

*Genesis 4:17-26 Secular or Sacred 06/04/17*

*Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.<sup>18</sup> To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech.<sup>19</sup> And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.<sup>20</sup> Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock.<sup>21</sup> His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe.<sup>22</sup> Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.*

*<sup>23</sup> Lamech said to his wives:*

*“Adah 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.*

*<sup>24</sup> If Cain's revenge is sevenfold,*

*then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold.”*

*<sup>25</sup> And Adam knew his wife again, and 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.”<sup>26</sup> 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.*

*(Pastor prays)*

I'm thankful for Hickory Grove Baptist Church and for Hickory Grove Christian School (HGCS). Both have been good for my family and for my children. Nate, my youngest, graduated from HGCS last weekend and, as a part of the graduation celebration, we (and when I say “we,” I mean Connie and herself) had to put together a poster board with multiple pictures. The board was filled with snapshots that would illustrate in some small way Nate's life as he was growing up.

Now a snapshot, by design, doesn't tell the whole story; but it does give us a small window into life. Here in the last section of Genesis 4, we have a snapshot of man's early life. In this snapshot, there are two points of focus that show us the two categories of humanity. You have Cain (the cursed one) and his descendants in verses 17-24 and they represent a society without God. And then in verses 25-26, Moses takes us back to Adam and Eve and more specifically their third son Seth. Seth represents a sacred, and a godly life that is ultimately realized in Christ. Now, at the risk of sounding too simplistic, each one of us here lives our lives like either a descendant of Cain (who are enamored with the earthly, fleshly, and ungodly) or we live our lives like a descendant of Seth, trusting the goodness of God, believing in the Son of God and living for the glory of God. Part of what I hope to do this morning is to pull your eyes away from the bankruptcy of a self-centered life and call you to set your affections and desires on our good God through faith in His son Jesus Christ. Because this text reminds us that...

## **A Godless Life Is a Hopeless Life**

### **The More You Sin, The Easier It Gets**

You have a mechanism inside you that helps you build up a tolerance to things. You can build up a tolerance to children, heat, altitude, traffic, pain. Unfortunately, this ability is often misapplied and we learn to tolerate our own sin. Cain did. Take a step back in the story after Cain killed Abel and when God pronounces judgment on him in verse 12. Listen to what God says: *When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.*

That was God's decree. He was put out of God's presence never to settle down. And yet, in verse 17 the text says he knew his wife (which would also be his sister) and she conceived and bore Enoch. And when Cain built a city, he called the name of the city after his son Enoch. John MacArthur said that when Cain went out of the presence of God, he was the first apostate, the first doomed sinner; and he just kept sinning. When he founded a city, which he wasn't supposed to do, he named it Enoch, honoring himself, not God. And although he would have a home and sleep in his own bed every night, he was a vagabond and a wanderer in his heart the rest of his life.

Early in his life it seemed as if Cain was bothered when God was not pleased with him, but that didn't bother him anymore. It just gets easier and easier to compromise and to flirt. You start to miss church and being at church on a Sunday just keeps getting put further and further down the list of priorities. It's usually displaced by luxuries or vacations or children's events. I'm not grinding an axe, it's just the truth. It's much easier to justify, to compromise and explain away behavior that is otherwise sinful. Eventually, your lips may say you believe in God, but your calendar or bank account or hard drive say differently. Don't be like Cain who was of the evil one. Instead, today, turn from it, break the cycle, call on God's grace in Christ to forgive you and to strengthen you, because a godless life is a hopeless life and the more you sin, the easier it gets. Also,

### **Lip Service Is No Service**

To see this, we need to return to verse 18 and follow Cain's descendants, especially his great-grandchildren. You might not see it the first time through, but let me point it out. Let's read it. *To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech.*

Look at those two names - Mehujael and Methushael. You will notice that they are named with God in their name - El. But there is no power, no commitment, no evidence and no love for God or commitment to His will.

It's just window dressing and it's happening all across the country right now, maybe even here at Hickory Grove. People join a church without knowing Christ so they have the pretense of religion and the heart of a devil. The name "Christian" has lost its power **not** because Christ is powerless but because people remain *unconverted*. It can't be that you name the name of Jesus and live a life without Him. The God we worship and the Gospel we trust is not to be trifled with. If your Christianity isn't enough to get you to church on Sunday or keep you from adultery on Monday, then it won't protect you on Judgment Day.

Where are the Spirit-filled men who protect their homes and provide for their families and point them to Christ and the church? And where are the Spirit-filled women who weep for the lost and pray for their children and love the church? Our world has had

enough bad religion. Our world has had enough of Cain's religion. Let's show the world what it looks like to live with our lives given to the crucified one, Jesus Christ...because a Godless life is a hopeless life, and the more you sin, the easier it gets and lip service is no service. Here is a third point.

### **Sin Always Accelerates**

It always picks up speed. By the time we get to verse 19, we are several generations removed from Cain and the scope of sin has widened and deepened. In verse 19, Lamech has abandoned God's creative design for marriage and has two wives. Let's read it. *And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.* The name "Adah" means "beauty" and the name "Zillah" means "adornment." Lamech was driven by base desires when he picked his wives and down in verse 23-24 he writes the first poem. It's a taunt song that shows the velocity of sin. Cain succumbed to murder and Lamech rejoices in it.

*Lamech said to his wives:*

*"Adah 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.*

*<sup>24</sup> If Cain's revenge is sevenfold,*

*then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold."*

Seventy-seven fold. This is probably what Jesus was referring to in Matthew 18:21-22. Remember when Peter asked Him about forgiveness? How many times do you forgive a brother? *Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"* <sup>22</sup> *Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.* In Genesis, Lamech's unending revenge must remind us of God's unending forgiveness in Christ.

In verse 25 of Genesis 4, Moses turns our attention back to Adam and Eve. Don't forget Eve's heartbreak. She's lost two sons. One son killed the other and then he was driven away. Imagine the heartache and misery that accompanies that and then in verse 25, here's our hope.

## God's Plan Can't Be Derailed

I need you to stretch your mind a little bit when you think about God. Remember the Gospel promise back in Genesis 3:15 when “the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent’s seed.” The promise is that Christ would win. Let’s read verse 25. *And Adam knew his wife again, and 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.”* Seth, his name means “appointed.” God will be victorious. The plan of God to save sinners through Christ, the ultimate seed of the woman, is a plan that has existed before the very foundation of the world.

No matter how dark the world becomes nor how twisted and sinful and distorted people lives might be, our sovereign God has a plan fixed in eternity. It’s a plan that is secure in Christ and made real to you by faith so that your life doesn’t find its parallel in Cain but your life finds hope in Christ. You see a shadow of it in verse 26 as the story comes to an end. And what a beautiful note to end on.

This verse says, *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.* This is reflecting their purpose in life...What they were created for, what you are created for, what we are created for.

The Bible teaches us that God is good and holy and created everything including mankind, all of us in this room. You were created in the image of God. That image of God within you and me has been disfigured by our own sin to the degree that we are separated from God. Jesus Christ, who was fully man and is fully God, lived perfectly, earning righteousness that you and I can’t do. Then Jesus took the wrath of God in the place of sinners. The wages of sin is death, and Jesus died on the cross for us. Then God raised Him from the dead, He ascended into heaven; and He sits at the right hand of God and rules the entire universe.

We can never work our way to Heaven but the work of righteousness has been done in Christ. The work of salvation has been done in Christ, so what is left for you is to believe. To believe means turning from sin, knowing that it is wrong, and turning to Christ, believing that Jesus saves.

Don't be like Cain. Don't live a life that is bankrupt. Turn to Christ and live a life that honors God.

*(Pastor prays)*