

The Sad Pattern Of Humanity

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- [0 : 00] Well, can you think of a time of your life when you have felt trapped in some kind of rut where there's nothing you can do to get out?
- You may have found this in your study, when it feels like an endless exercise, and at the end it just produces more study and more work.
- You may have found this playing Flappy Bird with some kind of irrational desire just to keep playing, but really you know you're just going to worsen the situation.
- You may have felt this while cleaning your house for the 50,000th time. No matter how well you clean or how much you change your lifestyle, you just can't avoid having to clean again.
- Some of you may feel this in everyday life, the fact that you have to do the same thing every day with no way out. This pattern, it kind of reminds me of a few movies which follow this repetitive plot.
- [1 : 11] Groundhog Day, does anyone know the movie Groundhog Day? Maybe the older people in the room? Maybe the younger people in the room know the movie The Edge of Tomorrow, which just came out a few months ago.
- Both these movies are about these guys who are trapped in the same day. And it's repeating itself over and over for some slightly explained reason. And no matter what they do, there's nothing they can do to change their situation.
- They're stuck in a pattern with what looks like no hope of change. Well, the passage we're looking at this evening is a little bit like this.
- The difference in the passage is that all humans are trapped. Trapped in a sad pattern of sin.
- With seemingly no hope of change. Genesis 5 paints a picture of this pattern as a result of everything that's come before.
- [2 : 15] Now, as Mark said, it's been a few weeks since we've looked at this, so let me refresh your memory. First, we saw God's good creation. You might remember that.
- And then we saw God's good creation of humanity in a perfect home and a perfect relationship. And then we saw God's blessing on His creation.
- But then after that, we see that humanity has fallen out of relationship with God. And then we see God's curse on His creation as a result of that.
- And in chapter 4, which you'll hear about next week in more detail, well, the evil outcomes of sin, well, they just go off the hook.
- With more selfishness and jealousy and even murder. And we'll look at this a little more later. But something that's interesting in both chapter 4 and chapter 5 and even chapter 3 is, even though there's so much bad, even so there's so much sin and so much hopelessness for this humanity, there is still a glimmer of hope.
- [3 : 31] We see this hope in the fact that God hasn't forgotten about this humanity. They are fruitful. They increase in number. There is a kind of hope for the future.

And we'll see this hope continue to emerge in the midst of the hopelessness. But let's get to chapter 5. Chapter 5 starts with an account of the line of Adam.

And when I read this, it makes me think of this book called A Brief History of Mankind. This book is about where humanity has come from and where we are now in light of our history.

And that's a little bit like Genesis 5. The state of the generations of humanity because of what's come before. And so in this family line, we see more than just a family tree, but perhaps the first brief history of mankind.

Let me read from verse 1. This is the written account of Adam's line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. He created them, male and female, and blessed them.

[4 : 40] And when they were created, he called them man. Well, firstly, just a few things about language. When it says God created man, it doesn't mean God created males only.

It's not talking about gender. It's talking about species. It means he named them mankind. Now, verse 1 proves this where it says God created man, that is mankind, in the likeness of God.

Male and female, he created them, it says. To be in the likeness of God means to be male and female. If we were just females, or if we were just males, then we wouldn't be in the likeness of God, because being in the likeness of God means male and female ruling in relationship.

Another thing about language is in regard to Adam. The word Adam in Genesis, does anyone know what it means? Anyone know what it means? That's right, it means man.

Now, this isn't very surprising when you think about it. The first man is called man. It's quite common in the Bible for a child to be called what they are, or what they will be, or something about the situation they were born into.

[6 : 05] In Genesis 17, God says, you will be called Abraham because you will be the father of many nations. Pharaoh's daughter named Moses because he was taken up out of the water, just as he took up God's people out of Egypt.

And Jesus said to Simon, his disciple, your name is Peter, which means rock, saying you will be the rock which I'll build my church on. And this doesn't just happen in the Bible either, does it?

Some friends of mine, they found an unlicensed dog. The pound didn't want it, and so they took it home. They looked at it for a while, looked at some of the key aspects, and they called it dog.

So it makes sense for Adam to be called man. I think we could even take this a little bit further. Adam is not only called man because he is the first, but also because he is the standard of humanity.

He's like the ambassador or the representative of all of mankind. What Adam says and does, he does so on behalf of all humanity.

[7 : 27] And so Adam's response to God sets the standard for humanity's response to God, which means that all people, all humanity is included in Adam.

We are, by nature, an Adam humanity. And we learn this in the New Testament, in 1 Corinthians 15, 22, which says, in Adam all die.

Those who follow in Adam's likeness, which is people, they die. This doesn't mean that Adam is responsible for our sin. It means that because of who Adam is, because of what Adam represents, humanity is sinful.

And so as we read chapter 5, we see that just since Adam, sorry, just as Adam represents humanity, the generations that follow him are a representation of the humanity that follows.

Meaning this genealogy isn't necessarily just teaching us about the nine generations that followed Adam. rather it's giving us a picture of the shape and the nature of all of humanity, specifically the pattern therein because of sin.

[8 : 55] And it's not hard to see this pattern develop as you read the passage, is it? I'm sure you would have been able to hear it as Alex read it. As each generation comes, you can't help but see this pattern unfold.

Let me read some from verse 4. After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and he had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Adam lived 930 years and then he died.

When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father of Enosh. After he'd become the father of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Seth lived 912 years and then he died.

When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Canaan and after he'd become the father of Canaan, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters.

Altogether, Enosh lived 905 years and then he died. And so it goes on with a very similar pattern. A lives for X years.

[10 : 01] A fathers B. A has more kids. A lives for Z total of years and then he died. Can you see the pattern? I'm sure you can.

They live, they father, they die. It always ends in the same, in the same way.

Just to drill in this, this unending, this frustrating, sad pattern. And then he died. And then he died.

And then he died. And then he died. As I mentioned earlier, in chapter 4, we learn that the evil behavior as a result of sin, well, it goes viral.

Sin had saturated the heart and brain so much that Cain, the third human in the Bible, killed his own brother out of jealousy and pride.

[11 : 10] And after that, Cain's line, it just gets worse. But despite this, chapter 4, well, it seems to end with some kind of hope.

There's a new son, Seth. There's a new chance. Perhaps there's a new hope for this failing humanity.

And it's not Luke Skywalker. It's almost like they're starting again. The first one didn't go so well, so let's try again. It kind of reminds me of the Hulk movie back in 2003.

Does anyone remember this? Anyone? Yeah? Everyone got really excited because there was going to be a Hulk movie, particularly me. And well, it didn't totally fail, but it was pretty average, wasn't it?

And just five years later, another director and another writer thought they could remake the same story. So having learned the mistakes of the first one, having listened to the fans, they thought they could do a better job.

[12 : 21] and there was lots of hype. There was lots of hope for this new endeavor. It's a bit like this new family in Genesis 5. Is there a chance that this new family line, this new humanity, can not make the same mistakes?

Now the thing I find interesting is that no one in this line in chapter 5 does any horrific evil compared to chapter 4.

There's no murder, there's no jealousy, there's no threats, there's actually some pretty positive comments about some people. But what we see in this new family line is that sin is so much more than the bad things we do.

Sin affects them in a totally life-changing way. When Adam and Eve rejected God's command and sin entered the world, sin didn't just become another option for people, it became a part of their nature.

And so regardless of how good people are or even of how bad they aren't, sin still affects you as a human and it affects you to the point of death, inescapable, unpreventable death.

[13 : 56] And it doesn't matter what these people achieved in their life, they may have invented the wheel, they may have invented sliced bread, they may have invented space travel and the internet which got destroyed by the flood, they may have been doctors or farmers or just nice people.

If you carefully look at this pattern of humanity, you'll see that it doesn't care what they did or didn't do. It doesn't matter what your family is like, it doesn't matter where you come from, they all end the same and he died and he died and he, she, they died.

Sadly, no more success in this new line than the old one. You can't improve the state of sin.

It always ends in death. The line of humanity fails again just like the Hulk.

Now, I think it would be good for us to pause at this point and think about what this means for us. Well, the truth of this family line, it's true for us too, isn't it?

[15 : 22] The pattern of death, it hasn't ended in the 21st century. And we know it, don't we? We still live our lives understanding that death comes to all.

We know this because we see people doing all they can to delay it and to hold it off, but knowing, although not often admitting, that there's nothing that can be done to stop it.

The pattern of, and he died, well, it continues, doesn't it? What does this mean? It means that sin is a part of each of us here too.

We're born, we live, and we die in sin. Remember what I said earlier about the Adam humanity? Those in Adam, those in his likeness, humans, all die.

Just like the people in Genesis 5. It doesn't matter what you're like as a person, it doesn't matter how bright and shiny your personality is, it doesn't matter how well you did or do in VCE, it doesn't matter if you're the employee of the month, it doesn't matter if you win the Nobel Peace Prize, it doesn't matter what you do, or what you've done, we are by nature sinful, out of relationship with our loving Creator, awaiting death and judgment for our rebellion.

[17 : 01] Well I bet you're getting the impression by now that humanity is in a bad state, lots of sin and badness, not much good, not much future, not much hope.

Is this all that's in store for humanity? Has God cut us off entirely? Well no, he hasn't.

There are three encouragements in the passage, sorry, that this passage gives us regarding this hope. The first one is that we are image bearers.

Despite sin, we still bear the image of God. Even though all humans exist in the likeness of Adam, as you'll see in verse 3, even though all humans sin because they're in the likeness of Adam, even though all humans die because they're in the likeness of Adam, God created mankind in His likeness, in His image.

Take a look again at Genesis chapter 1 verse 27, God created mankind in His own image. In the image of God, He created Him, male and female, He created them.

[18 : 18] God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Even after the fall, humans rule over the world. They still can and do relate to each other and to God in His likeness.

love and they're fruitful just as God blessed them to be, which we do see in the pattern. And so amongst this sad frustrating pattern, well there is a glimmer of hope, hope of good relationships and new birth.

Secondly, comfort is coming. When Noah is born, his father says, He will bring us comfort or He will bring us rest from our painful labor and toil.

And in Noah we see that God is working to bring these people back to Himself. We see that God is remembering His creation and that He desires new relationship with them.

And thirdly, despite this ongoing pattern of sin and death, well there are exceptions to the rule and we see this in Enoch in verse 22.

[19 : 39] Have a look in your Bibles. After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether Enoch lived 365 years.

Enoch walked with God and then he was no more because God took him away. Clearly there is something different about Enoch.

Firstly, it says that Enoch walked with God. This is the kind of phrase that is used about some of the heroes of the Old Testament like Noah, like Abraham, like Moses and also the prophets.

And secondly, right in the middle of this pattern of death that just happens over and over, the account of Enoch, well it just throws a curveball, doesn't it? Look again at verse 24, Enoch walked with God, then he was no more because God took him away.

And although we can't be certain, it appears that Enoch didn't die, which is really odd considering the pattern we've seen. The description of Enoch, it stands in stark contrast to the rest of the list, particularly where it says God took him as opposed to then he died.

[21 : 02] And so the question arises, what's so special about Enoch? Why is Enoch different? Enoch had a relationship with God and this relationship changes what happens to him.

And so what can we learn from Enoch? Well, a few things I think. Firstly, despite the continuation of this sad pattern of humanity, God continues to have a relationship with his creatures.

This fallen humanity can know God, they can please God and they can live in relationship with him. And secondly, neither death nor sin can stop God from taking us to be with him.

Yes, sin cuts us off from God. Yes, we are under the power of sin and death and we cannot escape it. death. But God is not under the power of sin and death.

The life of Enoch shows us that God can save us from the sad pattern of humanity. He can save us from sin and death.

[22 : 24] And does God just pick and choose randomly who he saves? No. Enoch walked with God. Meaning Enoch trusted God.

Enoch had a relationship with God and so God took him. The life of Enoch teaches us that sin and death have no power over those who know and trust God.

In Enoch we see both an image of Jesus and also of those who follow him. But despite these three encouragements the central focus well it's still the pattern of sin.

Sin which produces death which we are all included in. So is there any real hope for our future?

Well if we look into Noah's future at the end of the list we see judgment. We see judgment of sin and evil.

[23 : 34] We see salvation for the righteous. We even see a new relationship between God and Noah and his new family. But at the end of Genesis 9 well the pattern continues.

Noah dies and sin spreads again. So is there any hope for our future? Well if we look into our future we might see any number of things.

You might see fame or success. You might see family and friends. You might see the demons with the Premiership Cup but that's pretty unlikely.

You might see a lot or a little. but regardless of what we see along the way the end is the same for us all.

So what hope is there? Well to answer this question I want to take us to a verse from the New Testament. It's Romans 6 verse 23. It may be quite familiar to some of you because of the Colin Buchanan song.

[24 : 43] It's up on the slide. It says for the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Now the first part of this you know already not because you're familiar with the verse or the song but because you've seen it in Genesis.

You've seen it in humanity's response to God. What we get for our sin is death and he died and he died and he died and as we've seen there's no escape.

There's no prevention. There's nothing we can do to change this sad pattern. But Jesus the sinless son of God he has the power to change the pattern.

He has the means to break us from sin and death. Just like the rest of the verse says the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

And this is not something we can earn. If humans could have earned it surely Noah or Moses or Abraham or someone like that would have managed it. But our sinfulness it makes us powerless to change us.

[26 : 08] but Jesus sinlessness makes him powerful to save us. And so just as the old Adam represents the old humanity who live in sin and die Jesus is this new Adam.

He's the new humanity and those who follow in the likeness of Jesus become a part of this new humanity. that Jesus humanity is not under power of sin.

That Jesus humanity does not die. And the rest of that verse I mentioned at the start 1 Corinthians 15 22 it says this for as in Adam all die so in Christ all will be made alive.

Those who are a part of the Jesus humanity will break out of this sad pattern and will live with Christ.

And so just before I finish I just want to take a moment and consider does this truth affect our lives?

[27 : 24] If you consider yourself a part of the Jesus humanity which is freed from the power of sin and death does it show in your life?

Does your life follow in the footsteps of the one who perfectly walked with God? It's great to know and understand the power of Jesus and what he can do for us but can people outside this room, can people outside these relationships, can they tell that you belong to the Jesus way of life?

The life that walks with God, the life that trusts God, the life that only cares about what God wants or about what God thinks.

Friends, despite the pattern that we have seen tonight, there is hope for our future. God let's leave here tonight showing that we live our lives in the hope of Jesus, not in the death of Adam.

Why don't I pray? Heavenly Father, we thank you for teaching us about the state we are in because of our sin.

[28 : 49] Father, thank you for teaching us that you take sin very seriously. Father, enable us to recognize the hopelessness of our sinful state which leads to our eventual death.

Please, Father, enable us to take our rejection of your rule over us seriously like you do. Father, remind us that we are powerless to save ourselves.

Thank you, Father, for your Son, the Lord Jesus. Thank you that through his death he has the power to take away our sin and break us from this sad pattern of death.

Father, please strengthen us to follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. Help us to show those who don't know you the hope we have because of Jesus. Amen.