Small Group Guide: The Flood

Origins Series — Genesis 6–9

Overview

This session explores the story of Noah and the flood, examining what it reveals about God's holiness, his judgment of sin, and his merciful provision of salvation. The flood narrative is not simply an ancient story about animals and a boat — it is a profound picture of the gospel itself, pointing us toward Jesus Christ as God's ultimate provision for humanity.

Key Scripture References

- Genesis 6:5–9 — God observes the wickedness of humanity and Noah finds favor
- Genesis 6:14–22 — God instructs Noah to build the ark
- Genesis 9:11–13 — God establishes his covenant with Noah and gives the sign of the rainbow
- Hebrews 11:7 — Noah's faith described as acting on God's word before seeing the evidence
- Matthew 24:37–42 — Jesus compares the days of Noah to the time before his return
- Romans 5:9–11 — Justification and reconciliation through Jesus Christ
- Ephesians 2:8–9 — Salvation is by grace through faith, not by works

Key Takeaways

1. Sin is serious and God will judge evil. God is not indifferent to sin. The flood demonstrates that human rebellion carries real weight and consequence. God's patience should never be mistaken for his approval of wickedness.

2. Salvation comes by grace through faith. Noah did not earn God's favor through personal perfection. He found grace — unmerited favor — in God's eyes. His obedience flowed from his trust in God, not the other way around. Salvation has always been a gift received through faith.

3. The ark points us to God's ultimate provision of salvation in Jesus Christ. The ark was the only means of deliverance from judgment in Noah's day. In the same way, Jesus is the only means of salvation today. The parallels between the two are not coincidental — they are intentional, woven together throughout Scripture.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. What is the earliest memory you have of hearing the story of Noah? What stood out to you about it then, and how has your understanding of it changed?

2. The sermon mentioned that flood narratives appear in cultures all around the world. Why do you think this story is so universally present across human history? What does that suggest to you?

Sin and Judgment

3. Genesis 6:5 describes a world where every inclination of the human heart had become evil continually. In what ways do you see echoes of that description in the world today? In your own life?

4. The sermon made the point that God's patience with sin should not be mistaken for his approval of it. How does that idea challenge or encourage you personally?

5. We often minimize or rationalize certain sins, especially ones that seem private or harmless. How does the flood narrative reframe the way we should think about sin and its consequences?

Grace and Faith

6. Genesis 6:8 says Noah found favor — grace — in the eyes of the Lord. The sermon emphasized that this grace was not something Noah earned, but something he received. Why is that distinction important? How does it change the way we relate to God?

7. Hebrews 11:7 describes Noah acting in holy fear on something he had never seen or experienced. What does it look like in your own life to trust God's word when circumstances seem to contradict it or when obedience feels costly?

8. The sermon described Noah as someone who was willing to be counter-cultural — to live differently than the people around him in order to be faithful to God. Where in your own life do you feel the tension between cultural pressure and obedience to God?

9. The illustration was given of a child leaping from the stairs into a father's arms, growing more confident with each catch. How has your experience of God's faithfulness in the past shaped your ability to trust him in the present?

The Ark and the Gospel

10. Look at the comparison drawn between Noah's story and the gospel. Where do you find the parallel most striking or meaningful? Is there any part of it that raises questions for you?

11. The sermon stated that the same God who judges sin is also the God who graciously provides salvation. How does holding both of those truths together shape your understanding of who God is?

12. Matthew 24:37–42 records Jesus comparing his return to the days of Noah — a time when people were going about ordinary life, unaware of what was coming. How does that passage affect the way you think about your daily priorities and your readiness?

Reflection Questions

Take a few minutes individually before sharing with the group.

- **Am I taking sin as seriously as God does, or have I become comfortable with things that grieve his heart?**
- **Am I walking with God the way Noah did — trusting and obeying him even when the surrounding culture does not?**

Practical Applications

This week, consider one or more of the following:

1. **Read the full flood narrative.** Set aside time to read Genesis 6 through 9 in one sitting. Ask God to show you something new about his character as you read.

2. **Identify one area of compromise.** Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal an area of your life where you have grown comfortable with something that does not align with God's word. Bring it before him in honest prayer and, if appropriate, bring it before a trusted brother or sister in Christ.

3. **Practice counter-cultural faithfulness.** Identify one situation this week where you know the right thing to do but where cultural pressure makes it difficult. Choose obedience and note what God does in and through that moment.

4. **Share the gospel with someone.** The story of Noah is ultimately a story about God providing a way of salvation. Think of one person in your life who does not yet know Jesus. Pray for them by name this week and ask God to open a door for a meaningful conversation.

5. **If you are a parent or grandparent**, look for one intentional moment this week to point your children or grandchildren toward what God has done, what he is doing now, and what he has promised to do.

Closing Prayer

Close your time together by praying as a group. You may use the following as a guide:

Heavenly Father, thank you that you are a God who does not leave us to find our own way home. Thank you that you have provided salvation — not because we earned it, but because of your grace. Search our hearts and show us where we have taken sin lightly or where we have allowed the culture around us to pull us away from faithfulness to you. Give us the kind of trust that Noah had — a faith that acts on your word even before we can see the outcome. And may we never lose sight of the gift we have been given in Jesus Christ, our ark, our salvation, and our Lord. In his name, amen.