

Fallen

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[0 : 00] Open up your copy of the Scriptures to Genesis chapter 4. We're going to read the whole chapter, which is 20 some odd verses, 26 verses.

And so I want you to turn there and just follow with me, hang with me. We're going to read a lot of verses and we're going to try to cover this whole chapter this morning. So as you turn there, I want you to stand and we're going to begin with verse 1 this morning.

Moses tells us, Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain. saying, I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord.

And again she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. In the course of time, Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground.

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. But for Cain and his offering, he had no regard.

[0 : 56] So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The Lord said to Cain, Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 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. Cain spoke to Abel his brother, and when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

Then the Lord said to Cain, Where is Abel, your brother? He said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? And the Lord said, What have you done?

The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 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 said to the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden.

[2 : 04] I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me. 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. Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. 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. To Enoch was born Erod, and Erod fathered Mahujael. And Mahujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech.

And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other was Zillah. Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jabal.

He was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. Zillah also bore Tubal-Cain. He was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.

[3 : 05] 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.

If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold. 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 after Abel, for Cain killed him. 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. Father, we ask you that your spirit would open our eyes to see and our hearts to bend and be shaped by your word this morning.

Bless this in Christ's name. Amen. You guys take a seat. Genesis chapter 4 is filled with a lot of firsts.

[4 : 06] You have the first birth. I mean, after all, Adam was formed from the dust of the ground, and Eve from Adam's side. And so you have Cain and then Abel, the first birth. Some people think that they're twins.

There's no way to know from the text whether or not they are. There's no indication that they are, but they could have been. But either way, you have the first birth recorded here. You also have the first instance of a clear example of worship, of an actual religious exercise, of an offering being made there here by both Cain and by Abel.

Of course, along with that, you have the first example of false religion, of false worship, of worship that's not adequate, that's not acceptable to God. And then as a consequence of that, you have the first real act of human violence, of murder.

And then on from there, you can see in the story the first instance of jealousy. You see the first city being built. You see the first keeper of flocks.

You see the first metal workers, the first instrument players. You see all sorts of first... You see the first instance of polygamy and the first time that the institution of marriage is really beginning to be twisted and used for something else.

[5 : 18] There are a lot of firsts that occur in this chapter, but I'm not convinced that this chapter is written for us mainly so that we can see where all of these kinds of things began.

Because we know, especially in respect to the negative aspects presented in this chapter, many of those firsts are bad things. We know that those don't originate here in this chapter. They originate in chapter 3 with the fall of Adam and Eve.

Chapter 4 is not written to tell us when a lot of things began. Chapter 4 is written to show us what life is like in a world after the fall of Adam and Eve.

It's written to show us what now sinful, fallen humanity looks like. This is a vivid depiction and illustration of what sinful, depraved, fallen humanity really looks like.

But woven into the midst of this story with both Abel and at the end with Seth and Seth's descendants, we see in the midst of fallen humanity, we see God's redeemed people here as well.

[6 : 21] In fact, the great theologian St. Augustine, which I had a professor in seminary who couldn't stand it when people would say St. Augustine. He would always tell us, St. Augustine's a city in Florida and Augustine was a theologian in the early church.

I don't care really how you say it, I still say Augustine, he'd probably get mad at me. But he was also a general in the army, so I didn't argue with him, just kind of let him be. But Augustine, or Augustine, who was probably the greatest theologian in the early church, sort of post-New Testament, post-apostles, he's the greatest theologian of the early church.

Augustine illustrated this interaction between the fallen world and God's people, the church or the remnant within the fallen world with this imagery of what he called the city of God and the city of man.

The city of man, of course, representing this fallen sinful world that we live in, and the city of God representing God's people within the midst of the world. The city of God in its mature, more perfect form in heaven and then eventually on the new heavens and new earth, but nevertheless present in this fallen world.

Sometimes present to a very slight, small degree in which you can barely discern its presence, like we have here in this chapter, and sometimes present in a major way. Say, during David and Solomon's reign, or present in the church now as the church goes forth to share the gospel with the world.

[7 : 40] But we see this tension here in this chapter, and we see it throughout the rest of Genesis and really the rest of human history in the Bible between the city of man and the city of God.

And we live within the midst of the city of man. We live in a fallen world. We are post-Genesis 3, and there's nothing that we can do about it. That's the world into which we are born.

We are bound to that world. We, like Cain and Abel, are descendants of Adam. And so we, like Cain and Abel, are born with a sinful nature. That's why David was able to say, surely in sin did my mother conceive me.

He didn't mean that his mother did something sinful when he was conceived. What he meant was that from the moment of his conception, sin was bound up in who he was. That's why the Apostle

Paul says that we are all by nature or by birth children of wrath. We are descendants of Adam just as much as Cain and Abel, and we too possess the sinful nature. We're not just in a fallen world. We come into this world as a part of it, tied to it, connected to it.

[8 : 45] And yet, as followers of Christ, we are also members of the city of God. We are aliens and strangers in this world of which we are a part. And one of the questions that we always have to ask and have before us and constantly remind ourselves of the answer to is how do we, as members of the city of God, as followers of Jesus, how do we conduct ourselves in the city of man?

How do we live in a fallen world? And then, how should we think about this fallen world? I mean, how should we view it? How should we interact with it?

Because there are some who would say we need to remain as separate from the world as we possibly can be until you get all the way to the extremes of, say, the Amish.

That's an extreme, but you can see it also in a lot of evangelical Christians. So that some will refuse to really do anything that they perceive as worldly, refuse to go to any movies, or refuse to play certain games and all these sorts of things, and you begin to construct all these rules around what you'll do.

That's one way of approaching how to live as a follower of Christ in a fallen world. And then there are others on another extreme who will accommodate to the world so much so that it's difficult to even discern any sort of difference between the lives of some believers and the lives of the lost people around them.

[10 : 10] There's no discernible external difference that you could see other than the fact that they tell you that they're a Christian. And there's got to be a more biblical approach to how to live within this world than those two extremes.

There's got to be a way that we can see and evaluate this fallen world and live in this fallen world without becoming a part of it, but also without becoming so detached from it that we have no way of reaching out to it.

And I think this chapter can really go a long way in helping us to understand that because this chapter is showing us what a fallen world really, really looks like and how we should think about it. Now before we look at that though, let me just kind of answer a couple of sort of questions that always crop up when you read this chapter. And they may be questions that you were thinking of as we were reading through it. So here's a question that people always throw out.

Well, Cain was born and then later on in the chapter Cain knows his wife and then they have children. Who was Cain's wife?

[11 : 18] If everybody is descended from Adam as the scriptures tell us, where did Cain's wife come from? Well, the answer to that is not complicated. Cain married his sister to which we all kind of do that and gross out.

But the reality is that the law had not yet come into place. It would not come into place until centuries later that would ban that sort of behavior. In fact, Abraham himself married his half-sister Sarah so it was not an uncommon thing.

There was no other option. By the way, we shouldn't think of that as quite as messy as we might think of it today because you're dealing with a world that has just now fallen.

So that probably all the physical difficulties and problems that would occur today if a brother and sister were to marry would not have been really in effect at this point in time.

They would not have accumulated through the generations yet. And so Cain married his sister. That's the answer to the question. He married his sister. It wasn't yet outside of God's law.

[12 : 17] God hadn't given any command and it wasn't likely to lead to any sort of physical difficulties for their children at all. The other question that always comes up is okay, well later on in the chapter after God sort of comes and judges Cain and he says he's going to be a wanderer, Cain says, but this is too difficult for me and one of the reasons he says it's too difficult, he says, whoever finds me will kill me.

Who's going to find him? How many people could there have possibly been in the world? He wanders all the way over to Nod which is called, which means the land of wandering.

He goes all the way over to Nod east of Eden away from where he is. So how much danger is Cain really in? I mean, how many people are there in the world that could really harm him?

In terms of named people, we have Adam and Eve. Abel is dead, so we're still sitting at two other people. You have Seth who's named who apparently is born right after this incident but he would

have been a baby at the time.

So who is Cain afraid of? Well, I want you to take a look down. Look at the end of the chapter again. I want you to read something here. Verse 25. Adam knew his wife again and she bore a son and called his name Seth.

[13:26] So we know that Seth is born after Cain kills Abel. But then if you move into the next chapter, you'll see something else. Chapter 5, verse 1 tells us this is the book of the generations of Adam, so we're going to get a genealogy of Adam.

When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female, he created them and blessed them and named them man when they were created. Nothing complicated there. When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness after his own image and named him Seth.

So now Moses completely skips over Cain and Abel. He doesn't even mention them. He just goes straight from Adam to Seth, which means he's not interested in telling us about all the children born to Adam and Eve.

In fact, we are told next, verse 4, The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years and he had other sons and daughters. So Adam and Eve had other sons and daughters.

Some of them they may have had before they had Seth. We don't know how old Cain and Abel were when this incident took place. I would assume, since Seth is born when Adam is 130 years old, and it appears that Seth was born soon after Abel was killed, I would assume that Cain killed Abel sometime around when he was 120-something years old.

[14:47] 128? 128? 129 years old? We don't know exactly, but he's probably in his 120s. Now when you're living to be 900 years old, that's not an old man. You're still in your prime at 120 or 200 years old.

You're still in your prime, but that's probably about the time. So I decided to do some calculations, very sophisticated calculations with an Excel spreadsheet this week, trying to figure out how many people there might have been present on the earth about 125 to 130 years into a post-fall world after the creation of Adam and Eve and their fall.

And it starts off, as you might imagine, fairly slowly, but I figured it like this. Let's say that people didn't start having children until they were around 20, in their 20s.

So that's how I started with that. It's just sort of a baseline. All right? They probably started having children earlier than that, but let's just say they were in their 20s when they began to have children.

And let's say that about every two years, they would have a child.

You're dealing with a world with no sort of birth control whatsoever, so that's not, it wouldn't be strange. About every two years, they're going to have a child. And just calculate that out for about 130 years.

[16:02] And so that every 20 years, you've got more adults being added to the mix, more children being had, and so it's exponential. And the figures that I came up with was that around 128, 129 years, okay, after creation and fall, after Genesis 2 and 3, there'd be about a little over 2 million people in the world.

Now, I'll admit that that's a big number, so I tried to find anybody else who had done some of those calculations. I found one other writer who had done some calculations, and he did his much more conservatively than I did.

In other words, he used lower numbers. He assumed that they waited until much later to have kids, and they didn't have as many, and all those sorts of things. But he still came up with 100,000 people at around this time. So whether you go to the end where I ended up with over 2 million people, or you're still down on the low figure of 100,000 people, by the time that these events actually take place between Cain and Abel when they're grown, there could have been a lot of people living in the world.

So it's not a complicated issue for Cain to say, whoever finds me will kill me. There's somewhere between 100,000 and 2 million people living in the world in that area. So of course he's afraid. He's worried that someone else from his family will come and seek vengeance for the death of their brother or cousin or uncle, whoever it happens to be. They're worried about it. He's genuinely concerned about that.

[17:27] So he marries his sister. He's scared that one of these thousands, perhaps even millions, of his relatives might want to come and kill him. So take those two issues, bracket them off, setting them aside.

They're not a difficulty anymore. All right? Now let's take a look and see what is it like to live in this fallen world. How should we think of things? Well, the first thing that we need to recognize is that when we talk about the world being fallen, when we talk about this thing that Augustine called the city of man or the city of flesh, we need to understand that fallen means really sinful. It means that the sinfulness that Adam passes on to his descendants impacts everything about us. It impacts everything that we do. It impacts the way that we feel, the way that we think. everything is impacted. And you can see that. You can see the sinfulness and depravity of Adam's children revealed clearly in this chapter.

So, for instance, you begin with Cain who is jealous of his brother Abel. And why is he jealous? [18:36] Well, we are told by the writer of Genesis chapter 4 that God did not accept Cain or his offering. Take a look at what it says in verse 3.

It says that, In the course of time, Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground. Now, there's nothing inherently wrong with an offering from the fruit of the ground. In fact, in the Old Testament law and the law of Moses, there are regulations for giving offerings that you get from your grain and the crops that you grow.

It's okay to bring an offering to God of the fruit of the ground. There's nothing inherently sinful or wrong with that kind of offering. So that's not the issue here. But, move on.

He brought an offering from the fruit of the ground. It says, Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.

He had no regard, not just for the offering of Cain. Notice how it's worded. First he had regard for Abel and for Abel's offering and then he did not have regard, that is he did not look with favor upon Cain or Cain's offering.

[19:51] So the issue is not the offering itself, the issue is Cain. The reason that Cain's offering is rejected is because there's something wrong with Cain. There's something wrong with Cain's heart as he brings this offering to the Lord.

We are told later on in the New Testament it was because he lacked faith. Abel came in faith offering, but Cain did not. In fact, Cain is only mentioned three other times outside of this chapter in the whole Bible.

He's not mentioned not one more time in the Old Testament, but he's mentioned three times in the New Testament. And I want to show you a couple of those. I want you to turn, hold your place in Genesis 4 and turn all the way back to 1 John.

1 John chapter 3. I'll wait for you to get there because I know it's tough to find 1 John. It's toward the back of your Bible. 1 John chapter 3. In verse 12, John tells us this.

He says, We should not be like Cain who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. Why did he murder him?

[21:01] Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. You notice the New Testament perspective on Cain? This inspired perspective on Cain? We shouldn't be like Cain.

Why? Because he was of the evil one? Because his deeds were evil. So Cain becomes the prototype in the New Testament for fallen, sinful humanity.

That's who Cain is. Cain is of the evil one. Cain's whole heart and life is dictated by Satan himself. He's of the evil one. He belongs to him. He's outside the redeemed. And then one other place where we can see the New Testament perspective on him is just flip over a couple of pages to the book of Jude.

Jude verse 6 says, I'm sorry, not verse 6, Jude verse 11. Jude tells us, Woe to them, speaking of false teachers, for they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.

[22:06] So Jude is grappling for imagery to describe these wicked, evil, false teachers and he identifies them with three wicked, evil people from the Old Testament and the first one is Cain.

Cain is pictured by the writers of the New Testament as wicked, depraved, and evil and representative of those who are wicked, depraved, and evil. So when we're reading Genesis chapter 4 we have to read it with that in mind.

And the first thing that Cain does in bringing an offering to the Lord is Cain enters into the first instance of false worship or false religion. Why?

What's wrong with it? What specifically is wrong with it? Well, Hebrews tells us that Abel came in faith. Which means that Cain brought his offering not out of faith.

Not trusting in God's goodness but seeking to gain, earn God's favor. Not so with Abel.

[23 : 11] God accepts Abel's offering not because it is in and of itself better than Cain's. He accepts Abel's offering because Abel comes trusting by faith in God and Cain does not.

We're told, in fact, in Genesis chapter 4 that Abel brought the firstlings of his flock and the fat portions. He brings the best things that he has which show us that his heart is in a right state before God.

His heart is in a right state and Cain's is not in a right state. So when we think about this world we should not be surprised that the world in which we live fallen though it may be is an intrinsically inherently religious world.

I mean, just look around. Look at all the cultures. Look at all the people. Almost everybody is worshipping someone or something. It's wired into who we are.

I mean, go to the most unreached unknown people groups of the world untouched by modern man and you will see them worshipping. Go to the most sophisticated people who reject the existence of God and you will find some person or something in your life that has such a high priority that we might almost call it worship.

[24 : 31] We live in an inherently religious world but the problem with the religion of this world is that it is false and fallen and broken.

We shouldn't look around us and think, well, so long as someone does something sincerely, so long as somebody does something and they mean it, so long as what they believe in, they really, really believe in it, it's okay.

You have two acts of worship here. One is rejected. One is accepted. Same thing is true today. Worship abounds in the vast majority of it.

is rejected by God. So a fallen world is not a world in which worship is absent. It's a world in which worship has been stolen and robbed and it is false and it is not accepted by God.

That's a fallen world for you. A fallen world, though, is also a world in which jealousy breeds violence on a continual basis. violence. Now, I know that we sort of live these isolated lives as Americans and we see a lot of violence on television, but it's only occasionally that violence really creeps into our lives.

[25 : 54] It's only on occasion that it happens. But look around you. Look outside of the suburbs here. Look outside of America, even, and look at the world in which we live.

It is a violent, violent world. I mean, the Super Bowl is today. And yet, we see reports on television that it's at the Super Bowl that you find some of the worst of human trafficking happening.

In New York, in New Jersey, today, right now, there's a lot of human trafficking going on. And a lot of those people going to see the game are involved in it.

And great violence is being done to a lot of young girls. Right now, while we're in church, it's happening. It is a violent world that we live in. It shouldn't come as any surprise to us that one of the first things that's recorded for us among the descendants of Adam and Eve is an instance of violence, of murder.

Because that's what a fallen world really looks like. We can dress it up. We can isolate ourselves as much as possible. But sooner or later, sooner or later, you will see the real nature of the world that we live in.

[27 : 08] It's terribly violent. And it's filled with all manner of evil. It's just the way that this world is. So there's false worship.

There's violence. And then there's a continual, almost increasing violation of God's norms for the ways in which we should relate to one another.

You just have to look down to Cain's descendants. Just turn down a little bit, down to verse 17.

We're told, first of all, that Cain knew his wife. She conceived and bore Enoch.

And the genealogy goes down. And you end up with Lamech in verse 19. Lamech took two wives.

The name of one was Adah, the name of the other, Zelah.

It's just a few generations removed from the garden where God set up marriage where he said that it was to be the union of a man and a woman. A man, a woman, not a man and women.

[28 : 10] Alright? Just a few generations removed and that's already being violated. And we have a tendency to say, but yeah, but doesn't that happen a lot of times in the Old Testament? I mean,

aren't some of the best people in the Old Testament?

Don't some of those men have multiple wives? That's true. Abraham had Sarah. He also had a concubine, Hagar. Solomon had a lot of wives. A lot of wives.

So, is that okay? I mean, am I reading something into this passage to see this polygamous marriage as an example of the fallenness of humanity?

I don't think I am. Because consider all the instances that we can think of in the Bible where polygamy is involved. Consider the ramifications. Things didn't work out well when Abraham had children by Sarah and by Hagar.

Things didn't work out well at all. Sarah fought with Hagar and Abraham eventually had to expel Hagar and his son Ishmael out from the family and send them out into the desert. Things don't work out well when you have two sisters marrying the same man, Leah and Rachel.

[29 : 18] There's strife throughout the rest of their lives. And the children of one sell the child of the other into slavery. Things don't work out well for Solomon.

His entire downfall was brought upon him because he brought in all of these wives with all of their foreign gods and he allowed them to worship and do whatever they wanted. Solomon's father, David, experienced the same thing.

He had kids by multiple women and those kids ended up murdering one another, fighting with one another over the throne. You will not find in the Old Testament, you will not find positive outcomes or positive appraisal of polygamy.

It's always bad. It always leads to bad things because it is a violation of the norm that God set up for human relationships in Genesis chapter 2 and it did not take long for us to get there.

It didn't take long at all. Now, we're not yet in a world that is, in a culture that's just rife with official polygamy. Official polygamy.

[30 : 26] But it's being pushed for and all sorts of other violations of the biblical norms of marriage are being pushed in our culture. Why?

Because America is so terrible? No. Because we live in a fallen world and whatever the shape that these violations of the relationship that God has set up in the garden between men and women, whatever the shape it might take, it's found in every culture.

It doesn't matter whether it's homosexuality or polygamy or whether it's sort of an unofficial polygamy where men have mistresses all over the place. It doesn't matter what shape it exactly takes place. It's there. It's present all over the world.

That's part of living in a fallen world. A world in which we find false religion. A world that's filled with violence. And a world in which God's covenant relationship between men and women is constantly being violated all over the place.

That's the world in which we live. And yet, I don't think that we should despair because of all of that. I don't think that we should run in fear from this world because there's something else active in the world.

[31 : 33] Yes, it's a fallen world. Yes, we are sinners. The people that surround us are sinners. Terrible things happen. But there's something else at work in the world besides our sin. And that's God's grace.

Permeates this chapter. In fact, theologians often distinguish between two different types of God's grace. You have God's saving grace which is demonstrated in this chapter in a couple of places. God's saving grace by which He saves His people.

Those who trust in Him are delivered and rescued from their sin. But then you have another kind of grace that God gives out to everyone, not just to His people. It's called common grace.

You see, God has not abandoned this fallen world. Even in the midst of a world that is depraved and sinful and fallen, we can see multiple evidences of God's grace.

We can see them here in this chapter. For instance, consider how God responds to Cain. We're told that God comes first to Cain to ask him about the whereabouts of his brother.

[32 : 37] Cain sort of reacts, I don't know, am I my brother's keeper and all those sorts of things. And God pronounces judgment upon Cain and Cain responds, it's too much.

I can't handle it. So what does God do? Say, well, too bad, man. I mean, you sinned. You killed your brother. His blood's crying out from the ground. You think my punishment is too harsh. Too bad.

I'm not going to help you at all. That's not at all what God does. Take a look in verse 11. We have the curse. Now you are cursed from the ground which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

When you work the ground it shall no longer yield to its strength. You shall be a fugitive in a wanderer on the earth to which Cain says my punishment is too much more than I can bear. And then the Lord says to him in verse 15, not so.

People aren't going to kill you. I'm not going to let them kill you. Not so. If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And then we're told the Lord put a mark on Cain lest any who found him should attack him.

[33 : 42] I don't know what that mark was. I have no idea what it looked like. I've yet to find a single guess that I thought that's a pretty good guess about what the mark of Cain is. We have no idea what it was but it's some sort of physical marker so that everyone else will understand God's warning.

If you kill Cain I will come against you sevenfold. Seven times greater. So Cain who is representative of what it means to be sinful and fallen who has killed his own brother lied to God offered false worship all of these sorts of things Cain cries out to God and says your punishment is too great and what does God do?

Common grace. He protects even the worst even those that we would look at and say they're the worst among us. There's common grace there. We could say that for the worst people that we can think of in human history that there's common grace.

We could say that that God has been active everywhere at all times so that no one has ever been as evil as they possibly could have been. I mean it is conceivable as evil as Hitler was there were some acts of evil that he probably passed on.

He didn't kick every puppy he walked by. You know? He didn't do every act of evil that he possibly could have done. And if you ask yourself why why would a fallen totally depraved sinner who has no desire for God no desire for anything good why would he not kick every puppy?

[35 : 08] I mean why why? Why would he be that kind of person? Common grace comes in and God is constantly holding back some of our sinful desires. We see that for instance in Egypt.

Egypt ruled over by a Pharaoh who whose heart God hardens who also hardened his own heart and yet at the same time we're told that in one instance God causes the Egyptian people whom God has rejected and he's raining down judgment on them but he causes them at one time to show favor to Israel and then at another time he causes them to not show favor to Israel.

Common grace is at work. In one instance he lets their sin take its course in another instance he holds back their sin and they do something that we would look at and say that's good.

They give to the Israelites all their gold and everything they've got wish them a safe journey have a good time. Why would they do that? They're the Egyptians after all. They're the terrible wicked evil false God worshiping people.

Yeah they are. And yet God's common grace holds back some of their sinful desires. We're seeing that constantly that God's common grace is at work in a fallen world.

[36 : 22] We can see other instances of it too in this chapter. It's not just it's not just with Cain that we see it. It's with Cain's descendants. Notice the things that his descendants are able to do.

Verse 17 Cain to his wife she conceived and bore Enoch. Now Cain himself builds a city we're told. When he built the city he named the city he called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch.

So he's a city builder. To Enoch was born a rod a rod fathered Mahujael and Mahujael fathered Methushael and Methushael fathered Lamech. Lamech had his wives. Now listen to Lamech's children.

Adah for Jabal he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. Brother's name was Jabal he was the father of those who play the lyre and the pipe. And you've got Tubal Cain the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron.

Those are pretty major accomplishments here by Cain's descendants. Cain himself builds the world's first city. That's a massive accomplishment. And then you have one who keeps livestock.

[37 : 27] Probably not the same as a shepherd. We see Abel as a shepherd earlier in the chapter. Probably talking larger livestock here. Something some sort of cattle of some kind. That's a major accomplishment of its own.

We tend to take things for granted all the time but what if you start with nothing? Imagine yourself just dropped off in the middle of nowhere. Build a fire with sticks.

Go ahead build a fire with sticks. Go catch your dinner. Go figure it all out. We don't realize how much effort has gone into the steak that we buy at Kroger.

And yet here we have the first instance of someone actually herding cattle of some sort. Whatever the animals were. That's a major accomplishment. How does he figure that out?

How does he figure out how to domesticate what had once been wild? How does he do that? That is a major accomplishment. Only by God's grace would he have been able to do that. How about making music?

[38 : 25] How great is it that we have music? How great is it that we have people who can play all of these instruments and can sing and do all those sorts of things and yet it began here with Cain's sinful fallen descendants?

What common grace is that that God would give to humanity through these people music? music? How about the worker of bronze and iron?

It's hard to build much of anything if you don't eventually get around to having some metal tools to do things with. And yet here we see God's common grace at work enabling man to figure out how to form and fashion and shape metal.

That's not an easy thing to do. It's very difficult to do. It's a complicated process. How are they able to figure that out? Common grace is at work. So yes, we live in a sinful fallen world.

We need to be aware of it. We need to be on the lookout for evidences of this sinful fallen world. We need to know when things are going to take a bad turn. We shouldn't be surprised when bad things happen in this world.

[39 : 30] But that does not mean that we abandon the world. It does not mean that we despair of anything good ever coming out of the world. Yes, the Apostle Paul says no one does good in an ultimate sense as in doing all things for the glory of God.

Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do it all for the glory of God, the Apostle Paul says. In an ultimate sense, nobody does good. But in a relative human sense compared to one another, some people do things that by God's common grace can be reckoned in this world as good things. Non-Christians feeding the homeless, taking in orphans, taking care of those who are downcast. Non-Christians raising children who become decent citizens in the world. They're not out burning their neighbor's houses down. They're not kicking puppies either for the most part.

All from non-Christian houses. How do we explain that? How do you explain that? If they don't know Christ, and if apart from Christ nothing good dwells in us, as the Bible tells us, how do you explain that?

[40 : 41] Common grace. Not only with holding back our sinful desires and the sinful desires of even those who do not know Christ, but also so working and blessing people that they develop skills and are able to accomplish things and do great things in the world.

Which brings me back to what we were praying about earlier. We ought not to be people who despair simply because many of our government leaders do not know Christ as their Savior. Our number one goal in this world is to take the gospel out into the world and even to those government leaders. Sure. But when they reject the gospel, we ought not to despair that now they're a hopeless case, that nothing good is going to come out of them.

Really? God so disposed Cyrus' heart that he sent Israel back home. God can work in a fallen and sinful world through his common grace in such a way that we ought to have great hope that good things can be accomplished even where we don't see a clear present witness for Christ.

It's called common grace and it is active in this world more than you could possibly imagine. And that ought to affect the way that you think about the political system.

[42 : 00] It ought to affect the way that you appraise your neighbor. You ought not to think, well, because my neighbor is lost, therefore I shouldn't have anything to do with him and I shouldn't expect anything good out of this guy. I should have no expectations of my neighbor because he's a lost guy.

No expectations at all. He's probably going to rent a tractor and dig giant holes in my front yard all the time and just do terrible things to me every day. He's going to poison my cat and he's going to chop down my favorite tree.

No expectations of my neighbor because he's fallen and he's lost. Nobody thinks like that. Well, why don't we think like that? Because we know that God's grace is active and at work, even in lost people.

And his common grace restrains and directs and causes good things to happen and so it should. Understanding common grace at work in a fallen world should affect the way that we think about our neighbors, our co-workers.

It should affect the way that we think about and engage in a political process. It should affect. This chapter is telling us what to expect out of this world. Here's what you expect.

[42 : 56] It's fallen. God is gracious even to those who do not belong to him. That's the world. Now conduct yourselves accordingly. But despite all of this great massive amount of common grace that we see around us in the world, we need to never forget that common grace is not saving grace.

And it will not save anyone. It will not. The difference between Cain and Abel boils down to faith and lack of faith.

turn to Hebrews chapter 11. I want to show you this passage that I've referenced several times. Hebrews chapter 11 is the great faith chapter in which we are told in verse 6 that without faith it is impossible to please God.

But in Hebrews chapter 11 verse 4 we read this. This is the third place, the final place where Cain is referenced in the Bible, in the New Testament. We're told that by faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts.

And through his faith though he died, he still speaks. The difference between Cain and Abel is that Cain trusted in God and he believed in the promises of Genesis chapter 3 of a coming seed.

[44 : 25] Abel trusted and believed whereas Cain, Cain did not. That's the difference. Turn to the end of Genesis chapter 4 and we'll see that even in this fallen world, just as there was an Abel to counter Cain, there are always those that belong to Christ.

There are always those that belong to the Lord in the midst of this fallen world. Verse 25, 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.

To Seth also was a son born. He called his name Enosh. At that time, people began to call upon the name of the Lord.

At that time, there were more Abels. At that time, people began to trust. At that time, people began to worship God after the way of Abel and not the way of Cain.

It happened. It was real. And the difference is faith and no faith. The difference is trusting in God and in his promises and failing and refusing to trust in God and his promises.

[45 : 41] The difference is not religiosity. Cain was religious. I'm sure that all of Cain's descendants were very religious and yet they were lost. The difference is not religiosity.

The difference is faith and trust in God and his promises. And his promises can be summed up as the Apostle Paul says, that Christ was born, that he died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, and on the third day he rose.

God's promises are secure. He would send a seed into the world and that seed through his death would conquer the work of the serpent. Abel trusted in those promises.

Seth and his descendants trusted in those promises and the question is, do we trust in those promises that have now been fulfilled in Christ? Do we believe that he is the promised seed who has come and through his death has borne the penalty for our sins and has rescued us so that though we might live in the city of man, we are ultimately members of the city of God?

Do we believe that? Let's pray. Father, I hope that we would never be the kind of people that despair, that grow hopeless when things grow dark around us, but that we would remember that though we live in a fallen world, we live in a world even in its fallenness permeated by your grace.

[47 : 09] mostly though, Father, I pray that we would be people who do not forget that we have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus.

And it's not by our religious acts, it's not by the offerings we might bring to you, it's not by all the acts of devotion that we might perform, but it is simply by trusting in Christ and what he has done for us.

That we become a part of those who call upon your name and trust fully in you. Receive our songs as an offering through Christ, we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Let's stand.