

Not Fit For Noah's Ark

by Daryl Wingerd

Some people may have a soft spot in their heart for warthogs, but I think they are the ugliest animals on the planet. Baby warthogs are not quite as ugly as the adults, but even the babies won't win any beauty contests. And by the time a "cute" little warthoglet reaches maturity he looks like he fell from the top of an ugly tree and hit every branch on the way down.

Ugh! That face!!



Ugly Begets Ugly

No one would say a baby warthog grows into an ugly adult because he went through a rough childhood. Everyone knows he looks the way he does because of what he *is*—ugly *by nature*. Ugly begets ugly. Likewise (and I am speaking to those who are not followers of Jesus Christ), you are what you are *by nature*. In fact, what you are now is what Christians used to be.

Among them too we all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were *by nature* children of wrath, even as the rest. (Eph. 2:3)

Sin emanates from the center of your being. Jesus makes this clear in Mark's gospel.

That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man. (Mark 7:20-23)

Just as no one needs to teach a baby viper how to coil, strike, and bite, no one needed to teach you how to lust, deceive, or be prideful. These are the natural ways in which you express what is in your heart, even though you may have learned to hide them well.

You may not be as physically ugly as a warthog, but morally speaking and from God's perspective, you are as ugly as the devil. The apostle John actually distinguishes between "the children of God and the children of the devil" based on their nature and their practice either of sin or righteousness (1 John 3:10). Furthermore, Jesus included many of the respected religious leaders of His day in the category of the devil's offspring (John 8:44).

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In order to get a clearer picture of just how wicked you really are, consider Genesis 6:5. "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that *every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*." It was because of this universal wickedness that God instructed Noah to build an ark in preparation for the flood. God mercifully saved eight people and representatives of each animal species (including two warthogs!), but He destroyed every other human being—millions of them—because of their moral ugliness. *He simply could not stand to look at them any longer*. Had you lived then, you would have been among the drowned.

You might be tempted to think, "These people must have been *terribly* evil—more evil than modern man, and certainly more evil than me. After all, their behavior drove God to send the flood in which millions perished. I don't see myself doing anything *that* bad."

You only think this way about yourself because you cannot see your own heart from God's perspective. You need to look in a mirror that can show you who you really are, and the only such mirror is the Bible. You may see yourself as a moral, law-abiding person, a church-going person, a well-respected member of society, or even a religious leader. But if you have never come to see your ugliness, then you are unbearably ugly to God.

Mercy Always Comes With Truth

Noah and his family members were not perfect people. God dealt with them in mercy, and thereby preserved the human race. He deals mercifully with many people even today by drawing them to repentance and saving faith in Jesus Christ. But He never gives this mercy apart from truth—that is, without first bringing the person to understand that he *needs* mercy.

As long as you believe the lie that comes from your own heart, and from a society that puts self-esteem on a higher pedestal than justice and truth—the lie that says you are a "good person," and judges your natural human nature as beautiful and worthy of God's reward, rest assured that God is repulsed by what He sees. But when God in His mercy wipes away the deceptive fog that currently obscures your view of reality, then you will see that "There is none righteous, no not one. . . . There is none who does good, there is not even one" (Rom. 3:10, 12). Your throat, the Bible says, "is an open grave" (Rom. 3:13), and we all know what you find when you look inside one of those!

When you come to see what you *really* look like to God at the center of your being, you will find yourself crying out, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" (Luke 18:13).

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