Genesis 6:1-22: Trust and Obey for There's No Other Way
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In the Beginning

Introduction

• Growing up at Southside Baptist Church in Augusta - as a 4 year old standing on the pew singing out of the hymnbook.
• Learning to play piano - learning to play hymns as a 7 and 8 year old to play in church… A hymn we sang regularly, “Trust and Obey…”
• Trust and obey… there’s no other way… Do you believe that? How would your life be different if you daily trusted God and obeyed His voice?
• This is what the church needs! People who trust and obey! This is what the world needs to see: people who trust and obey!
• One of the most famous stories in the Bible: Noah. A story about taking God at His Word: “There’s going to be a flood.” A what? And obeying God’s Word: “Build an ark.” A what?
• In this story, why you should trust and obey, and I want to show you how you should obey. Three ways.

The Story

• First line… “When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word...” Before the fall, Adam and Eve walked with the Lord.
• Their firstborn son doesn’t walk with the Lord at all. The story of Cain so hopeless. But, the end of Gen. 4 is hope. Another child, Seth. After Seth was born, “People began to call on the name of the Lord” (Gen. 4:26).

• Gen. 5 seems hopeful. From Seth’s lineage a man named Enoch. Enoch gets it right! He walks with the Lord, and God takes him - like Elijah - he doesn’t taste physical death (Gen. 5:22-23).

• Gen. 5 - Maybe humanity will get it right. Maybe humanity will walk with God. Then Gen. 6. Humanity doesn’t get it right. Gen. 6:1-4 - notoriously difficult verses. Sons of God? Fallen angels intermarrying with humans? Intermarriage between Cain’s descendants and and Seth’s descendants? Whoever they were, their descendants were mighty men...

• Moses’ point: It was a strange time and it was a wicked time. “Every intention of the thoughts of man were only evil continually…” So much for walking the Lord.

• God cuts life short… Gen. 4 people live a very long time - Methuselah lived 969 years! From now on, about 120 years… (6:3) (Or, 120 years to the flood.)

• Imagine Moses trying to describe the heart of God as God saw how evil people had become. “He regretted making man. It grieved His heart.”

• Judgment… “I will blot out man, and every living creature.” Sobering words… God gave man an opportunity to bear His image - to represent Him on earth, but humanity did not. Everyone on the face of the planet deserved judgment, and judgment was coming.
• We decorate our baby’s nursery with images of Noah and his floating zoo, but this is a horror story. This story should give you and your child nightmares, not warm fuzzy feelings and cute images of a floating zoo.
• An unthinkable act of judgment. Yet, a glimmer of hope. One man - Noah - found favor in eyes of the Lord. Favor = grace.
• Gen. 3:15 - God will bring about judgment in a sinful world with a worldwide flood, but God will also leave a family on the earth and start afresh - and He will ultimately fulfill the promise He made in Gen. 3:15. Noah = hope for the human race.
• God graciously chooses Noah (vs. 9), and Noah lives in light of God’s grace. Noah a sinner like everyone else, but he knows the grace of God. He’s righteous. (First time word used.) He’s blameless - contrast to how everyone else lived. AND… He walks with the Lord (6:9) like the first man Adam pre-fall and like His great grandfather Enoch. Enoch walked with the Lord and escaped death. Noah walked with the Lord and escaped a world wide flood.
• The instruction: build an ark (vs. 14 - a massive boat. Noah had never seen anything like it, yet now he would build it.
• 450 ft. long, 75 ft. wide, 45 ft. high, 100,000 sq. ft. of space. Equivalent of 20 full size basketball courts. Storage space of 1.5 million cubic feet. Capacity of over 500 railroad cars. Could have held 20,000 - 50,000 animals.
• Took decades to build. 50-100 years! How? No details…
Did Noah have carpentry experience? No modern technology. (Show me the DVR!)

• Amazing thing: Noah did it (6:22). Built the ark. Gathered the animals. God brought them to the ark. Imagine the sight! (6:20).
• Why did he do it? Grace. Grace-saturated obedience. Our obedience should be grace-saturated obedience because we realize we have found favor in the eyes of the Lord. When you know how loved you are, how can you not obey… But, HOW does Noah obey?

Obey God with passion.

• Noah knew God would use his obedience. His life and the fate of humanity depended on his obedience. Noah believed what God said He would do.
• Passionate because he knew he was part of God’s plan of redemption. God wasn’t done - God would establish a new people from the descendants of Noah. A people that would be his covenant people.
• If you experience grace, you obey passionately because you know God is using your obedience (Eph. 2:10). Your obedience is not an exercise in futility.
• God uses your obedience to grow you. Think of the faith lessons Noah learned as he built the ark. The more you walk by faith the more you grow to trust, because the more you obey, the more you realize that God is faithful to you.
• God uses your obedience as a testimony of His
powerful work in your life. For years, Noah was asked, “Why you building that boat?” His answer: God. You’re not going to believe this… and no one did… BUT his obedience a testimony of God’s work. When someone asks why you live differently, God is the answer. Your obedience is evidence to the world of God’s work in your life.

- **God uses your obedience as part of His plan of redemption.** “I will establish my covenant with you...” (vs. 18). God wasn’t done… What does God ultimately want? For all people to know Him and walk with Him. God wants all people to walk with Him like Enoch did. Like Noah did. Grace has come to you so that through you God might extend grace to someone else.

- Obey God? Submit to His will? For many of us that doesn’t sound very enticing, but when you begin to consider how God uses your obedience to further His plan, how can you not be passionate about obeying Him?

- **Missing the Space X launch… didn’t know I could see it… What are you missing out on by not trusting and obeying?**

**Obey God with patient persistence.**

- Scholars debate how long it took to build the ark. 50-100 years. (Remember building our house in N.A. - a few months that seemed to take forever.)

- Every day. The same thing. Week after week, month after month...
month, year after year. Challenging work! It never quit!
• Not only did he build. He warned! 2 Pet. 2:5 - a herald of righteousness. As people watched, Noah explained. Noah warned. Year after year.
• For decades, no fruit for his obedience. Nothing really happened. No one believed his message and turned from their sins.
• AND… no indication that God spoke to him again for those 100 years. No indication that God checked on Noah and said: “Good job. Keep it up. You’re building a great ark.”
• Would you have obeyed God for 100 years when there was no visible fruit for your obedience?
• When would you have given up? After a few months? A year? 10 years?
• If we’re going to obey God we want to see an immediate payoff, but what if there isn’t an immediate payoff for your obedience? Will you still do what God says?
• Will you still give generously when it doesn’t seem like God is blessing you for your giving? Will you continue to share the Gospel when it’s hard? Will you continue to be faithful to your marriage when you’re in that marital drought and you and your spouse just can’t seem to get on the same page? Will you continue to disciple your kids faithfully when it seems like they could care less about the things of God? Will you continue to refrain from gossip when everyone else is gossiping?
• Will you patiently persist in obedience when it doesn’t
seem like there’s any fruit? When it doesn’t seem like God is blessing? When there seems to be no payoff?

- Why did Noah continue to obey? Because of what God had done and because of what God promised He would do.
- Here’s why you should patiently persist in obedience:
  - **Because of what God has done.** (He has showered you with grace like He showered Noah with grace.)
  - **Because of what God will do.** (He was going to bring Noah through judgment of the flood. He will bring you through judgment as well. You will never experience judgment but instead given the gift of eternity.)
  - It may be hard to persist in obedience, but if you are a follower of Jesus, you have every reason to.
  - Col. Sanders rejected 1,0009 times. You have a far better reason to persevere. You have something far more certain than a recipe for a great bucket of chicken.

**Obey under tremendous weight.**

- Obeying God isn’t easy. Christian life is full of joy, but there’s also a weightiness to following Jesus - the weight of obedience.
- Imagine not only the lack of fruit, but also imagine the persistent weight Noah was under.
- Didn’t know when it would flood. Every day, checking the sky. He had to get the boat built. Every day that passed by was one day close to a world-wide flood.
• Weight of preaching - tremendous responsibility of knowing that regardless of how people responded, he had to warn them of the upcoming flood. The weight of knowing that every person who rejected his warning would die in the flood.

• The weight… The responsibility… The burden…. Do you think Noah had sleepless night? Maybe asked, “Where are you God?” Maybe asked, “God, are you sure about this? Is there another way?” You think he wondered, “Am I doing this for nothing?”

• You feel the weight? The weight of knowing it’s not always easy to obey God? The weight of knowing that you might be rejected by people because of your stand for Jesus? The weight of knowing that you might be called bigoted or narrow-minded because of your biblical convictions? The weight of the spiritual warfare that you experience on a daily basis?

• Four options when you feel the weight:
  • You can fight. Where some of you are now. “I want what God wants, but I also want what I want…” Constant battle. Will you do your will or God’s will?
  • You can flee. Walk away from God because the weight is too much for you. You’ve chosen your will over God.
  • You can fix. Do God’s will on your terms. “God, you want me to share the Gospel? I’ll share with my friend. She’s easy to talk to, but not my coworker. She’s not so easy to talk to.”
  • You can fall. Fall before God and say, “I don’t have all
the answers, but you do. I trust and obey.” Some of us need to fall before the Lord this morning.

• Noah obeyed under persistent weight, and so did Jesus. In the Garden of Gethsemane, instead of fleeing, fighting, and trying to fix God’s will, He fell to His face and said, “Not my will, but your will be done.”

• Noah obeyed God, but he wasn’t perfect. We see that at the end of his story. At the beginning of his story he seems so different than Adam, but at the end, he’s not so different at all.

• Jesus, however, is very different. He never failed the Father. He lived His whole life saying to the Father, “Not my will, but your will be done.” That cost Him His life - laid down His life for you and me then rose from the dead.

• Talk about passionate, patient, persistent obedience! Paul said Jesus was obedient to the point of death on a cross (Ph. 2).

• Jesus obeyed because you couldn’t. In His grace, He has given you His righteousness. Now, He has given you a desire to obey Him in response to His grace.

• Trust and obey. For there’s no other way.