

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message

July 19, 2026 ***"The first stories. What can the first stories in Genesis tell us about God and ourselves?" "Seth"***

I Intro.

We're plowing through summer. Our schedule slowed down a bit, but there are still things happening. You'll want to keep up with everything that's happening at NCC. Stay connected through our social media to keep up with everything that's going on. This is our companion devotional to Sunday's message. It's just a part of all we have to offer to you. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey. We don't want you to miss out on anything. We consider you part of our community. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are fully committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family. If there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know.

II Recap.

We're in the third Sunday in our series ***"First Stories: The first four stories in Genesis"***. Each of the stories we're hitting have some historical inconsistencies that could distract us. We have to be careful of getting bogged down in trying to find the specific historicity of these four first stories we're covering in Genesis. We need to learn to dig deeper to see what these stories are trying to tell us about who God is. And frame these as a history of God revealing himself to his people. We want to avoid the questions; **Is this really true? If so, how did it actually happen?** Those aren't interesting questions. Engaging those questions won't call us to live a specific way. We can hit the details, because those are important in revealing truths. But more importantly; **What do these stories teach us about the nature of God? Who he is. Especially; What call do these stories make on how we live our lives?** The first week we talked about Adam and Eve. Hiding from God and him seeking us. Last week we did the story of Cain and Abel. incorporating spiritual practices in your life. Today we talk about the fill-in son...Seth.

III Sunday.

Okay, it's 'vulnerability about our past' time.

Have you ever felt like you were a last minute addition to an event or activity?

You were asked really close to the actual event, and you feel like someone else couldn't make it, dropped out, and you're just like a fill-in replacement for that person. I believe there were some weddings I did, because it was close to the actual day, I probably wasn't the first choice. We have to just own and embrace those times.

How did that feel? ? Were you able to overcome, and move past that?

Take a moment to think about this question. **Did it teach you anything about yourself?**

I want you to really connect with your feelings on this one.

How did it affect your relationship and understanding of God?

Hold onto those. One, because that's not a great feeling. Feel like an afterthought, or second choice. Two, sometimes it could be a sign of something greater and better. That's where we're going today.

This is the first time I think I've preached about the person Seth, Cain and Abel's brother. There's not a lot about him. There's very little that just jumps out from his story we can use. But, I'm doing the first four stories found in Genesis. I have to admit I've never ever noticed this one little specific verse. But it feels rich and loaded. And I can't help but believe, it gives us an insight to the importance of this barely mentioned person in scripture.

Story of Seth. This takes place after Cain kills Abel, and Cain is sent away... to some place called Nod. To marry who knows who. And to be protected from...the same. We've hit all that.

Genesis 4:25-26. Adam had sexual relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth, for she said, "God has granted me another son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed." When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name.

That's it. That's all we have about this third son of Adam and Eve. Seth was just a fill-in, in place of, a replacement. We'll come back to that. But it's the last line that piqued my curiosity.

What do we do with this?

Adam and Eve talked with God...intimately. Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to God. Cain heard both a curse from God and protection from God. But it's the birth of Seth's son we see a movement in people's understanding of God. According to what we've read so far, the early people did know of God. But there's something specific about the use of the phrase; ***"worship the Lord by name"***.

An evolution in understanding who God is. Let's jump to **Exodus 6:1-3**. God appearing to Moses. **Exodus 6:1-3. Then the LORD told Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. When he feels the force of my strong hand, he will let the people go. In fact, he will force them to leave his land!" And God said to Moses, "I am Yahweh—'the LORD.' I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El-Shaddai—'God Almighty'— but I did not reveal my name, Yahweh, to them.**

From this verse, it seems there is this evolving, growing, expanding understanding of who God is—that God is directing. Which seems to mean, as people grew in their ability to understand, and grasp the nature of God, God began to reveal more of himself to them. It's the same God through all of these encounters. But apparently, not the same understanding of God. Which means for the story of Seth, and even to now, we have to accept and embrace an ever evolving and expanding understanding of the nature of God. **Are you up for that? Are you seeking that?**

First truth— are new, fresh ways you can know more about the nature of God. I don't know about you, but I find that exciting and encouraging. It's not just rehashing old stories, and thoughts about God. It's the great adventure of uncovering and discovering new ways and understandings of who God is. When they told the story of Seth, this was an important little fact that meant something significant. My guess is the people who passed on this story made sure this one little phrase was included. ***"At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name."*** It may not be so much historical, as it was the specific truth it was carrying. Transition from rituals and emotions to organized beliefs. And the story of Moses reinforces that this is a continual process.

The importance of calling on God by name in the growth of our faith. There seems to be something in this phrase that's important. A handful of other verses that use this specific phrase.

Genesis 12:8. "Abraham called on the name of the Lord."

Joel 2:32. "And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Acts 2:21. “And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Romans 10:13. “For, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

You’re getting the pattern here...right? There are around 40 passages that say; “If you call on the name of the Lord you will be saved.”

This passage seems to show a significant movement in experiencing God. Seems to be a move from knowing there is a God, early faith, to knowing him by name, that changes our relationship. Our faith moves from this practice of things, to an intimate relationship. There is a growing practice of using rituals and practices to encounter God. There are emotions and feelings that come from practicing those rituals. Each of these are so important. But there is a transition, movement, transformation that moves from ‘knowledge of’ to moving forward into a named relationship that brings something different. I think we’re seeing here the beginning understanding of the work of salvation.

What can we pull from this short passage? This feels like a significant turning point in the movement of people in their relationship with God. Not vague spirituality. But an introduction of a personal relationship with God...as God. There are two different movements going on at the same time.

1. First, we’re seeing a steady movement of humanity away from Eden. (God’s original idea). Don’t think about Eden as a place– but as God’s plan. Because people are moving away from the rituals and practices of being with God. There is a movement from God towards us. **“Where are you?”** In that pursuit, God is telling us who he is. So we can call him by name. Remember. Eden is not this morally bound place where we follow all the rules. The only commands were; Take care of this place, be fruitful and multiply, and don’t eat of that one tree. No Ten Commandments, no structure, no rules and especially no religion. Eden is where we commune with God unencumbered, and fully enjoyed him. But we went astray. We need to own our tendency to do the same. This isn’t a detached story. It’s about us. A reliance on self, grabbing power, focusing on achievement, not needing God to survive or thrive. This looks like the movement from rituals and emotions to a belief that moves us into a personal relationship with God. It begins with a movement of God towards us in a more pronounced way (BY NAME) so we can experience salvation. People’s relationship with God is maturing, growing, and beginning to become more than just the practice of emotional rituals. There is a depth and substance happening in people.

There are corporate truths and personal truths. In the generation of Seth, there was a recognition of an immense and growing understanding of who God is. It’s an active, intentional effort, not earning, but of reaching out to God by the power of referring to God by name. The relationship moves from tribal tradition (I worship because my people do) to an intimate personal relationship. This is what spiritual growth looks like for us too...again...continually.

2. Seth as an essential part of the story of God redeeming all of creation. Seth is mentioned only three more times in scripture. Genesis 5 (which doesn’t count because it’s still a part of this story). 1 Chronicles in the genealogy of the nation of Israel. And in Luke, in the genealogy of Jesus. So, this “*in place of*” replacement for both Abel who was murdered, and Cain who was expelled. This last minute fill-in, substitute, became an essential part of God’s overall work to redeem all of creation. Seth is a second stringer, and there are two types of second stringers. Bench sitters. Those who could be in the game but they don’t seem to be committed and watch from the bench. And then there are those standing next to the coach helmet in hand. Ready to go in. This seemed to be the role of Seth.

IV Challenge.

This was a really scattered look at the person of Seth. But I believe there are several truths we can pull from this story.

1. No one is out of the possibility of being used by God. Seth was an; *“in place of”* replacement. A filler. Seth was there, because the first two who came before him didn’t fulfill God’s plans. The story was supposed to go through different people. But God’s work continues, and God never gives up on us to be a part of it. And God will find someone who will be available to continue to do his work. It was through the lineage of Seth that God carried out his plan. God gives each of us THE chance to be an essential part of his work.

But if we don’t answer that call, and step up to that calling, then someone else will be called to take our place. ***“God of Abraham, Isaac, and... Jacob.” Not Esau.*** None of them were perfect. But they were willing to be used. But that also means, no matter how you feel about your giftedness, talent, God will gladly use you to do a great work. Don’t ever think you’re not important enough, talented enough, gifted enough to be used by God. Stand on the sidelines next to the coach with your helmet under your arm. Seth’s talent was to have a kid. And not kill anyone. And answer the call.

2. God weaves what feels like our tiny story into the bigger cosmic story. Seth was a fill-in. A last minute addition. He came off the bench. He was a substitute. A replacement. We don’t hear much more of him all through scripture. Kind of a C or D list bible character. But Seth is mentioned in the lineage of Jesus. This replacement, after thought character, just a fill-in, became an integral part of the story of Jesus, and God’s ultimate plan to redeem all of creation back to him.

There is a bigger story being written by God, that we can’t see. We’re living in this lower story with all of our stuff, struggles, heartaches, battles. And maybe every once in a while little, what may feel like insignificant, victories. Sometimes that’s all we can see. But God is writing this bigger, higher story, that includes you. And you may not see all of where that story is going. But it’s a big, important, world changing story. And you get to be written into it.

3. In the midst of a world becoming more sophisticated and self-absorbed, the path is to always; “Call upon the name of the Lord.” The final and most important truth from this story. As people became more advanced in their knowledge and the use of technology, the movement towards God had to be more...intentional. What you know, understand, think about God will lead you to your next understanding of God. and we have to be open to those new understandings of God. The truth contained within this truth, is there is one response to when it feels all is lost. Cain had killed Abel. Both were out of the picture of God’s plan for his people. But Seth was a part of a movement to a deeper and more personal relationship with God by being a part of this movement to ***“calling upon the Lord by name”***. This is what is available to us in our darkest times. When we don’t feel important, necessary, needed or wanted. This is what brings meaning and purpose to our lives. And is an integral part of the larger, upper story, God is writing.

God is wanting to put you in the game. Be available, be ready, and expand your understanding so you can also know how to ***“call upon the name of the Lord”***.