

Mankind's Depravity and God's Deliverance

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[0 : 00] Well, the title of my message this morning from Genesis chapter 4 is Mankind's Depravity and God's Deliverance.

Mankind's Depravity and God's Deliverance will start in verse 1 of Genesis 4, and I'll read all the way through the chapter to give us the full context of what we'll be dealing with this morning.

Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, I have gotten a man with the help of Yahweh.

And again, Eve gave birth to his brother Abel. Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a cultivator of the ground. So it happened in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to Yahweh of the fruit of the ground.

Abel on his part also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And Yahweh had regard for Abel and for his offering, but for Cain and for his offering he had no regard.

[1 : 13] So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. Then Yahweh said to Cain, Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up?

And if you do not do well, sin is lying at the door, and its desire is for you, but you must rule over it. Then Cain spoke to Abel his brother, and it happened when they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

Then Yahweh said to Cain, Where is Abel your brother? Cain replied, I do not know.

Am I my brother's keeper? God said, What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground.

And now cursed are you from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you.

[2 : 18] You will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth. And Cain said to Yahweh, My punishment is too great to bear. Behold, you have driven me this day from the face of the ground, and from your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.

And it will be that whoever finds me will kill me. So Yahweh said to him, Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold.

And Yahweh appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one who found him would strike him. Then Cain went out from the presence of Yahweh and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Then Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch. And he built a city. Cain built a city and called the name of the city Enoch after the name of his son.

Now to Enoch was born Irad, and Irad was the father of Mahusael, and Mahusael was the father of Methusael, and Methusael was the father of Lamech.

[3 : 31] And Lamech took for himself two wives. The name of the one was Ada, and the name of the other, Zillah. And Ada gave birth to Jabal.

He was the father of those who live in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe.

As for Zillah, she also gave birth to Tubal Cain, the forger of all implements of bronze. And the sister of Tubal Cain was Naamah.

And Lamech said to his wives, Ada and Zillah, Hear my voice, you wives of Lamech. Give ear to my word, for I have killed a man for striking me, and a boy for wounding me.

If Cain is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold. What a braggart. Then Adam knew his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth.

[4 : 34] For she said, God has set for me another seed in place of Abel. For Cain killed him. And to Seth, to him also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh.

Then men began to call upon the name of Yahweh. Well, let me ask you this morning as we begin, what does a Roman emperor have to do with Genesis chapter 4?

I'm going to tell you. I want you to travel back in time with me as we reflect for a few minutes on what I'm going to refer to as a track record of human depravity, going back thousands of years to trace its origin to Genesis chapter 4.

Now, all of this actually started in Genesis chapter 3 that we've already covered, when mankind fell into sin. We say that, and that's interesting that theologians have chosen to term the sin that Adam and Eve did as falling into sin.

They didn't actually fall into it. They made a conscious decision in their hearts to rebel against God and believe a lie.

[5 : 58] Now, were they deceived by Satan? Yes. And were they self-deceived? Yes. It's a both and. We experience the same thing.

We experience temptation from without and from within, don't we? That's exactly the way it works for us, and it's been that way from the beginning of time. So now we'll travel back thousands of years to see this connection between this Roman emperor I'll introduce to you and Genesis chapter 4.

And then I want to make some even closer ties to what we're dealing with in the text this morning. The year is A.D. 211. The Roman emperor Septimius Severus has died.

He's died of health complications while his army is campaigning against Britain. Severus intended for his sons, Caracalla and Geta, to co-reign over the empire at his death.

But what daddy hasn't accounted for is how much his eldest son, Caracalla, hates his younger brother, Geta, and how Caracalla desires to rule Rome solo.

[7 : 18] Caracalla deeply resents his younger brother. He has absolutely no intention of sharing anything with Geta. Does that sound familiar?

It's no accident. Like Cain, Caracalla is a very wicked piece of work. The Roman historian Herodian wrote that Caracalla, being impatient to gain the throne from his dad, Severus, tried to help daddy along in his demise.

He tried to systematically poison him through his father's attendance over a very long period of time. Well, in the short term, Caracalla was not successful. But eventually, eventually, Severus' death occurred.

Now, another Roman historian, Cassius Dio, recorded Severus' final words to his two sons as he recounted the aftershocks of Severus' death.

Severus told both of his sons, Caracalla and Geta, this, quote, Stick together, enrich the soldiers, and despise everyone else.

[8 : 36] Caracalla kept half of that. Sorry, Dad, it ain't gonna happen. And it didn't. Because within a few months, Caracalla had Geta brutally murdered.

I won't even go into the details here. But that wasn't the end of it. Along with murdering his brother, Caracalla put 20,000 other people to death who were loyal to Geta.

So he purged the entire empire of people who would have supported him, at least when it came to the capital in Rome.

20,000 people murdered. More than that. Along with his brother, Geta. One by one, history tells us that Caracalla systematically murdered every single member of his family.

And then, if he had any suspicions at all about anybody close to him to include members of the Praetorian Guard who were his personal bodyguards, he would have them murdered as well.

[9 : 54] Until finally, at age 29, living by the sword and murderous intent, Caracalla himself was murdered by one of his Praetorian prefects.

What goes around comes around, huh? Now I'd like for you to do this with me. Rewind the history books about 200 years prior to this. You come to the true accounts of someone from the time of Jesus whom we are very familiar with.

His name is Herod. He came to power and to secure his reign, he murdered his brother-in-law, that is, his wife's brother, Aristobulus.

Herod was married to Mariamne who was from a royal family. Herod himself, not being royalty, was bitterly jealous of Mariamne.

Her heritage, her lineage, the royal family, and everybody connected to her. And so you can see what's coming. Out of bitter jealousy against her, that bitterness burned inside of him and eventually

spilled over into hard-hearted murder.

[11:10] He personally killed his wife, Mariamne. Then he set about murdering all three of his adult sons by her, Antipater, Alexander, and Aristobulus.

It was Herod's sinful nature to murder. This is the Herod of Matthew 2, verse 13, where God told Joseph in a dream, if you'll look up here, get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child, that is Jesus, to destroy him. And then in verse 16, we have this, Then when Herod saw that he'd been tricked by the Magi, he became enraged and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity from two years old and under, according to the time he'd carefully determined from the Magi. You're familiar with this story, yes? And so you know exactly what's going on here. This is a ruthless, hard-hearted, disgusting, monster of a person.

You look at people like this and think, like Hitler or Stalin, who put 20 million of his own people to death. You look at him and think, how can this person even be called a human being?

[12:48] Well, we need to understand that what lives in these men and motivates these men lives in us and motivates us. And it's only by the grace of God that we don't do things like this, at least in our hearts, if not openly.

Now, you may say, Jeff, that is really something awful to say about the people who come here to hear God's Word and sit under what you're telling us in the way of your preaching. I'm trying to tell you the truth.

I'm trying to bring you the stark, cold reality of why Jesus Christ had to send His Son to die on a cross as our substitute to deliver us from this very thing. Otherwise, you don't have any idea what you'd be capable of.

Friends, look at me and listen to me carefully. Please, as your pastor and friend, you don't have any idea what you are capable of outside the grace of God.

And neither do I. Because the Lord told us last time when I put a verse up here, our hearts are deceitful, desperately sick, wicked.

[13:51] Who can know our hearts? Only God can search the heart and know what's really going on inside of us. We need to come to terms with the reality that in our sin nature, we are anti-God rebels against Him, His cause, and everything that He stands for.

And if God turned us loose and took His hand off of us, there's no telling what we would be capable of doing toward each other. This is the reality that we live in. This is what we see in history.

The earthly nature and personal actions of Herod are tied to the cosmic, heavenly conflict God declared in Genesis 3.15 and to the sequence of events in Genesis 4.

In Genesis 3.15, if you'll look there with me, God said, I will put enmity or war, constant conflict between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed.

He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel. This is the first prophecy in Scripture telling us that God will send the Messiah or a Savior who will deal this death blow to Satan and his power over mankind.

[15:17] The conflict will be individualistic as it begins between Satan and the woman he deceived in the garden, Eve, and it will spread out to include all of mankind and it will include a godly line and an ungodly line of people who will constantly be at war against each other.

That is part of the consequence for Eve's failure to follow God and for Adam's rank disobedience against the Lord. In Genesis 3.15, God established war.

God established war between Satan's line of ungodly offspring and Eve's line of godly offspring from whom will come the Messiah, the one God promised to send to crush Satan's dominion over mankind and then rescue his people from their sins.

That's the gospel. That's the good news. God is going to do something about this terrible plight we find ourselves in. Now listen to this carefully if you would. Herod is Satan's instrument.

Yes, he is. To try and wipe out Messiah while he is still a vulnerable child. Satan knows what he's up against. Satan understands this prophecy that's being made in Genesis 3.15.

[16:36] Please understand, beloved, Satan is not omniscient. He's not all-knowing like God is. He's not omnipotent. He's not all-powerful like God is. He's not omnipresent.

He's not everywhere at one time like God is. That is an exclusive domain of the Lord God. Satan has his minions and they're on the face of the earth as demons doing their work.

But only God has the power to be everywhere at once to know all things and to have all power as a sovereign God. But Satan knows this prophecy. And so from Jump Street, he is trying to destroy this godly line of people that this Messiah will come from.

He wants to take that out. And throughout the Scriptures, if we just started here and just started reading and spent the rest of the afternoon with me just reading through the Bible, there would be instance after instance where you would see the tie of Satan's efforts to destroy this line in different families and peoples and events throughout Scripture.

And God always sovereignly preserves a remnant. God always sovereignly preserves His people. And then what happens? Messiah is born in a way that astounded and confused men because only God could pull it off.

[17:53] God came in the form of a human being, a baby in a manger. We celebrate that time, that birth at Christmas time. This is what's happening as Moses writes this to the Israelites and gives them the background of all of this.

While Herod is Satan's instrument to try and wipe out Messiah while he's still a child, for Herod personally, this child is a threat to his earthly kingdom.

In other words, friends, Herod knows nothing of being used by the devil to try and thwart a heavenly kingdom. You understand? All Herod understands is this child is a threat to my kingdom.

And yet, he's being used as an instrument of Satan. So here it is again. We have our sin nature acting on our behalf and we are being tempted, we're seeing here, we are being tempted by this outside spiritual force as he uses that nature against us to push forward his plans.

It's a both-and proposition. And so the Scripture is clear about how we're to fight this. This is what we're dealing with in our passage for today.

[19:08] Satan didn't waste any time in scheming to use Cain to murder as well. The terrible malady of sin plaguing human nature and being revealed to us in very graphic form in Genesis chapter 4 was only the beginning of what will spread through the entire human race.

What we see Cain doing, what we see Lamech doing, will be multiplied literally by the millions and then we're going to get to Genesis 6 and 7 and God's going to have an answer for millions of people with this nature being turned loose on each other.

And it is terrible. Terrible. And terrifying. This is again what we're seeing in our text for this morning. Moses then, I'll put this up here so we can have a visual of it. Moses wants us to see then the beginning of this downward spiral of sin as it poisons our souls leaves us totally depraved.

Our depravity is sin's power to exert dominion over us. Please kind of file that away. We talk about depravity, we're not talking about your ability to sin to the max.

[20:37] We are restrained. Even unbelievers are restrained by God's common grace. If the Lord took His hand off, we'd just destroy each other out of greed and lust and pride and murder in our hearts.

No. Our depravity is sin's power to exert dominion over us. That's what it is. So that no part of our personhood is free from this dominion or this control.

There isn't any vestige in you. There isn't any little bitty kernel of a something inside of you that is not tainted and poisoned by sin. It doesn't exist. All of us.

That's what depravity means. The whole of our personhood. This is depravity that consumes us then to the fullest measure. So that every aspect of our personhood is poisoned.

Poisoned how, Jeff? Poisoned against being submissive and obedient to God. So Satan uses this depravity. He uses this sin dominion in us to his full advantage.

[21:43] I have to stop short of saying but the devil made me do it. The devil did not make Cain murder his brother any more than the devil makes you choose to sin in the way that you sin or I sin.

I can't look at my wife and my closest relationship on the planet when I sin against Suzanne and say Suzanne made me do it. If she hadn't have said this, if she had only done that, then I wouldn't have done, I can't do that.

Because my sin comes out of my heart not hers. That's my responsibility. This is what the Bible teaches us. This is what we're going over on Wednesday night, isn't it, brother?

This is what we're talking about and fleshing out on Wednesday nights to help us understand how God helps us combat this kind of thing so that we can be more like Jesus. Satan will use this sin dominion in our lives to his full advantage and against us every opportunity he can by tempting us away from the truth and faithfulness to God.

But at the end of the day, we have a choice as Christians, as believers, so that when I sin, I'm choosing to sin. I may be deceived, I may be tempted from outside sources, spiritual forces like Satan, but at the end of the day, I choose to sin.

[23 : 04] You choose to sin. So it's a both and again proposition that we're talking about, hence the title of my message for today. Sin dominion is the issue inside of us.

And I told you last week that it's a human dilemma that does not have a human cure. We have to look outside of ourselves for the cure to this problem. So last Sunday, I dealt with Genesis 4, 10 through 12.

Would you look at that with me? Genesis 4, beginning in verse 10. God is responding to Cain, telling God, yeah, I don't know where Abel is.

I'm not his keeper. And boy, that is just full of resentment and bitterness and anger. And so God says, what have you done? Knowing what he's done, the voice of your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground.

And so now God pronounces judgment. Here are the consequences you're going to serve. for what you've done. Cursed are you from the ground because it's opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

[24 : 13] When you cultivate the ground, it'll no longer yield its strength to you. You're going to be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth. Cain will never be able to settle down. God won't allow it.

He will constantly have to pick up and move and pick up and move. He will not have friends. He will not have family members that will stay with him. When they settle, he'll have to pick up and move and pick up and move.

And that's part of the judgment that God levels on this man. The first point of my outline I covered last week. It's my intention today to take us to the conclusion of chapter 4 and I believe that we can hit these points that I'm going to present to you in pretty quick succession for what we've done in the way of laying the groundwork for the last couple of Sundays.

This is what we talked about last time. Our sin nature incurs God's just judgment. And we just read that in the passage. Cain rebelled against God and refused God.

Then he murdered his brother. That was an outworking of Cain turning his back on holy God. As Cain turned away from God, the consequences at that point then was abandoning the only hope he had to overcome the sin that was welling up inside of him in the way of bitter jealousy against Abel.

[25 : 41] He turned away from the only source that could have helped cut that off and stop it and then put him in a different direction. So it was only a matter of time before this would happen given Cain's choices to turn away from the Lord and refuse his wise counsel.

Cain, turn away from this, he told him. Your countenance will be lifted up if you'll fight against this and submit to me. And Cain said, nope, not having it. And so now he's done this deed and God is dealing with him.

The worst of God's judgment on Cain is that Cain will be forever separated from the Lord. And that's because he disobeyed God.

That disobedience means that now Cain will be forever, forever pushed away or kept from Almighty God. Cain gets it.

He understands what's being leveled against him. And this judgment against Cain reminds us of where the text takes us next. Our sin nature is a burden too great for us to bear.

[26 : 54] It's not just the consequences that we do when we sin and we have to deal with those. Those can be very hard. And I both know we know this maybe from our own life or we know it from the lives of people around us.

There are some ways that we can sin that follow us for life even after we've been forgiven. Right? By the Lord and by other people you can make choices in your life in the way of sin and that sin will scar you and mar you for the rest of your life.

Now isn't this something you teach your kids? Yes? I hope you're saying yes. You're trying to teach your kids that sin is the real deal and that there are some things we can do in life that will follow us in the way of consequences for the rest of our life even if we gain forgiveness from the people from the law or whatever.

even God forgiving us doesn't always erase the consequences of choices that we make in our lives. Look, you guys know the story.

Someone goes out and in the name of I just want to have a good time. I just want to party. And so they go out and they consume alcohol and they get behind the wheel and they go out and then they kill someone in an automobile wreck.

[28 : 19] They take the life of another human being or human beings and they live through it. And let's say they become a Christian after that. God uses that to literally sober them and help them recognize what they've done.

They're going to have to live with the reality of that murder or murders for the rest of their life. They're going to have to go to jail for what they did, aren't they? And they're going to get out of jail. And now that's going to be on their record forever. Do you think that's going to have consequences for jobs? Yeah. They could have been married. Maybe their wife divorced them in the process of them being in prison.

Just all kinds of things happen. You understand this. Even in the forgiveness of God, we have to live with the consequences of sin. So now we have this person coming to God and saying, what? This is too much. This is too much. Look at verse 13 with me if you would. And Cain said to Yahweh, my punishment is too great to bear. Poor, poor person.

[29 : 30] Behold, you've driven me this day from the face of the ground and from your face I will be hidden and I'll be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth and it will be that whoever finds me will kill me.

Now listen, folks, verse 13 is not the cry and confession of a broken, repentant man. That's why I read it the way I did and commented the way I did. This is not repentance. Cain's complaining. The Hebrew brings that out. He's saying in effect, it ain't fair, it ain't fair. It's left him vulnerable to others. These consequences have left him vulnerable to other people.

This comes out in verse 14. You've driven me from this day from the face of the ground and your face, so I'm going to have to wander all over the earth.

I'll never be able to settle down and then this and it will be that whoever finds me will kill me. There it is. Cain sees that God is punishing him at the point of his idols.

[30 : 31] That's what God does. Right at the point of the very things that he worships and has raised up and made choices to worship, God is going to bring the punishment. What am I talking about?

God is punishing him right at the point of the land and its produce. Cain put a lot of pride in his ability to work the land and make it produce for him. So he had become in the second way very dependent on himself.

He's very self-sufficient. I'm a self-made man kind of idea. And so God hits him right at those points. The land will no longer produce for him.

And in Cain's mind, being sent away from God means he's vulnerable and be killed. You notice that? Cain isn't saying I can't bear this Lord to be away from you.

Please, please, please forgive me. Not that. Anything else I can bear, but I cannot bear just the thought that I'll be separated from you.

[31 : 29] I've been foolish. I've been stupid. I've been moronic. Please, almighty God, have mercy. You don't hear that, do you? What's he say? He's still thinking about him, isn't he?

Don't send me away. You send me away like this. At least give me my prowess. Because people are going to disdain me and it's okay for him to kill, but it's not okay for people to kill him.

We got a whiny baby here. We got a guy thinking only of himself. Oh, no, no, no, don't do this. I'll be vulnerable and be killed. That's what he's worried about.

Here's a way we can say this. Very important. Cain is caught up in the consequences of his sin and not in the conviction of his sin. And there is a big difference.

Sometimes we will work with people who come in and the pain and consequences of their sin is so keen and so great to them that when they talk to us in the initial stages of us trying to help them, all they can think about is getting out from underneath the pain of the problem.

[32 : 39] And I had to tell someone recently in a very intense counseling session, this person is outside of our church, you have no connection, I had to tell this person in counseling, I had to say after about a little over an hour of listening and asking questions, I said, you know, I want to point something out to you.

I've heard you talk a lot about the consequences of things that have happened to you over the last couple of years because of choices that you have admitted to being very selfish and prideful and

sinful.

But there's one thing that I have yet to hear from you as I've listened to you recount all of these issues and as I've asked you questions. You haven't mentioned Jesus or God one single time. you have never said a single word about your heart being broken toward God for what you've done in your life. And this person sat back.

I was doing this online, you know, video thing. I don't know what it was. I just pushed the button. I just do what I told, right?

[33 : 54] Jeff, push this button. OK, it works. Oh, there you are. Visibly sat back and went. Oh. And I said, yeah, huh.

What do you think? And then that launched another 30 minutes of discussion. What does that mean? It's very sobering. Cain isn't repentant.

He's just whining because he doesn't like the deal. This isn't fair. It's too much. It's too much. He's worried about that.

His heart is not broken toward the Lord. He's simply whining about his punishment. And then verse 15. So Yahweh said to him, therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold.

And Yahweh appointed a sign for Cain so that no one who found him would strike him. Friends, Cain is reaping what he sowed.

[34 : 53] That's a principle in Scripture, isn't it? We reap what we sow. God is not unfair. He's not unfair period.

He's certainly not unfair here. God is merciful. And this is mercy. Cain will suffer under what he's chosen for himself. Just as I mentioned last week, God has given Cain over to Cain's idols.

God has given him over to his choice to live as a murderer. To make his own way. To do what is right in his own eyes.

I know that murder is wrong. I know that it will displease you, God. I know that you've confronted me and given me a way out. And guess what? I don't care.

I'm going to do what I want to do. Even to the point of taking someone else's life. Because I've determined that I deserve to live more than he deserves to live.

[35 : 57] And I deserve to live happy doing what I want to do and he's in the way. So I'm taking him out. That's it. That's it.

Cold-blooded murder. Because he decided he was more important than his brother. And so God's given him over to his idols. But notice, friends, God will not allow Cain to be killed.

Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. Instead, the Lord allows Cain to live out his life under the weight of unforgiveness and real guilt for his sins.

Did you hear me? Cain is now going to live perhaps for hundreds of years, unforgiven and under the guilt of his sins. Now, folks, for me, that's worse than death.

I can't imagine a year like this. I live like this as an unbeliever. Knowing I was sinning, knowing I was doing wrong, hiding it from my mama, hiding it from my dad and anybody else, trying hard not to get caught doing the wrong things, knowing that I shouldn't have been doing those things.

[37 : 08] I knew what it was like to live under guilt. All that did was motivate me to be more sneaky. For me, this is worse than death.

Do you agree? Who'd want to live hundreds of years like this? Well, that's not the worst of it. The worst of it is, this is going to be for eternity. He'll suffer on this earth.

That's just beginning. Because he's turned his heart away from God, God's going to drive him off forever. We'll say more about that as we go.

Now, folks, we don't know what this sign was that he put on Cain or around Cain. And it really doesn't matter for our understanding of the passage.

Many different commentators and many different people love sitting around debating and talking about, speculating about what the sign is. Folks, I have heard disgusting answers to this.

[38 : 13] I'm serious. I'm so disgusted I won't even repeat it to you here. It's so offensive that I won't even repeat it from the pulpit. I've heard all kinds of things about what this sign is.

We don't know what the sign was. Let me tell you one thing about the sign that you can put in your pocket as you hear all of the nonsense that goes on out here about what the sign was.

This sign, whatever it was, was unique to Cain so that when Cain died, the sign died with him. It was not perpetuated and carried forward on the human race.

So it has nothing to do with you and I today and who we are or how we are or where we come from. This isn't a sign that was put on him that followed a people group or a culture.

I've heard all that. I've heard it. It's been confronting. confronted. I preached a sermon one time that it was in my first church out of out of seminary, the second time seminary where I got my right theology and shepherdology and I was in my first pastorate preaching and I hadn't been there 30 days and I preached a sermon that I knew would strike a chord with my audience and boy, did I get some lash on this and they came to me and they told me that what I was preaching was wrong because it was based, it was based in a disregard for what God did in the way of putting a sign on Cain and then they explained it to me and I had never heard that before and I was, I stood there dumbfounded and broken hearted at what I heard because those men were leaders in the church and they truly believed what they were telling me and it broke my heart and then it angered me and so they got many more sermons along that line until they ran me off four months later

[40:17] I don't look for the trouble but when it finds me we just got to go after it and so that's what I did we don't know what the sign was but whatever the sign was when Cain died it died with him it was unique to him that's the whole point I'm going to put this sign on this man so that everybody who sees this sign will not kill him I mean God doesn't play around anybody who was even tempted to do this toward him would see that if you do this I will visit seven fold on you what you do to him seven is the number of completion my vengeance will be so complete that I'll just wipe you off the face of the earth you and everybody like you don't mess with Cain that was unique to him and it worked as far as we know it's exactly what God designed it to do and it did somehow the sign bore the communication of the clear message don't mess with this man what a mercy of God and yet at the same time what a terrifying judgment I'm going to let you live with your sin and your guilt for the remainder of your days and then you're going to die and it's going to be worse because then you're going to spend eternity away from me in a worse place you think it's hard here well another thing that we can say about this as we move forward is this our sin nature is life defining this is what they're all finding out if you'll look at verse 16 with me friends then Cain went out from the presence of Yahweh and settled in the land of Nod east of Eden now folks please don't rush past what verse 16 says particularly in that first part verse 16 is a soul sobering statement of what of a wasted life a life defined by sin the text says then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord

Cain went out from the presence of the Lord as I've already mentioned that will define Cain for eternity now isn't that tragic from the beginning then we can say this God has justly punished the guilty Cain is sentenced to live forever separated from God in a devil's hell so this is God's judicial punishment for unforgiven sin Cain recognizes what's happening to him and that's why he's crying out the way he is not in repentance but in defiance a rebel to the end by rebelling against God Cain chose hear me now Cain chose to follow sin himself and so what happened God gave him over to his own choices and the consequences I'm giving you over to what you've chosen

Cain and now you're going to have to live with the consequences of those choices you're going to have to stand up and live by what you've chosen folks look up here the apostle Paul warned the Christians in the city of Corinth or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God that's the point that is what God is telling Cain in this instance you are unrighteous you remain unrighteous you will not repent and so there's no more hope for you the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God do not be deceived neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor effeminate nor homosexuals nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor revilers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God that's a passage that we've been revisiting on Wednesday nights for the last few weeks as we've explained and taken that apart and talked about what God's done for us in this reality if that's true and we we are these people in these different ways what's the hope

Paul will give another list he does this several times in the Bible Paul will give another list like this in first Timothy chapter one where he will include murderers specifically murderers and those who murder their parents do you understand that we are headed to 2 Timothy 3 tells us we are headed to a time and a place in the world where it's going to be commonplace for children to turn their parents into the government to be murdered by the government that's coming now this isn't me trying to give you some weird conspiracy theory read the passage this is coming this is how we're going to live and where we're headed to it's not getting better it's getting worse I'm sorry that's just the truth but take comfort in the fact that we serve a sovereign God now in the following verses of this passage in

Genesis 4 we have the developing picture of Cain's legacy but his legacy as sin defines it he has his first son and with his first son Cain builds and names a city in his son's honor but this is a society without God so this will be a city of pagan people because of God's absence from their lives sin reigns in their hearts and over their homes if you look at verse 19 after we go through Cain having these children verse 19 and Lamech down the line in Cain five generations and Lamech took for himself two wives the name of the one was Ada and the name of the other Zillah so from [46 : 42] Cain's line five generations later or so unrestrained and in defiance of God's design for marriage Lamech takes two wives Ada and Zillah for himself and what does he do he introduces polygamy into society now we're going to deal with more of the questions you might have about polygamy down the road as we see some of the patriarchs engage in that what's that all about and God allowing that we'll deal with that another time right now the point is this the line of Cain continues and we have clear evidence of the common grace that is the undeserved favor of God among these people a common grace that is a grace that all people even unbelievers enjoy because God is a merciful God this is not saving grace but this is common grace how do we see that being given to us here well if you'll look with me again in the text let me take you through a few more verses and see what it says

Lamech took for himself two wives in verse 19 and verse 20 Ada gave birth to Jabal Jabal was the father of those who live in tents and have livestock why is it telling us that verse 21 and his brother's name was Jubal he was the father of all those who play the lyre and the pipe now we're not going to see these people anymore why is God telling us this why does Moses want the people to know this as he writes it notice verse 22 as for Zilla she also gave birth to Tubal Cain the forger of all implements by the way Tubal Cain as a forger as a blacksmith as it were what we would know as a blacksmith that would include weapons that would include metal weapons of warfare this is where it started this early

Genesis 4 we're just a few generations in and this is where we've come to already now I told you that this is common grace of the Lord as we read these verses how where do we think these people got the knowledge to do all these things do you think they just figured it out do you think they were just walking along one day and they gathered up a bunch of rocks and threw them in a fire for some stupid reason and all of a sudden stuff started melting and coming out of it oh you know what I think we'll do I think we'll all of this that we're seeing in these verses God built into humankind in our DNA why this is part of the dominion mandate this is how these people are learning to subdue the earth and steward these things we didn't invent this stuff guys all of these different categories that we're seeing here from animal husbandry smelting metallurgy blacksmithing music musical instruments God put this in human beings and now it's being expressed unfortunately they're not making this music to God they're not singing praises to the Lord is that what we see happening were they thankful to God for this common grace did they worship God yeah well look in verse 23 verse 23 speaks to that very thing it says and the people gathered together in gratitude and they made worship to God himself and they were rejoicing and praising the Lord and gathering themselves in great bands to do so is that what verse 23 says no what does it say and Lamech said to his wives Ada and Zillah hear my voice you wives of Lamech give ear to my word I've killed a man for striking me and a boy for wounding me if Cain is avenged sevenfold Lamech 77 fold no here's the pride of man far from being grateful to the

Lord Lamech stands up and beats his chest and says you know the Tarzan yell and it's all about me that's where we are that's what's happening with these people what is this our sin nature hardens us against God and others we've already seen this hardening because we saw it in Cain in verses 5 through 9 where Cain hardened his heart against the Lord burned with bitter jealousy against his brother refused to listen to God and now we see the same thing happening down the line in Cain's line in Lamech do you know what Lamech name means your Bible may have a footnote that tells you the name in the margin his name means warrior or conqueror this is his nature Lamech outstrips his forebears and begins to brag about murdering people now real quickly some commentators think that

[52 : 16] Lamech was boasting about something that he done that is I've murdered two people past tense other commentators say the Hebrew grammar here could be taken in a different way and they make the case that this is a poem it's the first poem in the Bible and Lamech is pridefully bragging about what he will do to anyone who challenges him or even so much as bruises him anybody who dares he likes the king of the mountain he is standing on the mountain and he is

basically saying to his wives look at what you are so blessed to have as a husband look at my masculinity and my prowess anybody messes with me and the hammer is going to fall and he is just bragging having a good old time this is the pride of man so either way what are we dealing with same thing whether he has already murdered these people or whether that's with me and mine it's the same heart of pride isn't it it's the same thing that

Cain had in his heart that brought him to the place of murdering his brother this man is making a pledge I will kill at the batting of an eyelash and you're dead you mean nothing to me nothing lamex sin shows us then this growing pride the callousness the shamelessness all of that stemming from the ongoing influence of depravity depravity expanding expression in society through what through polygamy and multiple murders you're about to see as we move through the next couple of chapters how these very things begin to spread so rapidly through humanity as the years go by that God has to send the flood to destroy them it is it is

I can't imagine living in a time like this we think we have it bad when we do but this is really really bad this hardening of the heart against God and man and this is the most important part I'm saying up here is an active principle in us this lives in us once again can I go to the apostle Paul just to flesh this out for us the apostle Paul characterized this ruling force of sin this active principle of sin as he admonished the Christians in the church at Ephesus here's what he said walk no longer as the Gentiles that is unbelievers also walk in the futility of their mind being darkened in their mind alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them because of the hardness of their heart and they having become callous hardened have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness that is a description of what we're seeing start right here in

Genesis 4 and it's just going to multiply like crazy please notice what Paul says here folks that from darkened callous hardened hearts unbelievers give themselves over to the impure greedy pursuit and practice of sin that's you or not you say Jeff wait a minute last week you told us that God gave them over now you're telling us Paul is saying here that they gave themselves over which is it what would you say the answer would be both and very good both and it's not a trick question it's the reality of what scripture teaches us about ourselves so this is comparative to analogous to the issue of God hardening Pharaoh's heart and Pharaoh hardening his own heart you've seen that in scripture scripture teaches and says literally both of those things within the chapters where it's dealt with and

God hardened Pharaoh's heart and Pharaoh hardened his heart against God and so you come away and you say well which is it well what does scripture say both both here in our passage is an entire society plunging themselves into deeper darkness and it's going to continue and it's going to get much worse and as I've already mentioned we'll come to Genesis 6 and 7 and God's judgment will be terrifyingly decisive there won't be any turning back for years and years and years these people partied and did what they wanted to do and followed the course of these kinds of nasty things while Noah slowly and patiently built the ark and nobody sat down and looked and said why is this dude building this boat because he's crazy ask yourself this how is it that an entire city of [57 : 53] Sodom down to every single man the Bible says burned with such intense fierce immoral greed for two angels in physical form who had come into town and were staying with Lot we're going to get to that story God ran and it is not G rated the Bible doesn't pull any punches how is it that every man in Sodom burned with immoral greed to have those two men send them out how is it that numerous cities in that same valley were just like this so that God destroyed every single one of them in judgment because they had sunk so low into depravity that they were beyond saving yes I said that they were beyond saving or

God wouldn't have done what he did we don't judge God in these things we trust him well God leaves us with hope in verses 25 through 26 our new nature submits to God oh hallelujah there's hope then Adam knew his wife again and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth for she said God has set for me another seed in place of Abel became killed him and to Seth to him also a son was born and he called his name Enosh then men began to call upon the name of Yahweh now in these verses Moses shifts the scene back to God's work of saving grace we've seen common grace and mercy so that Lament can stand up there in front of his wives and everybody in the city and boast about all of this impress everybody he still gets to have kids he has wives he gets to enjoy life in the way that he wants to enjoy it ultimately he will suffer judgment that he's living and God's being merciful it's just amazing saving grace is what we see in these verses as Eve gives birth to Seth she

acknowledges

God's grace in this notice what she says in the verse God has set for me God has set for me another seed in place of Abel this is God's doing God is doing a work here and she acknowledges it she sees it God is keeping his promise he's faithful this is what her life is saying as she attests to this I see the faithfulness of God doing what he promised he's continuing a line through me as he promised Adam and Eve are believers y'all they're believers in God they have saving faith as God's gift to them or they would never make comments like this they never acknowledge the Lord like you don't see Lamech doing this or anybody in Cain's line they're acting in faith as they praise the Lord for Seth thank you Lord for Seth and then the Bible tells us that the Lord continues to bless Seth and now God will continue the line of promise leading to the Messiah this is what Moses is establishing for the people because they're going to be given this teaching about Messiah many of their prophets are going to come and start to fill in the blanks of this and then verse 26 to end it out Seth had Enosh and men began to call upon the name of the Lord Enosh it means and it's not very flattering but listen to why Enosh means frail man it means weak or sickly you say oh wow what is that well it stands in stark contrast to boasting Lamech and his pride in his own prowess in Cain's pride in himself I'm a self-made man I'll make it work Enosh stresses humanity's frailty and neediness for God and his grace and so this is the beginning of men recognizing that neediness and calling out to God praise the Lord that's what we have here men began to call upon the name of Yahweh remember how many we've got at least five if not six now seven generations of people and now men are starting to call on the name of the Lord at least from this particular group of people I want to end with this verse for you Paul used it and it says and he has said to me my grace is sufficient for you for power is perfected in weakness most gladly therefore Paul said I will rather boast in my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may dwell in me isn't that our hope that is our hope for today Cain Lamech all of them wanderers Lamech will never know the ability Cain will never know the ability to settle and be settled in their heart

[63 : 39] Lamech may live in a city and boast and be around people that he gets as a follow Cain will always be in a city he can't stay get up go he'll have to go somewhere else and somewhere else and that's all a picture of what God will do to us as we are separated from him for an eternity I don't even want to think about that for anybody do you we don't want that for anybody will you bow with me in prayer dear father thank you for the attentiveness of your people as they come and sit under the word and allow me the privilege and the sober responsibility of bringing the truth to bear on our hearts and this truth is very difficult because it reveals to us the hardness of our hearts and our need our desperate need for you indeed father we're not only weak we're helpless helpless to help ourselves and save ourselves and so we thank you for Jesus we thank you for the power of the holy spirit and for drawing our hearts to you each one of us in here today who have a certainty in our salvation we thank you for that moment in time when you opened up our hearts to see the need that we have for forgiveness your forgiveness for our sin whatever we had been doing to others in the way of our sin the greatest issue in that moment was that we were sinning against you and needed your forgiveness as our God so thank you father for those in our congregation who are struggling with that for those in our congregation who are sitting here now and saying I don't have that I just don't have it

I pray that you will open their heart to cry out to Jesus for forgiveness that they will ask you God please make me your child help me to turn away from my sin give me what I need in the way of your undeserved favor and power to live for you and not for sin and self please forgive me for the sins that I've committed against you and others and don't hold those against me for eternity help me to be a person now who follows you in faith and trusts you and let my life be about following you forever and loving you as Jesus loves me father I pray that you would help us to bring that message of hope to our neighbors to our friends and co-workers knowing that they are caught in deception and they belong to the evil one there are those out there father that you've chosen there are those out there who need to hear the message of gospel grace and you've given us the commission to bring it to them so please help us to set aside self and take up our cross to follow you and to be faithful to bring this hope thank you for the truth of the lord jesus thank you for our salvation and thank you for the privilege that we have to sing and to encourage and to build each other up in the goodness of god in his name we pray amen