Understanding God's Judgment *[Genesis 1-11]*

Genesis 6:9-22; 8:14-17; 9:8-17 (preached on June 14, 2009)

Note to Discussion Leaders: *Please remember to start by reading the Bible passage as a group. While this is a "sermon discussion" guide, it's vital that our reflections and applications are grounded in scripture. In a similar vein, do your best to help group members to link their discussion points to the scripture text. Don't skip over all the questions that invite the group to observe and interpret specific verses in the passage.*

READ Genesis 6:1–9:17—*the whole section if you have the time!* **(NT reading: 1 Peter 3:13-22)**

REFLECT

1. **Warm-up.** Is there anything in this reading of the story of Noah and the flood that stood out to you or that you noticed for the first time?

2. Why can it be argued that God brought this great flood, ironically, in order to *preserve* life? Consider the state of humanity at this time (6:5; cf. 4:8, 23-24, also Matt. 24:37-38; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5).

3. How does God's judgment *prevent* vengeance? What's the difference between God's justice and personal vengeance? Read Romans 12:19-20. How can the reality of God's judgment help you to (a) forgive others, (b) process the evil and atrocity we see in our city and around the world?

4. *The sin and evil in the world grieved God's heart (6:6; compare Ezekiel 33:11; Luke 19:41-44).* What difference does it make to know that God doesn't ignore the injury or abuse that you suffer? Consider the quote: "*Every act of evil pulls tears from God*" (Nicholas Wolterstorff).

5. In what ways did God's judgment promote salvation, i.e., preserve the world so that the promise of deliverance could go forward (Gen. 3:15)?

6. *God is the initiator: he designs the boat, plans the rescue, sends the rain, brings the animals, seals the door* (6:13-22; 7:16). What's the significance of this?

7. *Noah knows the deliverance he needs is way beyond his capabilities*. Have you come to that same conclusion with respect to your sin? In what ark or "boat" do you tend to make your way through life, turn to for "deliverance" in hard times—e.g., resolve, defensiveness, status, etc.?

8. *In the Christian faith, you don't have to be your own boat anymore! Consider how 1 Peter 3:18-22 connects the story of Noah to the salvation offered in Christ.* How is Jesus God's ultimate "ark"?

9. Where do we see evidence of faith in Noah's actions (compare Hebrews 11:7)? What does it look like to "get into the boat" in the Christian faith?

10. What remaining questions (or doubts) about God's judgment do you have?