

# A Drunken Saint and His Gloating Son

Genesis 9:18-29

Halifax: 18 January 2015

## **Introduction:**

Last week, we took up a new Psalm of Focus—Psalm 12—because we came to a new section in our sermon series in Genesis.

- In this section, we begin to see how Noah and his family get on with the task of filling the earth with a godly seed.
  - Remember that this is still our task today—
  - We are to fill the earth with godliness in two ways...
    - by calling the ungodly to repent and come to Jesus Christ...
    - and by bringing forth godly children under God's covenant promise.
  - But of course with Noah, there was only one family, and this family was, as it were, God's people...they were all in the church...
    - They were on the ark because they were the only family remaining in the earth that was partakers of God's redemptive grace.

But sadly, we see that they do not get off to a very good start in Genesis 9-11.

- In the passage we are looking at today, we see, as one man put it, that:
  - “with an opportunity to start a new society, Noah was found drunk in his tent.”
- And this shameful slip becomes the occasion for many things...
  - It becomes the occasion for a response from his three sons—one (whose name is Ham) gloats and rejoices in his father's shame while the others cover it...
  - And the respective actions of these sons become the occasion for an oracle from God spoken by Noah in response to what they have done...
  - And the oracle shows God's intention to bless Shem and Japheth and to curse Ham by cursing his son Canaan who becomes the father of the notoriously wicked Canaanites.
- This week, we will not have time to cover all of this...
  - But we will look only at Noah's drunkenness and at the responses of his three sons.
  - Next week, Lord willing, we will look at the oracle of God and how it is fulfilled in Noah's sons and their descendants.
- Last week we saw an oracle in Psalm 12:5 that came forth in response to the cry of the righteous when they saw that faithful men were ceasing from the earth...
  - It was a cry that God would arise to act...
  - And this week, in our reading we see an oracle arises from the occasion of Noah's drunkenness...
    - An oracle that speaks far into the future and tells us of both blessing and cursing.

Please give me your careful attention as I now read this account to you from Genesis 9 beginning in verse 18.

- Genesis 9:18-29

**Genesis 9:18-29:** Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham *was* the father of Canaan. <sup>19</sup> These three *were* the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated. <sup>20</sup> And Noah began *to be* a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. <sup>21</sup> Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. <sup>22</sup> And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. <sup>23</sup> But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid *it* on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness

of their father. Their faces *were* turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. <sup>24</sup> So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. <sup>25</sup> Then he said: "Cursed *be* Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brethren." <sup>26</sup> And he said: "Blessed *be* the LORD, the God of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant. <sup>27</sup> May God enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem; and may Canaan be his servant." <sup>28</sup> And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. <sup>29</sup> So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.

May the Lord bless the reading of His holy word.

You see that our text opens by introducing us once again to Noah's sons.

- There were three of them—Shem, Ham, and Japheth.
  - These are the sons that went onto the ark with Noah with their wives so that there were eight persons in all.
  - We are told plainly in verse 19, that it was from these three sons of Noah that the whole earth was populated again after the flood...
    - God intervened in such a way that they multiplied in a very short time so that the whole earth could be replenished with the souls of men.
    - It is certainly possible for many nations to arise by this time—
      - If each of Noah's sons had five sons and five daughters and this continued for 10 generations (to the time of Abraham),
        - there would be 29 million families in the earth by Abraham's day.

So this is all well enough, but there is something that stands out in verse 18...

- One of Noah's grandsons is mentioned here, Canaan, the son of Ham.
- All of Moses's Israelite readers would have immediately recognised this son as the father of the wicked Canaanites...
  - the people that God ordered Israel to totally wipe out after He had brought them out of Egypt—because of their wickedness.
  - We know them to have been given over to all kinds of shameful, detestable practices that the Lord hated.
    - In Leviticus 18, the Lord mentions the Canaanites as people whose practices Israel is *not* to imitate.
      - Listen to what he Lord says to Moses in Leviticus 18:2-4:
        - **Lev 18:2-4:** "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God. <sup>3</sup> According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. <sup>4</sup> You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I *am* the LORD your God.

- And then there follows a long litany of sins that characterised the Canaanites and the Egyptians too...
  - Everything from incest to sodomy, from bestiality to adultery is named—and all of these are sins that are not once to be named among God’s people!
  - It was on account of such sins that God judged both Egypt and Canaan, and with the Canaanites, they had the added sin of bringing their sexual immorality into their worship...
    - The Lord made it clear that He detested these sins.
- And so in Genesis 9:18 when we have this one grandson of Noah who is the father of a notoriously wicked people named out of all his grandsons,
  - it alerts us that something ugly is about to seen.
  - And the thing that is addressed is the sin of Noah in a moment of weakness that brings about a very sinful response from his son Ham and godly response from his sons Shem and Japheth.
- Let us begin by looking at Noah’s sin...

### **I. The sin of drunkenness**

- We might wish that this had never happened, but as it is recorded for us, let us look at it that we might receive what God has for us here...
  - He has recorded this in His word for our benefit.

#### **A. Godly Noah falls into the sin of drunkenness.**

1. We learn here that even a godly man like Noah can fall into shameful sin.
  - a. Noah is one of the godliest men in the Bible...
    - He had lived in unwavering faithfulness as a blameless man in a world that was filled with great wickedness.
    - For all those years before the flood, he had kept himself from the sinful excesses of the people all around him.
      - He was, according the LORD, a blameless man who walked with God.
  - b. But now in a simple unguarded moment he gives way to sin.
    - 1) Noah had been very busy after the flood no doubt, and had apparently lived off the things that grew of themselves... and perhaps off of what had been stored on the ark...simple fare in any case...
      - But now we are told that there is development.
        - He began to farm—literally, to be a man of the soil.
        - Now he will be able to enjoy better food.
      - We are told that he planted a vineyard.
        - Some have conjectured that wine making was something new, but there is no clear evidence for that.
        - It simply tells us that this was something that *Noah* now began to do now that things had settled after the flood.

- There was nothing here of which the LORD did not approve, for He had given Adam to till the ground in paradise.
  - The fruit of the vine is a celebrated gift of God.
  - The Lord delights to give us good food and drink for our pleasure and enjoyment.
    - He is interested not only in sustaining our bodies, but in filling our hearts with gladness and our lives with good things.
  - Why else did He create so many herbs and spices and tasty foods, and why did He make us with the ability to enjoy them all?
    - He wants us to enjoy them all with thanksgiving to Him.

2) But Noah goes to excess.

- He drinks himself drunk and is left naked in his tent.
  - We can see a parallel with Adam in taking what was forbidden in the garden and then finding himself naked and ashamed.
- The Bible often associates the shame of drunkenness with the shame of nakedness...
  - **Hab 2:15: Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, pressing *him* to your bottle, even to make *him* drunk, that you may look on his nakedness!**
  - **Lam 4:21: Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, *you* who dwell in the land of Uz! The cup shall also pass over to you and you shall become drunk and make yourself naked**
- We know about this association between drunkenness and nakedness as well—
  - Where there is excess in alcohol, there is very often excess in sexual immorality.
  - We are not told here that there was anything beyond nakedness, but it was a matter of great shame for this godly patriarch to be lying uncovered in his tent in a drunken stupor.

2. Let this be a warning to you!

- a. If a man like Noah could fall into such a sin when he put down his guard, how much more might we!
  - Think of it—Noah had been a paragon of virtue all for those years before the flood...
    - All around him, men were giving themselves over to excess, but Noah looked to the LORD and stood strong.
  - To use the language of Ephesians, he put on the whole armour of God and was able to stand in the evil day.
    - It is often the case that we actually do better when temptation is the strongest because we know that we need God's armour...
      - But when we do not feel so threatened and have stood in faithfulness for years, we fall because we do not look to the Lord!

- b. Let this be a warning to you!
    - The most dangerous time is often there doesn't seem to be any danger.
    - That is when we cast off our armour and Satan takes advantage of us.
      - Do not let your guard down!
    - Know that pride goes before a fall and a haughty spirit before destruction.
      - Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.
  - c. Let the sin of this godly man alarm you and call you to be more vigilant than ever!
    - Don't despair; don't give up when you see Noah fall...
      - That is another ploy of Satan...
      - He wants you to give up and say, "If a godly person like Noah falls, I might as well not even try..."
    - But the godly response is to recognise when men fall that their strength is not in themselves.
      - Your strength comes from the same place as Noah's—from looking to the Lord your God.
    - So keep looking to Him and look to Him all the more when you see godly men fall
      - Remember Peter and the other disciples who did not pray with their Lord in the garden of Gethsemane?
        - They thought they could stand, but that very night they had a rude awakening.
- B. Let us take a moment to consider how wrong it is to give ourselves over to drunkenness.
1. First of all, it is wrong because God gave us wine for a very different purpose!
    - a. Psalm 104 teaches that He gave it to us to make our hearts glad.
      - Wine is to cheer us and fill us with thanksgiving to God
    - b. And for us to take what God has given us to fill us with joy in Him, and use it to excess is base ingratitude.
      - It is covetousness—it is trying to get more out of God's gifts than He has put into them.
      - Here He has given you a good thing and you enjoy it, but instead of being thankful, you demand more and more from it!
        - That is what you do when you over eat or over drink or over indulge in recreation.
        - You don't even enjoy it anymore because you are discontent—always looking for more.
          - This is what often leads to addiction as well because you are always looking for more and more and it is elusive...
          - You keep running back in hope, and you keep being disappointed and you become enslaved to the thing that God gave you to enjoy!
        - What a miserable way to use His good gifts!

2. But how is it (in particular) that excess in wine is so inappropriate?
  - a. Drunkenness is inappropriate and sinful because by it we destroy the image of God in which we were made...
    - Not just our bodies—though we do indeed do harm to them by our excess...there is damage to our brain, to our liver, to our heart...
    - But much more we attack our own souls and dehumanise ourselves.
      - The image of God is found in us in that we have the ability to distinguish between good and evil, and to follow what is good...
        - But when you become drunk, you destroy that reason and become like a beast!
        - You lose your discernment and become dull.
  - b. Men do all sorts of different things when they lose their reason through inebriation...
    - Some fly into a rage and become abusive and oppressive, yelling at their wives and terrifying their children, striking them or intimidating them.
      - The very people they are supposed to protect they attack...
      - Or they get into brawls and quarrels with their neighbours.
    - Others gravitate to silliness and act like fools and buffoons...
      - They lose all sense of shame—they will say things that are stupid and they will do things that a man without his wits would do.
      - They say things that they would never say if they were sober—insulting things, secret things, even blasphemous things.
      - They will waste their money, show disrespect to elders, and even mock God in their drunken stupor.
    - And still others will give themselves over to immorality...
      - How many commit adultery when under the influence!
      - How many resort to unclean speech that is totally inappropriate for anyone who professes Christ!
    - And of course a man under the influence will not be fulfilling his responsibility to care for others...
      - If someone is sick and he is a doctor, he will not minister to that person—if someone needs help in a disaster, he is unable to assist.
      - Children have died in fires because of drunken fathers who might otherwise have rescued them.
  - c. And what is worse still is those who give themselves up to drunkenness as a way of life.
    - I mentioned before this happens when they are trying to get more out of God's gift than what He had appointed—it does not work—it makes you a slave...
    - Such persons become totally absorbed with their own gratification and completely forget about the call to lay down their lives for others...

- They are like a sponge in the home when they ought to be like a fountain—giving and sharing and being a blessing...
- They spend up all the money on their drink and when they run out, they will steal.
  - They take bread out of their children's mouths.
  - They refuse to work or accept responsibility.
  - They are lazy and self-indulgent and do not call on the Lord for themselves or for their household—
    - They do not lead their family to God in worship.
    - Instead of others, they think only of themselves and how they can get another drink.
- This is true of addictions of all kinds...
  - drugs, immorality, pornography, gambling, and even things like
    - sports, eating, movies, music, reading, hobbies—you name it—if indulged in to excess as things that men run too far for comfort to avoid their service to God and others!
      - Life is found by dying—dying for the Lord and for others!
      - It is found by giving, not taking; by serving, not by being served.

TRANS> Should it come as any surprise that the Lord tells us to not be drunk with wine and that the scriptures warn us about excess in this area?

C. Now let us see how our faithful God chastens Noah...

1. In His gracious providence, He causes him to be discovered by his son Ham.
  - This sin might have been hidden if Ham had not come to his father's tent when he did.
    - Noah might have indulged and nobody might have known about it.
    - It is somewhat to his credit that he did not get drunk in public.
      - And it was to his credit that it was not a habit with him, but a sin that the godly man fell into on one occasion.
      - But it was still a defacing of the image of God by wine and was a great offense to the LORD...
        - So the LORD brought Ham along to discover him and bring him to shame for what he had done.
2. God often does this for those He loves...
  - The Bible tells us that He chastens those that He loves and those He receives as sons.
    - I have often marvelled at how God does not allow his faithful servants to get away with sin...
      - A faithful man will drink too much and he will get caught for DUI.
      - A young couple will fall into sexual immorality and immediately conceive a child.
      - A man will indulge in porn and his wife will catch him.

- This is a good thing...
  - God exposed Noah to stop him in his tracks.
    - If Ham had not found him, perhaps Noah might have done this again the next night and the next until he was ruined.
  - If you get caught, if you are exposed, give thanks to God!
    - And if you are not caught—then confess your sins to others and have them keep you accountable!
    - The worst thing that can happen is that you continue in sin and get used to it so that that it doesn't even bother you anymore.
  - I mean this—if you are indulging in some secret sin that nobody knows about—go and confess your sin to someone that can help you before this day is over!
    - If you are a young person, I can assure you that though your parents may be disappointed, if you go to them broken and looking for help, they will help you!
      - If they do not, come and tell one of the elders about it and we will sharply rebuke them!
  - There is forgiveness with God, but not if you keep on in your sin without repentance.
    - It doesn't matter what you have done—you might have to go to prison, but God will forgive you if you confess your sin and that is what matters.
      - **Pr 28:13: He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.**

TRANS> What a shameful thing that this godly old patriarch who saved the world should be found lying naked in a drunken stupor...

- See the shame and the horror of this...
  - Let it make you vigilant when you see what happened to Noah when he let his guard down...
- But now we must move on to look at a worse sin.

## II. Worse than sin is to glory in sin—especially in the sin of your father.

A. That is what Noah's son Ham does.

1. He found his father in this shameful state, and there was nothing wrong with that in itself...
  - He could not help finding him...
  - but what does this wretch do but parade off to tell his brothers about it!
    - You see this in verse 22:
      - **Gen 9:22: And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside.**



- He should have been horrified to see his father acting so out of character, acting so shamefully...
    - but instead he finds pleasure in it—it is as a sport to him to show his brothers what the old man has done!
    - He might have gone to them in horror and shock and that would have been different, but it is clear that such is not his spirit...
      - He is wretchedly glorying in his father’s sin.
2. This betrays a spirit in him that is not right!
- a. There are children who have godly parents who take pleasure when they find sin in their lives.
    - They don’t like for them to be godly.
    - They want them to fall and they keep an eye out for a fall.
    - They look for things to criticise, and if they find something, they magnify it; and if they don’t, they will even make something up.
      - You get the impression that they wish they did not live in godly home.
      - They find it boring and they would rather live in home where shameful deeds are done.
  - b. The chief priests and the Pharisees had a spirit like this about Jesus.
    - They wanted more than anything to find fault with Him.
    - They could not stand for Him to be righteous because they, despite their pretenses, did not glory in true righteousness.
    - They constantly sought to find something that they could accuse, and when they couldn’t find anything, they made things up.
  - c. You see this same spirit in those today who get just plain excited when a godly leader falls!
    - It is a great delight to them.
    - It makes them feel better because now they can feel that they are excused for all of their sins.
3. Here is the problem with a person like that...
- a. Instead of being justified by Jesus Christ and finding forgiveness through His shed blood on the cross,
    - they are trying to be justified by comparing themselves to others.
    - And that makes them very excited when someone who seems to be godlier than they are sins...
      - It makes you feel better about your own sins.
  - b. And there is another problem that is related to this...
    - 1) A person like that also does not really delight in godliness at all.
      - If you are not justified by faith in Jesus, then you resent godliness.
      - It is a burden to you rather than something you delight in.

- And you find sin to be attractive and desirable in many ways...
  - Sort of exciting—you are glad that there is immorality because you kind of—like it—really—when you get down to it.
  - Sin is appealing and has a glory in it for you.
- 2) When you are like that, instead of using the sin of a godly person like Noah or David or Peter as a warning,
- you will make their sins into excuse...
    - You will say—“Well drunkenness cannot be that bad—Noah did it and he was a righteous man.”
    - And then you will excuse yourself as if it is okay.
      - And this is all because sin is attractive and desirable to you.
- c. And now I wonder—have I struck a chord with any of you? Have I hit a nerve in saying this?
- Of course I have—because we all have something of this in us—the tendency to glory in sin and to see it as attractive and appealing.
  - That is why we so desperately need the grace of God in our lives.
    - We all have it with in us to glory in sin—and we need the Lord to deliver us from this body of death!
    - But if you are without grace, you live this way...
      - You are always happy to find sin in others and you take pleasure in sin because you are not resting in Jesus Christ.
- B. But now I want you to look at Shem and Japheth because there is a very different spirit in them.
1. These men do not take pleasure in their father’s sin and shame.
- The narrative slows down here by going into great detail—what Ham did is spoken quickly, but what these sons did is fully described.
  - In verse 23 it says:
    - **Gen 9:23: But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father’s nakedness.**
  - Here was a true spirit of godliness and respect.
    - They knew their father was acting out of character.
    - They knew he would be terribly ashamed of himself and they were ashamed for him—and refused to look upon him in his shameful condition.
      - Instead, they carefully cover him up.
        - They wanted their father to be godly!
        - They delighted in his godly character!

- They knew that they owed their lives to his godliness—that it was on account of it that they had been spared from the flood.
  - Noah’s sin was not exciting to them—it was disheartening.
  - They did not glory in sin.
2. This is a mark of the grace of God in you!
- a. When you have been born again, God puts His Spirit within you and causes you to delight in the law of God from within...
    - He writes His law on your heart...and causes you to walk in it.
    - Of course not perfectly, but He causes you to will and to do of His good pleasure—to be oriented and inclined in that way—to be against sin instead of for it—both in yourself and in others.
      - That is a God-wrought change in you—that you have died with Christ and been raised with Him.
  - b. And at the foundation of this delight is the fact that you are forgiven by the righteousness of Christ!
    - Instead of wanting to find sin in Jesus, you want Him to be righteous because it is by His righteousness that you are justified!
      - You are not in competition with Him as those are who are trying to win God’s approval by their own works...
      - But you are resting in His righteousness for your salvation.
  - c. This makes you gravitate to godly people...
    - You want to imitate them—you delight in their godliness and you are not threatened by it—it is rather an encouragement to you...
      - And it is a great discouragement when they fall.
      - It doesn’t make you feel better because you are not in competition with them; it makes you disappointed.
    - That is the spirit in Shem and Japheth that causes them to cover their father’s shame.

TRANS> So we have one son who glories in his father’s shame and two sons who by God’s grace do not glory in it.

- And next we will look at...

### **III. The consequences of glorying in sin (or not) upon our posterity.**

- But there is so much that I want to say about this that I am going to wait until next week so I will have time to develop it...

### **Conclusion**

But for this week, consider what kind of spirit is in you...

- Is it a spirit that glories in sin and shame?

- If it is then you need to repent—you need to come quickly to Christ and you need to confess the spirit that is in you and you need to ask Him to forgive you and deliver you.
- Such a spirit will be poison to you and to your offspring—do not let it remain.
- See that you have instead a spirit that glories in righteousness and salvation as was seen in Shem and Japheth!
  - This was the spirit that was in their father Noah, though he fell into sin in a moment of weakness,
    - And when this is the spirit that is in you, you set your household on a trajectory toward God and His blessing.