



Total Depravity, Yet Grace Still Reigns Grace Reigns: God's Gospel for All Peoples Series #11

Genesis 6:1-8:1a

David Sunday

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*Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.*

(Psalm 43:5)

God, as we lift our hearts up to You, we put our hope in Your Word. We pray that through the power of Your Holy Spirit illuminating our minds to its truth and empowering the preaching of it, that You, the God of hope, would fill us with all joy and peace, that we may trust and believe in You, and that we would abound in hope through the power of Your Holy Spirit. We ask this in Jesus's name. Amen.

Please turn in your Bible to Genesis 6. We are continuing our "Grace Reigns" series and come to the story of Noah and the Great Flood. You can find restaurants named after Noah's Ark, paintings of Noah's Ark, music boxes, t-shirts, coffee mugs, daycare centers and even a recipe on PastryWiz for Noah's Ark Brownies. Of course, there is also a great water park in Wisconsin Dells. However, when you read the story in the Bible, you will see this is not a cozy, put-your-grandchildren-to-bed type of story.

It is a story of God's judgment on the total depravity of humanity. It is the story of the triumph of God's grace in the life of Noah and his family. It is the story of de-creation, as God's wrath undid the structure of a world that turned against Him in *en masse*. It is also the story of re-creation. It is a story that answers a timely question for us in our day, a question that is posed in Psalm 11: *"If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"*

There are times in human history when the tide of evil rises so rapidly, it is like a tsunami of sin that engulfs the land. Regardless of how you feel about the moral landscape of our culture, people on every side of the cultural divide agree that the moral revolution taking place in our

society is happening at warp speed. For those of us whose convictions are shaped by the Bible, we are troubled. We are troubled by the rejection of sexual morality, the redefinition of marriage and the regime of tolerance that renders anyone who dares to object as a “hateful bigot.”

There is no doubt that today’s political, legal and cultural climate is going to require from us greater fortitude, courage, wisdom and resolve if we want to maintain a peaceful, loving and faithful witness for Christ and His gospel. But we must not panic or lose heart. When the foundations are destroyed, the Bible tells us what the righteous can do. We are going to see four very helpful instructions for us from this ancient story of Noah and the Flood.

Do Not Long for Former Times

When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do? First, do not long for former times. Do not wish for days gone by. Let’s look at what the times were like in Noah’s day as we read the first eight verses of chapter six:

When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.” The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

When the tide is rising against us, it is always tempting to long to escape and move to a more suitable climate, going back to a friendlier, godlier generation, so to speak. That is what the enemies of the Lord suggested to God’s people when the foundations were being destroyed. They said, “Flee like a bird to your mountain. Escape for safety!”

As believers and churches, we can become wistful, longing for former days. We are nostalgic, wishing that we could go back to a bygone era when everything was simpler, people were friendlier toward our faith and things were more comfortable for Christians. However, this

wish to go back is foolish. Nostalgia kills mission. Scripture wisely warns us against thinking like this.

Listen to Ecclesiastes 7:10: *“Say not, ‘Why were the former days better than these?’ For it is not from wisdom that you ask this.”* Wisdom reminds us that we are not living in the worst of times. God’s people have faced similar corruption and opposition in generations past. God did not forget them—He will not forget us now.

What were things like in Noah’s day? In verse one, we see there was a multiplied population and along with that multiplied wickedness. One primary form of this wickedness is spoken of in verse two: the abuse of marriage. This verse is one of the most difficult to interpret in the book of Genesis, so let’s focus on what is very clear about it. There were sons of God and what they saw with their eyes, they took in marriage any they chose. There was no discernment or fear of God involved in their choice of wives. They simply saw, lusted and took. When we see that phraseology in verse two—they saw and they took—it should remind us of Eve in the Garden of Eden. She saw the forbidden fruit and that it was desirable, she took it—going outside the boundaries God had established.

Therefore, these were men driven by lust rather than by the fear of the Lord, and marriage was abused because of it. There are a variety of interpretations of what it means when the text says the sons of God took the daughters of men and produced the Nephilim, the mighty men and men of renown. (Nephilim is a word that means “fallen ones” in Hebrew and was rendered as “giants” by Greek translators.)

Throughout church history, some have argued that what we have here is the godly line of Seth intermingling with the ungodly line of Cain and, through that intermarriage between believers and unbelievers, a very violent and sinful generation arose. That interpretation is plausible.

However, I am inclined to agree with a line of interpretation that goes all the way back to the early church which sees some form of supernatural, demonic activity at play here in verse two. You can read in the New Testament passages like 2 Peter 2:4-5 for possible explanation of what happened here. Or you could look at Jude 6, which says, *“And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day...”*

According to this interpretation, which is held by Bruce Waltke, these are tyrants, earthly rulers who became demon-possessed. They were men who were controlled by fallen angels and their perverted psyches, allowing the entrance of the demonic. They produced children in verse four. I realize that sounds bizarre to modern ears, but I also think it’s a plausible interpretation.

It helps us to see that the same serpent that tempted Eve in the garden is still at work trying to destroy the godly line so that, ultimately, the Messiah does not come into the world. Whatever interpretation you hold, there was an abuse of marriage in Noah's time.

God's patience was tested. In verse three, He said, "*My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.*" Judgment is coming in 120 years. How patient is God?

There was a man who debated Christians in Scotland a generation ago who was famous for his blasphemies. After he uttered all kinds of blasphemous things against God, he would say at the end of his debate, "Now, I'm going to give God three minutes to strike me dead." He would wait three minutes and when he was alive at the end of those three long minutes, he would say, "See, there's no God." One day, a pastor stood up to rebut his opponent and said, "Are you so foolish as to think you could exhaust the patience of an eternal God in three minutes?" God is very patient. He waited 120 years.

But His patience has a limit. God's perspective on human sin is unerring and observant. Verse five says, "*The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*" This is one of the clearest descriptions of the doctrine of total depravity that we have in the Bible. We see here that sin is internal. The heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart. No matter how good things may look on the outside, the inside is dirty, corrupt and polluted. Furthermore, no matter how bad things look on the outside, it's even worse within.

We also see that sin is pervasive. The text says "every intention" and "only evil." It is continuous as well. This is what God sees when He looks down at humanity. He sees total, utter depravity. This is a truth that Scripture upholds about humanity after the fall. Every part of our being is polluted and corrupted by sin.

If you put a little bit of deadly poison in a glass of water, every drop of that water is poisoned. The glass may not be as toxic as it could be had you dumped the whole jar of poison into the water, but, nonetheless, every drop of that water is deadly. It has been poisoned. That is how sin has polluted every human being.

This is God's perspective on humanity and this perspective brings pain to His heart. In verse six, it says "*the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth...*" He was sorry, and "*it grieved him to his heart.*" I am glad we have a God Who is personal. He is a God Who does not just stand at an objective distance and make unfeeling calculations about how He is going to respond to our sin. He is a God Who grieves because He loves. To grieve over someone is a sign of your love for that person.

God grieves because He loves, but, thankfully, God's response is not merely emotional. He is not merely pained over sin. He plans what He is going to do about it. He acted in justice in verse seven: *"I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them."* God has His perspective. It brings Him pain. It results in a plan of judgment, yet there is preservation.

Verse eight says, *"But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD."* That word for "favor" is the same word for "grace." Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. It is the first mention of the word "grace" in the Bible and it would be even better translated "grace found Noah." God's grace found this man. In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, God's eyes ran to and fro throughout the earth, landing on Noah. God worked graciously in His life.

God's grace is still at work in our time. We may see increasing corruption in our day and a tide turning against the values of God's Kingdom in our day. Nonetheless, God is still graciously at work. He is still on a search and rescue mission today, working in the most wicked and miserable of cultures. When the foundations are being destroyed, the believers do not lose hope or wish for a better time; they keep their eyes open for God's grace at work.

This past Thursday, April 9, was the 70th anniversary of the day Dietrich Bonhoeffer was hung in a German prison by the Nazis. Listen to the wisdom he expressed just 11 months before his death. He was a man who did not wish for a different time in which to live. He lived in one of the most wicked times of the 20th Century and suffered personally from it. However, listen to the wisdom as he wrote these words from his prison cell:

We have grown up with the experience of our parents and grandparents that a man can and must plan, develop and shape his own life. And that life has a purpose about which a man must make up his mind and he must then pursue with all his strength. We have learned by experience that we cannot plan even for the coming day that what we have built up is being destroyed overnight. And that our life in contrast to that of our parents has become formless or even fragmentary.

All of us have grown up hearing things like "you have a purpose" and "you need to plan" and "you need to execute that purpose in your life." But Bonhoeffer learned that there are no plans for the future. Everything he had hoped for was destroyed. Listen to what he says:

In spite of that, I can only say that I have no wish to live in any other time than our own, even though it is so inconsiderate of our outward well-being.

Wow! How can a man say this from a Nazi prison cell? You want to live here and now? You have no wish to go back to some other place, some other time? Bonhoeffer said this because he reflected on the wisdom of God's Word. He said:

We realize more clearly than ever that the world lies under the wrath and grace of God. We read in Jeremiah 45, *"Thus says the Lord, Behold, what I have built I am breaking down. What I have planted I am plucking up. And do you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not! For behold I am bringing evil upon all flesh. But I will give your life as a prize of war and all places you may go."*

Bonhoeffer meditated on this word. "God was bringing judgment so I am not going to seek great things for myself." Instead, here is what his focus became:

If we can save our souls unscathed under the wreckage of our material possessions, let us be satisfied with that. If the Creator destroys His own handiwork, what right have we to lament the destruction of ours? It will be the task of our generation not to seek great things, but to save and preserve our souls out of chaos.

And that was the task of Noah in his generation, not to seek great things for himself, but to keep his heart before God. He wished to remain faithful to God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. That is our task as well. We don't choose the times in which we live or the cultural conditions. What we must do is remain faithful to God in our generation.

If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?

1. Do not long for former times. Be faithful here and now.
2. Do not despair of God's grace.

Do Not Despair of God's Grace

We have seen God's grace at work in Noah's life and we are going to see it more. Do not despair of God's grace.

We often ask, "How can a loving God send people to hell?" The better question is, "How can a holy God send people to heaven?" If we understood the depths of humanity's sin and saw what God sees in humanity, we would not struggle with His judgment on sinners; we would marvel at His mercy. God is very merciful, just as He was in Noah's day. As wicked as this world has become, human sinfulness cannot extinguish God's grace.

We see this grace in verse nine, which says, *"These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God."* Noah was

righteous before God and blameless before men. Why? Because God's grace found Noah. God was gracious. This man was righteous by grace and blameless by grace. He walked with God.

Verse ten continues, "*And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.*" His sons and family was also set apart before God because of God's grace in their father's life. The Apostle Paul said the same thing happens to unbelieving sons and children today. If they have a believing parent or spouse, their lives are set apart by the grace of God (1 Corinthians 7:14).

We also see in verses 11-12 how corrupt the world was. It was filled with violence and God saw all of this. Nonetheless, Noah walked with God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. God's grace sanctifies, sets apart families and enables us to swim upstream like a salmon, going against the current. How many people do you need in your life walking with God around you in order for you to walk with God? Noah had no one. God's grace enabled Noah to walk with God when no one else was. We need to lay hold of that. Grace grows strong through adversity. God will call us at times to stand alone. Are we ready to do that?

In the Puritan days, Samuel Rutherford wrote:

I find it most true that the greatest temptation out of hell is to live without temptations. If my waters would stand stagnant, they would rot. Faith is the better for the free air and the sharp winter storm in its face. Grace withers without adversity. The devil is but God's master fencer to teach us to handle our weapons.

There is a man whose spiritual bloodstream has a lot of iron in it. It is what we need. We need that fortitude and resolve that the grace of God can enable us to swim upstream. God's grace is strong enough to both make and keep us holy in the midst of a crooked and violent generation. Paul said this in Philippians 2:14-16:

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

God's grace is at work. Don't despair of it.

God's grace also warns of coming judgment. Look back at Genesis 6:13. "*And God said to Noah, 'I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.'*"

Amos 3:7-8 says:

*"For the Lord GOD does nothing
without revealing his secret*

*to his servants the prophets.
The lion has roared;
who will not fear?
The Lord GOD has spoken;
who can but prophesy?"*

When God is sending judgment, He graciously warns humanity of the judgment that is coming. God's people who hear that warning don't keep it to themselves. They become like Noah, who was referred to by Peter as a preacher of righteousness. God speaks to us so that we might speak to others and rescue the perishing.

Thankfully, God does not just warn us that judgment is coming. He also graciously shows us the way of escape. Look at verse 14. *"Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch."* God gave clear and specific instructions on how Noah would escape the judgment. You can read all the details of it in verses 16-21, including details on how to build the ark and that he must take every representation of every animal, plus food and all that was needed.

What's the point here? Colin Smith says, "The message of judgment is not the angry outburst of a fierce God. It is the gracious call of a loving God Who says, 'I must destroy evil and I will destroy it, but I do not want to destroy you. So here is the way you can escape.'" That's what we heard last week on Easter Sunday. Jesus is risen; judgment is coming, so you must repent. God is warning us because He loves us and He has made a way of escape for all who will believe in Him.

If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?

1. Do not long for former times.
2. Do not despair of God's grace. He is able to sanctify us. He is able to preserve and protect us from His judgment.
3. Believe the Word of God and act upon it. If you believe it, you will act upon it.
You will not merely hear it, but you will also do it.

Believe the Word of God & Act upon It

This text emphasizes four times that Noah did all that God commanded him to do. You see it in verse 22: *"Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him."* I can think of many reasons why obedience may have been challenging for Noah. After all, there was no precedent for a flood like this. It had never happened before, but God said, "This is what is going to happen." He was in the middle of the desert and he built a ship? It took a long time. If you work in the same place your whole career, you might be there 40 years. Noah did not just work for ten

years, 20 years, 30 ears or 40 years on this boat. He worked for 120 years on this boat in the middle of the desert! It was a huge ship!

Think of how they must have mocked and derided him. Year after year, he would go to bed at night hearing eggs on his windowsills and people mocking out on the streets. He couldn't go anywhere in public without being laughed at, scoffed and scorned. It was a huge ship.

I read an article by Joe Carter about an ark of this size. He says, "Based on 18 inches to a cubit, the total cubic volume of Noah's ark would have been 1,518,000 cubic feet. What is that? It is the equivalent of 250 single-deck railroad stock cars. The average stock car can carry 80 180-pound sheep or 160 50-pound sheep." How many animals were on the ark? There were between 20,000 and 40,000 sheep-sized animals on the ark. Wow!

What is the point of the details in chapter six? It's not to impress us with the size of the ark. Rather, in the words of John Sailhammer, "The point is that we might appreciate the meticulous care with which this godly and exemplary individual went about his tasks of obedience to God's will."

With meticulous care, Noah obeyed God with all his heart for 120 years. He believed the Word of God and acted on it. That is what sets him apart as a righteous man. Hebrews 11:7 says, "*By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.*"

That's the challenge for us. Faith means taking God at His Word, despite all appearances to the contrary, and acting on what God has spoken. Every word God has spoken is true and the believer says, "I will act upon that. I will put my trust in that."

What is the word God has spoken to us that we are to act upon? Jesus tells us in Matthew 24:37-39:

For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Jesus said, "Get ready." Faith hears that and acts in obedience. Jesus is coming. A judgment is coming and the world has never seen anything like it. The risen Christ will return. He will judge the world in righteousness. A world of scoffers dismisses this pronouncement as fear-mongering nonsense. "Where's the promise of His coming? It's been thousands of years

and everything goes on just as it always has!” They overlook the fact that God destroyed the world once with a flood and He will come again and bring judgment.

How long will it be? The Apostle Peter says in a wonderful passage in 2 Peter 3:8, *“But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”* Don’t interpret God’s patience as slowness or laxity. The reason Jesus hasn’t come in judgment yet is because God is patient with us, *“not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance”* (2 Peter 3:9b).

In light of this truth, believers pursue obedience and holiness. Peter continues in verses 11-12, *“Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!”*

We are to live in obedience to every word God has spoken. If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? Don’t long for former times. Don’t despair of God’s grace. Believe God’s Word and act upon it and...

Find Refuge in the Shelter God Has Provided

The first mention of the word “grace” was in Genesis 6:8. The first mention of the word “covenant” in the Bible is in 6:18. *“But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.”* So there is a place of safety from the coming judgment, but it is not automatic.

Sean told us today how you can be safe from a tornado. You cannot stay in this room. You must go to one of the shelters. Just knowing there is a shelter will not get you safe; you must get up and move or have someone help you move there. Just knowing there was a covenant where God would safely keep those who trust in Him was not enough; Noah and his family had to go in the ark. They had to find refuge in the shelter God provided.

Genesis 7:1, 5-7 and 9b-10:

Then the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation....” And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him. Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ... [All the animals] went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. And after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth.

Now, I'd like you to focus in on verse 11: *"In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day..."* Do you doubt that the great flood was a historical event? God's Word is wanting you to know there was a specific day. It was in *"the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day"* in history. And then *"all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened."* It's like the second day of creation was overturned. God made the separation between the waters above the firmament and the waters below, so that there was a safe and dry place. Now, that separation is gone and chaos is returning.

Genesis 7:12-16 says:

And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in.

What's the point? Noah and his family did exactly what God commanded them to do. They heard of the place of protection, the refuge, and they sought safety in it. They placed themselves where they could be covered and upheld by God's grace amidst the deluge of the flood of God's wrath. Everyone else was running out to the grocery store, getting ready for the picnic, going out to eat, watching movies, attending weddings. These are wonderful things that we love to do, but the people were mindless of the warnings that were all around them. They tuned out this preacher of righteousness, who had been telling them for 120 years that judgment would come. They said, "We don't want to hear it, Noah! We are having a great time here."

Noah and his family gathered a huge menagerie of animals into a monstrous box of a boat. They waited for a worldwide flood. The door remained open. The preaching continued. The opportunity was still there for whomever would hear the Word of God to enter in to where there was safety from God's judgment. The door was open for 120 years. God was patient with that generation until *"the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month."*

But then we read in verse 16: *"And the Lord shut him in."* The door was shut. Inside that ark was perfect security.

The floods may rise, the winds may beat

Torrential rains descend
Yet God His own will not forget
He'll love and keep us till the end

(Immovable Our Hope Remains by Augustus Toplady, 1812)

He'll love and keep us to the end. Inside the ark is perfect security. Outside the ark is complete devastation, deluged under God's wrath.

Genesis 7:17-24:

The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

What was it like for Noah when the fountains of the great deep burst forth and the windows of the heavens were opened? Did Noah hear his neighbors pounding on that door, saying, "Let us in! Let us in!" Did the cries of their desperation ring in his ears? What was it like to see the world that he knew submerged under water, every familiar landmark obliterated and nothing but tempestuous seas all around him? What would it be like to see Illinois, the whole Midwest, and the whole United States submerged under a raging ocean?

Noah did not know how long this would take place. He did not know how he would ever be safe, but he knew that he was clinging to a covenant promise from Almighty God. If he would have fixed his eyes on that raging sea, he would have died of mortal fear. For Noah, it was not the planks of the ark that kept him safe; it was the promise of God that "Here you will be in a safe refuge from the storms of judgment."

I want to ask you, what is going to hold you up when the floodwaters rise in your life? Someone has called death "the deluge at the brink of our finitude." It is like that, isn't it? We never bend beyond death. It is a fearful thing when it rises like a flood. What will hold you up? Faith in the new covenant Jesus has made in His blood. That will hold you. That's what we say when we sing...

His oath, His covenant, His blood

Support me in the whelming flood.
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.

(My Hope is Built by Edward mote, 1834)

Have you come to Jesus? He is the ark of our salvation. The world may swirl in chaos all around us. Everything familiar, everything comfortable and everything we find secure may be submerged in a flood of judgment, but there is safety in Jesus. We are raised up in Christ, seated with Him in the heavenly places. Our life is hidden with Christ in God. In Him, there is perfect safety, safe and secure from all alarm. Come to Jesus and live. Find refuge in the shelter God has provided. Amen.

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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