



The Spread of Sin – Genesis 4-5

Recently I watched a clip on youtube of a comedian talking about ***Everything's amazing but nobody is happy.*** He said maybe the economic downturn will be good to make us be thankful for what we have. Especially in terms of the technology that is available.

He said when he was growing up he had a rotary phone. You know the ones. You had to stay where it was and you had to dial it. You cursed people who had 2 zeros in their phone number.

If you wanted money you had to go in the bank, fill out a form and then stand in line. If you ran out of money on the weekend you just couldn't go out. Then if you wanted to use a credit card the shop assistant would lift out this big machine. They would have to ring up the head of the President to get approval. Technology is wasted on us. He said you see some people getting impatient if their mobile phone takes a while to do something. He said give it a second it is going to space.

He talked about flying on a plane and having access to high speed internet in the air. After a few minutes it stopped working and the guy next to him let out a massive sigh. As if to say you're kidding no internet on the plane what is the world coming to.

Some people complain about their flights as if they've just experienced riding in a cattle truck on the middle of the Sahara. Could you believe we had to wait 20 mins in the lounge? What happen next? Did you get in the plane and experience the miracle of human flight like a bird. Think for a moment you are flying in the sky on a chair.

It doesn't matter how amazing life we still manage to be unhappy.

Wherever there is grace there is sin and on the other hand whenever there is sin there is God's grace.

In Genesis 4-5 we see life outside of Eden. Life as we know it. There are two realities. There is the presence of sin and grace.

1. The Spread of Sin

Let's read Genesis 4:2b-5.

There is always sin. Sin is passed down to the next generation. First time word appears is here.

We see it in the lives of Cain and Abel. On the surface they look the same. Both work hard, make offerings to God. But what is the difference? Hebrews 11:4 tell us. Abel made his offering by faith. His offering was in response to God. It was out of thanks to God. Cain's was not by faith. It was trying to win God's favour. His heart doesn't match his acts of worship. This can be true for us as well.

Cain is essentially saying: - "Look at me I'm so good you should accept my sacrifice whatever it is." He comes with the wrong attitude. So when he is confronted he responds badly showing his wrong attitude again. From then on every time he speaks and acts it is bad. This is God says to Cain sin is crouching at your door (Genesis 4:7). Sin always hides itself.

Your instinct maybe to think God is unfair. He favours Abel. But no this reveals more about Cain. Instead of rejoicing in his little brothers affirmation and doing good. He shows ENVY. He is ANGRY. This is expressed in v.5

Something is wrong with Cain's heart. The secrets of his hearts are uncoiled. The beast has consumed him.

He cannot accept what God values because it is not what Cain values ie himself. So Cain cuts loose. He is not out of control. There is a premeditated act of murder. His anger and resentment breaks out into murder.

Then there is Lamech who besides taking two wives he brags about his sin to his wives. See Genesis 4:23-25

What kind of man is this? Who boasts about his murder? Guess what honey someone looked at me the wrong way today and I killed him.

What about us? Are we the same? We say someone cut me off today in the car and I blasted him.

Just as sin is passed down to the next generation so is **Death**. This is one of the things you notice in Chapter 5 in the genealogy. See the phrase ...and then he died. V.5, 8, 11,etc

We do all we can to blunt the harsh reality of death. We can even try to avoid using the word. One hospital refers to death as 'a negative patient care outcome.' It doesn't matter what we call it we cannot avoid death. It comes to us all as a result of sin entering the world.

Sin is hidden. Sin crouches. It tries to avoid your sight. Your most dangerous weaknesses are trying to hide. This often means that to you they look smaller than they are. You're saying about them - it's no big deal.

"You may know you are resentful, or selfish, or jealous, or have a lack of self-control in a certain area, but almost always, you underestimate the severity or depth of your problem. Actually, in so many cases, sin hides completely. Substance abuse counselors know a lot about denial in the area of alcohol and drug addiction — but the Bible here and elsewhere tells us that all sin has the same dynamic. Most of us weave intellectual or psychological webs of deceit over our consciences so that we deny the sinfulness of our worst sins at all. We see workaholicism as productivity, obsession with physical beauty as good grooming, stinginess as prudence, ruthlessness as being a 'sharp businessman', and so on." Tim Keller

Are you resentful because God is not treating as your good life deserves? Or things aren't going the way you want them. You are saying God you are not treating me fairly. I deserve better.

Do you know your crouching sins? You can't stay bitter about people or issues without it distorting you and your view of other people. It will wreck you. It will harden you. Embitter you.

Do you know your crouching sins? You may not because they are exactly that crouching and so hidden. Or they have power over you so you can no longer see them. If that is the case you need to ask someone close to you. Your Husband, wife or friend. What do you think are my crouching or current sins?

2. The Spread of Grace

Read Genesis 4:1.

We see God's grace in this verse. In this verse Eve is saying this baby came with the help of God. God has brought life.

We see God's grace in the mark of Cain. Why is Cain spared? God initiates and affirms. God shows grace. He gives Cain what he doesn't deserve. But even before this God came to Cain and warned him. Before his attitude had expressed in an extreme way of murder.

God steps in. He confronts Cain about his heart before he erupts into violence. He said you must master sin. You can master sin. He gives Cain a gracious opportunity to repent.

Then when Cain sins he comes to Cain and says "why are you angry?" Not how dare you question me but he puts a question to him to help him understand his heart.

How you respond to being confronted by your sin shows your heart. It doesn't matter whether it is done well or not.

He puts a sign on this man an unrepentant sinner. This is not a curse but a sign of grace a promise. Like the rainbow we'll see next week is a sign of God's grace. God's promise that he wouldn't wipe out the earth by flood again.

We also see progress with the development of music, technology and animal husbandry. Diversity – Creativity - Industry

In Genesis 5 – Life goes on. We see this in the phrases ...had lived and lived so many years. Man is fruitful and increases in number.

Not only that but also the image of likeness continues to be passed on. Even though sin has entered the world. Sure it is marred and distorted but it is still there.

Then we have this man Enoch - 5:22. He is described as one who 'walked with God.' He had a special intimacy with God.

In the birth of Noah we have hope. Maybe even one who would be the serpent crusher. Did you notice what is said about him?

We know the ultimate expression of God's grace in Jesus. See Hebrews 12:24 There is a stunning phrase in Hebrews 12:24 — that Jesus blood "*speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel*" shows how the gospel of Christ "solves the problem" of sin. How can God continue to offer mercy and hope to the Cains of the world who have slain the Abels of the world? The Hebrews author puts it like this: "The ultimate Abel, the ultimate man of faith, the only truly and literally innocent man came into the world and we — Cains all — killed him. But this was not random accident. This one came into the world to be our substitute, to *bear the curse* that we Cains deserved. He was a wanderer without a home, rejected (Gen.4:11) — and he was killed, the innocent victim of injustice. But *his* blood cries out for grace! It cries "grace! grace! for all who believe in me!" It cries "Father, if they believe in me, they must be accepted, for I have paid the debt!" The cry-for-blessing of the blood of Jesus can save us from the cry-for-cursing that the record of our deeds would otherwise make in the ears of God.

Life this side of the garden is a mix of sin and grace. One day it will be just grace.