ARE YOU IN OR OUT?
“Facing Satan Head-On”

Title: The REAL Big Bang, Pt 9
Series: Intimacy

April 28-29, 2018  ser#3728  Sat SunE SunL

I. LIGHT MOMENT

A. Thanks for coming. I’m so blessed to have this privilege to share with you today. We’re going to be talking about some things that look into the mirror, but it’s a GOOD look! Please know that, as in 2 Corinthians 13:10, I want to “…build you up and not tear you down.” Let’s start with a light moment.

One day, two boys were sitting out of sight in a cemetery under a pecan tree collecting nuts. There were dividing them up equally, “One for you, One for me, etc…” Now, in their haste, a number of the nuts got away and rolled down to a nearby fence.

Another boy, who was passing by, heard them and thought, “It’s God and Satan dividing up souls. Quickly, he ran to the first person he came across, a grumpy old man. The boy told him the story, but he didn’t believe the boy. Finally, after much persistence, the boy persuaded the man to come and see what he was talking about.

When they arrived, they heard the boys inside still counting, “One for you, one for me, etc…” The old man said to the boy, “I guess you were telling the truth. Let’s go see what Satan looks like.” As they went to peer around the corner, they heard boys inside exclaim, “Okay, that’s all we have here. Let’s get those nuts by the fence!”

I’d be running!

II. LET’S PRAY

Lord, as we seek You and Your heart in this day, I ask that You would open our eyes and our hearts to the new thing - the next thing - that you have for each one of us. May we all be compelled to have a deeper, closer walk, not because of me and my words, but because You have spoken to all of us. May everyone here be truly touched and changed, as we give our lives to You to be used for Your honor.
You have spoken to all of us. May everyone here be truly touched and changed, as we give our lives to You to be used for Your honor and glory. In Jesus’ name, AMEN!

III. POINT OF INTRIGUE

A. Here’s a little history... Today’s message came out of my devotions last Wednesday. I knew that I would be speaking on Genesis Chapters 6 & 7, and I was praying for some direction from the LORD. I was going to talk about...

  • Maybe how big the ark was:  
    (show picture Ark Encounter)

  • Maybe what the inside looked like:  
    (show picture of Ark Interior)

These photos are from the Ark Encounter in Williamstown, KY. Maybe one day I’ll be able to go visit it in person.

  • Maybe animals boarding the Ark:  
    (show picture Animals & the ark)

After doing some initial research about the various points in these chapters, the LORD redirected me to focus on the first verses of Chapter 6 again. What He revealed to me hit me like a freight train. As a “train guy,” normally that would be cool, but this time it hit me hard. I didn’t even see it coming.

Here’s our text. We read from it last week, but this week we’ll see it with different eyes. God’s word is living and active... right?! As we read, I’m going to ask you to say the words in ORANGE for me.

I. Genesis 6: 5-9, 11-12 (NIV)
Wickedness in the World

5 The LORD saw how great the WICKEDNESS of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was ONLY EVIL ALL THE TIME. 6 The LORD REGRETED that He had made human beings on the earth, and His heart was DEEPLY TROUBLED. 7 So the LORD said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I REGRET that I have made them.” 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

9 This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. ... 11 Now the earth was CORRUPT in God’s sight and was FULL OF VIOLENCE. 12 God saw how CORRUPT the earth had become, for all the people on earth had CORRUPTED their ways.

As I read this passage, the LORD kept bringing me back to those harsh words we just said out loud: “wickedness,” “only evil all the time,” “corrupt,” and “full of violence.”

As I meditated on this, I saw that it says “they became” wicked.

That means to me that it wasn’t always like that.

Not to say that there was no sin, but to say that because of their CHOICES... SIN INCREASED...! Hold on to that!

We see that God regretted making man and was deeply troubled.

We know His ultimate response: verse 13 “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.” and verse 17 “I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.”

We all know the story from here... big flood... all but 8 people die. I think to myself... God could have wiped everyone out. I mean, He made everything... He could make it again... right? But in God’s wisdom, grace and mercy, He found Noah to be righteous and blameless. That changed everything...

In Pastor Bruce’s sermon last week, we saw that Noah wasn’t sinless. God’s righteousness of salvation is through Jesus. But we also have our righteousness, as we listen to God and trust &
In Pastor Bruce’s sermon last week, we saw that Noah wasn’t sinless. God’s righteousness of salvation is through Jesus. But we also have our righteousness, as we listen to God and trust & obey Him. That was why Noah found favor with the LORD.

LISTENING, TRUSTING and OBEYING God gives us blessings on earth and rewards in Heaven. I pray that would be our story - that God would find us to be following after Him in all things.

Back to my devotions last Wednesday. As I was reading through the passage about the world being corrupt, I was thinking about how that same corruption is still true today. That’s when I heard Him say to me, “You know, - you add to the wickedness in the world.”

My response was, “No God! You’re wrong!” (I really said that to God…) I said, “God, you know my heart. I try my best to walk my best walk with You. I’m even closer now than I’ve ever been. I may not be perfect, but I’m really doing the best I can.”

He said, (two slides-slide 1) “Every time you say ‘No’ to me..., you add to the wickedness in the world.” I buckled at my knees. I could hardly speak, but I mustered up the words, “No, God. That’s not my intent.”

As I pondered those words in my heart... I realized that He was right. (Of course He is! He’s God! SMILE!)

You see my thoughts... our thoughts... our motives... our choices... are either adding to the goodness... or to the wickedness... in the world.

UGH! That changed everything for me. I was distraught. I thought that I was following Him, but... to be truly honest... not really. There are too many “No’s.”

• I thought that I was in the boat, but NOW... this is how I felt! (We’ll leave that up) You may feel the same way... (show picture Outside the Ark)

Playing that out in my head, I thought to myself, “Well, what does He mean...?” God being God... started giving me a list of things
Playing that out in my head, I thought to myself, “Well, what does He mean...?” God being God... started giving me a list of things that I do... that WE do... to add to wickedness. At this point, I was feeling a bit like Job...

- Do we read or pray or meditate as much as we know we should?
- Do we pray and not listen to God for His response?
- Do we hear Him and say, “Not now, LORD?”
- Do we hear Him and flat-out say, “No?”
- Do we hear Him and say, “I don’t feel like it”
- Do we hear Him and say, “I’m too busy to commit time, talent and treasure to God right now, because I have all these other commitments - soccer, baseball, hockey, dance, etc...”

He said to me, “Hold up.” Go back to the first three words... “I’M TOO BUSY!” OUCH! BTW - Many of us can be too busy doing the “things of God” and miss the people we’re supposed to be reaching. I’m just sayin’...

We may not even realize where we are not giving Him our all.
- Do we say, “God, don’t talk to me until I’ve had my coffee and then... HEAR THIS... have tea all day...?!”

We can put so many things ahead of God. And, by doing that, we... in some way... add to the wickedness in the world.

Lamentations 3:40 says, “Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.” So, this message is about taking an honest look at ourselves.

You may say to yourself, as I did, “That’s not me.” Here’s a story:

One day, God and Satan were dividing up a crowd of people determining who was going with whom. Between them was a long, sturdy fence. As people were finding their places, a man thinking he was really smart, decided to get up on the fence. That way he didn’t need to decide which way to go.

When the crowd was sorted, Satan looked at the man and said, “You’re mine. C’mon.” The man replied, “No, I’m on the fence. I haven’t decided yet.”

Satan replied, “The fence... it’s MINE!”

So, are we finding ourselves on the fence about some things? Are we straddling the fence, hoping to have the pleasures of both...
So, are we finding ourselves on the fence about some things? Are we straddling the fence, hoping to have the pleasures of both sides? If we’re on the fence, we’re not adding to goodness.

II. ARE YOU IN OR OUT?

Back to our passage about Noah and the Ark, are you IN or OUT of the boat?

2 Corinthians 13:5 says, “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith (or in the boat!); test yourselves.”

For me, I thought that I was IN, until the LORD revealed otherwise. Here are some things He revealed to me... and maybe you, too:

• Am I too critical of myself...? Am I too critical of others...?
• Do I talk about people too much? Is it healthy or has it become gossip? I didn’t think I was, but even a little is too much.
• Have I cut my prayer time short due to outside influences? If I don’t PRAY, I become the enemy’s PREY! I say to you, Pray and turn that around for goodness sake!
• Have I exchanged one addiction of another? Yup, FOOD! The FAST gave me great revelation in this area...

(put on headphones, play MUSIC)

• Here’s another.... (Shouting over the music) Do I keep myself too distracted to hear God’s voice? Do I try to drown out His will my life? Oh... God, I’m sorry... Was that You...? (stop MUSIC) We can make so many excuses for doing wrong.

• Have I said, “I don’t FEEL LIKE doing that” when the LORD tells me to share... to serve... to connect... or to go? If you don’t know, we grow in our discomfort.
• Are you thinking to yourself right now..., “That just Jim’s list. NONE of this applies to ME?”

That’s the area where I believe as Christians, we ALL fall most. **PRIDE.** Let me tell you. **If pride is winning, so is the enemy.** Tweet that....! #OUCH!

I’ve thought, I want to live however I want. I don’t FEEL LIKE listening... serving... going... giving. I just want to come to church and sit... when I’m free. God never said, “Do these things if you feel like it!” **We are not our own; we were bought at a price.**
church and sit... when I’m free. God never said, “Do these things if you feel like it!” **We are not our own; we were bought at a price.**

What we want for **ourselves** can NEVER match what **God** wants for our lives. You see, **Our physical pleasure can NEVER meet our deep spiritual needs.**

As I’ve been sharing, I pray that the Lord has been revealing things to you, that - in a sense - are things that are still sticking out of the boat; places where we’re not ALL IN! Things like...
- Not praying - a hand or two
- Not tithing - the other hand... or a pocket... LOL
- Not going to church - a leg or two
- Getting too distracted - your head
- Not serving - your feet
- Not listening - an ear
- Saying “No” or “I don’t feel like it” - what’s outside? **YOUR HEART!**

We can get comfortable - too comfortable - in our Christian walk. **Comfortable doesn’t add to goodness** - it’s **drifting in the wrong direction!**

What are the things that are outside the boat that the enemy is using to **take you under**?
  - If you’re on the **ground**, you’re gonna **drown**.
  - If you’re on the **sides**, you’re hearing **lies**.
  - If you’re on the **deck**, you’ll be a **wreck**.

In all these cases, you’re going under.

**BUT,** **if you’re well inside, you will abide**... under His great covering! Can you say that with me? **If you’re well inside, you will abide!**

How do we face the enemy head on? Here’s the HOW - and we need do it NOW! The enemy say wait until tomorrow....

There’s an acrostic **on the card** you received today. **N. O. W.**

1. **Never stop praying,** It’s the only way that God can reveal what parts are still sticking out of the boat. **James 5:16**

   **Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.**

2. **Open and ready** to hear God’s response.
2. **Open and ready** to hear God’s response.
3. **Whatever it takes** to set things right with God.

HEAR THIS: **Many people who want everything God has for them, but they don’t do whatever it takes for God to bless them.** They don’t turn 180° from sin, only 45° or 90°. BTW - 90° is on the fence…!

**If we’re on the fence, then the enemy wins... every time!** We must **TURN FROM SIN... and TURN TOWARD GOD!**

When we do that, we **abide** under God’s protection, so **GET INSIDE!**

I think it’s interesting that, in Genesis 7:16, we see, “Then the LORD shut him in.” God can’t shut you in, if there’s stuff sticking out... And we can’t shut ourselves in. Only the LORD can do that!

Now, I realize that changing these things can be really hard, especially if they’ve been a part of us for a lot of years.

- **We've done it our way for so long, it's comfortable.**
- **We can identify with our defense mechanism.** We say, “That’s just the way I am...” Really? Uh... NO!
- **We see that our defense mechanisms have a payoff.** We see that we feel better if we have a “knee-jerk” reaction. That bad reaction feels good, so **whatever is rewarded is repeated.** We feel better... but we hurt ourselves and others... in the long run.

Ephesians 4:21-24 (NLT) says, “Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from Him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God — truly righteous and holy”

True change requires:
- Being open to see the **truth** about ourselves
- Being willing to make **choices** to go in a **different direction**
- Being willing to see our lives in a **new way**.

We’ll never change the unhealthy things in our life unless we seek the **truth.** Change requires learning the truth. Jesus said in John...
We'll never change the unhealthy things in our life unless we seek the **truth**. Change requires learning the truth. Jesus said in John 8:32, *“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”* We’re not going to be *free* until we know the **truth**.

We lie to ourselves all the time about the things we know we do that are not of God. But we have to *know* and *face* the truth, if we’re going to have *true* and *permanent change*.

At this point, I have to tell you that I cried out to the LORD in my despair. I was so distraught and I needed encouragement.

God brought two passages from **Lamentations 3** to mind. **Verses 31-32** say, “For men are not cast off by the LORD forever. Though He brings grief, He will show compassion, so great is His unfailing love.”

**Verses 55-58** say, “I called on Your name, O LORD, from the depths of the pit. You heard my plea … You came near when I called You, and You said, ‘Do not fear.’ O LORD, You took up my case; You redeemed my life.”

So, here’s the question… What is the LORD revealing to you today?

Your card says **IN** on one side and **OUT** on the other. I’m going to ask *everyone* to take your card out.

On the side with **IN**, list those places where you have victory… where you really are adding to “goodness.” I’m sure there’s many things you’re doing that add to the goodness in the world. Write that down on the **IN** side.

On the other side, the **OUT** side, list the places where God is saying, “*Put THAT in the boat!*” He will give you… and me… victory, but first we need to acknowledge it. Jesus said in John 13:17 “Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”

We’re going to take a moment NOW - while the music plays underneath - for you to fill out each side. This is only between you and God, so be brutally honest and open.

Once you’re done, I want you to put the card in a place where **only you will see it**. I suggest that you place it in your Bible, and then commit, to yourself and God, to go to your Bible *every day*.

As you do this, the Lord will honor your honesty and openness and
commit, to yourself and God, to go to your Bible every day.

As you do this, the Lord will honor your honesty and openness and begin to build you up where you’re weak. And then be willing to do whatever He asks you to do to fulfill His future for you.

For those who are here and none of this makes sense. Maybe you’ve been to church and it was too critical or condemning. God wants you to know that He loves you. And that He is for you and desires a relationship with you. That’s why He came, died on a cross and rose again - so that you might have victory over sin and have eternal life with Him.

VI. INVITATION

The question is: Has there ever been a time when you said to Jesus, “Here’s my life?”

Here’s how:

Admit – your sins have separated you from God. (Psa 14:1-3; Rom 3: 23); Believe – that God did something about your sins through Jesus Christ. (The final Pascal Lamb/Messiah.) (Lev 17:10; Heb 9: 19-22); Commit – yourself to His righteous by confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior. (Isa 53:5; Col 1:22); Do it today! (Isa 49:8; 2 Cor 6:2).

Father in Heaven, I’m sorry for the things I’ve done that are wrong: I am a sinner; forgive me. Thank You for loving me and sending your Son, Jesus, to pay the penalty for my sin. Holy Spirit, come into my heart; Jesus be my Lord and Savior. I give You my life. Amen!

IN CLOSING: Let’s all contribute to the goodness in the world.

Thanks for letting me share!