



MORE DISCERNMENT

Pleasing God more means living right in a world gone wrong

SUMMARY

We have become a very goal-oriented society, and, while that isn't a bad thing, we often fail to make the greatest purpose our greatest pursuit. With a myriad of options and opportunities, it is so easy for us to get distracted by and begin to drift towards things that aren't necessarily bad things, but they interfere with or take the place of what should be our greatest desire – to please God. This year, let's determine that our life is going to abound with and increase in those things that our Heavenly Father takes great delight in.

REVIEW

Two weeks ago, we looked at 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 where we find the theme for our church this year: **MORE AND MORE - DETERMINED TO PLEASE THE LORD MORE IN 2024.**

To summarize, we said that our goal for this year is to abound and to increase in the things that our Heavenly Father takes great delight in. It's a journey marked by **INTENSITY**, **INTEGRITY**, **INTERACTION** (with the Father and with the family of God), and **INVESTMENT**.

We've found that it is possible for God to be pleased, it is possible for us to know what pleases God, and it is possible for us to please God with our life.

With that foundation, we began to consider some key elements that need to be in our life if we are going to please God more.

Last week, we found that the first element is **MORE TRUST**. Our key statement was this:
PLEASING GOD MORE BEGINS WITH TRUSTING GOD MOST.

We have a very real enemy that wants us to trust ourselves more than we trust God. We found that misplaced trust always takes more from us than it brings to us, but we also found that God dwells with and God does incredible things in and through those who will simply learn to trust God.

MESSAGE

Once sin invaded the heart of man and the world of man, sin impacted the life of man – our world was **CURSED**, and we were **CORRUPTED**. Simply put, everything changed...quickly and not for the better. You may ask, “How bad and how quick?” Well, in Genesis chapter 3, Adam and Eve made a **MESS** of things and by Genesis chapter 4 Cain **MURDERS** his brother. I’d say that’s really bad and really quick.

Now, in the early portion of Genesis chapter 4, we find an explanation of how things got so bad so quickly and how they would continue to get a whole lot worse. We’ll not take the time to walk through the entire chapter (I encourage you to do so on your own), but in Genesis chapter 4 we’re given three contributing factors to the decline of the state of our world and of our own lives:

(1) The first contributing factor is the **DANGER** of sin

Sin is **DANGEROUS**, not just because of what it does and what it can do, but because of what it’s known for. Sin is described in Genesis chapter 4...

As a **PRESENT** danger (it’s always close by),

As a **PERSONAL** danger (it’s after you and it’s after me), and

As a **PATIENT** danger (it waits for the right moment to make its move against us).

It is those three components that make sin so dangerous.

(2) The second contributing factor is the **DESIRE** of sin

Sin is also dangerous because sin is **DELIGHTFUL**. The Bible tells us that there are “...pleasures [in] sin for a season.” Sin is enticing because it pursues the fantasies of our wicked mind, and it pursues the pleasures of our deceitful heart. Someone has correctly stated that “You will never be able to accuse sin of not doing what you want it to do.”

(3) The third contributing factor is the **DOMINION** of sin

Sin is also dangerous because sin is **DRIVING**. Now, what do I mean by that? Sin promises us control, and authority, and power (all things that deep down we really want), but then it hops in the driver's seat of our life and takes in a direction and toward a destination that does not care about our health and wellbeing or the health and wellbeing of those around us. And that is exactly what took place from Genesis chapter 3 to Genesis chapter 4. And that is exactly what is still happening today.

And by the way, our world today, post-flood, is heading in the same direction as the pre-flood world - one where the **AFFECTIONS** of man and the **ACTIVITIES** of man are wicked and continually against God.

Genesis 6:5-7 says, *"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."*

Sin drove mankind further and further towards that which is **PERVERSE** ("...wickedness..." – vs. 5), towards that which is **NOT PLEASING** ("...evil..." – vs. 5 [meaning "grief; misery; trouble; distress"]), towards that which is **WASTEFUL** ("...corrupt..." – vs. 11 [meaning "ruin; loss; spill; spoil"]), and towards that which is **WRONG** ("...violence..." – vs. 11 [meaning "unjust; false; damaging; unrighteous]).

Genesis 6:8-13 says, *"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth."*

God then gives Noah some very specific instructions on what he was supposed to do next (**BUILD** an ark) and what he was supposed to do after that (**FILL** the ark). Now, when we come to this section of our Bible, that's primarily what our focus is on, and yet, I think that there is a necessary element that largely gets overlooked. Let's keep reading.

Genesis 7:1-5 says, *"And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him."*

If you're in the habit of marking things in the Word of God, I'd like to draw your attention to two key statements that are found in the passage that we just read:

Genesis 6:9 where the Bible says, *"...Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God."*

Genesis 7:1 where the Bible says, *"...for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation."*

For a few moments, I'd like to consider this thought: **MORE DISCERNMENT - PLEASING GOD MORE MEANS LIVING RIGHT IN A WORLD GONE WRONG.**

It is so easy for us to consider the first seven chapters of our Bible and come out with the conclusion that Eve was deceived into sin, that Adam decided to sin, that Cain dealt a fatal blow to his brother, and that the world was so desperately wicked that God decided to destroy it. Now, while all of those things are true, and while all of those things can be found in the first seven chapters of the Bible, I want us to understand that those are not the only things found in the first seven chapters of the Bible. In those same passages, we also find the grace of God given to those who gave themselves to God.

It's among the wickedness, and the perversion, and the violence that we are introduced to a man by the name of Noah. The name *Noah* means "quiet or rest." In a world of chaos, corruption, and contention, Noah found rest in a personal relationship with God. And what we find is that it was that relationship that set Noah apart from everyone else.

1) Noah was an **EXCEPTION** in his **GENERATION**.

Genesis 6:9 says, *"These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God."*

Genesis 7:1 says, *"And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation."*

Noah was just. His generation walked contrary to the ways of God, but Noah chose to walk with God. Noah's generation worshiped self while Noah worshipped the Sovereign.

Even though it may have seemed like Noah was alone, the reality is that there was a line of individuals that decided to be the exception in their generation. And they are a great example for us to learn from and follow.

A) Enos was an exception in the area of **WORSHIP**

Genesis 4:26 says, *"And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD."*

B) Enoch was an exception in the area of his **WALK**

Genesis 5:22-24 says, *“And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.”*

C) Lamech was an exception in the area of his **WORK**

Genesis 5:29 says, *“And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.”*

D) Noah was an exception in the area of his **WITNESS**

Genesis 6:9 says, *“These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.”*

2) Noah was **EXEMPLARY** in his **GODLINESS**.

When we consider what the Bible emphasizes about the life of Noah, we find that the single greatest component of Noah’s life was his **RIGHTEOUSNESS**.

Genesis 6:9 says, *“These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.”*

Genesis 7:1 says, *“And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.”*

When proclaiming judgment to the nation of Israel, Noah was one of the men that God used to declare what He desired to see among his people – righteousness.

Ezekiel 14:20 says, *“Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.”*

2 Peter 2:5 says, *“And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.”*

Noah mastered the most important thing – he walked with God. We often become experts in things that really don’t matter. When the Bible says that Noah walked with God, that means that Noah agreed with God. It takes time to walk with God. It takes priority to walk with God. The reason we don’t walk with God is because the desire and the dedication are not there as it ought to be.

Psalms 119:66 says, *“Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.”*

3) Now was an **EXAMPLE OF GREAT FAITH**

Genesis 6:22 says, *"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."*

Genesis 7:5 says, *"And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him."*

Genesis 7:9 says, *"There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah."*

Hebrews 11:7 says, *"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."*