

[TITLE] Good morning Cornerstone! It is good to be with you this morning. We are starting our New sermon series called Wounds. Where we are calling out the things in our personal lives and church community that have wounded us. How we respond to these wounds and to those who wound us, matters. When we look to God and the future that he has planned for us, we can process our trauma and heal from our wounds.

Today our scripture is going to be found in Genesis 4. So if you would like to follow along with us there. If you do not have a paper bible and would like one we have some available for you in the back. You can also follow along with us today on the app with the scripture and our sermon notes available to you there.

But before we dive in the teaching today, lets read a part of our passage this morning together which comes from the book of Genesis 4:23-24. Before we read the names that are in here are pronounced Lamech (Lay-mech), Adah (Aye-duh) and Zillah (Zill-ah).

[1] SCRIPTURE Genesis 4:23-24

*“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.”*

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

INTRO

[2] From Genesis 1 to Genesis 4 there is this brief telling of 9 generations from Adam to Noah. The purpose of these individuals that are mentioned is to illustrate the polarity of humanity. What I mean by that is it a contrast between human beings that walk with God and those that give in to depravity or wickedness. These stories in these 4 chapters are like Morpheus from the Matrix giving the red pill. In these chapters God is showing us how deep the rabbit hole goes. How far Humans will fall when they are apart from God.

Now the genealogy that we are going to follow today is what is called a selective genealogy. Meaning it is only going to highlight the people and places that are relevant to the story. It may mention details but does not expand on them because they are not important to the purpose of the story. You may have questions like did Cain marry his sister. Not sure it doesn't say. Where did these other people come from? Not sure it doesn't say.

There will be mention of a people called Nephilim, but we don't know more than what is in the text but it is only relevant to the story to mention them and not create a detailed explanation.

We only have questions or make these topics super interesting because our imagination runs wild with it. If you want to talk about these details and nerd out over the possibilities let's go to lunch, but we won't talk about it in this sermon. We just need to go in knowing there are genealogies and stories are selective, being included to illustrate or summarize the period with relevant information.

What we need to see is the split in the people that are mentioned in the descendants of Adam and Eve. They had many children but there is a focus on Cain, Able and Seth, again selective genealogies because the others don't matter in the big picture. The entire bible is about the ultimate redemption story of Gods efforts for mankind. Christ then is the climax in the story and the pinnacle point in human history.

The story of scripture only included the information that makes that story clear and highlights God's involvement. That is why it includes historical events, and dialogue and excludes all of the other things that were potentially going on, on the other side of the world because it doesn't matter or bear any weight on what God is doing to bring about redemption.

[3] This descension into sin starts in Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve sin in the Garden. Adam and Eve disobeyed God because they were deceived by the serpent to doubt God is good. If you would like more information we did a sermon series last year called very good that took a deeper dive into the deception of Adam and Eve.

Because of their sin they were cursed, as was the world around them. They were kicked out of the Garden of Eden, out of the paradise that God created for them. In the curse, God tells them the natural consequences of sin being in creation. The curse of Adam and Eve was not added punishment of discipline, it was a description of a life when sin is a reality. Adam and Eve actually received mercy in 'the curse'.

They blatantly defied an all-powerful God and he let them live. When they should have died, which was what God told them would happen if they disobeyed. Instead, they received mercy and were permitted to live but the life they had to endure now has consequence because of the sin they brought into it. These were the consequence of living in a world that is separated from God.

In that 'curse' God gives them the first gospel, or protoevangelium in...

[4] Genesis 3:15

"I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel."

This is telling about the Messiah that will come and will remove the power of sin from mankind. It will crush the power of Satan in this world and give men the ability to fight against the sinful nature because of the Holy Spirit.

Even with this hope for the coming Messiah, mankind will face the full consequences of sin and see its effects on creation. Even in the natural consequences, mankind continues to defy God and fall deeper into their sinfulness or wickedness. The first example being with their sons Cain and Able. Cain was the oldest son.

He was one that would work the land like Adam did, which was a sign of the curse that they would have to work the ground in order to provide for themselves. Able was the younger brother and he would raise livestock and animals, which was the role of Adam, before the curse, to establish dominion over creation. Cain followed the curse and Abel followed the mandate.

This is where we begin to see this split in the nature of man and their heart. Cain and Abel both brought offerings to God. This was not a sacrifice like we see in the times after the law as an offering for sins, at

least the text doesn't indicate that. This would have been a love offering to God, a sign of devotion and thankfulness for his provision (providing the fruit and the livestock). Even though it was through the 'sweat of their brow' (Gen 3:19) they know and acknowledge that God was still the one that provided it.

[5] Genesis 4:3-5

"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"

Cain brought fruit from the ground that he had worked. It doesn't say anything about the fruit. It wasn't special in any way it was just fruit, but an offering never the less. Abel on the other hand it says that he brought before the Lord some that were of the first born of his flock as well as the fat portions. Because of this God looked upon Abel with favor. This obviously was upsetting for Cain.

As the first born it would have been expected that he would be looked at with favor simply because he was the first born, but that is obviously not the case. God is identifying the favor that he finds in the heart of these men, nothing to do with status. Which is a common theme throughout scripture, God's favor is not with the expected. God chooses to show favor based on matters of the heart (Lk 6:45/Matt 15:17-19).

[6] Genesis 4:6-7

"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?^[b] And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to^[c] you, but you must rule over it."

This was a warning of the danger of the status of Cain's heart. God knew that he was angry, jealous, envious and that he had hatred in his heart toward the object of his wound, his brother. Cain harbored all of these things, but he did nothing with them. He did not confess them he did not bring them to God, nothing. He harbored them, dwelled in them and let them fester and grow. God issues this warning that in this mindset or status of heart sin is so close at hand.

The picture God uses to describe it is like an enemy that is crouched waiting in ambush of their unsuspecting victim. Ironically this is what he does to his brother. But God tells him that where his heart is going to lead him is in opposition of who he was created to be, it is opposite of his design. Since it is not who he is meant to be he has to demonstrate authority over it or attempt to control it. This is the same Hebrew word that is used in the curse where God said to eve that her desire will be contrary to her husband and he will rule over her (Gen 3:16).

What does Cain do with this warning?

[7] Genesis 4:8

"Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him."

This is where the contrast becomes obvious, Cain takes his brother out into a field and kills him. This act was premeditated and plan with the motive of Jealousy, I feel like this is an episode of Criminal Minds. After Cain kills his brother the Lord appears to Cain.

[8] Genesis 4:9

"Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' He said, 'I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?'"

This is not God asking Cain because he does not know. This was meant to create this contrast between Cain and his Father Adam. When Adam was in the garden, after he and Eve sinned, God came into the garden...

[9] Genesis 3:8-12

"And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool[c] of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?'"[d] 10 And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself. He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" 12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."

Both times after these men sinned God comes to them and is searching. In the case with Adam he was looking for Adam and Eve, and with Cain he was looking for Abel. But in both situations God is looking for his creation to admit to the wrongdoing. God in his mercy is presenting an opportunity for them to come clean about their sin, and confess it to God.

In the case of Adam when he is questioned he admit to it, although he does not take responsibility, he does admit to his disobedience and demonstrates remorse. This is a complete opposite reaction in the case with Cain.

[10] Genesis 4:9

"Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' He said, 'I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?'"

Cain responds with arrogance and anger. You can see that Cain was not only angry with his brother for finding favor with God, but he is also angry at God, for not finding favor with him. Cain allowed for his anger to be so big that he killed the object of his hatred and jealousy. He also further drove a wedge between him and God, by not only committing the sin of destroying his creation, which is similar to what Satan did with Adam and Eve, but he lied about it to God's face. He did not take advantage of the opportunity to come clean, like his Father. Even more so he is repulsed by God assuming that he somehow should be responsible for his brother in any way.

[11] Now I say that Cain, when he murdered his brother, did something like what Satan did with Adam and Eve. In both situation it was a complete corruption of God's creation. Satan corrupted by deception and Cain corrupted by destruction. Cain killed the opportunity of praise from another, meaning he ended the worship of Abel. He did this by demonstrating his own free will as dominating over another. He killed another image bearer of God and denied further praise from his brother to God because of his sense of entitlement. He even takes on the role like Satan by crushing the seed of the woman, his mother Eve.

Satan did the same thing. He desired to be praised above God, at the very least praise to be taken away from God, and through his own free will in rebellion, he corrupted the creation that was made to worship. The only created thing that bared God's image, Satan deceived to sin and consequently to be condemned to death. Satan demonstrated dominance over God creation by corrupting their praise.

For similar infractions, Satan and Cain, both received similar curses. The serpent was cursed to crawl on its belly, it was a sign to the enemy that the anatomy of the snake now had the purpose of demonstrating that he is already defeated. He already eats dust and is crushed under the feet of God. The serpent receives no mercy, he is going to be crushed and eternally punished. After Cain lies about not knowing where his brother is...

[12] Genesis 4:10-12

“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.”

Cain's curse is one that amplifies the curse of Adam. Adam is forced to work the ground to find food, when previously the garden was created to simply provide it without Adam's intervention. Cain now can still work the ground, but it will do him no good and he will now gain nothing from it. He will be forced to wander from place to place looking for food. He is forced to wander because he cannot plant roots and be sustained. Cain responds to this curse in...

[13] Genesis 4:13-14

“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.”

Cain is unpacking the gravity of his sin. He is no longer allowed to work the ground. This is being taken from him. He probably grew to like the work of the ground, like a gardener. He did not grow up in the Garden and therefore has known nothing else. So, part of his curse is that he is not allowed to work the ground and to provide for himself.

He also sees that he is going to be even further separated from God. He was already separated from God because of the sin of his father Adam. Sin by definition is being the separation from God (Isa 59:2, Col 1:21), but he still had a relationship with God up to this point. Cain still gave offerings. The favor of God was tangible, which was how he knew his brother was favored over him.

Even God coming to him after he murdered Abel, was a normal occurrence. God comes to him and there was no dialogue of 'do not be afraid'. To Cain it was "oh hey what's up" like it happened everyday, but now he is being removed at an even greater capacity than before. That relationship was going to cease to exist. Cain has created the trajectory for his line to not only be separated from God but to continue in this further separation from him.

Cain's fear is that people are going to find him and kill him in his wondering. What people? Why not say My father Adam, my brother and sister, etc unless these were people he somehow did not know? Again I don't know. This is an example of the selective geologies. We don't know, and it really doesn't matter. Cain's fear is that this curse is going to bring him harm. God does something about this.

[14] Genesis 4:15-16

“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.”

This is God's mercy on Cain that Satan did not receive. God curses Cain and it is meant to be a sign to him as a punishment of his actions, but God's intention in this curse is not to harm Cain. His death would only be more bloodshed and that is not what God wants. Cain is already living in the guilt of his sin, stripped of his sense of purpose and livelihood in working the ground, and is forced, now, to live completely separated from God.

As a sign of this protection God places a mark. The nature of this mark and what it could have been is unclear, some say it was like a mole, other think there was this hideous deformity. Which he was later married so that would be hard for him to find a wife he was cursed with some physical deformity, the truth is we don't know. What we do know is that this mark was a sign of God's protection. The Hebrew preposition that is used here to say that the Lord put a mark 'on' Cain, could also be translated as a placing a mark 'for' Cain. Which means this mark would have demonstrated to Cain that even though he was separated from God, he was still protected by him.

God mentions this vengeance being dealt as seven-fold. Now if someone were to kill Cain this does not mean that God was going to kill someone raise them from the death and kill them again 7 times because of what they did to Cain. This sevenfold judgement would have been seen as symbolic. It would have just communicated the severity that such vengeance would be carried out on such a person.

So as much as this mark is a sign of mercy, in that it will protect him from dying, I think the point also, is the suffering in this curse will be worse than death. Eventually he would wish someone would kill him, but others refuse because of the mark that he carries. So it could be a bit of a 'both-and'.

BODY

That being said, Cain is forced to wonder as a result of this curse and a mark is placed on him. In verse 17, Cain then knows his wife and continues on this line of rebellion against God. At the same time Adam and Eve have another son named Seth, who was to be the son in place of Abel. This is where we see the polarity of the descendants of Cain and Seth. They will often share similar names if not the same ones but they are complete opposites of each other.

[15] To help keep all of this straight this is a depiction with the names of the descendants of Seth and Cain as visual of all of these similar names.

Enoch who is the son of Cain is uneventful other than the fact that he has a city named after him. This would have been the first building of urban development that is named after Cain's son Enoch. But nothing noteworthy. Then you have Enoch the son of Jared in the line of Seth 5th generation after Seth. This Enoch is said to have 'walked with God' and it says that God 'took him'. Meaning he didn't taste death. He walked so close with God he was rescued from this world. The only other person that this is said about is Elijah in 2 King 2.

This Enoch had a son named Methuselah, the Oldest person in the Bible, God granted him life of almost 1,000 years, 969 years to be exact, and according to this timeline would have died the year of the flood. Noah being his grandson.

In Cain's 4th generation is a man named Methushael, his name means 'man of God' which could allude to God still being with the line of Cain even though they have descended into wickedness. If Methushael was

a man of God, it didn't last because he had a son named Lamech. Lamech, is the epidemy of the descendants of Cain but well come back to him in a moment.

There is a Lamech in the line of Seth, who is the Father of Noah. This Lamech remembers the words of God in the curse of the serpent, and he says this prophecy of the Messiah coming from the line of his son Noah. He out of Noah will come one that will bring relief from the futile toil of this earth. Lamech had other sons and daughters in his 777 years (number of completion), but all of them other than Noah fell into the rebellion against God, and they died in the flood.

Us in the church age, know that what has happened with Christ, Lamech prophecy came true. We no longer toil for this earth but everything that we do it a toiling for the kingdom of God. Noah, we know was known to have walked with God, like his great-great-grandfather Enoch, and his name means 'comfort'. It was through Noah that God saved humanity and flooded the earth as a judgement on sin.

You can see this contrast between the 2 sides of this family throughout the generations. But Genesis 4 includes a story about the Lamech from Cain's line specifically to illustrate the depths of depravity that humanity is capable of.

[16] Genesis 4:19

"And Lamech took two wives. The names of the one was Adah, and the name of the other was Zillah."

Judging by the several generations of similar names and the names of the Lamech wives they were very creative when they named their children. Apparently, Skyler or Hunter were a name that they had not come up with yet. I digress...

So Lamech starts of strong in his rebellion against God. He is the first to violate God's ordinance for marriage (Genesis 2:23-24). Lamech is the first polygamist mentioned in the bible. If we look throughout scripture it is a practice that is never endorsed in the bible, especially in the book of Genesis. If anything, there were more pain and suffering created within these relationships because God did not design it to exist in such a way.

Favoritism in Jacob (Gen 29:30) Elkanah (el-kane-ah), Samuel's Father (1 Sam 1:4-5) and Rehoboam (2 Chron 11:21). Jealousy between competing wives with Abraham (Gen 21:9-10), Jacob (Gen 30:14-16) and Elkanah (1 Sam 1:6). Solomon harem turned his heart away from God (1 King 11:4) and David's multiple wives led to incest and murder among his children¹.

Lamech polygamy was a departure from God's plan for what marriage was supposed to be and is the second sinful practice that was introduced by the line of Cain, the first being murder.

[17] Genesis 4:20-22

"Adah bore Jabal (Jay-bull); he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. ²¹ His brother's name was Jubal (Jew-bull); he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. ²² Zillah also bore Tubal-cain (Too-bull-kane); he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah (Neh-a-mah)."

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwhMX3xxp3o&ab_channel=InspiringPhilosophy Andreas J. Kostenberger, *God, Marriage and Family* (2nd edition), pg 44

Lamech has 3 sons and a daughter, again super creative names. You can see that even in the wickedness of their father and their ancestors, they are living in the depraved role of Adam and Eve. They are still given dominion over the earth. They are still raising livestock, they are inventing and demonstrating creativity, and they are using the resources of the earth to thrive. But this is where we see the depths of evil that is in these people.

[18] Genesis 4:23-24

“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.”

That's it that is all it says about Lamech but here's what someone in Israel would have noticed. Remember the book of Genesis was written by Moses and was a documentation of the history of the people of Israel.

First Lamech proclaims this declaration which is known as antediluvian (ant-te-di-lu-vi-an) poetry or poetry from before the flood. He is making this incredibly arrogant and violent decree poetically to his wives. There are other implications, but we will get to that in a second, but this statement to his wives would have been a threat. A way to intimidate them.

This would have communicated that 'I killed a young man for simply hitting me, know what I am capable of doing to you'. It is a decree to oppress and intimidate his wives. This would have been a repulsive thing for a man to do to his wife let alone to multiple women. This was far from the treatment of women as a helper or fellow image bearer of God. As bad as that is, there's more...

He says that he killed '*a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me*', he talking about an exchange he had with a young boy. This is a term that would be used for a 'male child'. This wound or strike that he says he receives would have been like a bruise. For the crime of bruising Lamech he kills a young boy.

He not only demonstrates evil in the domination of a small child when he is a man and father of 3 children himself. But he sees himself as able to bring a judgement of capital punishment for a bruise. His twisted sense of judgement is evil, corrupt and is based on his personal vindication, not on a punishment fitting the crime any sense of grace and mercy and little to no sense of justice in any sense of the word.

Lamech ends this poem with a declaration about the mark on his great-great-great-great grandfather, and how his mark, Lamech's mark is so much greater. The deception of this man is unreal. He believes that the revenge that was to come on the person that murdered Cain was the revenge from Cain. When clearly that vengeance is from God, and the mark that is the precursor for this revenge was an act of mercy on Cain as a sign of divine protection over him. Also Lamech notice receives no such mark, he is so diluted by his sin.

If Lamech knows the source, which I believe he does. He is saying that the divine protection that was on Cain is on him in a greater amount because he killed, unjustly, and had no consequences for his own actions. Another way of seeing this is that in his arrogance he is saying that the divine protection that was on Cain is unnecessary for him because he can protect himself and he will deal out a vengeance that is greater than what God would have.

This was a clear defiance and misrepresentation of God and an example of the depth of evil in the depravity of man. Here is Lamech that kills unjustly and in excess. Is proud of his deeds and because there is no consequence that he is aware of, he boasts that God is with him and uses this opportunity to dominate and intimidate his wives because of his murdering of a child.

[19] In 7 generations look at how far mankind has fallen. Adam and Eve, the only one of mankind that got to live for a time in a world free of sin. Let's look at the degeneration of these men. Adam sins but feels remorse (3:10). Cain sins, lies and feels no remorse, and even response with a sense of arrogance (4:11). Lamech now sins and boasts about his sin and uses his sin to oppress others and misrepresent God (4:23-24).

These are all of the things that someone in the land of Israel would have read out of this story. Lamech would have stood as an example of the contrast between God's mercy and the sinful justice of mankind.

[20] In the Law, there is a limit that is placed on the amount of punishment that mankind is to carry out. In the Greek Septuagint it is called Lex talionis, which was the law of retaliation. Which would have prescribed a punishment to resemble the offense committed in kind and degree (Ex 21:25, Lev 24:17-23).

According to the Law of Moses the just and fair punishment for this young boy would have been a bruise for a bruise (Ex 21:25). But Lamech goes above and beyond, because he follows his own sense of justice. Which is why the lex talionis exists. It was not a gruesome punishment to be followed to the letter, but a limit that could not be exceeded. God placed it not as a bar but as a capacity, because humanity left to our own devices follow our own perspective of justice, which is relative and varies from person to person and cannot hold to the absolute truth of God.

This is perfectly exemplified in kids. Every time boys would wrestle in the house what do mom's always say? "you better stop before someone gets hurt". As kids we always wanted to believe that when someone inevitably got hurt it was an accident. However we all knew what really happened. It was always a progression of offenses. You brother does a slap, so you throw a punch. He elbows you in the head, you knee him...elsewhere. He bear hugs you to the ground, you suplex him into the coffee table. You get punched, you punch back harder.

That's true for all of us though right? We respond with this sense of justice and it never matches the offense because it is more important for us to feel vindicated in our woundedness, than it is for things to be right and fair. When we are hurt, our depravity holds no bar or standard. We become like Cain hold in our hurt, never address it, never bring it before God, let it fester and grow because we dwell in it. And just like Cain, sin is crouching at our door.

We become Lamech and dish out the punishment that make us feel vindicated or justified. You see, vengeance has no limits. The worst is when we try to bring God in our vindication and attempt to claim that he is on our side. We are protected, we are doing his will and you should learn not to hurt me because God will get involved.

GOSPEL

Our reaction to sin, at least the sins against us, the things that we take offense to, the things that wound us, our reactions are consistent with our nature. They are poor, they are destructive and that ruin

everything around us. This is all to contrast the nature of God and the people of God. God's response to sin is consistent with his nature too. His response is always characterized by the fullest expression of mercy, which is by definition less than what the sin deserves.

Adam and Eve sin in the garden he clothes them. In their rebellion saves them from immediate death and they live another day in dominion over God's creation that they ruined. Cain kills his brother. Abel's blood cries out to God for the sin that has been done to him. According to the Lex talionis, the just punishment is a life for a life (Lev 24:17-23). Instead, God lets Cain live. He does send him further from his presence, but allows him to continue to live in dominion over the creation that he ruined. Even though his sin ended life, he is allowed to create it by having children and descendants. He is given the opportunity to have children because of the mark of divine protection that is given to him by God. All of that is an act of mercy to protect him from others that might take his life.

APPLICATION

If God then, is so merciful, then why would he not command in the law for there to be mercy given from those that follow him instead of this law of retaliation. If God were to decree mercy it would no longer be considered mercy. It would just be a following of the legal standard. Mercy must be a willing decision by the victim or judge to impose on the offender that is less than what the legal standard requires. Remember that law was a limit not a 'quid pro quo'.

That is where the Israelites missed the purpose of the law. It was meant to be a mirror to identify sin. They saw this law of retaliation as the standard. It defined a punishment for a crime to be nothing less and nothing more. Jesus came to rewrite that understanding.

[21] Matthew 5:38-42

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.⁴⁰ And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.⁴¹ And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.⁴² Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you."

This is a stark contrast to what Lamech did. Jesus is calling us to go above and beyond and defy what the human nature is used to, is comfortable with and would continue in if left to their own devices. The depravity of man is to be defied. The descendants of Cain chose instead to defy God and not their nature. We are called in the new covenant with the help of the Holy Spirit to live like the decedents of Seth when our flesh desires to be the descendants of Cain. This is the contrast that can live inside the believer because of the Holy Spirit.

When we are wounded by others, we naturally react poorly. We have no desire to grant mercy because our flesh craves vengeance.

[22] When we react poorly, we destroy lives.

Jesus during his ministry, shares the heart of God. He demonstrates where the people missed God's desires in his actions, in his love and in his words. Jesus knew that in him and through him the law was going to be fulfilled. Jesus knows that with his death and the coming of the Holy Spirit he is going to undo the things that happened in the garden. He was going to fulfill the words of the Lamech from Seth's line the relief from the painful toil of the earth.

Through Christ we work and toil for the kingdom of God. We now do not live by the Law but we are being sanctified by the work of the Holy Spirit to be more like Christ in our conduct. Jesus even alluded to the words of the Lamech descended from Cain when he talks about our wounds.

Matthew 18 talks about when we face conflict with one another. We are to go our brother and call out the sin and seek that reconciliation with them. Which is already in contrast to Lamech, but Peter goes to Jesus after this teaching and asks how often shall he forgive my brother?"

[23] Matthew 18:21-22

"Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times."

Sound familiar?

Jesus undoes everything that has been written by sin. He set the example of how-to live-in contrast to the sinful nature. He saves mankind that had no righteousness of their own, in the ultimate act of mercy. He does this so that sinful mankind can be equip with righteousness and be reconciled to God. Which is the opposite of the curse of Cain.

[24] We who are called 'Christians' which literally means 'followers of Christ' are to embody the standard that fights against our flesh and is in accordance to Christ's example that is led by the Holy Spirit. That means we embody that standard when it feels easy. Like when we are the keyboard warrior on social media, where we have an unnatural boldness to stand up for truth and the example of Christ.

That also means that we are to also live in accordance to that example when it is hard. When the friend, that is supposed to be following that example as well, hurts us. When the person that we trust the most in this world, deeply wounds us. We are not to be like Cain's descendent Lamech and strike with a vengeance until our flesh is satisfied. We are to respond in mercy, not because we are not justified in the law of retaliation, but because we are more obedient to the nature of God, than the nature of our flesh.

[25] We have heard this message of following God and denying our flesh a million times, but its always easier said than done in the moment. You are right but practice makes perfect. You cannot expect you body and flesh to be a slave to God in the heat of a moment when you do not make it your slave in the normal and trivial part of your life. You may default to being like Lamech in your hurt because you are not walking with God like Noah in all the other areas.

Its easy to point our wounds and our poor reactions to them sure. We could sit and have a pity party for all of the church hurt that exists, even just in this room, but that does not help you heal. That gives you permission to be like Cain and sulk in your hurt, with sin crouching at the door.

You want to embody Christ in the hurt? Find healing in Christ and with your fellow believers, but don't dwell in it. Work with the Holy Spirit to move on and continue to walk in the truth and walk with God. That requires active participation and not just on Sundays. Walking with God is a lifestyle, not a social club. We devote ourselves to that lifestyle to put our flesh to death and live a life that is more obedient to the nature of God working in us that the sinful nature that was never a part of who we were designed to be.

PRAYER

REFLECTION

This topic can be heavy. Wounds, lifestyle, hurts, guilt and sin. I don't want to lead you away from what might need to be said between you and your father. So I want to just open this time and part of our service to just reflect on what we talked about. Bring to God the things that you need to lay at his feet. Take the time to lean on your brothers and sister that are here with you come alongside each other walk together in this and pray for each other. Lets take some time to pray and reflect.