



This Sunday we were in Genesis 5v1-6v8, a passage that we might be tempted to skip over as it consists of a genealogy (5v1-32), a confusing myth-like scene (6v1-4), and a terrible indictment of sin and warning of God's judgment (6v5-8). But there is much rich gospel truth for us even in as grim a diagnosis as this if we will listen.

1 – Creation & curse (5)

Through the genealogy stretching from Adam through to Noah we see how God both blessed and cursed his people after the Fall. He allowed human beings to continue in his image (cf. v3), gave Adam and Eve a fruitful family through Seth, and blessed their descendants with long lives and many children. Human experience was marked now by death, however. Although Enoch seemed to outdo death so faithfully did he live (v24), and in Noah's birth Lamech saw hope of a comfort to come (v29), death is the drumbeat of this chapter (v5, 8, 11, 14, 17...). Creation and curse now go side by side and hand in hand. They are inseparable.

In many ways we too live in a time of creation and curse. Sin crouches at our door and often overpowers us, and death takes us all in the end. Yet because of Jesus we live in a very different time. The genealogy begun here is not completed until Luke 3v23. Though Jesus too died, he was raised. Because of him the pattern of creation and curse has been broken and there is life eternal for the believer and hope despite suffering in the present.

2 – Regret & removal (6v1-8)

Having in the previous chapter stood on the sidelines operating common grace, God in this section intervenes. The sons of Gods are judged for transgressing

boundaries in the way that they take the daughters of men to be their wives (v2). God punishes them by limiting their lives (v3).

In v5 God steps back and evaluates the human beings he has made. His diagnosis of the extent and depth of their sin is awful. In v6 God's heart breaks over his creatures' sinfulness. In v7 we learn what he will do: wipe out the humans he has made and the creatures with them. In v8 there is a glimmer of hope as God's grace lands upon Noah. Noah has "found favour in the eyes of the LORD". He and his family will survive this judgment. Salvation is just around the corner.

God's diagnosis of the human condition and each of our hearts is hard to swallow. Secular society pushes back vehemently against it, as do our sinful hearts. Yet the Bible speaks again and again of humanity's sinfulness and God's rightness in his judgments. But the Bible also speaks of God the judge being made man that he might take the judgment for us. What incredible grace!

Here are a few questions you might want to use with your group...

1. How do you feel about this passage? Why might be tempted to skip/read quickly through a part of the Bible such as this? What might we miss if we do that?
2. What do you make of the many strange things in this section? Which do you find most troubling/interesting? How are we to handle such things (see Deuteronomy 29v29), and how are we to deal with passages like this that contain them?
3. How does the genealogy in chapter 5 speak strongly of creation/blessing? How does it speak strongly of curse?
4. How does our experience of life resemble this picture? How, because of Jesus, is our experience of life very different from this picture?
5. What do you think is going on in 6v1-4? Who are the people involved, and more importantly what is their sin and how (and why) does God deal with it?
6. Why do we find God's verdict upon humanity in 6v5-8 so hard to accept? Where might we go in the New Testament to see the same verdict?
7. How does v8 totally transform this passage? How does the knowledge that God in Jesus would be made man and himself bear this judgment transform it?
8. How can both the warning and the hope of this passage affect how we live each day? What in this passage leads us to know God better and love him more?