves up to this kind of possession. And so these demons have come to take home, take up residence in a welcoming place. I preached that last week. And now we have these men going into human women and they're having human babies under this satanic influence. And this influence is spreading rapidly among societies across the way. And this is an unprecedented time then of evil setting the tone for what God will do in his judgment. As I said, it is a progressively dehumanizing and enslaving reality here on the earth. And the people themselves are culpable.

[20 : 35] So Moses is writing this. Now think about this with me. Moses is writing this to the children of promise. To know the origins of evil and its devastating effects on a people who turn their backs on God and go after the idols of their deceitful hearts. Can you see why Israel would need to know this?

As they stand on one side of the Jordan River getting ready to possess the land of promise and God telling them, do not adopt the ways of the people I will send you to conquer.

Do not marry them. Do not take on their culture. Do not envy them and do not adopt their gods. Isn't that what he said? And what did they do? They turned their backs on God and they started building idols like the people of the land. They married their daughters. Corruption came.

And what did God do? Judge them. And the judgment was severe at times. And then they would be forgiven. You'll see, God willing, I have plans in the next couple of sermons to take you into the book of Judges and show you all of the ways that God says to these people, I forgive you. I have mercy on you.

Will I restore you? And then a little while later it says, and the people turn their backs on the Lord and did what was evil in the sight of God and blah. And then now we go again. Generation after generation doing that to the Lord. So Moses is wanting these people to understand this is what happens if you turn your back on the Lord. This is what you can expect because we serve a God of wrath.

[22 : 09] Moses then is showing his original readers the catastrophic judgment that God will bring on the people of this era. Did I lose my... Are we good? Working on it? Hey, remember, this is a good place for me to say this and then I'll just keep moving. We'll catch up with the slides.

Hey, we have a new text system and you can pray for us as we work on it. It's great. It's really great, but we're still working on trying to understand how it all operates and does things and all. So it's all good. Just be patient with us and we'll figure it out. Okay, let me go to the next. Thank you guys. Good job. Let me go to the next one. Genesis 6, 5 then not only shows us God's view of how bad it really was at this particular time in human history, but the verse also gives us the theological foundation for how God weighs or how he alone is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the human heart. That's very important that we understand that. Now, last week, in keeping with that theological foundation and theme, I gave you point number one that I'm working through in this little outline, the sinfulness of society in verses one through four. That was last week. Now, today we're going to deal with the sagacity of God in Genesis 6, 5. Then Yahweh saw that the evil of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

That's where we're going to camp out for this morning, for the remainder of what I want to say. Now, beloved, the assessment of God on the human heart is always 100% true.

100% accurate. God never makes a mistake in how he assesses or evaluates our measures or ways, the motives, the desires, the intentions, and the plans of your heart and my heart and the hearts of these people. All right, so I'll put this up here. The assessment of God is always true.

Sagacity means a readiness of apprehension, a discriminative intelligence, an acute practical judgment. So it's the quality of being wise, discerning, and sound in judgment.

[24 : 29] God's sagacity allows him to constantly judge or weigh our hearts in a way that he is always 100% reliable, trustworthy, and correct about what he says about us. That's very different from how you and I would weigh our hearts and what we understand. This is where we need to start.

Now, notice in the text, the Bible says, then the Lord saw, or in my case, then Yahweh saw.

So what we have here is God seeing, God seeing. And that gives us the idea of God's perfect perception as he applies his wisdom to our hearts and lives. God is looking on and he is visibly seeing and calculating and evaluating what he is seeing. But he's seeing it. Nothing is escaping the eye of the Lord in the way of the vileness of these people and where they've come to. Which that is, how does a holy God look on that kind of stuff? But he does.

He sees it. He knows exactly what is happening. So he observed perfectly the motives and desires of these people because he's watching their actions. He's going behind the actions, but he's also seeing their behavior and taking note of it. Creator God is looking then with the deepest insight and understanding into mankind's life on earth and nothing's escaping him.

Nobody's getting away with anything. There aren't any secrets before the Lord. When God judges a heart, he's not hindered. He's not negatively affected by things that we are, like personal sin or selfishness or lack of knowledge or deceitfulness. Those are the kinds of things that get in the way of you and I evaluating our own hearts and evaluating the situation with other people. Have you ever been guilty of this? Have you ever been guilty of assigning a motive to somebody? I know why you did that. As if you could see into their heart? Well, you can make an educated guess, but the truth is you don't know. You do not know. Now let's just get that on the table right now and you need to stop that. Drop it. You don't know the heart of another human being.

[26 : 58] You hardly know yours and you can't know yours apart from the Lord. You can't. I can't, folks. This is the kind of stuff that starts messing with congregations and families and relationships is when we do stuff like that. And so we don't want any of that going on with us. We want to repent of that and be aware of it. The reason that I'm hard on this is because this is the kind of stuff Satan uses to needle his way in and start to make you feel disenchanted, discouraged, alienated from.

This is when you pout. This is when you punish. This is when you don't say stuff. This is when you do the silent treatment or this is when you get on and write emails. Now I'm saying you. This is plural.

I don't have anybody in mind. Thank God none of that's going on in our church. We're we're we're we have a wonderful spirit of unity and I praise God. Look, I want to protect that. I want to safeguard that with you. I want you to be proud of being a part of this and feel the warmth and love of Jesus as we do this together. But notice this is messy. We're messy people.

So we have to be willing to go into the messes of each other and say, I'm going to love you through this. You love me through mine and we'll walk through this together. Right. That's that's the body of Christ. We have the love of Jesus to help us be that kind of people. And we need to work together to preserve that. That just that can't just be our concern. Me and Greg. That has to be the concern of our congregation. So that's that's why I'm bringing this up and hitting on this with you. God, when he makes his assessment and weighs our heart, he is not hindered by the things that hinder us in that evaluation. He's not hindered by personal sin. He doesn't have any. He's not hindered by the deceitful desires that reside within us. He doesn't have any of those. He's not hindered by selfishness or a lack of knowledge because he knows everything and he knows everything about us. So that sets God apart from us in a big way. When we start talking about weighing the heart, the motives and the plans and purposes and intentions of the heart. All right. Look at some scripture that makes us clear about the

Lord. I'm not saying all of this because I think any of you doubt this. I want to reinforce and encourage you in this truth. Look, look here. The judgments of the Lord are true. They are righteous altogether.

[29 : 34] True meaning faithful, sure, firm, reliable, trustworthy. God's judgments about you and about me in the world and situations and trials. His judgments are always true. Totally trustworthy. That's so great.

Here's another one. Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments. This is great. The Lord is righteous. And from that righteousness, he is upright in how he judges us. So the judgment that we see happening here in Genesis chapter 6 is right altogether. This judgment is issuing from the righteousness of Almighty God in his character. Verse 5 tells us, verse 5 tells us, look, that God's accurate evaluation of the judgment. The judgment of the Lord is righteous. He is righteous. He is righteous.

That he himself observed about these people. What were those two things? We'll take them in turn from verse 5. The first is, notice, then Yahweh saw that the evil of man was great on the earth. We'll take that clause first. He saw their outer wickedness. I've already hinted at this. He saw their outer wickedness. Then the Lord saw that the wickedness, that's behavioral iniquity, of man was great on the earth. So that emphasizes their behavioral sins. The wickedness of man refers primarily then to lifestyles. It's how these people were living outwardly among each other. And you think, land's in, land's in, nobody seems to have any problem with this stuff. I mean, we can read between the lines here and realize this is immorality on a level that is just bizarre. Arresting, yeah.

Everybody was just buying into it. Sounding vaguely familiar across our land? You recognize we have an entire contingent of people in our country alone that think that murdering babies is supposed to be a woman's choice and right? They have no compunction whatsoever and seeming no conscience whatsoever about murder.

And on and on it could go, right? We're living in a time, could you have, listen, I'm going to be 63 years old in another month or so. And in my adult lifetime, never would I have been able to conceive that we would be where we are today in the way of our sexuality and how we parade perversion in front of each other. How we're piping it in through the television and show after show in prime time. Stuff that would have 20 years ago been labeled pornographic and never would have made it into your living room during prime time now is front page stuff. Just click or dial and you're there.

[32 : 56] Right there. You don't have to, whatever you want. That's where we live today. And now we're being told that if we buck homosexuality, lesbianism and the whole gay agenda with all the initials behind it, we're the deviants. We're being made the perverts because we're not tolerant and we're not accepting and we're not understanding and we're living in the dark ages. No, we're not. We're just subscribing to the truth of the word of God uncompromisingly. We love them. We pray for them. You have people like that in your life and so do I. People I love and care about and pray for and witness to.

I don't know of anybody around here or close to me or in this congregation that's taking their finger and pointing at people and calling them nasty names and telling them they're going to burn in hell and so go on and burn. What I do see and I've talked to you is we pray together and we weep for them and our hearts are broken for them and we're terrified for them. And that's what we should be.

Nobody needs to fall under this judgment. What we're about to see in the flood is our God in his wrath and worse worse is coming. It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of a holy God.

And we want to preach that our God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, that their lifestyles were evil, evil. And that is God's assessment. Notice this particular verse here.

For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord and he watches all his paths. So nothing is escaping the Lord in the way of these people. God is not making an evaluation about these people where he missed something so that they could come up and say, oh yeah, yeah, yeah, wait, wait, wait.

[35 : 09] Before you level that on me now, did you see when I did this and this and this? Yeah, he sees it all. And his assessment is perfect. How about this verse? Oh, let me back up.

The eyes of the Lord are in every place watching the evil and the good, watching the evil and the good. Now notice that God's assessment is that this wickedness is, notice, great. Do you see that?

See the text. It's not it's not that it just says, then you always saw that the evil of man was going on on the earth. No, it was great on the earth. That's not an insertion. That word is in the in the text, in the Hebrew text.

It was great on the earth. The earth tells us that God sees this as a pervasive issue, a widespread encompassing problem on the earth, not a part of it on the earth.

That is all of mankind right now is involved in this kind of stuff. It's rampant. It's an epidemic of vileness and immorality in the world.

[36 : 21] And it's great. Great refers to God's assessment, then, of this widespread epidemic behavioral iniquity, characterizing how people are actually pursuing life.

They are a people defined by their lewdness and their cruelty. Notice now we're not going to get there today, but notice down deeper in chapter six, God's evaluation here.

Notice, for instance, verse 11 of chapter six. Now the earth was corrupt before God and the earth was filled with what, church? Violence.

Notice verse 13. Then God said to Noah, the end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. And I'm about to destroy them.

And God willing, we'll get there and we'll talk about what he's saying here. Right now, we just need to know that this is a very, very, very serious situation in the eyes of the Lord as he weighs their hearts.

[37 : 20] Now look, this is how God defines this great wickedness. One of the things that we can say about it, according to the text, it is the wholesale abandonment of all godly constraints and values.

Notice this one. It is the prideful violation of God's boundaries for human existence. And then finally, it is the total disregard for God and his ways.

Akin to number one. That's the situation that these people find themselves in as God weighs their hearts. The outward evidence of evil was staggering.

Everywhere God looked, he could only find people who were immersed in this malignant way of life. An evil, wicked, perverse way of life. Everything the Lord made as good for the good of mankind, people are defiling, debasing, exploiting for their own gain and pleasure, apart from any relationship or accountability.

God, are we not seeing that today? Are we not seeing people who are blessed with maleness or femaleness, taking that for granted, exploiting it, abusing it, rebelling against God, and then maligning what God gave them at birth as a gift?

[38 : 42] I made you male. I made you female. That's not good enough for them. Wanting to be their own God, now I'm going to change that up, and I'm going to be something other than that. I've shared with you before, I was in a conversation with someone who told me that they didn't want to be a female anymore.

They were going to identify as a different person. And so I asked them, well, if you're not male and you're not female, because they told me they didn't want to be either sex, I said, well, what are you then?

And this is the answer that I gave. There was no verbal answer. It was this. Just shrugged shoulders in a look of, it doesn't matter.

It doesn't matter. I don't have to be male or female to live my life. I can be what I want. Now, I'm going to say to you in clear terms, that is demonic deception at work.

Now, notice I didn't say possession. That is deception. That is a person self-deceived and demonically influenced in the deception that they can live apart from what God made them to live as and have a meaningful life.

[39 : 59] It's not going to happen. They're going to chase the wind the rest of their lives. This is the tragedy and the sense of loss that I feel for people I care about who are succumbing to this lie.

These are lies that hold people in bondage and enslave entire societies. And do you realize that there are churches in our town who name the name of Jesus Christ and they are subscribing to this stuff?

They're in our town. And they're saying that under the name of Jesus, God is okay with you doing this kind of stuff. And I want to ask them, have you read Genesis chapter 6 lately?

The second observation that God makes about mankind in our verse, then Yahweh saw that the evil of man was great on the earth and now, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

What do we do with that clause? This is their inner evil. God sees what they do, but He also sees why they do it. Inner evil.

[41 : 07] And that every intent of the thoughts of his heart, that is mankind, His is mankind, was only evil, notice continually.

Friends, that is God's evaluation. Now, this refers here on the screen to the root of behavioral iniquity.

In other words, the cause. What's the cause of all this wicked living? What's giving rise to this? What's fueling it? And God says that mankind's wicked lifestyle is produced by his evil heart.

Heart is synonymous with soul or mind. The wickedness we do issues from who we are, according to Scripture.

That's one of the principles that I want to encourage you to hang on to as you move through the Scriptures and whenever you're reading about God's view of mankind and Him weighing the heart.

[42 : 07] God is always weighing what we do by who we are. Now, Jesus taught this as He confronted the heart hypocrisy of the religious leaders because the religious leaders were twisting God's Word for their own gain.

And they were doing this to the great harm of God's people. They were laying burdens on God's people and confusing God's people by twisting God's Word and making it say something that it doesn't mean.

This was from a heart of hypocrisy in these men. And Jesus went after that hypocrisy of heart.

Now, I want to take you to the place that I'm talking about in Scripture. It's in Mark chapter 7. Would you turn there? Hold your finger there in Genesis. This is also in Matthew.

But I'm going to take you to Mark chapter 7 to see it. It might be a little less familiar to you in Mark's account. Now, notice in Mark chapter 7 that as Jesus addresses the religious leaders, He comes to verse 5 and the Pharisees and the scribes ask Jesus, Why do your disciples not walk according to thee?

[43 : 34] And here's the issue they're concerned about. The tradition of the elders. Now, I'm not here to preach through this passage, so we'll have to let that go. But look, the point is, they're asking, Why are they not keeping the tradition?

And so, on the surface of it, it sounds like these guys are concerned with the disciples of Jesus keeping spiritual religious tradition in a way that will help further them in their walk with God.

Why aren't they subscribing to these helpful things? And on the surface, that sounds like a legitimate issue. But notice, notice the way of our Lord.

Because He's God and He weighs the hearts, what does He say next in response? And He said to them, Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you... What's your text say?

Hypocrites. Do you see that? Right off the bat, where does Jesus go? He goes to the heart. You hypocrites. You honor Me with your lips, but notice in verse 6, what is their heart?

[44 : 41] Far from Me. See, Jesus knows that about them, you, me. And so, their worship is in vain, and they've left the commandment of God in verse 8.

Verse 9, He says, You're good at setting aside the truth in order to do what you want to do, your traditions. Then He gives them an example. Now He goes in, and in verse 14, He wants them to understand what He's trying to teach them about this.

And so, in verse 15, There is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him, but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.

What's Jesus saying? Your religious leaders want to make it look like when you come to do a religious thing, you've got to go through certain rituals to get yourself all physically ready to do that kind of stuff.

And they're ignoring the reality of the heart that you bring to worship. Hypocrites. They're not concerned about that. And Jesus says, Look, it's not the stuff on the outside that we need to worry about.

[45 : 46] I don't need to go take a shower before I come worship the Lord. I want God to cleanse my heart so that my heart brings something worthy of the Lord and He'll make it worthy. As I bow in humility before Him, in a brokenness before Him, I want to bring this to You, Lord.

That's how we should enter this place every Lord's day that we come before Him. In Your worship, in Your home, as you're driving in your car praying, this is the heart you need to bring. God's concerned with that. He says, no.

Things that come from the outside aren't what pollute us and corrupt us and defile us. It's what's on the inside coming out that we have to worry about. And so He's making that clear.

Notice in verse 17, When He left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples were asking Him about this brief parable. And so He said to them, Look, are you lacking in understanding in this as well?

You don't understand this either? You think they're making a good point? Do you not understand whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him? That's verse 18.

[46 : 45] Look at 19. Why? Because it doesn't go into his heart. When you eat stuff, they're saying, Don't eat these defiled foods. Don't partake of this stuff that when you eat is going to defile you religiously before the Lord.

And what does Jesus say? Now look, when you eat that kind of... That doesn't go into your heart. It goes into your stomach and then into the sewer. You eliminate it. Verse 20. And as He... Oh, and He declared all foods clean at the end of 19.

And then He was saying in 20, That which proceeds out of a person, that's what defiles you. For from within, from the heart of men, proceed what?

Evil thoughts. Here's ours. Sexual immorality. That's the stuff going on in Genesis 6. Where's all that sexual immorality coming from? From their hearts. Thefts.

Murders. Murders going on in Genesis 6. Probably thieving as well. Adultery. Definitely. All of that in Genesis 6 coming from their heart. Coveting. Definitely.

[47 : 45] Wickedness. Well, we've got that one listed for us in Genesis 6. Deceit. Sensuality. Envy. Slander. Pride. Foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the person.

Where does your sin come from? It comes from your heart. Where does my sin come from? My heart. When I sin, can I look at Suzanne and say, Oh, well, you made me do it.

You influenced me. No. Did I sin out of Suzanne's heart or my heart? Mine. But don't we mix this up? We want to do the same thing that our parents did when they got caught in their trespasses and sins.

We want a point. We want to assign issue with the other person or society or the situation. If you had it as hard as I do.

And I'm not saying we don't suffer. But we cannot blame society or situations or other people's hearts and motives on the sin that we commit. And I'll tell you right now, folks, listen, whenever we have a couple of people involved in a situation where there's conflict in relationship and there's something going on, we're going to deal with both parties, aren't we?

[49 : 04] There's both sides. And that's how we're going to deal with it. We're going to bring God's word to bear on the reality of that situation. Now, back to this. Genesis 6. Listen.

What did the Hebrews mean by heart in the context of Genesis 6, 5? Well, I can only tell you I'm not going to be able to run off with it.

But listen. The heart in Hebrew thought was the core of personhood. You've heard me teach on this before if you've been here. The way the Hebrews understand the heart and the feelings and all that's tied up in the heart is that it's the core of personhood.

It's the core of who you are. It's what makes you you. I came across this particular quote from commentator Lawrence Richards and I thought it was helpful. So let me put this up here for you.

Hebrew thought, he says, maintains the unity of the person. So it looks at a human being as a whole and expresses all of these and other human functions by use of the word heart.

[50 : 07] In the Old Testament, the heart is thus the conscious self. That is, it is the inner person with every function that make a person human.

So everything that functions in your inner person to make you human is what the Hebrews meant by heart. So your heart is your mind, your will, your emotions or feelings and your desires.

That's pretty much what comprises your inner self, the core of who you are. It's how you think, it's your will, how you make choices, it's your feelings, what you feel as you go through life and stuff comes at you and then your affections or your desires, what you want.

All of that issues from your heart and they all work in concert to define who you are and how you live. This is the basic teaching of Scripture. Your character then, when we talk about character, in the Bible, your character reflects your heart always.

And your personality, because we're good at throwing around the idea of personality. Again, you have to come to Scripture and let Scripture inform you because psychology and sociology and the wisdom of men are things that we grow up with and we hear and we read and it's coming at us and programs we watch, they're constantly throwing psychology at us.

[51 : 33] Your personality also shows your personhood or your heart. I'm not squashing personality or saying it doesn't exist. I'm just saying we have to understand it in light of what Scripture says.

So, Genesis 6-5, then I'll put this up here, Genesis 6-5 reveals the depravity of mankind. This is the doctrine.

This is the label. It's often referred to as the doctrine of total depravity. Total depravity. Let me emphasize that through this definition.

What am I talking about? Total depravity emphasizes the devastating impact of sin on the person and covers three related concepts.

You see that up there? So, we're talking about how we're going to understand total depravity biblically as we see it referenced here in Genesis 6-5. What does the total depravity of man mean?

[52 : 32] What is that about? Number one, sin is total or pervasive in that all components of a person are polluted by sin. No part of man escapes.

Now, don't run by that. What we're saying is we're not saying people are acting as badly as they possibly can. And that's what depravity means.

No. Depravity has to do, first of all, with the reality that we are completely polluted and corrupted by sin so that there's no part of what constitutes you as a person unaffected by sin.

All of you is polluted. No part. Your will did not escape corruption. Your will to choose is just as corrupt as an unbeliever as any other aspect of your personhood.

Okay? This is why we understand and say we would never choose God apart from Him first choosing us because my will is corrupt. My will doesn't want to choose God.

[53 : 36] It's in rebellion to Him. I'm depraved. Sin has corrupted every aspect of my humanity. I can't choose God even if I wanted to, which I don't want to.

I have to be given a want to. That's the teaching of the Bible. This is why I say if you get this foundation right, the rest of the sovereignty of God in coming to rescue sinners is like a no-brainer.

It's like, oh, of course. Of course God has to act on me. I'd never act toward Him because I'm corrupt. Total corruption. Every part of who we are is affected or polluted by sin.

Number two, sin is total in that man is incapable of pleasing God on his own. I can't please the Lord. Anything that I would offer the Lord as an unbeliever or as someone who's trying to rely on myself is as filthy rags to the Lord.

And so that brings up the righteousness of Jesus and the doctrine of righteous imputation and me offering to God what is pleasing to God based on the righteousness of Jesus, not a righteousness of my own.

[54 : 45] You see, these are critical. And then finally, sin is universal in that all humans are sinners. All humans are sinners.

sinners. No one is born into this earth apart from sin. Now, look, what does the Lord then want us to know about the inner condition of human beings which prompted God to render such cataclysmic judgment against them?

What does He want us to understand? Well, He says, the intent of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually. And this led to grossly sinful lifestyles.

Hear me, beloved. The word intent here can mean framework. Every intention of the thought of His heart or every intent. The intent here can mean framework.

It can also be rendered purpose or form as in the forming of pottery. So, it's akin to the word that was used in Genesis 2-7 where God where God is said to have formed man from the dust of the ground and then add to that the word thoughts.

[56 : 00] Every, what does it say? And every intent of the thoughts of His heart. Thoughts can also be translated devices or inventions.

Every invention of His thoughts was only evil continually. every invention He came up with from His heart was only evil.

Every device, every design. This is reflecting on the outside that depravity that we're talking about on the inside.

What He's doing on the outside is simply what's the evidence of the birth of what's within. Thoughts highlight the work of the mind as the most critical component of your heart.

Our thought life is a component of our heart life. We think out of our heart, out of our personhood, out of who we are, and we process life and make meaning of life that way.

[57 : 03] Now look, I'm going to put this up here to clarify it for you. So taken together then, the thoughts of a man's heart are those intentions and purposes issuing from the core of who we are.

It is the place where we form, produce, and frame our plans, purposes, and intentions. So as meaning makers, you and I want to understand and solve the problems of life that we encounter that come at us.

So we often see our problems through the lens, though, of self and sin. And so what we do in that situation is we diagnose our problems as being outside of us.

you're the problem. That's the problem. The circumstances are the problem. If they would just change, I wouldn't be like this. People don't understand me.

You know, these kinds of things. But Scripture tells us that our own hearts are our problem. Our hearts lie to us. Our hearts can be deceived.

[58 : 07] Our hearts are then unreliable. And this is true even after we become Christians. And so we are never going to tell you here at Grace, follow your heart. Not without some careful qualification.

That's hallmark. That's wisdom from the world. Follow your heart. And yet, you see where that leads. You want to shake them and ask them. And in every single case outside of these syrupy things we see on TV, how does that work out for people?

Ruin, devastation, heartache, divorce, murder. My goodness, follow your heart. Are you kidding me? Run and hide if they tell you that.

Our hearts are unreliable. So here's the way the Bible approaches this. The psalmist then, in light of that, asks the question, who can discern his errors?

That's good. The obvious answer is no one. No one. So then he says to God, acquit me of hidden faults. Why does he have to pray that?

[59 : 17] Why does the psalmist have to say, acquit me of hidden faults? Well, obviously, if God's going to acquit us of hidden faults, they're not hidden to him. So who are they hidden to?

Me! You! That's why we need to be super careful when we point at somebody. you with me? Super, super careful.

Because even with the assistance of God's word helping us to evaluate our hearts, we are still prone to deception and the unreliability and selfishness of our hearts.

It doesn't go away. It's still there. Look at what we see here in Ecclesiastes from the wisest man who ever lived apart from Jesus, Solomon.

The hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and madnesses in their hearts throughout their lives. Throughout their lives. You never escape this. You never graduate. I hope you are all so depressed by now, right?

[60 : 17] Oh my goodness, Jeff. This is terrible. This is why we need a savior. This is why Jesus came to rescue us. Look, by the time Noah was born, think about this, about 1,000 years, a little more than 1,000 years in our understanding of the timeline of scripture, has gone by since creation.

So by the time Noah is coming on the scene, a little more than 1,000 years have gone by. 1,000 years. By the time of the flood, approximately 1,600 years had gone by.

Right about that. So now why am I saying that? Listen, by Genesis chapter 6, by this time in the Bible's history, hundreds and hundreds of years, of reproducing and building and relating and living have gone by, but man's heart has not evolved to get better.

At best, man's heart has devolved to devise evil all the time and to produce disorder and violence and corruption and every evil practice.

And the reason that's true is in Scripture. And it's this. Do you see it here? Jeremiah 17, 9. The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick.

[61 : 32] Who can know it? Who can know it? Again, the answer is no one. No one but the Lord. Friends, God can reveal our hearts to us through His Word, but we cannot know.

We cannot know or search or understand the heart of another person. We may see the evidences of what their heart's producing, but going into somebody's heart is God's domain.

We need to stay out of that. Even as a counselor, when I deal with people and I offer them what I see in Scripture as a way for them to understand what's going on in their lives, I'm careful to try and help them understand this is God's wisdom, not mine.

I'm not sitting here as some expert guru trying to convince Mark as we counsel together that I've got this special insight into his heart. Aren't you glad you came to me, man?

Because I can see you. No, we can't do that. That's good stuff for science fiction movies and all that kind of thing, but even Superman can't see into your heart.

[62 : 43] It just can't happen. But God can, and God uses his word always. I'm not going to put it up there, but Hebrews 4.12. I think I used Hebrews 4.13.

Hebrews 4.12 tells you the work of God's word to see into our hearts and reveal to us. But that's the work of the word. That's not me having special insight or you.

So because we can't understand another person's heart, we can't even really understand our own hearts, this is why the Lord tells us, look how he answers now in Jeremiah, look, I Yahweh search the heart, I test the inmost being, even to give to each man or each person according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.

You see the fruit of your deeds, I see the fruit of your deeds, but God sees what's causing it. He sees the motive and the heart and the intention and the plans and the designs of your heart.

That's why he answers that in Jeremiah 17, 10, right behind verse 9, the heart is desperately sick and wicked, who can know it? No, that's my domain, the Lord says. And then another one, for God knows the secrets of the heart, Psalm 44.

[64 : 01] God knows the secrets of the heart, not Jeff, not you. And then this, Hebrews 4, 13, there is no creature hidden from God's sight.

All things, all things are uncovered and laid bare to the eyes of him to whom we have to give an account. Now, as I end, carefully and prayerfully consider a few takeaways with me as we just list them out.

They're related, so you'll see some overlap here. First of all, we cannot trust our own hearts apart from God's truth. God's truth helps us weigh our heart.

If I'm going to sit down with you and help you use the word of God to weigh your heart in the wisdom of God, I'm going to be very careful and circumspect to help you see I'm helping you come before the Lord and the Lord is using his truth to weigh your heart.

I'm not doing that. I don't have any special ability to do that as a counselor or a pastor or even a well-intentioned person. You with me? So we need to be careful now what we're qualifying here.

[65 : 08] Then another one. God's view of our heart is trustworthy. So we turn to the word of the Lord and we try to use God's wisdom to penetrate into the plans and intentions of your heart to expose to you what's going on there.

And what's going to happen is you're going to see God identifying idols, God replacements that you've lifted up in your heart instead of honoring the Lord in this. you're following the wisdom of something else, not the Lord.

And God will make that clear to you as you deal with him in his word. And then this, God sees the outwardly visible and he alone also looks to the inward or the innermost part of our being as well.

So he sees your actions and he sees what's causing those actions from your innermost part. Only God can accurately assess and expose the inner condition and operations of the heart.

That's God's domain. God's assessment is always proper, fitting, faithful, and firm because his judgments issue from his person. We saw that.

[66 : 13] He is righteous and so his acts are always, his judgments are always and utterly, completely trustworthy. And then God never lies to us or misjudges our hearts.

We can't say that about the world. They're just as messed up as we are. And then finally, God's word at the bottom of the screen, God's word alone is his wisdom to assess and expose our hearts to us for what is truly there.

That's very like the one where I say he can only accurately assess and expose. Well, he, this one down here is telling you and he uses his word to do that. So God will put you in circumstances in life where you will have an outward response or behavior or reaction to what he's putting in your life and it's coming at you and that what you say and do is evidence of what's going on in your heart.

And he'll use those circumstances to reveal your heart to you. He'll show you. So when you are impatient and you speak in impatience, in gratitude and maybe in anger towards someone, that's revealing something in your heart.

Your mouth is speaking from the overflow of your heart. And God uses these things to expose our heart to us. So we're always relating to God and to others from who we are in our inner person.

[67 : 42] And we need God's word to help us do that. Now the world, the world tells you, I'm almost done, the world tells you to look within yourself. Don't do that. That's a devil's scheme to ensnare you in a dark process by taking you into a dark place.

And it leads to discouragement. You spend all this time looking in, looking in, looking in, looking in instead of looking up and you're going to get discouraged because looking in is nasty.

You're going to see some stuff. But now what? The Bible tells us, no, examine ourselves by the light of God's truth. We are to examine ourselves on occasion, perhaps even regularly would be helpful, but we do it carefully within the word of God and in much prayer before the Lord.

And what that teaches us is it teaches us to ask God to acquit us of hidden faults, right? Keep your servant from presumptuous sin. But I understand there's also sin that I don't even know I'm doing.

That's my heart, Lord. Please forgive me. All right. Here's how I'll end with this verse. The unfolding of your words gives light, not dark.

[68 : 57] It gives understanding to the simple. Thank God. Thank you, Lord, for giving understanding to this simple boy. God's love for you. Amen. Let's pray together this morning.

Lord, Father, as always, we are humbled at your word.

We are humbled by the message that not only Jesus saves, but that Jesus saves sinners. And that you have given us new hearts.

And yet we still fight against remaining sin. We still fight as Christians against self and the deceitfulness of our desires that camouflage and hide and want to pass themselves off as something legitimate.

But the people who have come here this morning have come to hear the word. They've come to see Jesus exalted in the preaching of the truth of the gospel. And so that good news that Jesus saves is how we want to leave here today.

[70 : 01] We want to realize that the depravity of our hearts points us to our need for a Savior who will forgive us for our sins and cleanse us and take us into his heart and reside in us, making us new creatures in Christ, giving us hope for eternity in heaven with you.

This is the God we serve. So thank you, Almighty God, for extending to us the invitation to embrace Jesus by faith as our Savior and our Lord.

that we would be forgiven for our sins and given hope. We want to run to the cross of Jesus where you laid our sins on him and he gave himself up to death to pay the penalty of death for us.

God, thank you for Jesus and thank you for his resurrection where you prove that you accept the offer that he made on our behalf so that now we can know his righteousness, his sinless life credited to us that we might have salvation in him alone.

Father, thank you that we can rehearse the gospel to each other and take great hope and confidence that you have saved us from ourselves and from a life of deceit.

[71 : 16] Now I pray that you would help your people to walk in the light of your love, that they will repent and humble themselves before you and each other, seeking and asking for forgiveness from each other and from you, and then desiring to replace sin with a holy walk so that we are walking in a manner worthy of the calling with which we've been called in Jesus, being imitators of him, knowing that you love us.

Thank you for your word and thank you now for our time together. May you bless us as we leave this place and seek to make our lives a blessing to you. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.