

II. Timeless Truth for Timely Topics in Biblical Perspective

What Does the Bible Say?

“A Culture of Life”

Genesis 4:1–16

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I would like to make one word of explanation before I read the Scripture initially starting with Genesis 4:1–7. Our ministry theme this year is Thy Word is truth. I will do a collection of five sermons dealing with the end times, the last things because there is so much confusion today about the end times, the millennium. One of the most important keys about understanding what the Bible says about the last things are the seventy weeks in Daniel 9. In the next study I will go over this and how this lays the ground work for what our Lord is going to do in the last days as we come to those days preceding His coming. Let's start by looking in Genesis 4.

Genesis 4:1–7 says [1] *Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.”* [2] *And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.* [3] *In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground,* [4] *and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering,* [5] *but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.* [6] *The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? [7] If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I have no hesitation to tell you that one of my favorite books in the Bible is Genesis which was probably born out from the 70 plus sermons I preached on it several years ago along with Romans, Ephesians and others. I love the whole Bible but I do have favorites. Genesis is rich, powerful, pointed, absolutely crucial and it deals with origins. The very name means that. It gives us the origins of the heavens and the earth, creation, man – male and female, marriage – how God designed it and instituted it, work – the dignity of work, sin – how it entered into this world and its consequences, God's covenant of grace, God's church and the origin of the Kingdom of God in which the church is the embassy of that Kingdom. Genesis gives us multiple things concerning what is absolutely crucial to develop a Biblical world and life view. That is why I believe the book of Genesis is under constant assault by the outside secularists and by the inside of the church through liberal theology.

Then working my way through Genesis in anticipating this day there is something I want to bring specifically to you. There are three times in the book of Genesis that sin crying out to the Lord brought the Lord down to the earth, whereby He brought measured judgment. If you work your way backwards you'll find this in Genesis 18 and 19 as the sanctity of sexuality is assaulted at Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding plains by sexual promiscuity and perversion. God comes down identifies it, clarifies it and brings a measure of judgment upon the cities of the plain, most notably Sodom and Gomorrah, while rescuing Lot from the city.

Another time is in Genesis 11 where a city state comes into existence named Babel. It then raises up a tower that will reach to heaven. Here you find the sanctity of

government being perverted into a messianic government. The government will create the manner and way to get you into heaven. So God comes down and He scatters them.

The first one that precedes these two is in Genesis 4 where our study is today. It is where Cain sheds the innocent blood meaning humanly innocent blood of his brother Abel, in the field. God comes down and brings a measure of judgment. Stop and think about what I just went through in these three times in Genesis.

God comes down because of the sanctity of sexuality in the culture, in its promiscuous and perverted acceptability, approval and domination of the culture. God comes down when the government affirms itself as creating the tower to salvation. Then God comes down on the issue of the sanctity of life and the shedding of innocent blood. Does that sound familiar to you at all? Do you know any cultures where the government is claiming its messianic role of salvation where in sexuality what once was unthinkable is now thinkable but legally affirmed and culturally embraced and the sanctity of life in a culture of infanticide, with active euthanasia and an unrestricted assault upon the child in the womb? God came down for all three of those in Genesis but it is just one of those I want to look at in this study.

I want to deal with this matter of the sanctity of life and God comes down to deal with Cain. After the conception of sin from Adam and Eve, what you now have is the birth of the culture of death through their firstborn, who is born with a sin record and sin nature whose name is Cain. He has a brother. The text identifies for us the first two male children of Adam and Eve – Cain and Abel. Furthermore, their vocations are identified. Cain is a farmer, a tiller of the ground. Abel is a shepherd of the sheep. Both of them come to worship and they appropriately bring worship from their vocation. Cain brings “some of the fruit of the ground” and Abel brings the first of the flock and the fat portions. God accepts the worship of Abel and rejects the worship of Cain.

Cain’s response to God’s rejection is two-fold. He becomes angry and his countenance then falls. We would call that a pouty face. His lip hit the ground. He is not accepted so he begins to be absorbed in self-pity, coupled with being ‘very angry’. Now what happens after that in the birth of this culture of death? Let’s go back to Genesis 4 and work our way through the remaining part of this text. God comes to Cain with a question when He asked him “Why are you angry?” Now notice the graciousness of God to intercept Cain in his death spiral with a question designed to identify the problem with “Why has your face fallen?” and then again there is word of grace that if you do well will you not be accepted.

Then there is a warning; sin is powerful for it’s like a lion crouching at the door. It has a death design on you. As you arise each day sin stands crouching at the door. Its dominion brings death, like a crouching lion. You need that dominion to be broken because its desire is for you but you must have dominion over it. Immediately that ought to send Cain to repentance over his sin and call upon the Lord for His help to break the dominion of sin in his life. That is not what happens to Cain. With God’s gracious intervention of this warning of the dominion and consequences sin and what he needed to do since his worship was not acceptable was to repent instead of becoming angry and pouting but what was his response?

Genesis 4:8 says [8] *Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.* I John 3:12 gives us the commentary on why Cain kills Abel when it says, [12] *We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.* In other words, Cain is not going to deal with his sin but he is going to destroy the righteous testimony in front of me in order

for him to get relief from his sin. So the one who is living out the message of grace where God has intervened with him, instead of responding to the message of God he then kills Abel. What does God do? God comes down again.

Genesis 4:9 says [9] *Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"* First of all Cain's answer is a lie. We would say today that he knows where the body is buried. Secondly, he then moves from a lie, while the death spiral continues, now in defiance blasphemes God when he says 'am I my brother's keeper.' Cain is basically telling God that He has no right to hold him accountable for what he did. It's almost like Cain said 'who do You think You are God?' He is really thinking he is God. Cain goes from anger to what I would call as spiritual depression, a sin induced depression of his fallen countenance and does not respond to God's call upon him and His intervention, accept to respond with a lie and defiance against God. So God asks another question. It is the persistent intervention of a gracious God and now we know why God has come down.

Genesis 4:10 says [10] *And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground."* The result is a judgment upon Cain, not a final judgment or eternal judgment but a temporal judgment, a measured judgment. His questions have not stopped Cain but perhaps this measure of judgment will stop him and bring him to repentance. Here is what the judgment is.

Genesis 4:11–12 says [11] *"And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. [12] When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."* Cain is farmer and God is telling him that as he embraces his vocation as a farmer, he will plant but there will be no harvest. You will be a planter without a crop. The result is that will turn you into a fugitive and a wanderer as you move throughout the land looking for anything wild that you can eat because what you cultivate will not bear fruit.

This is taking the curse that came to Adam a step further. Adam's curse was when he worked the land through his toil there would be thorns and thistles but there would still be a crop. Here there is not only the sweat of the brow, thorns and thistles but there will be no crop. We don't even think about this with God, do we? We just think something will come up when we plant a seed. It comes up because God brings it up and there are times that God won't bring it up. So here is a measured judgment identifying that when you go to the soil that has the blood of Abel upon it, it will no longer yield for you a crop. The result is the chaos and confusion of a wandering life that has no stability to it whatsoever. Now is the opportunity for the third time for Cain to repent. What does Cain do?

Genesis 4:13–14 says [13] *Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. [14] Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."* Now Cain, instead of remorse and repentance, descends further into the death spiral, absolutely absorbed in his self-pity. Just in these two verse the word 'I' and 'me' are used six times. It's all about him. There is nothing about Abel or his father or mother. There is nothing about the God of glory and life that Cain has offended. There is nothing about what he has done. There is blame on God and constantly we see this self-centered world and life view that is at the core of the culture of death. It's all about me. So what does the Lord do? Again we see God's grace. God who could clearly enact a capital punishment upon Cain has given him measured judgment, mercifully and graciously and now extends it further.

Genesis 4:15–16 says [15] *Then the LORD said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. [16] Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod (meaning the land of wandering), east of Eden.* There are some obvious observations that I would like to share with you in this culture of death that is birthed through Cain.

The first observation is worship matters. It matters to God and it matters to you. We came today to worship. Our worship today will either be acceptable to God or not. If it is spirit and truth it is acceptable. If it is not it is not acceptable. You will never meet anyone who doesn't worship. Everybody worships. The question isn't do we worship, but do we worship rightly or wrongly? The question is who and how do we worship? It is God who is the Arbiter of what is faithful and true worship.

Here God pronounces that Cain's worship is not acceptable and Abel's is. The answer is found in the text. They both bring praise from their vocation that is appropriate but Cain only brings some of the fruit of the ground and Abel brings the first of the flock and the best of the flock, the fat portions. Our language in the New Testament is the tithe and the offerings of praise. God sees the worship reflecting the heart. Worship matters. The way we worship indicates our life.

When you got dressed this morning and you looked in your closet to make those choices of what to wear, you realize that what you are wearing is by God's kindness and grace. The clothes still hanging in that closet is God's kindness and grace and it can be gone in a moment. The breath you have that you refuse to expend in the singing of praise was given to you by God. The time where you prioritize the assembled praise of God and fact that you have a heart to rejoice in the Lord, the soul that has been set free from shame, guilt and fear because of the Gospel, is all a gift of God.

Abel's worship indicated his life and so did Cain's. Worship not only indicates our life, worship instigates our life. Abel goes from that worship serving the Lord and Cain goes from that worship into a death spiral – very angry, pouting, depression, defiance, blasphemy, murder, refusal to repent. He had worldly sorrow as he said 'Look what has happened to me' because of the consequences but there was no Godly repentance as Paul says in II Corinthians 10 – no confessing of the sin, no fleeing to God for forgiveness and the power of God's grace to break the sin in his life. On the contrary the death spiral continues to the point that he willingly, pointedly walks away from the presences of the Lord. Worship matters and is an indicator and instigator.

The second observation is unconfessed sin is never static or private. We tend to think that a little sin in life won't go any further but we're wrong. Sin is not static. What is there will lead into a death spiral, a downward spiral. Unless God's grace intervenes, we confess, repent and cast ourselves upon Him for forgiveness and the power of transformation, it will continue into the death spiral. So the anger goes to spiritual depression which goes to defiance which goes to blasphemy and finally is walking away in apostasy from the presence of God.

None of our sins are private. Abel paid a price. Worship paid a price. The testimony of the living God was paying a price. Cain is going to have a child whose name will be Enoch. Genesis 4:18 says [18] *To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech.* Lamech the great, great grandson of Cain will rise up and sing his own song. Lamech says, "Cain has killed a man, and I have killed a boy and a man for simply touching me and if Cain is avenged seventy fold, I will avenge myself seventy times seven fold."

Now comes the glorification of violence and he doesn't stop there for he introduces polygamy and sexual immorality. Sin is never static and it's never private.

The third observation is the measured judgment of sin is actually an act of grace and mercy. When God brings the consequences of our sins in our culture and in our life that's actually an act of God getting our attention for if this consequence is now you don't want the unmeasured judgment of God in eternity. This is a yellow flag calling to repentance. While judgment ought to get our attention and bring us to repentance, it doesn't for only the Gospel can do that. It can get our attention but it won't bring us to repentance. God's measured judgment to Cain just sent him further into his sin instead of stopping him.

Here is another example. The Bible says when people step into hell they will be doing two things – wailing and gnashing of teeth. That is the phrase they used to describe what they did to Stephen when they killed him. They gnashed their teeth. Gnashing of teeth and wailing is not remorse for it's the temper tantrum of defiance, even in hell. You can see it with Lazarus and the rich man. When the rich man is up in torment he says “God this is Your fault. You should have sent someone else.” There was no repentance. In his life he used Lazarus and from hell, he says “God would You send Lazarus” for he still wants Lazarus to be his water boy in hell. There is something that brings repentance and that's the glorious Gospel of grace in Jesus Christ. It is the message of life. Judgment ought to get our attention for it's God's measured gift to us.

The fourth observation is use questions even if you know the answers. Jesus does in His ministry what God does here in the Old Testament. That's why I love evangelism explosion because you start with two questions and end with two questions. When you ask a question you clarify what people are believing and they have to own what they believe verbally. So God uses questions.

The fifth observation is innocent blood shed always cries out to God, whether it is one or 55 million. All sin cries out to God but the shedding of innocent blood has a very special voice that cries out, whether it's one murder that takes place in a field or 55 million that takes place under the legal approval of the irrational codes of a nation and its culture. We have the descent into the culture of death. We see the culture of death going into the death spiral all the way from Cain when he left the worship service to murder to all the way as it continues in his line as this culture of death develops.

You are seeing it today in our culture. Dr. Schaeffer was right when he told us “Here is what is coming.” That is the slippery slope. Do you know why there is a doctrine of the slippery slope? It is because there is a slippery slope. So abortion went to infanticide and infanticide to active euthanasia so that we get this Dr. Emanuel that has just designed this healthcare system that has just been brought to this nation. Embedded in that is a culture of death because instead of a healthcare system trying to find ways to life, we're going to take what assets we have and quoting Dr. Emanuel “By the time you get between the ages of 74 and 78 you don't need life, you just need to die.” So now we're determining life at the beginning and life at the end. If it is inconvenient to our economic status then do away with it.

Then we have this absurd rationality of this man, Dr. Jonathan Gruber who provided the math for this healthcare system. In a report he wrote some time ago he said “One of the great blessings of abortions is how much money it is saving us as a nation because we know that abortion is usually upon unwanted children and if they had been born more than likely the vast majority would have been in a dysfunctional home and we know the track and trajectory of those in dysfunctional homes. We know where they go in the criminal system and the welfare system and all. So the fact that we know that they

were killed in the womb, think about how much money that has saved us as a nation.” Those are our bright minds in our culture who are getting 50,000 to 100,000 dollar checks in their speeches that promote and celebrate the culture of death all around us.

I will simply conclude with a question as my takeaway. If shedding the innocent blood of Abel resulted in a single voice that cried out to God bringing down judgment in Genesis, then what will 55 plus million voices crying out to God from our soil bring upon this nation? Up until this point I feel absolutely comfortable and convicted of everything I have said but I am now going to give you what I believe is my opinion. I believe God has already come down and has already started judgment. I don't think it's any accident that in the sovereign providence of God we find ourselves mired in unstoppable and seemingly unwinnable wars, hopeless in terms of any moral or courageous leadership in our nation.

We find ourselves with unprincipled leadership, economic instability, and glorified violence where we put glorified violence in games for children and then wonder why they act it out in a school. We glorify violence just like Lamech did from the line of Cain. We are dismantling marriage and consigning generations of children into fatherless and motherless homes while codifying sexual anarchy. There is a loss of hope for the coming generation who are entering college for when you interview them they have little hope in our culture. Over one half of the children today will be raised at best in a single parent home, many in no home. There is the absolute assault upon religious liberty that many have purchased so dearly and in its place is a culture of violence and death that now is absolutely absorbed in the unfettered pursuit of sexual eroticism and nothing is to stand in the way of it. By the way, the culture of death is a handy instrument that if in my unfettered eroticism we have produced children then we'll remove them because they are inconvenient. That's where we stand, I believe, as a nation today.

What is very clear here is that what we have descended in, even to the point that I find Christians walking around with a badge after this last insidious assault of a newspaper journalist because of what they did and now we're going to be the divine instrument for judgment on that insidious assault. I find Christians wearing headbands that say “We are Charlie (Hedbo)” and I am not Charlie. I will not celebrate blasphemy as a culture of life. Where we are thinkingly celebrate blasphemy we have grown accustomed and callous to one point five million. We will rise up and hear all the news reports of the twenty plus children that died in the school in New Town without even batting an eye, that almost twice that number every day in that state is killed in abortion clinic.

But, I have Good News for you. I have Great News for you. Thousands of years after this incident in Genesis our cry of our sin goes up to heaven and God comes down but this time, He doesn't come down even to give measured judgment or any judgment, He comes down to bear our judgment. He goes to a cross and now the innocent blood of Jesus cries out to heaven to save us from our sins. We are given a message of life to take to the public square and into the life of the woman who is being confused and deceived by the culture of death to the man who is abandoning a responsibility, to letting the children know there is no such thing as being unwanted. Not by God's people with a culture of life that they have embraced but because of that innocent blood that cries out from Calvary we can have every one of those ministries that cares for the child and ministers to the woman and we can give to the woman who has been deceived going into that abortion clinic the message of life which brings forgiveness, change, God's grace, mercy, peace and restoration and reconciliation.

These ministries all over bring the Gospel of life because there was innocent blood that was shed and this time it cries out in which I'll share one of my favorite hymns from Charles Wesley. This is from the hymn titled 'Arise My Soul, Arise.'

*Five bleeding wounds he bears,
Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly speak for me:
Forgive him, O forgive they cry!
Nor let that ransomed sinner die.*

That's the message we take. Those are the ministries we do. Through the public square we take death on and rage against the one who came to steal, kill and destroy. In the lives of men and women we bring the Gospel of life and the Gospel of life that brings a culture of life for there is a Good Shepherd who laid down His life that you might have life abundantly and forever. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Grant us courage, grant us wisdom as we face this hour. Just before the Lord take a moment of silence and ask "Lord, where are You calling me with the message of the Gospel that declares life that proclaims the innocent blood of Jesus who bore our judgment to a world that is hopeless, to the ministries of life, to those who are being deceived in a culture of death or who have been wounded by it?" O God, our God, may the word from our lips and our lives proclaim to the world praise to the Savior who gave His life for now you can have life forever, I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

II. TIMELESS TRUTH FOR TIMELY TOPICS IN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

What Does the Bible Say?

"A Culture of Life"

Genesis 4:1-16

THE BIRTH OF THE CULTURE OF DEATH

SOME OBVIOUS OBSERVATIONS

- Worship matters.
- Unconfessed sin is never static or private.
- The measured judgment of sin is actually an act of grace and mercy.
- Use Questions even if you know the answers.
- Innocent blood shed always cries out to God.

LIFE TAKEAWAY

If shedding the innocent blood of Abel resulted in a single voice that cried out to God bringing down judgment in Genesis, then what will 55+ million voices crying out to God from our soil bring upon a nation?

BUT...