

Cain, Abel, & the Enemy Within

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Genesis chapter 4, begin reading in verse 1. Now, Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord.

And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now, Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.

In the course of time, Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground. And Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions.

And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.

[1 : 13] So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The Lord said to Cain, why are you angry?

And why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door.

Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it. Cain spoke to Abel, his brother.

And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, where is Abel, your brother?

He said, I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper? Remember? And the Lord said, what have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.

[2 : 25] And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength.

You shall be a fugitive and wanderer on the earth. Cain said to the Lord, my punishment is greater than I can bear.

Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.

Then the Lord said to him, not so. If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him.

Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. Verse 17, Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch.

[3 : 35] When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch. To Enoch was born Irad. Irad fathered Mahusajel, and Mahusajel fathered Mesushel.

Mesushel fathered Lamech, and Lamech took two wives. The name of one was Ida, and the other Zillah. Abel bore Jabel.

He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of those who play the lute and pipe, or lyre and pipe.

Now, Zillah also bore Tubal-Cain. He was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-Cain was Nema. Lamech said to his wives, Ida and Zillah, hear my voice, you wives of Lamech.

Listen to what I say. I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, Lamech's revenge is 77-fold.

[4 : 45] Adam knew his wife again. She bore a son and called his name Seth. For she said, God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.

To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time, people began to call upon the name of the Lord.

May God bless the hearing and preaching of his word. In 2007, author Cormac McCarthy won the Pulitzer Prize, Tennessee author actually.

He won the Pulitzer Prize for his book, *The Road*. *The Road* has been made into a movie, but it tells the story of a father and son walking alone through a burned-up America.

All that happened in the past for this father and son seems like many lifetimes ago. The man remembers the life or the wife he lost. The life they shared.

[5 : 49] The sunlight, the warmth, the good times. Now he and his boy are struggling to survive. The world has drastically changed after this burning.

Everything is burned. The sky is dark. The ground is cold. The land is wrecked. Houses, trees, and fields are covered with ash and soot.

The father and son have nothing but the clothes they're wearing, a cart of scavenged food and each other. And they're walking the road trying to make it to the coast.

Well, Genesis 4 takes us into a similarly changed world. The world under the shadow of the fall. The opening chapters of Genesis bring, or placed man and woman in paradise.

Everything is in its right place. Everything is beautiful. Everything good is there to be eaten and at their fingertips to enjoy. But after they rebel, Adam and Eve are kicked out of paradise.

[6 : 53] That's where we saw them last, east of Eden. Genesis 4, though, picks up the story and tells us what happened. It spans generations.

And yet, it's carefully crafted to say something to us. Like the story of creation. If you'll notice, the story of Cain and Abel includes multiples of seven, of the number seven.

The name Abel and brother occur seven times. The name Cain occurs 14 times. That's two times seven. The name for God in the beginning of these chapters.

And the name for God in 1, 1 through 2, 3 is 35 times. One word, Elohim. After that, 2, 4 to the end of this chapter, we see names for God 35 more times.

Such that the very last verse, they are declaring the praise of God, is the 70th, 10 times 7, occurrence of the name for God in the first four chapters.

[7 : 57] So, it's a carefully crafted message. The number seven signifies fullness and completion in the scriptures. Whereas, the number seven in creation is saying that creation is complete and full in every way.

It's the good world God has made. The sevens recurring here in Genesis 4 signified the complete spread of sin to all whom God has made.

The chapter is alerting us to the reality that sin has now spread everywhere. The fall of the first family has been passed down to their children and eventually to all whom God has made.

Kent Hughes says in a sentence, there is vast intentionality in this narrative as it instructs us about the essential nature of all mankind.

All stumble. All go astray. Romans 3 says all the world is under sin. And because of this, because the spread of sin is so universal and complete, all mankind is in a fight.

[9 : 20] And the same goes for Christians. Though all Christians have been set free from the power of sin, we fight the presence of remaining sin until Christ returns. The Bible encourages us to view ourselves as nothing less than a soldier in a state of warfare.

Dr. Piper, as he says things like this so well, he says, I hear so many Christians murmuring about their imperfections and their failures and their addictions and their shortcomings.

And I see so little war. Murmur, murmur, murmur. Why am I that way? Make war.

The only possible attitude toward out of control desires is a declaration of all out war. I believe that was, this is Moses' intent in crafting Genesis 4 and so too is God's intent as we read this, that we would make war on the desires of the flesh, whether it's for food or alcohol or sex or applause, acceptance or control, power or money, wherever the ranging desires go.

The only possible attitude toward out of control desires is a declaration of all out war at those desires within. In a word where we're going is kill sin or sin will master and kill you.

[10 : 43] Kill sin. Sin will master and kill you. Look at point one, his ungodly desires lead to sin. Genesis 4 breaks into three sections.

The first begins with the birth of Cain. The woman gives birth, or Eve gives birth to Cain. She says, I've gotten a man with help from the Lord. Now Adam knows his wife in the deepest, most intimate way.

She conceives a son. Cain is just a word that means to acquire, to get, or possess. And that's what she said, I've gotten a son with the help of the Lord. She acknowledges God's help.

But really, she's saying, I have done this. And we're meant to see already and meant to expect already trouble in the life of Cain.

Before long, she gives birth to another son, Abel. And the promised battle begins. The next several verses kind of contrast Cain and Abel.

[11 : 45] Cain is the older son. Abel is the younger son. Abel is a shepherd. Cain is a farmer. Cain brings to the Lord an offering from the field, perhaps grain or wheat.

Cain brings an offering, an animal, a sacrifice, a sheep. The Lord accepts Cain's offering but has no regard for, accepts Abel's offering but has no regard for Cain's.

Why? We were sitting around the kitchen or table this morning. Why did they? I mean, that's the first question you get, right? Now, both Cain and Abel, they brought an offering to the Lord. Come on.

But why does the Lord only accept Abel's? Now, it's not because of what they do for a living. It's not that God is partial to the shepherds, even though he reveals himself as a good shepherd. That's not what's going on here.

And not partial to the farmers. That's not what's going on. It's not that God loves missionaries and evangelists or something like that more. He doesn't love certain occupations more. That's not what's going on.

[12 : 54] It's not even the type of offering. So it's not that the difference and the problem is not the fact that Cain offers a grain or a wheat offering, cereal offering of some kind, and Abel offers an animal.

That's not what's going on. Both of those are commanded in the Old Testament law. So we know those are good and right and holy offerings. It's the motivation of their hearts.

Look down in verse 3. In the course of time, Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel brought the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions.

Hebrews 11 tells us that the difference was Abel offered it in faith. I think the idea is Cain brought some of what he had to offer. Abel brought the best of what he had to offer.

Cain brought a part of what he had to offer. Abel brought the fat portions. Abel went out of his way to please God. Cain merely checked a box.

[14 : 00] Cain, obviously, read this passage. He looks very religious, but he did not come sincerely to God. The fact that he offered just some of what he had is telling us that he didn't come to make himself like a little child.

He didn't come and confess his dependence on the Lord. He did not trust God to provide. True worship, as we know from the rest of Scripture, is not a matter of checking the boxes. It's not even a matter of offering sacrifices.

It's a matter of the heart. God looks not on the outward appearance, but on the heart. What pleases God are not bigger and better sacrifices, but sincerity of heart. I think it's the most quoted verse in the New Testament, from the Old Testament, by our Lord and Savior.

Here is Hosea 6.6, I desire mercy, not sacrifice. Because it's the heart that matters.

These verses, though, push us to think about our giving. True worship is not about giving what you easily can. I mean, there's philanthropic organizations all over the place for you to give what you easily can.

[15 : 07] True worship. It's about giving until your heart trusts completely and sincerely in the Lord to provide. That's what the poor widow does. You know, you kind of want to think, am I given in light of the poor widow that gave all that she had?

After the Lord rejects his offering, Cain becomes very angry. We see that immediately. So, therefore, Cain was very angry and his face fell.

Instead of humbling himself, Cain is jealous of his brother. He's envious. He's resentful of what has happened to him. Instead of examining his own heart, he's bitter and angry.

Anger is such a hard sin to turn away from because it feels so good. Frederick Buechner said, Of the seven deadly sins, anger is possibly the most fun.

To lick your tongue. To lick your wounds. To smack your lips over grievances long past. To roll your tongue. Roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontations still to come.

[16 : 17] To savor to the last toothsome morsel both the pain you're given and the pain you're given back. In many ways that a feast fit for a king. Anger is a terrible snare.

It feels good, but it also feels right. Anger at its base is just saying, I don't like that. You know, it's hard for us sometimes to admit we're angry. But if you're just saying, I don't like that, then you can admit it.

A little bit, you know, come off it a little bit. But the Lord goes to him, which is just so wonderful. The same way the Lord goes after Adam, the Lord goes after Cain. To try to help him. Look in verse 6.

He says, Cain, why are you angry? Why is your face falling? The Lord knows. His eyes see through everything. He looks on the heart. He knows what's going on. He's appealing to him to turn from his anger.

That's what's going on. The Lord is trying to alert Cain. He's trying to alert him that it's not Abor, the type of sacrifice he offered, that's the problem.

[17 : 21] It's not anything circumstantial that's the problem. The problem is the ungodly desires in his heart. The desire to just kind of treat God like an object.

And to not render him the worship that he deserves. So in verse 7, he said, if you do well, so you can turn. You can change.

Will you not be accepted? We're not consigning you to condemnation. Because anything you've done is what the Lord is saying.

If you do well, you'll be accepted. But if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you. But you must rule over it. So sin is personified here as an animal crouching, hiding, and waiting to pounce on its prey.

Sin's desire is contrary to you. But you must rule over it. It's almost exactly the way the wording is in Genesis 3.16. Look back there. And the curse on the woman.

[18 : 31] It says, your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you. That's right. You know, it's almost the exact same. Sin's desire is contrary to you.

Same verb. But you must rule over it. Same two verbs. Many translations say, your desire will be for your husband, but he will rule over you.

Now, the ESV says, your desire will be contrary to your husband, but he will rule over you. The literal translation is, your desire will be for your husband.

So why does the ESV change it here? Because the literal translation doesn't solve the difficulty of this verse. Desire and rule are not always good or bad things.

Desire and rule are not always good, this side of the fall. Nor are they always bad. We know they can be good things. They were in the garden when the woman desired her husband to honor and respect him.

[19 : 34] And the husband ruled over his wife with love and care. So it's not an undoing of authority that was in the garden. A rule can be a good thing. Desire can be a good thing. But they can be bad things as well.

It's the context that helps us understand whether desire and rule are meant to be understood good or bad. Here. Desire. And the ESV takes a stance.

Desire is contrary to her husband. The context is a curse on man and woman because sin has entered. And desire is no longer pure.

It's mixed. And rule is no longer pure but mixed. Desire can be good. But at its worst, the wife can try to overthrow her husband.

And the husband can try to control his wife in the same way that Genesis 4-7 tells us sin works. I think not just the context of the curse in Genesis 3 is the reason I stand with the ESV.

[20 : 38] But also the fact that Genesis 4-7 is right here because Moses is telling us how to interpret Genesis 3-16. Now that's a little bit of a bracket. But sin is seeking to overthrow Cain there.

It's not playing nice. God is warning him. God is calling him to wake up. But in the same way that Eve was talked into sin by the serpent, Cain cannot be talked out of sin by the Lord.

Devastating. Verse 8, Cain spoke to his brother. When they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. The reality is ungodly desires are what led to the first murder.

It wasn't an injustice of not having his offering accepted or something like that.

So too ungodly desires lead to sin. James 4, 1-2 helps us. What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this that your passions are at war within you?

[22 : 00] You desire and do not have so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain so you fight and quarrel. This is so helpful. Conflict does not come from different personalities, preferences, or circumstances.

Conflict comes from the heart. James is writing to a church and he's saying it comes from the war within you. You desire and you do not have and so you murder.

You murder. Conflict doesn't come from your kid ignoring you. Or your boss overlooking you.

Or your mother-in-law pestering you. You desire and do not have so you murder your brother. I imagine. Moses was writing this to a people about to go into the wilderness.

About to wander for 40 years. And Moses is trying to prepare them for that. If you remember the wilderness, there's a whole lot of grumbling and murmuring and fighting among themselves. And Moses is trying to prepare them for how to handle the conflict that was there.

[23 : 04] And so too God has this chapter to prepare us for the conflict in the church. With the church, the household of God called to love one another as brothers and sisters.

The repetition of brother here is meant to remind us how we're supposed to treat our brother. The danger of rivalry, jealousy, and anger are always close at hand. It's not different personalities and preferences and circumstances of life that rip a church apart.

It's ungodly desires. Even good ones that you love too much. You may not kill them, but do you judge them, condemn them, slander them, and hate them?

God would say, are you okay with your brother? Are things really okay? You need to leave your gift at the altar, as our Lord said, and go and be reconciled.

Two sin brings about the judgment of God. We immediately see the judgment of God.

[24 : 21] After Cain kills his brother, the Lord goes to him again. The Lord said to Cain, verse 9, where is Abel your brother?

He said, I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper? The Lord's not looking for Abel's whereabouts. You know this. I know this. The Lord is again inviting Cain to return. He's inviting Cain to confess his sin, to fess up.

He refuses. He said, am I my brother's keeper? Now, this phrase, now sometimes we can say it in passing, joking form with our brother, or something like that, but this is meant to startle us.

Yes! Yes! Yes! You are your brother's keeper. You too are made in the image of God. You are a co-heir of life. You're meant to love him, help him, and protect him, but sin has caused a man's enemy to be members of his own household.

And the Lord no longer appeals. The Lord confronts him. Verse 10, what have you done? Cain denies the murder, but the Lord says, your brother's blood is crying out to me.

[25 : 47] Abel's body has been cut off from life and breath, but Abel's blood is pictured as a victim crying out for help.

And who does the victim cry out to? It cries out to me, to the Lord. Why?

The earth and the fullness thereof are the Lord's. All people are stamped in the image of God, and they belong to him. He's a potter. They're his clay formed with his fingers. Therefore, everyone and all who belittle, mock, bully, slander, shame, kill others made in the image of God are ultimately sinning against the Lord.

David understood this perfectly. David, and man, after God's own heart, he went and struck down.

First, he committed adultery with Bathsheba, and then he had her husband struck down. But then if you go to Psalm 51, Uriah the Hittite and Bathsheba don't even make an appearance.

[26 : 50] Why? Because ultimately, his sin of murder and his sin of adultery was against the Lord alone. He said, against you and you alone have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

And so the Lord says, Abel's blood is crying out to me. The Lord moves immediately from confrontation to judgment.

Verse 11, he says, now you're cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood. When you work it, it won't yield to your strength. The Lord said in Genesis 3, cursed is the ground because of you.

Now the Lord says, cursed from the ground are you. He is a worker of the ground, a farmer. But now he says, you won't have a homestead anymore.

You're not going to have a home. You're going to wander. A fugitive. A renegade. You'll have no rest.

[27 : 54] The Lord is the giver of life and breath and everything. And soberly, the Lord is the righteous judge. The Lord at times brings judgment, righteous judgment, without any darkness or sin whatsoever.

Immediately, we see Uriah the Hittite struck down for presumption. Nadab and Abihu for their arrogance. Ananias and Sapphira for their deceit. Romans 1 says, those who continue to reject the Lord and deny the truth, he gives them over.

One of the most sobering verses or sections in all of Holy Scripture. He gives them over to the lust of the flesh. Desires their heart to become more and more callous and hardened like Pharaoh.

At the end, the Lord promises to bring judgment on all people. He'll sit on a glorious throne and gather all the nations. The Lord will render a perfect and final judgment on every person that's walked the face of the earth.

That bears his image. Even though he knows the guilt, Cain protests the curse. And you saw that as you read it.

[29 : 16] He said, my punishment is more than I can bear. I'd be driven from the land. I'd be a fugitive and a wanderer. And whoever finds me would kill me. I think if we, sometimes when we read this, we think it seems like Cain's coming to his senses.

Like, you know, this isn't good. Like, life's not going to go good. But once he realizes what he's done, sometimes I feel like we read it and think, yeah, Lord, that's a little much. But all Cain is worried about is himself.

Look in verse 13. He says, my punishment is greater than I can bear. Oh, you have driven me today from the ground.

From your face, I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and wanderer on the earth. Whoever finds me will kill me. I, me, I, I, me, me.

Cain is not humbling himself. Cain's not grieved for sinning against God. He's not sorrowful for striking down his brother. Cain is feeling sorry for himself. The one who failed to keep his brother's life is the one complaining that no one's going to keep his.

[30 : 27] He's trying to be a victim. A couple months ago, I listened to a stirring interview with Megyn Kelly and Jason Redman.

The guy in our armed forces. Redman tells a story of a number of things in the military that he experienced overseas.

And the challenges he faced, the failures that he faced and grew through them. But then he gets to the main story that Megyn had him on for. In September 2007, during a mission in Fallujah to capture a high-value Al-Qaeda operative, Redman was struck by machine gun fire.

He was out in front and going and walked into an ambush. It hit him first in the left elbow and then in the right side of his face, entering his jaw, exiting through his nose, basically blowing his nose off.

In all, Redman was shot seven times in the face and arms, pinned down with machine gun fire. For I think 25 minutes before they could call in planes to bomb the target.

[31 : 53] As of today, all right, let me say one thing. Redman was lucky to be alive, but he was only barely alive. And this is amazing. In less than five days, he arrived back in Bethesda, Maryland, to receive the best care that we can offer.

As of today, Redman has undergone 37 surgeries, requiring 1,200 stitches, 200 staples, 15 skin grafts, one tracheotomy to piece his body back together.

During recovery, one day, he tells a story. This is where you might have heard about him. He tells a story of sitting there kind of under anesthesia and under all the pain of what he was experiencing.

And over here, some people in the room, like you might hear if you've ever been in the hospital, talking about how sad it all is. How sorry they are for Redman.

Sad of what has happened to him. His jaw was wired shut so he couldn't say anything. When they left the room, he motioned for a marker and a paper from his wife and wrote a message.

[33 : 01] I think we have the picture for you. You can't read it, but I'll read it to you. He said, Attention to all who enter here. If you're coming into this room with sorrow or to feel sorry about my wounds, go elsewhere.

The wounds I received, I got in a job I love, doing it for people I love, supporting the freedom of a country I deeply love. I'm incredibly tough and will make a full recovery.

If you get to know this guy, you're like, yes. What is full? That is the absolute utmost physically my body has the ability to recover. Then I will push that about 20% further through sheer mental tenacity.

The room you're about to enter is a room of fun, optimism, and intense rapid regrowth. If you're not prepared for that, go elsewhere. Oh, I love that.

Now, he didn't do anything to deserve those wounds, but that's a man taking responsibility and refusing self-pity. Cain should have responded like that.

[34 : 06] It's so easy to continually rehearse the wrongs done to us. It's so easy to play the victim. It's so easy to blame. It's so easy to make excuses.

It's so easy to feel sorry for yourself. But when you do, there's only one person center stage, and it's not God. It's you. Whether it's getting snubbed for the basketball team in middle school or snubbed at community group or something like that, it's you.

The problem is you're reflecting on what you deserve. It's all about you. The problem is there's too much you in all of it. What you need is Christ.

Cain doesn't get it. Stumbles into self-pity. It's a warning to us. What's going to happen in the community? Things that tempt you to say, I don't deserve that.

That's what's going to happen in the church. You know how to respond to that? Cain continues to protest.

[35 : 16] The Lord, though, graciously marks him so that he will not die. Cain settles away from the presence of the Lord in the land of Nod, which just literally means nothing, wandering east of Eden.

Point three, despite sin and judgment, God gives more grace. Despite sin and judgment, the line of Cain continues.

Verse 17, Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. The rest of the chapter continues with the family of Cain.

On the one hand, the line of Cain is filled with grace. It's filled with things that Cain doesn't deserve. Advances in agriculture, music, craftsmanship, and more.

It's the establishment of civilization and culture. You know, sometimes when we begin to talk about culture, one of the things we can conclude is that nothing good and nothing to be enjoyed can come from a culture that does not please God.

[36 : 20] But actually, what we see throughout human history are advances that do bring good to many people in the culture. And so we see in his three sons, Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal Cain.

You talk about a mouthful, you know. I'm sure he slurred those together like every father does. But even though Cain is not serving the Lord, his son Jabal is the father of those who dwell in tents and look after the herds and flocks.

He's the father of agriculture. He's the father of farming. His son Jubal is the father of those who play the lyre and pipe.

He's the father of arts and music. What you're seeing and what Moses is, the reason he's including this is a pairing of these people when they enter the Canaanite lands, they would realize that culture is a gift from God.

It's the grace of God. Tubal Cain is the father of those who forge instruments of bronze and iron. That's not talking about musical instruments.

[37 : 21] He's talking about he's the father of science, agricultural instruments, metallurgy, weapons, craftsmanship. All of this is what theologians call common grace. God gives life to people, the good and the bad.

It rains on the good and bad. God forms people his image with wild abilities to do different things, even when they never give him thanks. Common grace makes sense of the reality that though sin is spread to all men, the world is not as bad as it could be.

Though we'll learn next week, the intent of the human heart is evil continually is what the Lord says. It's not as bad as it could be.

I remember, you know, we're not used to this because our news cycle thrives on bad news. I remember during the pandemic, John Krasinski started a YouTube show called Some Good News.

He was great. I didn't watch every episode. I remember watching one where this girl, he's talking about nice things that were done during the pandemic, and then there was this girl who had her tickets to Hamilton canceled because of the pandemic.

[38 : 38] And Krasinski arranged for the Hamilton cast to sing to her over Zoom. Remember Zoom? We spent our life on Zoom. To sing to her the theme song over Zoom.

She's just like, well, man, well, Miranda is speaking to me right now. The world is filled with good news. Common grace causes the world to advance, but the line of Cain is filled with sin as well.

Cain builds a city and names it not after the Lord, but after his son. Vanity. Lamech takes two wives committing the sin of polygamy.

You know, sometimes the Bible doesn't immediately say polygamy is bad when you see it in different parts of the Scripture, but trust me, it's bad. The Bible is just alerting us to the reality that we're no better than anyone that came before us.

Like his great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, Lamech is a murderer. He boasts about it. The first poem is praising God for the gift of woman.

[39 : 43] The second poem, he's praising himself before woman for striking a man down. You wives of Lamech, listen to what I say. I killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me.

It's a perverse world. The culture and civilization is prosperous, but it's empty and crumbling. It's not protecting life, and it's dishonoring marriage.

That means it's going nowhere fast. But the Lord gives more grace. Look at verse 25. Adam knew his wife again a third time.

She bore a son, called his name Seth. God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel for Cain, kill them. The Lord gives another son.

Notice she says, she doesn't say, I've gotten another son. She says, God has appointed. What are we meant to see? God's keeping his promise. God said, your offspring will crush the seed of the serpent.

[40 : 52] So what God's doing? God's keeping his promise. These guys are wicked, wicked, wicked. But God's keeping his promise through the offspring. If you notice, and we will some more next week, but the seventh son from Adam through the line of Cain is Lamech.

But the seventh son from Adam through Seth is Enoch. Now, not the Enoch related to Lamech, but the other one. Lamech is the seventh son through Cain and is the essence of ungodliness, like Manasseh.

You know, just bad, bad, bad. Well, Enoch is the seventh son through Seth and is the essence of godliness. So much so that he walked with the Lord.

The Lord just took him home early. It's helping us to see immediately that there is a power struggle between two families.

The seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. But the harsh reality is we're all the sons of Cain in the flesh.

[41 : 58] The family we fit in in the flesh most closely is his.

In the mercy of God, there was another son of Adam, another son of Seth, who would come and cleanse and welcome us into the presence of God. Hebrews 12, the Lord, the Scriptures are drawing a contrast between those who come to the Lord in fear and those who come by faith.

And listen to what it says, or look at what it says. Hebrews 12, you have come to Mount Zion. That's just, Zion is the hill that represents Jerusalem, the gathering place of God, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.

You're not coming to a physical location. You're coming to the ultimate throne. To innumerable angels in festal gatherings. So they're just having a party. To the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven.

And to God, the judge of all and the spirits of the righteous made perfect. And to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant. And to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

[43 : 22] You've come to Jesus. The wonder of all wonders is that there was another son of Seth that came to offer all the sons of Cain and Lamech rest and peace in Jesus Christ.

What was the blood? Now he's speaking a better word than the blood of Abel. What was the word? The blood of Abel was speaking. In a word, the blood of Abel is crying out for justice.

God is a righteous God. God is pure. His eyes are too pure to look on evil. He must judge sin. So what is it saying?

Oh Lord, look on your servant. Do you see what he has done? How long before you'll judge and avenge the earth? But the blood of Jesus speaks a better word.

Mercy. Mercy. Our culture just flaps their jaws all the time talking about justice.

[44 : 30] We need justice. You know what? If we get justice, we're damned to hell. What we need is mercy. Wonderfully, in the gospel, mercy triumphs over justice through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

Never forget, a couple of years ago, I listened to a book called Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson. He tells a story in there of, he kind of defended people that were wrongfully convicted and on death row.

That's what he does now when he talks about the story of getting into that. He was working for this, in Georgia, he was working for the Equal Justice Initiative. He said the first time he went to death row, he was scared to death, as you would imagine, and kind of fumbling around.

He was sent to death row as a little junior intern lawyer guy to report to an inmate there that there's no chance, there's no chance you'll be executed any time in the next year.

He tells a story that he went into the, he arrived early, the inmate is brought in, and immediately says, I'm a law student, I can't help, can I help you in any way?

[45 : 54] Sure, the guy's relieved. But he said, I was sent to tell you, you're not at risk of execution any time in the next year.

He said, oh my gosh, I've been longing to see my kids.

I didn't want to bring them in here and bring my wife in here if I knew that I was going to be killed and executed in a matter of days. And he's just overflowing with gratitude. Well, I've been sent to tell you that you're not at risk of execution anymore.

The power of the gospel is a gospel that triumphs over judgment forever. The truth is there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

The law, the spirit of life has set us free from the law of sin and death forever. And so, the only blood that's crying out for your name today is the blood of Jesus, and it's crying out mercy.

[47 : 26] Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. In the road, the world has changed.

It's burned to the ground. What do you do in a world that's a shell of itself? Like this one. The father kept telling his son, we must carry the fire.

I can help think of Jeremiah. He kept telling his son, we must refuse to give up. We must fight for what's true. We must not become one of the bad guys.

What do we do in a world under the shadow of the fall? The same thing. Don't give up. Kill sin.

Lest it master and kill you. Let's pray. Father in heaven, we hide ourselves in you. We thank you for the word mercy.

[48 : 29] Now, there are a few words in the English language that settle our hearts quite like that. Thank you that you've not set us free from slavery to fall back into fear.

You've set us free from slavery to be free forever as a son and a daughter. And so we hide in you this day and always.

In Jesus' name, amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.

For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at trinitygraceathens.com.