

**Subject: *The Plague of Plagues***

**Scripture: *Genesis 4:8-26***

The title of this sermon comes from a Puritan book on the subject of sin. Pastor Ralph Venning (1621-1673) wrote this book to remind us that sin is the worst plague ever to come upon this world. There is a terrible pandemic called sin that is far worse than Covid. It has affected every man, woman, boy, and girl in the world. Sin is the most deadly plague. The symptoms of sin can be seen in a person's words and actions, but the real problem runs much deeper than that. Sin attacks the very heart and soul of a person.

In the Genesis 3 and 4 we see three things about sin: the source of sin in Adam and Eve; the course of sin in their children, Cain and Abel; and the force of sin in their attitudes and actions.

### **1. God allowed sin in the world (Gen. 3)**

In a previous sermon from Genesis we saw that only 4 chapters in the Bible take place in a world without sin. All other chapters describe a world of sin and its consequences. But these chapters also reveal God's response to deal with sin and reverse the curse through the work of Christ. God allowed sin so He could reveal His grace, mercy, love, patience, as well as His holiness, righteousness, and wrath.

### **2. God allowed sin to spread (Gen. 4)**

Sin began in the Garden of Eden, but it didn't stay in the garden. Sin began with Adam and Eve, but it was passed on to Cain and Abel. Sin continued with a descendant of Cain named Lamech. In Genesis 4:16, the Bible says that Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and there is no mention of God from Genesis 4:17-24.

The sinfulness of Adam and Eve passed on to their children and then to their children, and down through all humanity. Theologians refer to this as "original sin." It is the corruption of the human race and the fallen sinful condition in which we are born. We are sinners not because we sin. Rather, we sin because we are sinners. As David confessed in Psalm 51,

**Psalms 51:5** *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

### **3. God allowed sin to reveal itself in many ways**

First there was Cain's sin of false worship and then the sin of rebellion toward God and unbelief. We may not think of unbelief as a sin, but actually it is the worst kind of sin.

**Hebrews 3:12** *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

Then there was Cain's sinful anger. The Bible says, **Ephesians 4:26** *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.*

Then there was Cain's sinful resentment and jealousy, which led to his sin of murder and lying (just like Satan, John 8:44, a murderer and a liar). Then we see Cain's sinful arrogance: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Then in Lamech we see the sin of polygamy, the worldly pursuits of Lamech's sons without any mention of worship, Lamech's sinful boasting and vigilante justice. And this is just the beginning of the story of sin in Genesis, let alone the rest of Scripture.

#### **4. God brought accountability and judgment for sin**

God judged Adam and Eve for their sin. God brought a curse on the ground for Adam's sin. God rejected Cain and his offering. God confronted Cain and punished him for killing Abel. Wherever there is sin, God brings accountability and judgment.

#### **5. God restrained sin to some degree**

Sin grew worse and worse, but it was not as bad as it could be. We sometimes speak of "total depravity," but that doesn't mean man is as bad as he could be. A better term is "radical depravity" which means the very root of human nature is bad, but it still comes short of being as bad as it could be. And that is only possible because of God's restraining grace.

#### **6. God was patient and merciful to sinners**

Cain was sorry for his punishment ("greater than I can bear"), but as far as we know he was never sorry for his sin. The same was true of Lamech. God was patient and merciful to Adam and Eve, to Cain, to Lamech, and to sinners after the birth of Seth.

**Romans 5:20** ...where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

God allowed sin in the world. God allowed sin to spread. God allowed sin to reveal itself in many ways. God brought accountability and judgment for sin. God restrained sin to some degree. And God was patient and merciful to sinners.

### **APPLYING THIS MESSAGE**

#### **1. The plague of sin has affected each of us and our families**

We should be more concerned about sin than we are about Covid or any other disease.

**Romans 3:23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

#### **2. The plague of sin has revealed itself in many ways**

We commit sins of the flesh and sins of the spirit; sins of commission and sins of omission; sins that are openly disgusting and sins that are socially acceptable; sins that are intentional and sins of ignorance. We sin in many ways.

#### **3. God holds us accountable for our sins**

**Ezekiel 18:20** The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

**James 1:14-15** <sup>14</sup> But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. <sup>15</sup> Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

#### **4. God restrains our sins to some degree**

We are not as sinful as we could be, but only by the grace of God can we say that. Apart from God's grace we are all capable of all kinds of sin. It would be ugly without God's restraining grace.

#### **5. God is patient and merciful to us in our sins**

**Romans 2:4** Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

When we see our sin, we should be broken over it and repent.

When we see that our sin is offensive to God, we should repent.

When we see that Christ died for our sins, we should repent.

#### **6. The worst possible condition is to deny our sin and resist God's grace**

**1 John 1:10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

**Hebrews 2:3** How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?

**Hebrews 10:29** Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy, who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

To deny your sin, to neglect salvation in Christ, to trample Christ underfoot, to count the blood of Christ a common thing and insult the Holy Spirit...this is the worst possible condition we could ever be in. It is a hopeless condition.

Genesis 4 tells us about this awful plague of sin. After sin had run its course through several generations, what could be done about this terrible plague? We find the answer in the last part of verse 26.

**Genesis 4:26** then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

The Lord was their only hope, and Christ is our only hope.

**Romans 10:13** For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.