

Life in Adam's Image

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[0 : 00] Our gracious Father, we do thank you again for your word, which directs our lives and also gives us wisdom in how to live. We do pray, Father, that you would help us to know what you are saying to us this morning, but more than that, that you would help us to live in light of it.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, some time ago, one of my daughters was singing at the kitchen bench while Michelle, my wife, was cooking dinner.

And I walked in to hear her singing and she kind of stopped for a moment and said, I'm not a very good singer, am I? And so I paused at that point. I thought, well, do you encourage them or do you speak the truth or what?

And so I said, look, we all have different gifts. And then I confessed, and unfortunately, you've inherited my singing voice.

In fact, I remember when I was a student minister leading the church service one time and the senior, I was doing the singing and I was in front of the microphone. And the senior minister actually came up and turned the microphone off while we were mid-song and then whispered to me, that's better.

[1 : 10] And so it seems my poor daughter has inherited my bad singing voice. But that's what happens in life, isn't it? People inherit certain traits from their parents, whether it's their height, their looks, their mannerisms or their voice.

So the next slide, here's Tom Cruise and his son, Colin, who's inherited looks. They look like each other. Tom Hanks. Thank you. Sorry, not Tom Cruise. Tom Hanks and Colin.

That'd be really bad. They don't look like each other then, do they? On the next slide is Paul McCartney and James. They look pretty similar. It's a normal part of life, isn't it, where we inherit a family's likeness and even sometimes things that we wish we didn't inherit.

Well, today we come to a new section in Genesis where the writer describes the family line of Adam, the first Adam. And as we'll see, we share a certain likeness to Adam and have inherited certain things from him, including things we prefer not to have inherited.

So if you look at verse 1 in your Bibles, the writer begins by using that phrase that he repeats throughout his book. This is the written account of Adam's family line.

[2 : 25] Or literally, this is the book of the generations of Adam. And you see, the writer is about to describe Adam's family line. And remember the phrase, the account of...

Is that phrase he repeats 10 times throughout the book of Genesis to structure his book, his material, to group certain chapters together, to make certain points.

And so this new beginning in chapter 5 verse 1 continues over the page to chapter 6 verse 8. Because if you look at the top of the page in verse 9, he's got that phrase again.

Do you see the phrase? This is the account of Noah and his family. And so we've got this new section, which is chapter 5 and the first bit of chapter 6, put together by that phrase.

And as we look at Adam's line, you'll notice the writer will trace only one family line. So it's not a family tree, which includes all the sons and daughters branching out.

[3 : 24] It's just one family line of one son. The line of Seth, not the line of Cain. And that's because the writer is looking for that offspring, that child, literally that seed, who will crush the serpent's head.

Do you remember from chapter 3 a couple of weeks ago? Chapter 3 verse 15, God promised an offspring of Eve would crush the serpent's head. And last week Eve rejoiced that she had acquired a man whom she named Cain.

And so perhaps this was her offspring who would crush the serpent's head, who would rule over sin. But as we saw last week, Cain was instead ruled by sin and murdered his brother Abel.

A Sunday school child once wrote this prayer on the next slide. It says, on the next slide, the next one, I think, says, Dear God, maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each other so much if they had their own rooms.

It works with my brother, Larry. Of course, the rooms were not the problem. Sin that ruled over Cain was the problem.

[4 : 35] But at the end of the chapter, we saw God's grace to Eve, which granted her another son called Seth. So perhaps he is the one who will crush the serpent's head. And so the writer now traces Seth's line to see if Seth is the one.

And so we come to point one in your outlines and verse one and two in your Bibles. And he begins this account, this family line of Adam, by reminding us about our promising beginning.

So he says, this is the written account of Adam's family line. When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them mankind when they were created.

Now, do those two verses remind you of anything we've seen so far? It kind of reminds you of the beginning, doesn't it? Chapter one, where he uses similar sorts of language.

So just turn back in your Bibles one page to chapter one, verse 26. It's on the left hand side of the page there. So chapter one, verse 26, left hand side of page two.

[5 : 39] And notice the language there. Verse 26. Then God said, let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals and over all creatures that move along the ground.

It's similar. Let us make man in our likeness. And then it continues. Verse 27. So God created mankind in his own image. In the image of God, he created them male and female. Same language as chapter five.

He created them. And verse 28. God blessed them. Same language. And said to them, be fruitful and increase in number. Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over it.

And so on. You see, the beginning of chapter five actually reminds us of the beginning of creation. When God created us in his likeness to rule over the world.

Kind of like we heard from Psalm 8 at the beginning of the service. To represent his rule as his image bearers in this world. And it reminds us of how God created us as male and female so that we'd help each other to rule the world.

[6 : 49] And it reminds us of how God has blessed us with fruitfulness. The ability to bring life so that we might increase in number. Fill the earth. Subdue it. And so rule over it. Chapter five here begins by reminding us of our promising beginning back in chapter one.

But then, of course, it all went pear-shaped, didn't it? Adam and Eve rejected God's rule over them and decided to play God themselves by doing what they wanted. Which meant eating the forbidden fruit and sinning.

I saw online a church sign in the States. I'm hoping this presentation synced properly. Tim, you might want to check that. But on the next slide, it says, forbidden fruits create many jams.

And I thought, yeah, that's true, isn't it? Adam and Eve, by eating the forbidden fruit in chapter three, created a huge jam. It changed our promising beginning to a painful present.

For their sin led to judgment, including death. That's what we've seen. And so as this writer comes to Seth's line in verse three, notice how he changes his language from verse one and two.

[7 : 58] From the promising beginning to the painful present. Point two, verse three. When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image.

And he named him Seth. After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. All together, Adam lived a total of 930 years. And then he died.

Notice how the writer changes language here. He doesn't say Seth was made in God's image. He says Seth was made in Adam's image, in Adam's likeness. Why?

Well, because something has happened between that promising beginning in chapter one and the painful present here in chapter five. And what has happened was sin, chapter three, which led to judgment, especially death.

And so those who come after Adam like Seth, like us in this room here this morning, we all inherit Adam's likeness, his image. On the positive side, this means that we still share God's image as Adam did.

[9 : 03] We are still to rule over the world as Adam and Eve were to rule over the world. And just as Adam and Eve received God's blessing of fruitfulness, so too do we. But on the negative side, just as Adam and Eve were tainted by sin, so too are we.

And just as Adam and Eve were under God's judgment, including death, so too are we. This is now our life in Adam's image, you see. And this is what the writer highlights for us in chapter five. So, for example, God's blessing is still enjoyed. Of fruitfulness, verse three, Adam has a son. And in verse four, he has other sons and daughters. There's the blessing of God's fruitfulness. But notice how Adam's life ends in verse five.

And then he died. Death has the last word in this life. And this pattern continues. Have a look at verse six. Notice the same pattern.

And notice Seth, who we thought might be the one to crush the serpent's head. Well, he dies. He suffers the same judgment because of sin. He doesn't conquer death, does he?

[10 : 29] And so we have to look forward to another. And yet in the meantime, the pattern of life in Adam's image continues. There is the blessing of fruitfulness and life, where they seem to live a long time.

They have sons and daughters. But there's also death. Their ages slowly decline. There's a couple exceptions, but on the whole, they decline. They get shorter.

And their life always ends in death. It's the last word. And it's relentless, which makes the overall tone of this chapter and pattern rather depressing.

Let me read a big section to you and see if you can see the pattern and also feel the tone. So verse nine. Let's 10 years. When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kenan.

And after he became the father of Kenan, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enosh lived a total of 905 years. And then he died. When Kenan had lived 70 years, he became the father of Mahalal.

[11 : 26] Do you see the pattern?

There is the blessing of God in the fruitfulness of life, but no matter how much fruitfulness of life there is, it always ends in death. It's like humanity is caught in this depressing cycle.

It's kind of like that, I had some slides, but I don't think they've synced. It's kind of like that movie Groundhog Day. Do you remember that movie Groundhog Day that just repeats over and over again? Or more recently with the one with Tom Cruise, Edge of Tomorrow, Live, Die, Repeat. There it is, it has synced. It's kind of like we're stuck in this cycle. Live, Die, Repeat. And it's a depressing cycle because death always seems to have the last word.

You see, the writer is highlighting for us that we're a long way from our promising beginning in chapter 1. And one of humanity's big problems is death. Now, I know people today will say that, look, death is just a natural part of life.

[12 : 43] It happens, you know, and it's just normal. But it's not normal. It's not natural. I mean, if it were a natural part of life, if death was the way God meant life to be, then why do people still fear death?

Why is our natural instinct to resist death, to fight against death and seek life? And why is it that it causes so much pain when death comes to those around us?

Shouldn't all that tell us that death is not natural? That we're built for life? And that death is an unnatural invasion of life?

I remember visiting someone who was dying and they were not a Christian. They, you know, didn't really want any part of God. They were a nice person, but they didn't want anything to do with God or the church.

And they'd often taught their children, look, when you die, you die. That's just life. And yet, when they were about to die, they contacted someone from our church who then asked me to go and visit them to pray for them.

[13 : 57] Because they thought, look, maybe a minister will kill me so I can live. You see, here's a person who doesn't even believe in God and yet even deep down they know that death is not normal such that they will try anything, even a minister from a church, that they might keep living.

And have life. We are built for life. That's natural. But death? No, that's unnatural. And yet death will come to every person.

One out of every one person in this room today will one day die. Welcome to Holy Trinity. Are you having fun? But there is a sign of hope.

Have a look at verse 21. When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters.

Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. Enoch walked faithfully with God. Then he was no more because God took him away. Here is a break in the pattern, isn't it?

[15:10] Enoch is different. By the way, it is a different Enoch to the Enoch of chapter 4. This is a good Enoch who walked faithfully with God. And notice his life does not end with and he died.

It ends with God took him away. And so instead of death having the last word, God has the last word here. God saves Enoch from death.

And why does God save Enoch from death? Well, it says twice because he walked with God. Now this is a rare expression which speaks of a very close relationship with God.

And at the heart of this relationship, like every relationship actually, is trust. Faith. And so on the next slide from Hebrews chapter 11 is like a commentary on these verses.

Hebrews 11 says, By faith, Enoch was taken from this life so that he did not experience death. And then the writer quotes Genesis chapter 5 here, He could not be found because God had taken him away.

[16:11] For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God, who walked with God. And without faith, it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

You see, Enoch not only trusted that God existed like Cain did last week, but he also trusted in God as his personal God. God of his own life such that he sought to please God like Abel did.

And the writer of Hebrews says it's this faith that saw him saved from death. Enoch even had faith in God to provide for him, to give him reward when he sought it.

A reward not so much in treasure, but things like food and protection. The point is that the heart of his walk with God was his faith in God. And this faith or trust meant death did not have the last word for him.

Here is hope in an otherwise sad pattern of life in Adam's image. And so, could Enoch then be the one who would crush the serpent's head? After all, he walked with God instead of being ruled by sin.

[17:24] What's more, he conquered death. And yet, there's no hint that he has dealt with the sin for us, for the rest of humanity. Because the sad pattern just continues for them.

You see verse 25? When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech. And after he became the father of Lamech, Methuselah lived 782 years and had other sons and daughters.

Altogether, Methuselah lived a total of 969 years, and then he died. The pattern's back. And so, we continue to look forward to one who might crush the serpent's head and free us all from death being the last word for us.

And we don't have to wait too long because we've got another candidate in the very next verse. Because in verses 28 and 29, the pattern breaks again. When Lamech, a different Lamech to last week, by the way, when Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son, and now the pattern breaks. He named him Noah and said, He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed.

[18:37] It's Genesis 3. And after Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years. He had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Lamech lived a total of 777 years, and then he died. Here, the pattern of humanity is again broken with Noah, isn't it?

Lamech calls his son Noah because as your footnote says, the name Noah sounds like the word in Hebrew for comfort. And so Noah, it seems, will somehow bring comfort from the curse of chapter 3.

The curse caused by Adam and Eve's sin. How will Noah do this? Well, as we'll see next week, he builds an ark and offers salvation through judgment. A new beginning for all who would trust in God like he does, like Enoch did.

Although sadly, not many will take him up on his offer. But for the moment, the writer wants to highlight the real problem here in chapter 5, which is death. This is the real problem for life in Adam's image.

But there is one other. A primary problem that is the cause of all this. And so that brings us to point 3 in chapter 6. And that problem is sin. See chapter 6 verse 1.

[19 : 46] When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful and they married any of them they chose. Then the Lord said, My spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal.

Their days will be 120 years. The Nephilim were on the earth in those days and also afterward when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, they of renown.

Now, most people want to know who the sons of God were. But unfortunately, no one knows. No one knows for sure. In fact, one commentator says this is the most debated verse in all of Genesis. There are options and you can ask me about those later if you like. But whoever they are, it's a picture of humanity's decline in sin. Here it's represented by men marrying whoever they want, indicating many wives instead of one wife as God created marriage to be.

And so God brings death because of this sin by shortening their life. He says in verse 3 that his spirit will not contend, or as your footnote says, will not remain in mankind forever.

[20 : 56] For they are mortal. In other words, God's spirit sustains mortal mankind. But his spirit will not sustain humanity forever. Instead, he will now shorten their life to 120 years to bring death sooner.

Why? Well, because of sin. Sin leads to death. And we see this again in chapter 5, sorry, verse 5 and 7. The Lord God saw how great the wickedness of human race had become on the earth and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.

And so the Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth. And his heart was deeply grieved. So the Lord said, I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race that I have created and with them animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground.

For I have regretted or I relent that I have made them. Here in chapter 1 we heard that God saw all that he's made and it was very good.

But here in chapter 6 verse 5 God saw how great the wickedness of humanity had become. And notice it grieves him. End of verse 6 says his heart was deeply troubled or literally grieved.

[22 : 08] Sin grieves God. It breaks his heart. Which means God must have really had a broken heart because humanity is utterly sinful here isn't it? And the writer says that the human heart was only evil all the time.

Now I realise for some people here that seems like over the top language. I mean surely humanity can do good as well can't we? And you're right humans can do good people can do good from time to time but notice the writer says humanity's hearts are always evil and that's because a heart that rejects God a heart that seeks to live apart from God is by definition sinful evil.

I remember on the next slide how I wrote the word sin for a couple of weeks with a capital I it's because the essence of sin is about ignoring God and living how I want as though I am God.

This is the essence of sin and evil living a life apart from God in rebellion to God. And when we realise this it's not hard to imagine a world whose hearts are only evil all the time.

In other words a world whose hearts always ignore God and live apart from God. In fact it's not too dissimilar to our world today. And this sin again leads to death and this time by flood a grieving God will wipe out a sinful humanity and yet there is still hope.

[23 : 41] Verse 8 But Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord. Here is one man who found favour with God. Why? Well verse 9 tells us that Noah also walked with God just like Enoch.

Same expression. And so I take it that he also had a faith or trust in God like Enoch did. In fact as we'll see next week he had to trust God to build a big massive boat in the middle of nowhere nowhere from water.

He had to trust God. And given this and the fact that Noah's very name suggests he will bring comfort from the curse caused by sin then maybe Noah is the offspring of Eve who will crush the serpent's head and free us from sin and death.

Well sadly no. Because as we'll see next week Noah ends up being ruled by sin as well. And so we are left with this pretty depressing picture of life in Adam's image aren't we?

Life that is plagued by two big problems. I mean I know we all face all sorts of problems in life. One parent said to me recently that they have three problems and they are aged 12, 10 and 8 kids.

[24 : 49] for others we face financial problems or health problems or family problems. But this account of Adam's family line reminds us that life in Adam's image comes with two big ones in particular.

Death, chapter 5 and sin, chapter 6. And they are related. That is death is caused by sin. And not only death in this world but eternal death in the world to come such that death really does have the final word.

So we need to look for someone who will deal with the primary problem of sin and in so doing free us from death being our last word. And it just so happens that there is such a person there is an offspring of Eve who walked with God like Enoch and Noah.

There is an offspring of Eve who offers us salvation through judgment like Noah. There is one for whom death was not the last word for him like Enoch.

And this one is the one who crushes the serpent's head and deals with our sin. It's of course Jesus. As we heard in our second reading on the next slide Jesus became a man he walked with God and by his death his death on the cross where he took God's punishment for our sin it says he broke the power of the devil who had the power to accuse us of sin and demand our eternal death.

[26 : 20] And yet because Jesus has paid for our sin the devil has lost his power to demand our death. And so death doesn't have to be the last word for us. I may have told you this story before but there was a family who bought some white goods from one of those big superstores like Harvey Norman or something on those 100 days interest free schemes and for some reason or other they couldn't make the repayments.

and so they received a notice in the mail saying that they had to pay the outstanding balance by a certain date otherwise some guys with a truck would come and repossess the goods.

You see the family's debt meant that these guys had the right or the power to demand the goods back. But then a family member ended up paying the balance for them and gave them the receipt of payment.

Except Harvey Norman didn't tell the guys with the truck and so the next day after the due date they turned up and parked their truck on the front lawn and banged on the front door and demanded the goods back.

But then the father went inside the house got the receipt held up to the guys and said my debt has been paid in full. You have no power to demand anything from me anymore. Move your truck.

[27 : 31] That's what Christ has done for us. You see we have a debt of sin we cannot repay but Christ paid it for us. And because he did then save it no longer has any power to demand our eternal death.

We're off the hook. And death doesn't have to be the last word for us anymore. Instead we can have life again. As Paul says on the next slide in Romans chapter 6 he says the wages or the payment of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And this means that we no longer need to fear death anymore because we know that we can have life eternal. Life is the last word for us if we trust in Christ.

I've had the privilege of conducting a number of Christian funerals over the years and most recently a man called Bill. And as I spoke with Bill the week before he passed he didn't fear death.

Don't get me wrong he there was a big part of him that wanted to live and that's right because we are built to live. Death is unnatural. And there was a big part of him that didn't want to leave his wife or his children or grandchildren and that's right because we are built for relationships.

[28 : 49] Death is unnatural. But he did not fear that death would be the last word for him. He knew that there would be life again.

and his wife Betty knew that she would see him again. It was great hope and comfort you see.

Chapter 5 makes it very clear that every person in Adam's likeness that's all of humanity will die.

But those who trust in Christ will live again. In fact Jesus even lived again to prove it. And we have evidence historical evidence for his resurrection. But this certain hope over death is for all who have faith in Jesus.

Like Enoch had faith in God. Like Noah had faith in God. So can I ask you this morning have you put your faith in Jesus for life? Do you trust in Christ for life?

And for us who have do we continue to exercise that faith like Enoch did and walk with God in Christ? To walk with God means we have a relationship with God.

[29 : 52] You see Christianity is not about a religion where we do certain things over and over again to earn God's favour, twist God's arm. Christianity is about a relationship where we trust God and he gives us his favour.

And if it's about a relationship where we trust God and walk with him then it means we are to relate to him. We are to talk to him in prayer. We are to listen to him by reading his word and we are to trust him when life is good and when life is bad.

I know these are all basic things you've heard lots before but it's not always easy to do is it? And yet it's the very essence of being a Christian. Secondly and on the flip side walking with God means trying not to grieve God.

Remember sin grieves God it breaks his heart. I remember at one of my old churches a young guy coming to talk with me and he had tears in his eyes because he had gotten drunk at a party. Now nothing bad had happened because of it but he knew it grieved his heavenly father and that grieved him. Now the great news is God loves to forgive which I told him but it really struck me that he understood you know that sin grieves God that Christianity is about a relationship with the heavenly father who loves us and gave his only son for us and so this guy hated the thought of grieving his heavenly father.

[31 : 20] We're to walk with God we're not to grieve God and finally we are to give thanks to God that death no longer has to be the final word. We have hope. Let me finish with this verse on the next slide from 1 Corinthians 15 it says the sting of death is sin but thanks be to God he gives us the victory over death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

So let's give God thanks now let's pray. Our gracious heavenly father we do thank you for this reminder this morning that the two big problems that all of humanity faces are death and sin and yet in the Lord Jesus you have dealt with them both and that through trust in the Lord Jesus death is no longer the final word for us but rather life is.

And so far we pray that you would help us to keep walking with you keep seeking not to grieve you and keep giving thanks to you who has given us the victory over death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.