

Guest Preacher - Mr Duncan Macpherson (North Harris)

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Preacher: Mr. Duncan Macpherson

[0 : 00] Okay, if we can turn back to Genesis 4 and verse 17 onwards.! The Bible speaks of two ways, but uses different terms throughout the Bible as it talks about the two ways we can live in this life.

In Psalm 1, David writes of the righteous and the wicked, and that is a common theme throughout Scripture. Elsewhere, we hear of people who are wise and people who are foolish.

We have the wise and the foolish builders in Jesus' parable. And in another parable, we have the wise and foolish virgins.

At other times, we hear of people being prepared and people being unprepared. And these are themes that come through in Scripture. The one thing in common is that it's always one thing contrasted against another, and how the Bible puts people into one of the two camps.

And we have that situation here in Genesis 4 and 5 as well. But this time, it comes through in terms of lines of unbelief and lines of faith.

[1 : 42] We have the line of Cain and his descendants, those who lived lives of unbelief, and those in the line of Adam through Seth, who were the line of faith.

And it's important as we look at these two lines that we keep these things in mind, and that the Bible isn't just giving us these genealogies for the sake of giving us genealogies, but to show us that there are two ways we can walk in this life.

We can follow the ways of this world, or we can follow God's revealed will for our lives. So first of all, if we have a look at Cain, and we see in verse 17, Cain has a son.

His wife gives birth to Enoch. And in the ESV, it says Cain built a city. The more correct way of putting it is actually Cain was then building a city.

The verb that is used there is one of a continuous effort that never actually came to an end. There was nothing decisive in Cain's life that he built a city and achieved what he set out to build.

[3 : 02] And it was very much a reflection of Cain's life. The curse that was upon him was that he was cursed to be a wanderer through life who would never complete anything. He himself was not able, going to be able to settle down in a city.

But instead, he named that city after his son Enoch. And like many people in this world, he set his own hopes upon his son Enoch, hoping that his son would be able to achieve what he himself was not able to achieve in life.

And we see there we have Enoch's descendants, and it goes all the way down to the sixth generation from Adam in verse 19 when we're introduced to this man Lamech.

And we see in Lamech he is the first person to have more than one wife in life. The first person who wanders distinctly away from God's revealed will for marriage.

We can see that although the descendants of Cain had gone east from Eden, had left God's presence, yet still something of God's word remained in their lives and in their actions.

[4 : 15] But we come to Lamech and things start to go seriously wrong in his life. But also we see certain things that we can see in a sense going right.

We see, first of all, the development of civilization, of culture, of society. We have in his sons, we have Jabal, who lives in tents and raised livestock.

And he was the one who developed that pastoral living. We have Jubal, who is the father of all who play the harp and the flute. The one who, in essence, developed music in this world.

And then we have Jubal Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. Someone to whom God had given gifts that he might be a forger of metal.

And when we look at these men and the skills that they had, we can see all of these things were good in and of themselves. If we look at 1 Kings 7 and Psalm 150, thinking about the praise that is to be given to God in the days of the temple and of the tabernacle, the flute and the harp were used in temple worship.

[5 : 36] In 1 Kings 7, 41 to 45, we read that the bronze pillars were made by the skilled artisan Hiram for the temple itself. And all the bronze articles that were made for God's service and for the service of the priests within the temple, none of that would have been possible if it hadn't been for Jubal Cain, developing the skills of forging metal.

And therefore, when we look at the temple, we can see that the temple's structure, its service, its sacrifice and its worship were founded on skills that were developed by the line of unbelief. But these were skills that were given to these people by God, that they might be a blessing to the whole world. And we can see that even when people refuse to believe in God himself, that God fulfills his plans and his purposes, even in the midst of man's rebellion, and to the blessing of God's people and of God's church.

Those are the positive things that came out of Lamech's life. But if we look in verse 23, we can see really disturbing things in his life.

We can see that he was familiar with God's word. He had obviously heard of God's word in the past. It may well be that he himself had been able to see Cain and actually see the mark that was upon Cain for having God's protection over him.

[7 : 15] When Cain was banished from God's presence, he was worried that somebody would come and kill him. So God put a mark upon Cain, saying that, no, if anyone kills you, I will be avenged seven times over.

So we see in that situation, God being merciful to Cain, despite Cain murdering his own brother. And we have a merciful God who vows that justice will be done in this world.

But here we have Lamech taking God's words and turning them upside down. We see, first of all, that Lamech was wounded. He said, I've killed a man for wounding me.

So obviously these two men got into a fight. The other man wounded Lamech, and Lamech killed the other man.

And he essentially took the law into his own hands to sort of his own disputes. He wasn't willing for God to resolve the situation. And he wasn't willing to take the warning that was placed upon Cain, that nobody should come and seek to destroy the life of another without God's sanction.

[8 : 30] And the punishment we see in this case certainly didn't match the crime. For he said, I've killed a man for wounding me. He was willing to kill the other young man, even though he himself was only slightly wounded.

And he set himself up as greater than God and saying, if Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech 77 times. That warning from God was that perfect justice would come with that number seven.

And here's Lamech saying, well, if God can get justice seven times, I'll have it 77 times. Here we have one who sees in his own eyes that he is greater and more important than God himself.

He's an arrogant and a boastful man. I remember hearing someone speak on him not so long ago, and they were even wondering if in him calling out to his wives and saying, wives of Lamech, hear my words, if in effect he was threatening them that he would cause similar wounds to them if they didn't do what he said.

Possible hint there at the first violence within marriage as well. Altogether, Lamech was a thoroughly disreputable character. He had invested everything in this life, and what mattered to him was his own name and his own pride.

[9 : 54] And he would borrow God's words to serve his own purposes rather than to serve God. When we take all of Cain's line into account here, we can say that you can have the heights of arts and culture and the depths of pravity coexisting together in the same people.

Paul mentions a people called the Scythians in the New Testament, and they were known as particularly fearsome and barbaric warriors, but they could make the most exquisite gold jewellery. And you have that combination of art and violence together. In the Second World War, older people in particular will know of the bombing of Dresden, and how that city became a firestorm one night through Allied bombing.

And there was various criticism was made of that bombing because Dresden had been a centre of high culture within Germany, and a lot of that high culture in terms of buildings and arts was destroyed.

And yet, at the same time, Dresden had been at the forefront of the persecution of the Jews. And indeed, they had planned to send all the remaining Jews in Dresden to concentration camps just within a couple of days of that Allied bombing raid that came upon them.

[11 : 24] You have the situation of terrible depravity coexisting alongside high arts and culture. Meanwhile, there's a very different set of people and a very different line of people occurring within history.

And this is Adam's line. Adam, who was responsible for bringing sin into the world in the first place, the one who was responsible for Cain and the actions of everyone who followed on from him.

But we see Adam himself trusting in God despite his own initial rebellion. We can see here that he is one who has taken to heart God's word to him.

And he has taken to heart God's promise that God would undo the damage that Adam himself had done. He had another child and he was able to say God has granted me another child in place of Abel since Cain killed him.

And as it has in the ESV, you actually have that word appointed me another child which is the more accurate translation. God had given them another child.

[12 : 42] God was determined to see that the line of belief, the line of faith would not die out.

Although it may just be held by one person at a time, God had his plan for this world that was not going to be undone by the sins of men.

We have Adam and Eve's recognition of God's grace at work in their lives. We see also in verse 26 of chapter 4 a bit of encouragement in that Seth, their son, he had a son named him Enosh and it says, at that time men began to call on the name of the Lord.

I think both Seth would have had more sons. Adam would have had other sons as well and daughters and they would have started coming together jointly to call upon the name of the Lord to worship God together.

it was not going to be an individual religion. It wasn't going to be for one person on his own here and one on their own there but they came together.

We can say it's a fair chance you could describe this as the first revival that occurred within the history of the world as people came together jointly to worship God and to give thanks to him for his grace in their lives.

[14 : 07] and we can see when it goes into the detailed account from verse 1 onwards we have that reminder of Genesis 1 and the sinless state in which Adam and Eve were created.

When God created man he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them and when they were created he called them man.

we have God reminding us here that he had created Adam and Eve in chapter 1 and despite the sin the rebellion and the disaster that was happening down the line of Cain God had his purposes to fulfill.

It wasn't going to be sidetracked by sin. It wasn't going to be a mere second best. God was going to achieve what he had set out to achieve when he created the earth and that was to have men and women in fellowship with him in eternity.

And he created them in his own image and he blessed them. We see there we come into Adam's line of faith and we see he himself is described as having a son in his own likeness in his own image and he named him Seth.

[15 : 30] Very much echoing the words of God's creation of Adam and of Eve making individuals in his own likeness and I think that is to tell us there that yes Adam was created in God's image and that image was not lost despite his sin and that image was transmitted down through the generations so that each and every one of us is made in God's image in God's likeness.

And when we look at Adam's line we see something quite striking. We've heard nothing about how old Cain was when he died or any of his descendants and I think a reason for that will be as James describes our life he describes it as a vapour or a mist that is here today and gone tomorrow it simply disappears after a while and that is the way it is particularly with the wicked they are here for a short time they fill themselves with the things of this world and then they're gone and their place remembers them no more.

But here we have in this chapter the ages of people are very meticulously recorded and we see the great age that they were living to Adam verse 5 lived until he was 930 Seth in verse 8 until he was 912 Kenan in verse 14 until he was 910 Jared to 962 and Methuselah to 969 all of these men lived a great time way longer than we would ever live today and yet each and every single one of them fell just that bit short of a thousand years in age and in the Bible the number a thousand is one of those numbers that speaks of perfection all of them although following God and following his word would fall short of perfection none of them would achieve it and the message is coming through to us here that each and every one of us because of sin falls short of God's perfection and because of that we need our saviour the Lord Jesus

Christ who was perfect in our place but in the midst of these really old men we have another man Enoch in verse 21 who is quite distinct and it tells us that he only lived for 365 years his life was one quite different from theirs 365 and it just comes to mind that's 365 days in a year so although his life was much shorter than everybody else around him yeah I think he had a very full life a complete life because it tells us that he walked with God for 300 years after he had had his son Methuselah he had walked with God for 300 years and had other sons and daughters what a privilege for him to be able to spend 300 years preparing himself to enter into God's presence permanently if we think up to that time when we think of these men living to 900 and odd years the one refrain that comes through each time is and he died and he died and he died each and every one of them died in a sense that's not a surprise to us at all because each and every one of us die and yet how often do we actually think about death how often do people in this world today think of death we do our best to hide from it we ignore it we live as though we are not going to die at some point in the future we make all our plans and we keep hoping that we're going to live a long time even those of us who are in Christ we desire to live a long time that we might spend time with our families and our friends that we might be witnesses within the local community that we might declare the praises of God to those around us and yet there is an absolute certainty that death will come to each and every one of us we have the promises of scripture today but in their day they did not have scripture before them to tell them what would happen after death they only had the faintest ideas of what was to come and so we have this remarkable instance here where it simply says

Enoch walked with God then he was no more because God took him away God took Enoch away from the world and everybody knew that this had happened it's recorded here for us in scripture we don't know how it happened but certainly God took him and he was renowned for being someone who walked closely with God so those who were living at that time would have been able to take great comfort and great strength and this fact that God had taken Enoch from the world so that when they saw anybody else dying and they put their bodies in the grave they wouldn't need to make the assumption that that was the end of things no God had taken Enoch as a sign to men and women everywhere that he had a purpose beyond this world and that like Enoch he was planning something better for everyone else that they would not simply die upon this earth at the end of life but there was a future to be had in

[21 : 38] God's presence death would not be the ultimate victor in this world for God himself holds power over death in Adam's line we also see another interesting character by the name of Lamech this time we have Lamech Mark 2 who is a man of faith and he is the father of Noah we see in verse 29 he named him Noah saying he will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed the curse lay upon the ground but Noah was there to give him comfort and the Hebrew word Noah means comfort has that sense about it we have here Lamech recognizing God's hand in his life recognizing God's goodness towards him that though he deserved to be under a curse yet

God was giving him a son as a comfort and a strength to help him in this life and we can conclude by the fact that Lamech was named Lamech in the line of faith that there's no name in and of itself is cursed because of the bad actions of somebody else we have his father was happy to call him Lamech despite the disreputable character Lamech who was there in the line of unbelief and we see the blessing that Noah was not only for Lamech himself but also for everyone else to follow for Noah himself was a man of faith who when God called him set out and he built the ark and he preached for a hundred years to everybody around him calling them to come and to join him in the ark in the place of

God's salvation and when the flood came upon the earth the world was destroyed as it was in those days but Noah himself and his family were saved through the flood that the line of belief might

continue and that ultimately the saviour of the world the Lord Jesus Christ would come God was at work in the line of faith ensuring he had a people preserved for himself a people who would believe and trust in his word and a people who would continue to the end of the world that all of God's purposes would be fulfilled that went that went right down through the children of Israel through kings like David who spoke to us of Christ the great warrior king we had Solomon who was a king in great glory in his days speaking to us of Christ our king in glory and then we had Christ himself coming into the world to redeem his people and since then we've had a continuous line of faith down to our present day where would we be today if our fathers and forefathers had not told us of the gospel or told their children of the gospel until it was passed down to us how important it is for each and every one of us to make sure that the next generation know about the Lord Jesus Christ know about God's salvation know about the judgment to come and know about the fact that there are two choices and two only in this world that either we believe the word of God and we follow the Lord Jesus Christ or we reject it and we live for ourselves and in conclusion we just need to remind ourselves that there are two ways in this life and there are two lines that we can follow the line of belief and the line of unbelief and just ask ourselves to which do we belong do we belong to the community of faith or do we belong to the community of unbelief and as for our children and our offspring what will happen to them because of who we are today may God grant that each and every one of us will believe his word and will save not only ourselves but provide our children and our grandchildren with a faith to carry on that they too may follow in the ways of the Lord and trust him for their salvation amen may God bless these thoughts to each and every one of us let us pray Lord our Father we thank you that once again we come into your presence and once again we've been able to have a look at your word and to hear what your word has to say to us we pray Lord God that you bless your truth in our hearts this night we pray Lord that your truth would thrill us it would animate!

[26 : 55] us with a desire to know you if we do we thank you Lord that your word is inexhaustible and we thank you Lord that what we have in Genesis speaks to us of your great purposes for this world purposes that will not be void that will not fail to take place for you are the omnipotent God and you are ordering everything to bring all things to conclusion at the end of time when all of your people called into your kingdom and Lord they will go like Enoch to be with you forever more we pray Lord God that you would enable us to have that living faith in the living Savior that we ourselves might live in eternity to the glory and honor of your name all these things we ask in and through

Jesus Christ our Lord Amen our closing praise is the final verses of the first psalm that we sung psalm 24 from the Scottish Psalter and we shall sing verses 7 to 10 psalm 24 verses 7 to 10 ye gates lift up your heads on high ye doors that last for ye be lifted up that so the king of glory enter me but who of glory is the king the mighty lord is this even that same lord that great and might and strong in battle is ye gates lift up your heads ye doors doors that do last for a be lifted up that so the king of glory enter me but who is he that is the king of glory who is this the lord of hosts and none but he the king of glory is let's give our praise to this king of glory Ye gates lift up your hands on high ye do that last for me be lifted up that so the king of glory enter me but who of glory is the king the mighty lord is this in that same lord that great in might and strong in the last ye gates lift up your heads on doors doors back to last morning be lifted up that saw the king of glory and our may but who is he that is the king of glory who is this the lord of hosts and and but he the king of glory is and may the grace of the lord jesus christ the love of god and the fellowship of the holy spirit be with us all now and forever more amen to!