

XII. Revival in Biblical Perspective

Revive Us Again!

“The First Revival”

Genesis 4

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May 21, 2017, Morning Sermon

This is God’s Word. It’s the truth. Genesis 4:1–24 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 contrary to you, but you must rule over it.”*

[8] *Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.* [9] *Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?”* [10] *And the LORD said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground. [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.”* [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.”* [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, east of Eden.*

[17] *Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.* [18] *To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech.* [19] *And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.* [20] *Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock.* [21] *His brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe.* [22] *Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.*

[23] *Lamech said to his wives: “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. [24] If Cain’s revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech’s is seventy-sevenfold.”*

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 was going to cover the Hezekiah revival in this study but because of the text I was currently studying and a few other things I will cover that one at another time. Because we are in the graduation season I felt this text in Genesis 4 would be more appropriate to address at this time. This has also been a very difficult time for me and I so appreciate all the communication

for the body of Christ during this time. This difficult time has been what the puritans would call the 'hard Providence of God.'

In a broken world we know God's providence is for His glory and our good. Romans 8:28 says [28] *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.* He doesn't say all things are good. We are in a broken world. Even when God is working good things for us and our glory those good things include difficult things which are the hard providences of God in a broken world. They are not easy and I confess to you I'm in the midst of this. I'm struggling with it somewhat. I know the Biblical truths, I cling to them and I'm looking to them but existentially and emotionally having to work them into my life I'm sure is going to take some time.

This week was had an interesting moment where my oldest daughter was married. If someone had told me 25 years ago I was going to be in Birmingham, Alabama for the rest of the my life unless I get fired here and that I would follow one of my esteemed models in life and ministry and that I would be in the same family as Bill Hay (my daughter marrying his son this past weekend), I would have not believed it. There was no one more invested in this wedding beyond perhaps my daughter herself, than my sister and her aunt Vicki. She had already made four trips here in preparation for this wedding and was on her way with her husband to spend a week here and Wednesday I got the call her and her husband were in a horrendous wreck right outside Augusta, Georgia which was quite challenging for me. Augusta is the ancestral home for the Reeders for whatever that would mean for there are five generations there. It is there that the Lord chose to take her to be with Himself.

This is a hard providence for me for a number of reasons and not only what she was coming to be a part of and the occasion but even more she was my best friend, other than my wife of course. I have been best friends with her longer than I have been best friends with my wife Cindy. She was my best friend for 65 years. Probably no more than one or two days went by that we weren't talking together, praying together, challenging one another and I could always depend on her to defend me. She was one of the most loyal people you have ever met in your life. She was a little hard headed but unbelievably big-hearted. Simply put she was my best friend. I have this gigantic hole in my life right now because when I left the wedding yesterday I call Vicki and there is no Vicki to call here. Where she is she wouldn't want to be bothered with my phone call so those are some things I'm going through right now. She dearly loved this congregation and had established some wonderful friends here. She was so looking forward to the marriage celebration and feast and all that was about to take place.

I just felt in light of all of these things just pray for me and that I would preach like I did in the last study where our eyes are on you Lord! That is the only answer in these matters. Also pray for Vicki's husband Calvin who survived the accident and that we could minister to him. With that in mind I went back to this text that I had been working on. Our theme this year is taken from Psalm 85:6 which says [6] *Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?* When we say 'revive us again' we know a couple of things right off. One, if we have to be revived again it means to some degree that we must be faithless if He has to keep coming back to revive us but isn't it glorious that God is so glorious, persistent and relentless that He does revive us again, and again and again?

Secondly, that text tells us that God does not rejoice in our unfaithfulness but He does rejoice in reviving His people. He loves to revive His people and we actually study how He does that in II Chronicles 7:14 which says [14] *if my people who are called by my name (1) humble themselves, and (2) pray and (3) seek my face and (4) turn from their wicked ways, then I will (1)*

hear from heaven and (2) will forgive their sin and (3) heal their land. That is the promise to His covenant people and His design.

Here is what we have learned about revival. Revival is not an objective. Revival is a divine corrective. The objective is God's people enjoying the power, presence, and intimacy of the Lord to accomplish that which the Lord has called them to do. This is the reason for the definition of revival. Revival is an extraordinary work of God's grace through ordinary people in ordinary places by ordinary means with extraordinary consequences for God's glory. He brings what is dead back to life. He takes a valley of bones and turns it into a glorious army to serve Him. The ordinary means He uses are preaching, prayer, worship and fellowship to bring revival to His people for extraordinary purposes and those purposes are two-fold. One is that God's people say 'no' to idolatry, self-exaltation and 'yes' to God-centered worship. Number two is that God's people not only reach up and reach out with the Gospel and on the heels of revival come Gospel harvest where many can be brought to Christ.

While I rejoice and will continue to rejoice in the Briarwood commitment that I inherited and hopefully have engaged in along with you to be a world mission's church sending the Gospel to all the nations with sacrificial praying, giving and going, I also believe that if you have a true heart for the nations you have a primary heart for the nation where you find yourself. This is seen in Calvin as he sent 1300 missionaries to France, his home country while making his own trips at the risk of his life to try and encourage the Huguenot church under persecution. This is seen in John Knox when he left Geneva, arrived back in Scotland under the threat of his life and said 'Give me Scotland or I die.' We see this in Hugh Latimer and Nicolas Ridley when they were tied to the post as flames began to lick their bodies to their destruction, Latimer turned to Ridley and said 'be of good cheer Mr. Ridley and play the man for today you and I shall light a candle for Christ that shall never be put out in all of England.' It is that heart that beats within God's people that the Gospel to the nations would begin with power in their own nation but you can't have a Gospel harvest without a revived church.

Revival cannot be worked up for it must come down but God has said to His people 'Here's where I bring it down. I use revival leaders and preachers for I bring revival where My people humble themselves, pray, seek My face and turn from their wicked ways for that's where I move.' Why do we know God moves there? It is because we won't humble ourselves, pray, seek His face and turn from our wicked ways if He hasn't already started moving on us. The very four elements here that bring revival are the evidences of God's already present reviving work. Here is this glorious truth of revival and God does it again and again.

If God does revival again and again then that means He did it before. Somewhere there was the first revival and we know where the first revival was. Adam and Eve sinned and when they sinned God made a wonderful promise of a covenant of grace that He would send through the woman a Redeemer, who would defeat Satan, sin, death, hell and the grave. Then Adam and Eve had their first child and Eve doesn't know if this is the one or not so she names her first born, Cain, meaning I have received a man child from the Lord. Then she has another child, Abel and again God's sovereignty is seen because it's not the first born through which the line of redemption is coming. It is the second born, Abel. Abel manifested his love for the Lord and Cain manifested his sin nature untouched by God's redeeming grace in a worship service.

The Bible does not reveal the 'lostness' of Cain and Abel in their off hours or in their hobbies. It is revealed in a worship service and it wasn't that one worshiped and the other one didn't. Both came but one worshiper was acceptable and the other one wasn't. What element of the worship service did the heart become exposed? It was when it was time to bring the

offering before God. It wasn't that one had something and the other one didn't. The Bible takes great pains to point out to us their occupations. One was a shepherd of the sheep and one was a farmer. Rightly so when they come to worship they bring their offering from their occupation. The problem was not the substance of their offering but the problem was the heart of those bringing the offering and it shows it when the Bible indicates that Cain brought some of the fruit of the ground. Abel brought the first of the sheep, the tithe and that wasn't enough for him because he also brought the fat portions – the best sacrificial offerings to go with the tithe. It means that Abel saved that first of the flock to bring to give praise to God.

What should Cain have brought? He should have brought the first fruits and not the leftovers. Abel brought the first of the flock plus the fat portions, the best pieces of it. So God has regard and affirms the true worship indicated in the offering by Abel and He brings to Cain that his worship is not acceptable. So what does Cain do, repent? No, Cain becomes angry against God. God says 'Cain your problem is your heart. Right now sin is crouching at the door and ruling it. You need My grace so that you can have dominion over the sin and kill it.' Then when He gives the consequences of Cain's sin as God applies it to him, does Cain repent and admit God was right and just? No, Cain says 'God, what You are doing is not just.' Then God's forbearance and grace is seen at least in common grace as He says to Cain 'I will withhold any immediate and ultimate judgment. You will be a wanderer and a fugitive and I'll put a mark on you so that people won't kill you for what you are doing.' God shows His grace and mercy even to the one who is arrogant for him.

Does the arrogance end there? No. The arrogance continues. Not only does Cain rebel against God in the worship service but now under the disciplining hand of God, Cain says he won't be a wanderer or a fugitive and builds a city. The city is built as a statement of rebellion against God. Cain not only builds a city but he puts his son's name on it. This goes on for seven generations and things are invented because of God's common grace because we're born spiritually depraved so at least God has restrained the effects of that depravation so even lost people can get something right. They invent elements of bronze, working elements and deal with the matter of livestock so there is instrumentation that is developed but it's all about Cain and his family with nothing to the glory of God. We see the descent and the death spiral of a culture that is apart from God's grace.

We need an awakening and that means we need a revival. A revival only comes from God. God will You send revival? God sends the first revival in the Bible by sending a revival leader. Let's go back to Genesis 4 and pick up where we left off. Genesis 4:25-26 says *[25] And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him." [26] To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.*

When did people start to call upon the name of Lord? It was with Enosh. Enosh sent from God through Seth who was sent to replace Abel, now in this covenant of grace line, this redeeming line, this Kingdom line, comes Enosh. Adam and Eve are both still living. His father Seth is living. We have seen the death spiral that is going on in the kingdom of darkness in the line of Cain and right in the midst of all that is going on God sends Enosh. What is stated about Enosh? *At that time people (men and women) began to call upon the name of the LORD.*

"Call upon the name of the Lord" is an interesting phrase. That phrase is used in three different ways in the Bible. One, it is a phrase describing gathered worship. It is describing public worship as people come together and call upon the name of the Lord. Secondly, this is a

phrase used to describe intercessory prayer – calling upon the name of the Lord to intercede. Thirdly, the phrase is used to describe what those are being saved are doing.

Romans 10:13–17 says [13] *For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”* [14] *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?* [15] *And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”* [16] *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?”* [17] *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.* So to be saved you have to call upon the name of the Lord. To call upon Him you have to hear Him and to hear the Lord God has to send someone who brings the name of the Lord to you.

I thank God that I have been given that privilege as a minister of the Gospel and I don't want to waste a single day but I also thank God that He sent Enosh long before He ever sent me. Now here is ordinary. What do we know about Enosh? His grandfather was Adam. His father was Seth and Seth was a gift from God to replace Abel. Seth was faithful. Enosh was faithful. The next thing we know is that in Enosh's life men and women called upon the name of the Lord. How would you like to finish your life and that is all that is written about you? Harry Reeder, in his time people called upon the name of the Lord. Now that is a tombstone.

In just a few days I'm going to be giving a task that I have had four times in my life. I will have it with my other two sisters, and Vicki's husband. My sister Vicki's remains are going to be set aside and we're going to put up a tombstone. What are we going to write there? How are we going to sum up 65 years? This won't go on the tombstone but this is one way I could do it – hard-headed but big-hearted. That was my sister, wow! I have never seen a heart that big in all my life for it was unbelievable. She also was hard-headed but thankfully that didn't come to me in the family.

The first time the tombstone task came to me was with my granddaddy. He came to me in the late 1980s and said to me 'Son, I think it won't be long till I meet the Lord and I want you to preach my funeral.' I said 'I don't think I can do that. I don't think I'd be too comfortable doing that.' My grandparents were 36 years old when I was born and I may have gone through adolescence before my granddaddy did. I was really close to my dad, mom and grandparents. He said to me 'I don't really care if you're comfortable or not, you're going to preach my funeral. I'm giving you two instructions, can you follow these?' I said 'yes sir.' 'Instruction number one have it in that church (he named the church he grew up in) and when the receiving is over close the casket, push it to the side and then you tell them about Jesus. Jesus hasn't been preached in that church in 25 years and if I have die to get it in there one more time then I'm going to do that.' 'Yes sir, what's number two granddaddy?' 'It is my tombstone. The plot is at Westview Cemetery. Put my name, my birthdate, my death date and then write one word, 'Forgiven' and that's your sermon for the funeral.'

I had a second task when my dad had been a prodigal for 14 years and he had come back to the Lord for 11 glorious years. This one wasn't hard. It was 'here lies a poor sinner saved by the grace of God.' Then I had the task with my mother who was the most astounding woman I had ever met until I met my wife, Cindy. My mother's tombstone said 'an excellent wife who can find' for only God makes them like that. Praise the Lord! Now I have a fourth time with my sister Vicki and I'm still working on it. I know my other two sisters will have input and I know her husband Calvin will have his insight but as I was thinking about it I came to this.

There are like tombstone verses in the Bible. One of them for me is Acts 13:36 which says [36] *For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers...* Wouldn't you love for someone to say at the end of your life 'he served God's purpose'? Then there is Paul when he said in II Timothy 4:6-7, [6] *For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. [7] I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.* Basically when he had gotten to the end he had given all for Jesus and there awaits for him a crown that will become his worship resource for all eternity as he brings the crown back to Jesus.

I have always thought this one in this first revival was certainly an amazing tombstone verse. Here is the first revival, the first revival leader, the first revival preacher and the only thing we know about him is that at the time of Enosh people began to call upon the name of the Lord. We certainly know about Lamech who wrote a song about himself. He says 'you think Cain is something well I killed a boy, you think Cain gets protected seven-fold, I get seventy seven fold.' Lamech was the first Frank Sinatra crooner and that was his version of 'I did it my way' which happens to be the most requested funeral song in America today. That right there tells you why we need a revival. We see the arrogance of the line of Cain and we see the simple statement that Seth replaced Abel. Enosh came from Seth.

So in the time of Enosh when people began to call upon the Lord, does that mean prayer? Yes. Does that mean worship? Yes. Does that mean Gospel evangelism? Yes. So which one of the three possibilities/meanings is it for the phrase 'call upon the name of the Lord'? I think it is all three meanings because I think when you get saved you worship and to get saved you have to start praying. So here is the glory and majesty of calling upon the name of the Lord.

This is what I'd like for you to think about as we come to a close on this study. My sister, who wanted to be here today and especially yesterday for the marriage celebration and feast that took place, is a picture of all of you who know Jesus. So if you know Jesus as Lord and Savior, my sister was a picture of you. If you know Jesus according to Revelation 19, do you know where we are headed? We are all on a journey to a marriage feast and unless Jesus comes back first, death will interrupt that journey. My sister was on the way to a marriage feast on Interstate 20 mile marker 188 and death interrupted the journey. Then she went to a greater marriage feast, the one she was always moving towards.

So friend where are you headed? There is a golfer who has a chance to win this golf tournament again. He is an amazing golfer. I like to play golf and when I get up on the first tee I have two swing thoughts. The first swing thought on that first tee is 'O God, please do not let me totally embarrass myself' and that is soon followed by a second swing thought/prayer request. That is 'O God, after I hit this ball I would like to be able to find it.' Bernhard Langer is not thinking that when he plays in this tournament and gets to the first tee. In fact, when he is on that first tee he is not on that first tee because his mind is on the green. He is going to birdie the hole. There is a place on that green where there is a slight uphill no break six foot put for a birdie and that's where he is going to be on that green. To be there on the green there is a certain place he needs to be on the fairway and so he is going to get to the fairway so that he can get to the green to sink his birdie and now he's ready to hit that drive.

You don't begin at the beginning, you begin from the end. The students graduating this afternoon will be going on a trip and the highway they get on will be determined by the destination they have chosen. So are you headed for the marriage feast of the Lamb? Have you made that decision that by God's grace Jesus is your life? If that's the case then someday somebody will be able to stand at your grave, look at the tombstone and not only say 'they are

with the Lord' but they will be able to write 'in their day men and women called upon the name of the Lord.' Now that's glorious! That is something to live for.

People have asked me, 'Harry how did you sister die?' I know what they are doing but this is what I answer; 'she died the way she lived' and therefore to die was gain because to live was Christ. It was not with perfection but it was with the steady drumbeat of God's relentless grace in Jesus Christ. As Paul says in Philippians 1:21, [21] *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* Is that your decision? If it is then the people who are left when death finds you and takes you to that marriage feast, will ultimately have joy in what they write on the tombstone knowing what God has done and is doing with you. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together this day in Your Word. Thank You for coming to meet with us. We would behold our God who sits upon the throne for there is none like Him. We surrender to You and today if you have not surrendered to Him and made Jesus your Destination in life, for life and for eternity then please contact us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 for we would love to pray with you. If you have done that then ask the Lord that every moment of life will be Jesus. O God, the revival we need out there begins right here and the revival we need here begins in me. I would choose Jesus. Help me, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

REVIVAL

Revival is an extraordinary work of God's grace through ordinary people in ordinary places by ordinary means with extraordinary consequences for God's glory.

GOD-SENT REVIVAL EVIDENCES

1. God-centered Worship
2. Gospel Harvests

THE ENOSH REVIVAL