

# You Asked For It! How About Animals?

This is the final sermon in the "You Asked For It" Series.  
We have covered a lot of territory over the past 4 months.

We have travelled all the way from hell to heaven.

We have had encounters with angels and demons.

We have looked at society at large and home up close.

We have praised God's work and cried when life's not fair.

We have seen how exciting the life of faith can be.

And we have seen the cost with which faith is lived.

We have seen people at their worst and their best.

At the centre of it all has been Jesus.

There was one more request that came in well after the series started.  
It was a totally different request.

Pastor, I wish you would preach on animal treatment.

The requester went on to point out animal abuse.

How animals are slaughtered and transported inhumanely.

Will we be answering to God for this?

Will there be animals in heaven?

We have no society without animals.

I began this sermon with our dog Jolie lying on my lap.

I hate to admit it but we don't always get along so well.

Sometimes she makes me so upset.

She did it to me again just this week.

We met family for supper on New Year's Day.

When we came home Jolie had toilet papered much of the main floor.

She got hold of 5 rolls of toilet paper and she had a lot of fun.

I didn't think it was so funny.

She knows now when to hide.

When I allow myself to get as upset I know it is wrong.

I know I am disappointing God.

He isn't disappointed because of how I treat a dog.

He is disappointed because my spirit is grieving His Spirit.

I am not being Christ-like when I begin frothing at the mouth.

If I can't be Christ-like to an animal that would never intentionally wrong me how can I be Christ-like to an enemy?

Who can count on me to show genuine love?

Let me say outright that a society does not require animals to exist.

I already preached about Healthy Society.

If you missed that part of the series ask me for a copy.

But I do believe that animals can have an impact on a society or family.

Listen to this clip from The Tonight Show. (PLAY VIDEO CLIP)

Animals can bring out our best and our worst.

## **I The Days of Noah**

Our text takes place in a very dark period of history.

The days of Noah were the spiritually darkest time our world has ever seen.

As bad as things seem right now, we can't hold a candle to the pre-flood.

People were living so vile that God regretted the day He had created Adam.

People's hearts had grown so wicked.

They were doing unspeakable evil.

Their minds were consumed with evil.

They couldn't get enough to fill their depraved appetites.

Alexander Maclaren says, "Bad men are cruel men."

**"When bonds which knit society to God are relaxed, selfishness soon become furious ... sin saps the very foundations of social life and makes men into tigers."**

It all goes back to the Garden of Eden.

Adam and Eve rebelled against God.

Sin entered God's beautiful and perfect creation.

And now just 10 generations later nothing was right.

God had decided to blot out everything that breathed.

He was sorry that He created life.

And were it not for one man it would be the end of the story.

Satan would have triumphed.

People gave Satan permission to steal all that God had loved.

Verse 11 tells us the earth was corrupt in God's sight.

The earth was filled with violence.

That violence would have been person to person.

It would have also been person to animal.

It would have included animal against humanity.

Sin was ravaging all of creation.

**"As far as God was concerned, the Earth had become a sewer; there was violence everywhere. God took one look and saw how bad it was, everyone corrupt and corrupting—life itself corrupt to the core." (Genesis 6:11-12 TM)**

People were living to inflict maximum damage.

They were stripping all that was sacred and good from life.

It is like when we strip leaves from a branch.

They were sucking life out of everything around them.

If left alone there would not have been much of a world left.

They were spilling anything of value.

They were utterly wasted and wasting.

I have known people who live that way, if it can even be called living.

They have no regard for others.

Anything good is spoiled by their addictions and manipulation.

Life is left battered, broken, and bruised.

People's lives are left ravaged and ruined.

Multiply that by everyone you know and you get a taste of Noah's world.

But in the midst of the chaos God blazes grace into our lives.

In our Scripture we find one of the most amazing verses in the Bible.

It is a verse of beauty, grace, dignity, love.

**"But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord."**

Noah lived a life that was totally unique to his environment.

Noah was living a righteous life.

He was living a life that was blameless in his generation.

God said to Noah, **"I have determined to make an end of all flesh; for the earth is filled with violence through them; behold I will destroy them with the earth."** (Genesis 6:13)

And God forged a covenant relationship with Noah.

This was the very first covenant between God and a person.

Covenant is what separated Noah from every other living creature.

It separated Noah from all the people of his generation.

And it separated him from all other animals.

It was through Noah that life was preserved.

God instructed Noah to take into the ark his family.

Eight people survived the flood because of God's covenant with Noah.

Through God's mercy to Noah every animal with life was preserved.

God gathered 7 pairs of all clean animals and birds.

Noah was to care for them.

He was not to eat them.

He was to take enough food for his family and all the animals.

All animal life was preserved through the flood.

But it was all because of Noah living to please the Lord.

The animal world had no special status over the human race.

Noah was given the same instructions as Adam.

He was to have dominion over all other life.

God would provide the food.

## II The Days of NOW

Sin changed everything about this world.

It affected how we treat ourselves and each other.

It has also affected how we relate to the world around us.

Some people turn to abuse.

Other people become tree huggers and animal rights activists.

Some treat the world as if they were a god who can do whatever they want.

Everything becomes just an object of their whims and pleasures.

Others treat animals and plants as if they were gods.

They elevate lower life forms to the status of humanity or beyond.

Both are Biblically wrong approaches.

King David held God's perspective on life.

"I look up at your macro-skies, dark and enormous, your handmade sky-jewelry, moon and stars mounted in their settings. Then I look at my micro-self and wonder, why do you bother with us? Why take a second look our way? Yet we've so narrowly missed being gods, bright with Eden's dawn light. You put us in charge of your handcrafted world, repeated to us your Genesis-charge, made us lords of sheep and cattle, even animals out in the wild, birds flying and fish swimming, whales singing in the ocean deeps. God, brilliant Lord, your name echoes around the world." (Psalm 8:3-9)

Centuries later we listen to the insights of the writer to the Hebrews.

"It's crucial that we keep a firm grip on what we've heard so that we don't drift off. If the old message delivered by the angels was valid and nobody got away with anything, do you think we can risk neglecting this latest message, this magnificent salvation? First of all, it was delivered in person by the Master, then accurately passed on to us by those who heard it from him. All the while God was validating it with gifts through the Holy Spirit, all sorts of signs and miracles, as he saw fit. God didn't put angels in charge of this business of salvation that we're dealing with here. It says in Scripture, 'What is man and woman that you bother with them; why take a second look their way? You made them not quite as high as angels, bright with Eden's dawn light; then you put them in charge of your entire handcrafted world.' When God put them in charge of everything, nothing was excluded. But we don't see it yet, don't see everything under human jurisdiction. What we do see is Jesus, made 'not quite as high as angels,' and then, through the experience of death, crowned so much higher than any angel, with a glory 'bright with Eden's dawn light.' In that death, by God's grace, he fully experienced death in every person's place. It makes good sense that the God who got everything started and keeps everything going now completes the work by making the Salvation Pioneer perfect through suffering as he leads all these people to glory. Since the One who saves and those who are saved have a common origin, Jesus doesn't hesitate to treat them as family, saying, 'I'll tell my good friends, my brothers and sisters, all I know about you; I'll join them in worship and praise to you.' Again, he puts himself in the same family circle when he says, 'Even I live by placing my trust in God.' And yet again, 'I'm here with the children God gave me.' Since the children are made of flesh and blood, it's logical that the Savior took on flesh and blood in order to rescue them by his death. By embracing death, taking it into himself, he destroyed the Devil's hold on death and freed all who cower through life, scared to death of death. It's obvious, of course, that he didn't go to all this trouble for angels. It was for people like us, children of

Abraham. That's why he had to enter into every detail of human life. Then, when he came before God as high priest to get rid of the people's sins, he would have already experienced it all himself—all the pain, all the testing—and would be able to help where help was needed." (Hebrews 2:1-18 TM)

People, not animals, are the object of His ultimate love through Jesus.

We are called to love others and care for what God has created and redeemed. Jerry Cook in *Love, Acceptance, and Forgiveness* writes, "It is the church of Jesus Christ that should stand as a model of right in a sea of wrong. As the Bible puts it, we need to be light in a dark place. ... We should be bringing God's insight into situations." (pages 31-32)

If you are concerned about animal treatment get to know a beef farmer.

Get to know a zoo keeper.

Get to know the owner of a circus.

Build relationships with those who oversee the treatment of animals.

But in the process don't neglect the spiritual plight of your neighbor.

Don't overlook the malnutrition of children and life in orphanages.

Reach out to the prisoner and the sick.

"We should be speaking Christ's love and redemptive power into the heart of the individuals caught in sin. We see Jesus doing this." (Jerry Cook p. 32)