

## Sermon Starter – One More Time

*Genesis 9:8-17, 1 Peter 3:18-22*

**The problem:** This passage picks up at the tail end of a catastrophic event: the total destruction of life. This tragic occasion represents a return to the chaos from God-brought order in the creation of the world. While the events that precipitate the flood are an early example of people turning their backs on God, this kind of behavior is hardly an isolated incident. Many of the most memorable events of human history are occasions when people bring forth, and embrace, chaos among themselves as well as with the rest of creation. The lure of disorder seems perpetual, and even as mature Christians we find ourselves outside the peace of Christ.

**The grace:** The focus of the Genesis passage is not on the destruction of evil and corruption, but on the redeeming nature of God. This is where the story of redemption and grace begins, and God is the agent of and sole actor in the covenant that gets established here. There is no call for Noah and his descendants to take on, or even to remember, the covenant: God takes care of it all. When we humans fail, God never again wipes us out, but instead walks alongside us. God gives a second chance. And a third. And a fourth . . .

What God started in the beginning (the “genesis”) continues even now. While the Genesis story is the first promise of redemption and grace, 1 Peter points out the ongoing pattern: God’s unceasing work to bring us back when we fall away. We worship a patient God, a God who will not break a promise but continues to find new ways to keep welcoming us home no matter what we do or don’t do.

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