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Week 4: Just Love (From Noah to Babel)

Introduction:

The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all of fiction; jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully. (Dawkins, TGD, p. 51)

Genesis 6:5-8

→ Every heart...only evil...all the time

Sightings of God's Love in the Story of Noah

The _____ of Methuselah

God waiting 969 years before sending the judgment He had revealed to Methuselah's father Enoch.

God's _____ toward Noah

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (verse 8).

The _____ of God's patience

This is not a story of God losing His temper. It's a story of incredible patience and longsuffering on the part of a God who sent warnings and relented from sending judgment for centuries in spite of EVERY heart being ONLY evil ALL the time.

The Big Idea:

- What if WE are not the "good guys" but instead God is?
- What if God could provide the cure for hearts that are ONLY evil ALL the time? (Well...He HAS!!!)
- We get to be part of the solution because the Solution has made us part of His family...adopting us into a New Humanity by the New Covenant.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS OR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Personal Life:

1. When you first heard the story of Noah, did you wrestle with the notion of how a loving God could possibly send world-wide judgment on such a grand scale? Share your thoughts...

Ponderings:

2. Think about the description in Genesis 6:5, when EVERY human heart was ONLY evil ALL the time. These words "every," "only," and "all" paint a very dark picture of the human condition when left unchecked.
 - Against this backdrop, do you agree or disagree with the possibility that on occasion, God's judgment is the most loving action for Him to take?
 - The days of Noah pictures a world filled with people who God knew would never turn to Him, In spite of centuries of opportunity. How does this impact the way you see the story?
 - Why do you think it is so natural for humans to see themselves as "the good guy" and God as "the bad guy" as they relate to what they think they've heard from the Bible? Discuss...
3. When Jesus said, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the (second) coming of the Son of Man," can you conceptualize our world becoming so dark and sinful that "every heart is only evil all the time?"
4. How is the presence of the Body of Christ on planet earth a restraining force against full-blown evil, and what does it mean that we (disciples of Jesus) are part of a New Humanity that can be part of the solution rather than the problem? Discuss...

Promptings:

Let's be gut-wrenchingly honest. If you're a believer in Christ, you are a new creation and part of the New Humanity. Yet, it is possible to allow fleshly patterns of thinking and behaving to habitually manifest in our lives. Is there a pattern of thinking or behaving that you would want to yield to the authority of Jesus right now? If so, will you let another trustworthy human being know about it so they can pray for and encourage you?