

TRUSTING GOD'S PLAN, PURPOSE, AND DESIGN

"Making the Right Call" Genesis 4:17-26

November 3, 2024

INTRO.: Making the right call! Years ago, before the instituting of instant replay, a major league pitcher baseball pitcher was pitching a perfect game heading into the ninth inning. A perfect game is when a pitcher pitches all nine innings and nobody from the opposing team reaches base. In the history of Major League Baseball there have been only 24 perfect games pitched. So, it is VERY rare. The pitcher had faced 24 batters, and none had reached base. In the ninth inning of this game the first batter hit a long fly ball, and the outfielder made an incredible over the shoulder catch. The next batter hits a routine grounder and is thrown out by the shortstop. The pitcher only needs one more out. The batter hits a ground ball, the pitcher covers first base on the throw, and the runner is called safe. As you view the slow motion replay it is clear the runner is out but there is nothing that can be done to change the call. After the game, the umpire watches the replay and realizes he made a mistake. He was tearful and apologetic upon meeting with the pitcher after the game. The pitcher was forgiving and understanding of the mistake, telling reporters after the game, "Nobody's perfect." Many others throughout Major League Baseball subsequently voiced their support for the umpire. The sportsmanship demonstrated by both the pitcher and umpire earned them widespread praise for their handling of the incident. Yes, it was the wrong call, but it didn't have eternal consequences. This morning we're going to look at something where we need to make sure we make the right call because it does have eternal consequences. We are going to look at three things concerning the line of Cain and the line of Seth as recorded in Genesis 4. We will be looking at **THE PRIDE, THE PROBLEM, AND THE PRAYER**. To begin we're going to back to God's judgment on Cain for committing murder. God told Cain that the ground would no longer yield its crops for him, and he would be a restless wanderer on the earth. Cain would no longer have a place to call home. So, we pick it up in Genesis 4:16.

Genesis 4:16 So Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Since no one can escape God's presence, what is being said here? This is referring to God's presence at the entrance to the Garden of Eden. One of the consequences is the removal of God's blessing on Cain. He lived in the land of Nod, which means "wandering." He most likely did not stay in one place there and it is possible that his son, Enoch, finished building the city. Cain would no longer have any roots. Anyone who attempts to navigate life without God has no true roots for their life. This reminds me of this quote, "Mankind has his feet firmly planted in mid-air."

This wandering has produced restlessness. Many people fill their lives with activity so that they won't recognize their rootlessness without God.

Simone Weil, who lived in London during the occupation of France by Germany and who died there in 1943, wrote a book entitled *The Need for Roots*, analyzing the uprootedness of her day. She concluded that the only cure for uprootedness is a rediscovery of the human being as God's creature and of God himself as the source of those basic elements without which a proper civilization cannot function: order, liberty, obedience, responsibility, equality, the right to express one's opinion, security, private property, truth, and others. Our roots are in God; and if we will not have God, we are condemned to be vagabonds.

Many are busy but they don't really know where they are headed.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in his first inaugural address, "We don't know where we're going, but we are on our way."

Thomas Huxley, noted English agnostic, was in Dublin, Ireland for a speaking engagement, and when it was over he left his hotel in a hurry to catch a train. Hoping into one of the city's famous horse drawn carriages, and assuming the hotel had told the driver where he was heading, simply shouted to the driver to drive fast. A few minutes later he realized they were headed away from the train station, not towards it, so he shouted to the driver, "Do you know where you're going?" "No, your honor, but I'm driving fast."

Cain was not just a restless wanderer when it came to his physical location but also when it came to any relationship with God. What were the differences between the line of Cain and the line of Seth?

THE PRIDE

Genesis 4:17 Cain lay with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch.

NOTE: many of the meaning of names taken from Arnold Fruchtenbaum's commentary on Genesis

Enoch means “consecration” or “dedication” The name is from the same Hebrew root as the name Chanukkah, which is the Feast of Dedication (Arnold Fruchtenbaum). There is a hint of some spiritual interest in some of these names. Maybe there were even some believers in the line.

Cain was building a city because he could no longer grow anything from the ground. It is interesting to note that this speaks about what Cain did. Where is God in the picture?

We are told that Cain names the city after Enoch.

Genesis 4:18 To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael was the father of Methushael, and Methushael was the father of Lamech.

From Arnold Fruchtenbaum’s commentary: Irad means “city man”; Mehujael means “God makes me live,” and Methushael means “man of God” or “man of prayer.” Both of these last two names end with “el,” the simple name for God.

Do these names change the direction of Cain’s line? The description of Lamech provides a resounding, NO!

Genesis 4:19 Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah.

What’s the first thing we notice? He married two women. This is the first time we read of multiple women married to the same man. How does that work out? It’s interesting to note the meanings of their names:

Adah: means “adorned” or “ornament”

Zillah means “shady,” “twinkle,” “tingling”

Later on we see that the daughter’s name is Naamah meaning “loveliness”

What do all these names focus on? It is all about the outward appearance. What does God consider to be of the greatest value?

Proverbs 31:30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

1 Peter 3:3–4 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. **4** Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.

Then we read about Lamech’s children in the next three verses.

Genesis 4:20–21 Adah gave birth to Jubal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. **21** His brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute.

Jubal: the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock (the word for livestock includes camels and donkeys)

Jubal: the father of all who play the harp and flute (includes both string and wind instruments)

Genesis 4:22 Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain’s sister was Naamah.

Tubal-Cain: the originator of metal works: brass bronze, iron

There are all kinds of advancements being made to civilization, but what is missing? There is no credit or glory going to God. These were good things for the society but how much do they mean without God? Lamech will take pride much further for what we have here is in the form of a poem, a song. It is three, two-sentence couplets and is in the form of boasting addressed to his wives.

*Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Ye wives of Lamech, harken unto my speech.*

*For I have slain a man for wounding me;
And a young man for bruising me.*

Lamech is boasting about killing a young man who had wounded him. Did he not understand the seriousness of murder? This was all about pride and justifying his killing this man.

*If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold;
Truly Lamech seventy and seven-fold.*

Who promised he would protect Cain? It was God! Who is Lamech depending on for his protection? It is himself! Lamech is proclaiming that he will avenge 70 times. What does Jesus teach?

Matthew 18:21–22 (NASB95) — **21** Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” **22** Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

One commentator describes Lamech, “I have been offended and I have judged that the offense is a mortal one, punishable by death. Because the God of the universe, who is supposed to be running things, didn’t run them to suit my fancy, but permitted someone to offend me, I have erased that offender from the face of the earth. No one may call me into account. God put a mark on old grandfather Cain, in order to protect him, but I am perfectly able to take care of myself.”

Neither Cain’s nor Lamech’s approach will bring spiritual roots in our relationship with God. They both believed they had a better way. They both acted like they knew better than God. Pride was at the root of the first sin by mankind in the Garden of Eden and it is still the main culprit when it comes to sin in our lives.

Jude 11 speaks of “the way of Cain.”

Jude 10–11 Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals—these are the very things that destroy them. **11** Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam’s error; they have been destroyed in Korah’s rebellion.

What is the “way of Cain?” He murdered his brother, lied about it, complained about the consequences, and sought protection from revenge. His name is given as an example of what not to do.

1 John 3:11–12 This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. **12** Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous.

In whom are you putting your trust? As the passage continues, we are going to see a dramatic shift and in the midst of this shift we see:

THE PROBLEM

What’s the problem with trusting in ourselves, for depending on nobody but myself? What is wrong with doing what I feel like and with me being the captain of the ship of my life?

Genesis 4:25 Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, “God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.”

Seth means “appointed.” The root meaning of this name is “foundation,” because here is the foundation for a new line, the line of Seth (Arnold Fruchtenbaum).

Eve recognized that this child was given by God and is in the place of Abel. She is recognizing the hand of God in providing Seth. Seth’s line would lead to Noah who is described as being “a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God (Genesis 6:9b).”

Look what happens as the line of Seth continues.

Genesis 4:26 Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD.

Seth names his son, Enosh which means “frail man” or “mortal”

Seth is willing to admit the weakness of man, both physically and morally.

Psalms 103:15–16 As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; **16** the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.

1 Peter 1:24–25 For, “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, **25** but the word of the Lord stands forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.

Romans 3:10–11 As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; **11** there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

Here’s the problem of you and me depending on ourselves to navigate this life and the life to come. We are all sinners and so prone to sin. Our sin pushes us away from God. Self-sufficiency pushes us away from God. Pride pushes us away from God.

James Montgomery Boice says this is an illustration of what has sometimes been called the seesaw in theology. How does a seesaw work? When one end is up the other end is down.

When man elevates himself, thinking that he is strong, good, and self-sufficient then he looks down on God, sometimes even perceiving God as unnecessary. He puts his security in himself, so why would he need God. Eventually, this leads to him believing he can take the place of God.

Now, when the opposite is true, God is elevated, then man must be down. Man sees himself as weak and needy, unable and unwilling to navigate life without God. This results in realizing the need to have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The fruit of this is a desire to get to know God better through the study of His Word, prayer, and gathering with other believers as God’s Word is taught and preached. This begins a life of worship, obedience, and submission to God.

Some would say that this second scenario gives a low picture of man, but I believe just the opposite for God alone gives true value, meaning, and purpose to life. God’s Word tells us that we are created in the image of God and made to serve and glorify God. We are fearfully and wonderfully made by God. In 2 Corinthians 5 we are told that God created us to be with Him forever. He has enlisted His children (those who know Christ as Savior and Lord) to be a part of the greatest mission ever, telling others about the good news of the gospel.

Cain displays the sin of pride which Lamech further perpetuates. Seth recognizes the problem every one of us, we are weak and frail both physically and spiritually. True meaning and purpose in life is not found in trusting ourselves but in trusting God. As Seth recognizes his absolute need of God this section ends with:

THE PRAYER

Genesis 4:26 Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD.

People began to call on the name of the Lord. There was a turning point in this line. The Hebrew phrase refers to regular public worship (Fruchtenbaum). This is an expression of dependence on God.

James Montgomery Boice, “The line of Seth had recognized that sin was no mere imperfection of human nature but something destined to destroy both the individual and the culture unless it should be overcome by the grace and power of Almighty God.”

There was nowhere else to turn but to God. Why do you and I come to this place each week? May it be because we see a need to worship God and express our total dependence upon Him. Communion reminds us that our only hope of having our sins forgiven and a right relationship with God comes through the cross.

SO WHAT???

*Have I called on God for salvation?

Don’t let your pride get in the way of having a relationship with God. All are separated from God because of sin and in need of the Savior. Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection provides the only way for forgiveness. If I have made the right call in regard to salvation:

*Am I calling on God daily in prayer, hearing from God daily through His Word, and obeying Him?

*Am I continuing to recognize that I can’t live the Christian life without the power and strength of God?

*Who am I urging to make the right call when it comes to their relationship with God?