

What in the World is Wrong?

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Genesis

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Bible Text: Genesis 1-5

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There is a thick irony in the reality that I am a pastor who lives in Kentucky. It's very true. You see, I grew up on the other side of the river in the state of Indiana and I spent my youth mocking the people of Kentucky for what I perceived to be their inferior breeding and intellect. I would have scoffed at the idea that I would ever be a citizen of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. But the irony is much thicker than that in light of my sarcastic, mocking youth, tomorrow Nancy and I, along with our girls, are going to take my mother and her brother, both of whom are in their 80s, on a trip to eastern Kentucky, south of here into the hills of eastern Kentucky to show them the various places where their ancestors are buried. My mom and her brother whom we call Walden, the rest of the world knows him as Gene, my namesake, my mom and Walden will see for the first time in their 80 years in little towns of Anvil, Buckhorn, Courtland, and Crocketsville, Kentucky the succession of their direct lineal ancestors going back seven consecutive generations dating back to John Baker who lived from 1744 to 1831. Their mother, meaning my mom and her brother, my grandmother, Emma Johnson was a seventh generation child of the hills of eastern Kentucky. Do you realize what that means? My ancestors are from eastern Kentucky. In light of my childhood and young youth mocking of the hillbillies of Kentucky, all I can say is, oops.

We will enjoy that time with my mom and my uncle. It will be a wonderful time reviewing the heritage that I once mocked but now I quite honestly embrace. It will also bring home something else as we go from cemetery to cemetery to cemetery and see the markings of those that whose blood we now carry, it will be a reminder that something is wrong with the world. These people are all dead. Why? Why? None of them wanted to die and frankly it's a little bit frustrating to me. I would love nothing more in these next two days to talk with these ancestors, to hear their stories, to ask them about their lives, to discuss the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them; there are reports that at least one of them was a preacher of the Gospel. Why can't we do that? Why can't we sit down and talk with our family? Do you realize that something is horribly askew in the world that makes that impossible? And I realize that it's not just my family, this is true of your family as well, not just ancestors going back multiple steps on the ladder that perhaps you don't even know about, our loved ones die. Men and women everywhere across time, across cultures, across geography, they die. It is a universal problem. What in the world is

wrong? Doesn't someone see that it shouldn't be this way? Doesn't someone understand that this is grossly out of order? A world view that cannot answer that question is useless. What in the world is wrong? How do we explain this state of affairs? Let's go just a step further: a world view that cannot relieve that pain is also useless. It is a fundamental reality of life that "it is appointed for man once to die and after that comes judgment." How did we ever get into this miserable state of affairs? That people we would naturally love are separated from us by a wall that we cannot see and yet we cannot cross, that there is nothing that we can do to connect with the people whose blood runs in our vein, that we can't see the people that we've shared this life together once they are gone. How did we ever get into that horrible state of affairs?

Well, last week we introduced a study of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, and we said that it would lay a foundation to life and that it would also lay a foundation to the world around us and that brings us after that general overview last week to the book of Genesis this evening and that's where I would invite you to turn is to the first book in your Bible, the book of Genesis. Now there is a certain unavoidable risk in what I'm trying to do these weeks in trying to survey such a vast amount of Bible material. We are doing a high wire act and there is a high risk of failure, quite frankly, because the nature of what we're trying to do means that we're inevitably going to leave many important things out, that we're not going to say anything about matters that have great significance simply for the sake of being selective and focusing on a particular few themes that we want to choose from. Let me say that I'm grateful for the work of Answers in Genesis, that our church is in harmony with the thrust of that ministry but I'm not going to speak on creation today, that's not the purpose even though that is what the first two chapters of the book of Genesis address. We simply aren't going to take the time to do that. We're going to assume that God created the world in six literal 24 hour days a few thousand years ago. He made man from the dust and placed him in paradise to have fellowship with him, Genesis 1 and 2.

Now, the word "genesis" is from the Greek translation of the Old Testament. It's from a Greek word that means "the beginning." The book of Genesis gives us the beginnings of the universe, the beginning of man, the beginning of many other things. Our focus tonight and also next week as it turns out, is going to be on what happened after Genesis 1 and 2 as we look at the first 11 chapters of Genesis in a very survey sort of way. I'm very delighted to have this material to share with you this evening. Genesis 1 to 11 introduces fundamental themes about God and man that are woven through the rest of the Scripture going clear through to Revelation chapter 22. The whole of the Bible is an unfolding of what happens in the first 11 chapters of Genesis. To understand the themes that we're going to look at tonight is to grasp the groundwork of world history and more importantly to grasp the groundwork, the foundation of the Gospel of Christ. To miss any of the themes that we're going to talk about tonight is to set a trajectory for darkness, to be unable to answer the fundamental questions of a proper world view, one that explains and answers the problem of death. We're going to try to avoid that trajectory here tonight and here's what I want you to see, here's what we're going to talk about in our time together this evening: through God's dealings in Genesis 1 to 11 with men and with the nations, you see the repeated themes of sin, judgment and grace. Sin, judgment and grace. Those

themes are introduced in the first 11 chapters of Genesis in a way that suddenly gives us a perspective that we need to understand how we ever got to this miserable state of affairs. When I say a miserable day of affairs, I'm not speaking out of a depressed, broken heart, I rather enjoy my life. I rather enjoy sharing it together with you in Truth Community Fellowship soon to be Truth Community Church. I enjoy life but, beloved, what I want you to see is as we step back and as we think about the big picture that includes death, a topic that many people prefer to avoid rather than to address head on, but when you address the topic head on you realize that something is really, really wrong. Something is terribly wrong with the world where you live for a while and then you die and a generation or two later you're pretty much forgotten. The whole book of Ecclesiastes is like this. The idea that we would live life and then be separated from the only realm that we have known, from the people that we shared it together with, something is grossly out of order. This can't possibly be right. Death is a wrench in the whole realm of human existence that shows that something is horribly, horribly amiss.

Well, what we see in the opening chapters of Genesis is the foundation that helps us to understand the themes of sin, judgment and grace. Sin, in that man has rebelled against his Creator. Judgment, in the sense that a righteous God brings condemnation on man for his rebellion and sin. Grace, in that God shows mercy in the midst of judgment. We see those themes in four events that are outlined in Genesis 1 to 11. We're going to talk about two of them here this evening. There's two parts to this message tonight with three sub parts to each one. We're going to open up and just talk about the garden of Eden and see where this all started. We can trace our family history through nine generations in the eastern hills of Kentucky but if we trace it all the way back, we find ourselves going back to the very beginning in the garden of Eden and I want to just start with Genesis chapter 2, verse 15. I'm going to assume as I know that you do, you know the basic account of the six days of creation in Genesis 1. We're going to pick up the story of creation in Genesis 2:15, kind of, in one sense, in an oversimplified sense, the start of the human race. The beginning of the career of mankind, you might say, in the garden of Eden. This is our first point: the garden of Eden. Just to give us a starting point for our survey of Genesis, Genesis 2:15, "Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. The LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.'" There we go, there's the hint that a problem could be on the horizon. But paradise hasn't been broken yet. In verse 18, "Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him,'" and you know what happens. Verses 19 and 20: the man named the animals but for Adam there was not a helper suitable for him. Verse 21, "So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.' For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed." Here they are in paradise and everything is good. In fact, God said at the end of Genesis chapter 1, "It was very good" as he looked

on his creation. The solitude of man had been broken. God brings a woman and they are joined together and they are in paradise with the fellowship of God and things couldn't be better. That was the start of the human race. How did we ever get to this mess that we have now in the year 2014? Well, the sin of man intervenes. That's your first sub point, the garden of Eden and we find the sin of man. God created Adam and set him in the garden with one command to obey and he fell. He failed, we could say.

Chapter 3, verse 1, "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Indeed, has God said, "You shall not eat from any tree of the garden"?' The woman said to the serpent, 'From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" The serpent said to the woman, 'You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" Verse 6, "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise," you just feel a sense of gloom coming apart as you see the progression coming, don't you, as you read it as if for the first time. "She took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate." Rebellion, disobedience, sin, transgression against the one command that man was given to keep. Our first parents listen to the serpent instead of obeying God and the consequences were immediate and vast. In verse 7 it says, "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings."

Now, at that point, Adam and Eve set the pattern for evasion and blame shifting that marks you and me today when we sin. There is nothing new under the sun. How you respond to sin and certainly how you responded to it as an unbeliever is illustrated and shown from the very beginning of humanity when humanity fell into sin. Look at verses 8 and following, "They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.'" Fear and isolation enters in where fellowship and joy had once prevailed and God said to him in verse 11, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The blame shifting begins. "The man said, 'The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.'" He points to Eve and he points to God, "She did it and you are the one who put her here." The chaos of this in light of chapter 2 is just jarring. Verse 13, "Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?'" And the woman, "taking cues from Adam's blame-shifting, "said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.'"

So here we have it: the first sin, the first rebellion of man. We see it laid out for us in a historical narrative. Let's be really clear that Adam and Eve were real historical persons just like the Bible says that they were. This is not an allegory. This is not an illustration of some moral truth. This is the actual time and space historical record of what happened at

the beginning of humanity. We are in this position because of a real man and woman named Adam and Eve as described in Genesis 3.

Now, we see the sin of mankind introduced as a theme in Genesis and God displays his righteous character in response. Now we're going to see in the rest of Genesis 3 the judgment of God. The sin of man and now the judgment of God. And what we're seeing here is that these themes are introduced and they continue on throughout the rest of the book of Genesis and it's all contained here in the third chapter. What was the result of man's sin? Untold, unmeasurable, infinite judgment and ruin. Look at verse 14, "The LORD God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; And I will put enmity 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.'" We'll come back to that a little bit later but God curses the serpent. Verse 16, he declares judgment on the woman and he said in verse 16, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you." Verse 17, "Then to Adam," God just systematically goes through the chronology of that which introduced sin into the world: the serpent, woman and then man. Now the judgment comes on the serpent, woman and then he stops and addresses Adam in verse 17, "Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat from it"; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.'"

From paradise to sin to judgment. Man had rebelled against an infinite holy Creator who had commanded one thing to be done and man in response to temptation from the serpent, went and did something else. This is no minor occurrence. Sin ruined paradise. God judged the serpent, the woman and the man with curses, pain and sorrow. And every time that we see death, every time that we have a hard day in labor, every weed that grows up in your garden and in your flower bed, every time you sweat in labor, is a reminder; all of those daily aspects of our existence are a reminder of the fallenness of man. As much as we're going to enjoy this little trip of family history with my mom and her brother over the next 48, 72 hours, I'm running this trip for my kids, you know this, right? In one sense. Every gravestone we see is a reminder of the fall of man. Every death is a reminder that something is askew in the human race. You see, what happened in Genesis 3 was more than a set back for Adam and Eve, this was a catastrophic fall for the human race.

Turn over to Romans chapter 5 and in verse 12 you see the biblical commentary on Genesis 3 and an explanation of the ongoing ramifications of what we just read in that portion of Scripture. Romans 5:12, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world," it only took one, "and death through sin," man was in the world and he brought sin into the world and right on its heel, death followed. Death through sin, "and

so death spread to all men, because all sinned." Here we have a statement of the universality of human depravity and human corruption. Why is there all of this death in the world? Beloved, sin has consequences. Adam brought death to the whole human race and when we see the results of it around us, we trace it all the way back. We follow that genealogical tree all the way back to Adam and say, "Here is where it began." We can understand why death is here.

Not only did Adam sin but as you know, you and I have also sinned. We're part of the problem. We are perpetuating the corruption of the human race with our own sin and rebellion against God. If you think about it, Adam's one sin brought all of this onto the human race. Do you realize that in quality, that in kind, that each of your sins represents the same catastrophic cosmic rebellion? That each of our sins would have brought upon the same consequence upon the whole human race? We take sin far too lightly, don't we? We're far too ready and willing to embrace the attitude that says, "Well, I'll do this and then I'll confess it later." It doesn't work that way. We measure the horror of sin. We measure the evil that is inherent in every act of sin, every rebellious thought, every sinful attitude, every angry, bitter word that comes out of our mouth. We can measure the intrinsic evil of it by what one sin brought upon the human race. The utter chaos of death is the measure by which we see how bad and evil sin is in the sight of God. The fact that we can so easily traffic in it, the fact that we are blind to it, the fact that we are callous and indifferent to it, the fact that we tolerate sinful habits in our lives, doesn't change the reality of it. One sin ruined the human race. If that does anything for our believing, regenerate hearts, it should make us hate sin, shouldn't it? It should make the thought of sin unthinkable to us and even though we have remnants of corruption even as Christians dwelling within us, there should be such a mindset in us that our heart commitment is so separated from sin, so hostile to rebellion, so hostile to indifference towards this God whom we are supposed to love with all of our heart, soul, strength and mind, there should be such a settled opposition and hostility to sin in our heart because we understand what the consequences of it are. We measure the evil of it by what it has wreaked on us.

Genesis introduces us to the whole concept. Adam brought death to the whole human race. When we say the fall of man, understand that we're not talking about a little stumble and he fell down a couple of steps. Adam fell off Mount Everest and went all the way down and splattered the whole human race. This fall was great because from perfection and joy and fellowship with God, now we have inherited this awful mess of sin, rebellion, judgment, death and separation. And the reality of it is such that as you continue reading, as you contemplate the effects of sin, what I wish that every unbelieving person would do is walk through a cemetery and have that sink in on their minds, "This is my destiny. This is what's going to happen to me. This is really awful," and have the question come, "Is there any hope in the midst of such desperate judgment?" And if you imagine reading Genesis for the first time and you see man rebelling against this righteous, holy God, you realize, at least you should, you should realize immediately that through his rebellion, man has forfeited any claim on God whatsoever, that man cannot come back and expect kind, favorable treatment from God in that he has positioned himself as a rebel, as a traitor against cosmic goodness and by all standards of right and wrong, he should merely expect that God would carry out the judgment and curses that he had pronounced on him

in Genesis chapter 3. On what basis does a rebel suddenly plead for goodness from the hand of the one that he has rebelled against? Don't forget, Genesis 3:24 as we wrap up the consideration of the judgment of God. Genesis 3:23 and 24, "Therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life." Cast out of paradise and not permitted to return. That is the judgment of God.

Now, as you read Genesis, as you survey this, you realize that there is something else that is going on here. Thirdly, you see the grace of God as well. Sin, judgment and yet grace? And yet kindness? Yet undeserved favor being extended? The sin of man, the judgment of God and now we see the theme of the grace of God being introduced in what we're about to see. God could have righteously cast man aside forever, instead he displayed mercy. He promised future deliverance. Look at Genesis 3:15 again. In speaking to the serpent, God said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head," he shall deliver a crushing blow to you, "And you shall bruise him on the heel." This verse is sometimes referred to as the first Gospel. God is promising here to send someone to crush Satan who tempted man to rebellion in the first place. In the midst of ruin, in the midst of judgment, comes a promise of redemption. And in the meantime, God made provision for Adam and Eve. Look at verse 21, "The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them." Instead of killing Adam and Eve on the spot as their sin and rebellion deserved, God instead slew animals and provided them with skin coverings to cover them in their shame. And we see here in Genesis 3 the early shadows of the Gospel of Christ. Christ the one who crushed the serpent's head at the cross. Christ our substitute to cover us, the Lamb for sinners slain. Here in Genesis 3 in this short familiar account, understand what you are seeing. Understand the theological themes that are being introduced: sin, judgment and grace, all displayed in the garden.

As you continue reading into chapter 4, perhaps there might be a sense of hope, a sense of desire that maybe it won't get so bad. You don't have an idea just from chapter 3 of exactly what all the consequences are but you find that what happened in chapter 3 is passed into chapter 4. What Adam started, he passed along to his next generation in point number two here, our final point for tonight, we're going to consider Cain. Adam and Eve had sons named Cain and Abel and if you look at the first four verses of Genesis, you can see what transpires. God allowed Adam and Eve to continue to live and then in chapter 4, you see their progeny. Verse 1, "Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, 'I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD.' Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering." You know the story. You know how this unfolds. Verse 5, "but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard." We're about to see, once again, the sin of man in what follows. You know the story: Cain got angry and Cain killed Abel.

Look at verses 5 through 8, "So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?'" Let's stop there for just a moment. A word that is particularly pertinent to those of you here who are not Christians, those of you here who are still living in rebellion and rejecting Christ, what's happening in your life right now, right this very minute, right here in this room, is an illustration of what God did with Adam and what he did with Cain in Genesis 3 and Genesis 4. Here was Adam in his sin and God takes the initiative and speaks to him and says, "Adam, where are you? Adam, what have you done? Who told you that you were naked?" God comes and speaks to Adam in his sin. God initiated the contact. Here you have in chapter 4, you have Cain in his sin and you have the Lord graciously speaking to him. The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?" God speaking to the sinner in the midst of his sin, addressing him, speaking to him rather than immediately turning him away and passing him off into eternal judgment.

My non-Christian friend, whenever the Bible is opened and you are under the preaching of it, you young people, whenever the Bible is opened and preached to you, God is speaking to you in your sin. God is addressing you. God is taking initiative with you even though you are hardened, even though you are resistant to obedience, you are resistant to the Gospel of Christ, God nevertheless positions you providentially under the sound of his word and says, "Listen to me." He speaks through his word. He speaks through the proclamation of Scripture. God initiates and comes to you and speaks to you. The pattern in Eden, the pattern with Cain, is repeated every time a sinner is brought under the sound of the Gospel. How good and how gracious is God to do that? To speak into the life of one who is sinning? My non-Christian friend, understand that what's happening in your heart tonight is a replication, it is the exact same thing that is going on in Genesis 3 and Genesis 4, God speaking to you in your sin, trying, as it were, speaking to you...let's put it this way, I don't like the word "trying," God calling you, commanding you, to come out of your sin and to come to him. My non-Christian friend, understand that the love and mercy and grace that brought you here is something that should turn your heart to Christ. It's wrong for you, speaking to you non-Christians, and if there are a hundred of you in the room and 10% of you are non-Christians, I'm just making numbers up, that means 10 people here are currently under the wrath of God. Understand that God graciously calls you through the Gospel and says, "Come out of that. Come out of your sin and rebellion. Come out of your hardened attitudes. Come out of your spiritual indifference. Come to Christ. Come out of your sin and come to Christ that you might receive the blessing of forgiveness and grace, that all of your sins would be wiped away." Now, listen: why would you reject that? On what possible basis could you justify continued rebellion against your Maker and continue to rebel against his offer of grace to you in the Gospel of Christ? That is inexcusable. You must come out of your sin tonight. You must. You must come out of your sin. You must give your life to Christ. You must finally turn in obedience to the God who calls you. It's time. Don't perpetuate your sin like Cain did.

Look back at verse 8 of Genesis 4. Actually, I think we're in verse 7. God called Cain just like he calls non-Christians here tonight, "Why are you angry? Why has your countenance fallen?" Verse 7, "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up?"

And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." Cain didn't master it. Verse 8, "Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him." Oh, the sin of man. And in just a single generation going from eating forbidden fruit to anger and bitterness against God and against his own brother to such an extent that he killed him. This is what sin does. This is the evil of sin on display and Cain's sin brought God's judgment.

We've seen Cain's sin. We see the judgment of God. Now look at verse 9. God and his righteousness could not leave a murderer unaddressed and in verse 9, still speaking to him, drawing him out, "Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' And he said, 'I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?'" The insolence. The arrogance of sin manifested right there. The same arrogance that makes people reject and refuse and mock the Gospel today. The same arrogance against the voice of God. What on earth is Cain doing speaking to God this way? What's the deal with the smart mouth back to the Maker? Well, I don't know. In one sense I don't know but all I do know is that those of you who are still resisting Christ are having the exact same attitude that Cain expressed here in Genesis 4. "Why are you talking to me, God? What do you want from me? I don't know what you want. Am I my brother's keeper?"

Verse 10, God said to him, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground." God in his omniscience knew Cain's sin even though Cain would not acknowledge it. My non-Christian friend, let's be real clear: God knows your sin too in precise detail even though you refuse to acknowledge it and repent, that you don't escape your guilt by refusing the call to repentance.

Verse 11, God says and introduces the judgment, "Now you are cursed 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; you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth." Judgment. "Cain, you're guilty. Here is your judgment." Unbeliever in this room, you are guilty. Your pending judgment is known as eternal hell.

Verse 13, "Cain said to the LORD, '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 whoever finds me will kill me.'" Cain realized the consequences were great.

Verse 15, we see the grace of God yet again. God displayed mercy even to Cain. Look at verse 15 with me, "So the LORD said to him, 'Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold.' And the LORD appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him." God in his mercy, in his grace, in his kindness, gave Cain some sort of mark that put him under divine protection. This is another example of undeserved favor from God.

In the garden of Eden you see sin, judgment and grace. In the life of Cain you see sin, judgment and yet grace. What I want you to see, what I want you to understand even

those those terms are not necessarily used, the themes, the theological realities are most certainly there and it's woven in those themes that we see introduced in these early chapters of Genesis which you can read in five or ten minutes of your time. All of a sudden you realize that what you're reading in five or ten minutes of time is the key to understanding the state of the world. You're understanding why the world is in its wretched condition. You're seeing why there are wars and rumors of wars. You're seeing why false religion exists. You are seeing why your loved ones die. It's because there is this judgment of God on humanity and the reality of it is profound.

Now with this in mind, turn over to Romans 6 and you see in a single verse, a very familiar verse in Romans 6, that Scripture is repeating the same themes in the heart of a book talking about biblical salvation from sin. Romans 6:23 you see, "For the wages of sin is death." The sin of man, the judgment of God. "But," now comes the grace of God, "but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." The pattern with Adam and Cain is sin, judgment and grace. The New Testament message to sinners today is conviction of sin, judgment on that sin and yet an offer of grace that is extended in the Gospel of Christ, that in the crucified and risen Jesus Christ, God extends an offer of grace, of complete forgiveness of all of your sins if you will come to him in humble repentance and faith for salvation from your sin. If you would abandon the hardhearted attitude of Cain and Adam in their sin and simply acknowledge yourself as one under judgment, righteously under judgment, to realize that you can call out to Christ and just as he was gracious to Adam and just as he was gracious to Cain in a completely undeserved fashion, to realize that in the foundation laid in Genesis is the assurance that God is a gracious and merciful God towards sinners. But to realize that also that if you turn away from Christ, my friend, if you would shut your ears to the Gospel and cover them as some of you do and just figuratively speaking but it's not much less than this, "Blah, blah, blah. I don't want to hear. I'm not going to listen." Understand that when you put your fingers in the ears of your heart and close out the Gospel and you reject the grace of God that is presented to you week after week from this pulpit and in people who plead with you, your parents, your friends, your grandparents, when you reject that grace, all that is left for you is the certain judgment of God. This is what Genesis teaches us. This is what the unfolding of Scripture confirms.

My unsaved loved one, I love every one of you that's in here. My unsaved loved one, understand that your sin means that you should fear God and cry out to him for grace, "God, show me grace like you showed to Adam. Show me grace like you showed to Cain. Show grace. Show mercy on me. I want to leave aside my rebellion and sin. Have mercy on my soul unto eternal life." That's what you should be praying right now. That's what should be resounding in your heart is a cry for mercy because look, look: this is the pattern that God has established for thousands of years. It's not going to change for you. God deals with all of humanity this way: judgment on their sin with an offer of grace found in the Gospel alone. If you cut yourself off from grace, if you turn your back on Christ, all that is left for you is the certain terrifying expectation of the judgment of God. He doesn't play around. And so, beloved, when a pastor or a friend or a family member pleads with you to consider to receive Christ, understand that God himself is pleading. God himself is calling. God is calling you to the grace that is intrinsic to his character.

There are times that this Kentucky pastor is just mindful, you are mindful of the weakness that you have as you stand in a pulpit. You can't make anyone believe. I can't make anyone believe. I would if I could but I can't. You must go to Christ on your own. You must flee to him yourself. You must cry out for mercy.

For the rest of us, those of us who are in Christ, those of you who are here today and you have had a rotten day and you sort of stumbled into this room mindful of your own sins of the prior hours of this day, let me encourage you with what we have as we close here: understand that the grace of God is available to you too, that you have every ground to ask him, to go to him and ask him to be merciful to you, to cleanse you from your unrighteousness and sin and not from a position of fear and doubt about how he will receive you. He has manifested himself that he's gracious. He is always gracious to those who call upon him. He is gracious to those who don't ask for grace, not in an eternal saving way but he extends grace everywhere. He is gracious by definition. Understand that you as a believer in Christ, those bought by the blood of Christ, that grace is available to you right now to settle your conscience, to give you peace of mind, for you to walk out of this room restored and saying, "It's still well with my soul. My God is gracious." If he bought you in Christ, he's not going to be any less gracious to you than he was to Adam or Cain. We have a gracious God. You were saved so that he would display grace to you time unending. You can find your heart refreshed. Go to him now. Humbly confess your sin and just say, "Lord, just as you have been gracious to me in Christ, be gracious once more," and understand that he receives that prayer.

What a great God. A righteous God in perfect control of the sin of man who reigns over and accomplishes his will despite it, who cannot be successfully rebelled against. What a great God, by power, by righteousness, by holiness. What a great God in grace. All revealed to us in these opening chapters of Genesis. In Genesis chapter 5, we see that grace starts to come through a man named Noah. That's where we'll pick it up next week.

Bow with me in prayer.

Our Father, we're grateful to you for your righteousness. We humble ourselves before you in fear and trembling knowing that we are sinners. Father, we ask that you would be gracious to us, those of us who are Christians, those of us who have been redeemed and justified by the blood and righteousness of Christ. Father, we ask you for the grace of just the cleansing from the dirt that has accumulated on us over the course of the day of walking in this world and the remnants of our own indwelling sin. Father, as 1 John 1:9 says, "As we confess our sins, be gracious, cleanse us us from every sin. Cleanse us from all unrighteousness," that we might walk out of this room restored in joy, restored in a sense of communion and fellowship with you.

God, for those unsaved and the lost in our midst that we're rubbing shoulders with, Lord, you know their hearts. Would you be gracious to them too? Not just in a temporal way but in an eternal way would you grant them repentance and faith to come to Christ? Father, would you work in their heart in a way that they would cry out to Christ for mercy? May the reality of death and judgment and the wages of sin is death, Father,

would they pull their fingers out of their ears finally tonight. Pull their fingers out and listen. May your Spirit open their hearts to receive and to believe the things which have been spoken. Christ Jesus came to this world to save sinners just like them. Father, may those words evoke a response of repentant faith. May there be several tonight that walk out with the daunting realization for that first time, "I've been born again. God has opened my heart and my mind and I have been born again. I believe in Christ. I have yielded my heart to him." Grant us that great grace tonight, O God, we pray. And as we sing of the resurrection, Father, may we sing with joy remembering our Savior who was the price of your grace to us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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