

North Summit Church
Genesis 4:17–26; 5
October 18, 2026

Two Cities, Two Lines

Mission Moment - Jim and Lena Miller

INTRODUCTION

We're continuing our journey through In the Beginning: the "Prologue" of the Bible that gives us the deep grammar of who God is, who we are, why we exist, and what went wrong. Genesis 1–11.

- Last week Mark took us through the first murder in human history. Cain killed his brother, God confronted him, and Cain "went away from the presence of the LORD." Today we follow him out and down through his line.
- Hold on to one detail from that scene. God told Cain that anyone who killed him would suffer vengeance "sevenfold." That was a promise of protection, given to a murderer. Remember it, because it's about to come back in an interesting way.
- Here is what Genesis does next. It gives us two family trees. One runs through Cain, and one runs through Seth. From the very first generation after Eden, the human race splits into two lines, and the Bible follows them all the way to the last pages of the Bible.
- **Here is the big idea for today: Two lines run out of Eden. One builds a name for itself. The other calls on the name of the LORD. And the difference between them is not whether they build—it's whether they worship their creator.**

READ: Genesis 4:17–26.

—

1. The Wanderer Builds a City (vv. 16–22)

Genesis 4:16–17

"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."

Wandering, Settled

- God's sentence on Cain was that he would be a *nad*—a "fugitive and a wanderer" (v. 12). Now look at where he lands. *Nod*. It sounds like the Hebrew word for wandering. Cain goes to live in the Land of Wandering—and settles down.
- And then he builds a city. Why a city? Genesis doesn't tell us. But we know what cities are for: walls, security, safety in numbers, a place with your name on it.
- God had already given him a mark and a promise of protection. Cain's first move away from God's presence is to build his own. When God's protection doesn't feel like enough, what do we build?

Two Little Words: *Qara* and *Shem*

- Listen to the grammar: "he called the name of the city after the name of his son." The verb is *qara*, "to call," and the noun is *shem*, "name." Cain's line begins with a man naming a city after his legacy.
- Keep that phrase in your ear. We're going to hear it again in verse 26, with a very different object.

Genesis 4:19–22

"And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all implements of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah."

Look at What They Built

- Livestock and tents. Music. Bronze and iron. That is agriculture, art, and technology in three verses. Back in Week 3 we heard God command humanity to fill the earth, subdue it, and rule. Cain's family is doing exactly that.
- And notice what Genesis does *not* say. There is not one word of criticism for any of it. The shepherd's tent, the lyre, the forge—these are good gifts. Whatever is wrong with Cain's line, it isn't that they made things.
- So what's missing? Read verses 17 through 24 again. **God is not mentioned once.** No altar, no prayer, no thanks. Eight verses of cities, music, and metal—and not a single word to or about the One who gave them hands to make it.

Psalms 127:1

"Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain."

- A city with nobody guarding it but the watchman. A house with nobody building it but the builders. All of it real, all of it impressive—and all of it, the psalmist says, in vain.

Application: Build—and Ask Whose Name Is on It

- God made you to make things. Your work, your craft, your business, your art, your home—none of it is second-class. Build it, and build it well.
- But ask the question of everything you build: *whose name is on it?* A career, a reputation, a legacy, a platform—each one can become a city named after us.

Make things, and make them for God. Work is a gift to be offered, not a monument built to ourselves.

2. The Song of the Sword (vv. 23–24)

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.'"

Where the Arts (Technology) End Up

- Everything we just read—the tents, the music, the forge—ends in a song. It is the first poem since Adam sang over his bride in the garden: "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." Adam's song was about love. Lamech's is about killing.
- Lamech also "took two wives." God's design was one man, one woman, one flesh. Lamech is the first to rewrite it—to take what he wants and set his own terms.
- And what has he done with the new technology? "I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me." A life for a bruise. A forge doesn't care what it makes. It will hammer a plowshare or a sword, depending on who is holding the hammer.

The Mercy He Turned Into a Weapon

- Remember the promise to Cain? Vengeance "sevenfold"—a shield God put around a murderer. Lamech grabs that very sentence and rewrites it: *If God protected Cain sevenfold, I'll protect myself seventy-sevenfold.*
- God said, "I will protect." Lamech said, "I don't need you to." He took mercy and made it a license.
- Look at the slide towards self-sufficiency. Cain's pride was a name—a city with his son's name on it. Lamech's pride is strength—a song about his own sword. First a name. Then a weapon.

Culture and technology without worship does not stay neutral. It just needs a few generations to find its sword.

A Fun Nugget: Matthew 18

- Here is a fun connection. When Genesis 4 was translated into Greek, Lamech's number was —"seventy-seven times."

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?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.'"

- Peter offers Cain's number—seven. Jesus answers with Lamech's number, in the very same words. Jesus takes the number the world uses for revenge and spends it on forgiveness.

Application: Don't Answer a Wound with a Weapon

- We have built tools that let us strike back faster than Lamech ever dreamed—a sentence, a screenshot, a post, and a reputation is gone. A man for wounding me. A young man for striking me.
- And what do we do with grace? We treat God's patience as permission and his mercy as a loophole.
- How often have we heard "God forgives" and quietly translated it as "so it's fine"?

Receive mercy as mercy. And when you've been wounded, spend Jesus' number, not Lamech's.

3. The Line That Calls on the Name (4:25–5:32)

Genesis 4:25–26

"And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, 'God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.' 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."

Another Offspring

- Back in Week 5, God promised that the woman's "offspring" would crush the serpent. Here is Eve, with a newborn in her arms, and look at her words: "God has appointed for me another *offspring*." It is the same Hebrew word—*zera*, "seed." She hasn't forgotten the promise.
- She doesn't say a replacement for Cain. She says "instead of Abel." The line of the righteous was cut off in a field, and God has picked it up again.

Frail Men and the Name

- Seth names his own son *Enosh*, which means "mortal" or "frail man."
- And right there—in the shadow of a boy named mortal—comes the sentence we've been waiting for: **"At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD."**
- In verse 17, Cain's line called the name of a city. In verse 26, Seth's line calls on the name of the LORD. One line names things. The other names God. One builds a name for itself. The other calls on the Name of the one true God.
- And notice who does the calling: people who know they are *Enosh (Mortal)*. The proud build cities that bear their own name. The meek call on God, and allow him to do the building. They see themselves rightly.

Genesis 5:5

"Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died."

And He Died

- Now we get Genesis 5, and it sounds like a drumbeat. Born, lived, fathered, lived, *and he died*. Again. And again. And again.
- Compare the two lines. Cain's line gives us cities, music, and metal. Seth's line gives us funerals. If you judged by output, Cain's line wins in a landslide.
- **That's the point.** Calling on the Name doesn't make you immune to the curse. Death reaches the worshipers too. The line that calls on the LORD is not the line that escapes the judgement of the fall—it's the line that waits for the promise. That trusts in the faithfulness of God.

Genesis 5:24

"Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him."

The Drumbeat Breaks

- Then one man breaks the rhythm. Enoch. Seventh from Adam—and the only one whose story doesn't end with "and he died."
- Cain's line has a seventh man too: Lamech, with his sword and his song. Two men, seventh from Adam. One sings, "I have killed." The other "walked with God."
- That word *walked* is the same stem we met in the garden, when God was "walking in the cool of the day." Enoch is walking where God walks. Eden's fellowship.
- Genesis even makes the point with the names. Enoch and Lamech appear in *both* lists. Same names, opposite directions. Two Enochs: one has a city named after him, and the other walked with God. Two Lamechs—and the second one is where Genesis 5 turns.

Genesis 5:28–29

"When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son and called his name Noah, saying, 'Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.'"

- One Lamech looks at a broken world and sings about revenge, and self-preservation. The other looks at the same cursed ground—and names his son *hope*. That phrase "painful toil" is the word from Genesis 3. He knows the curse is real, and he believes God isn't finished with it.
- We'll meet Noah next week.

Where the Two Lines Go

- These are two lines from the same bloodline. The New Testament makes clear that what divides the two seeds is allegiance, not ancestry. And the two ways run through the whole Bible: Cain's city grows into Babel in Genesis 11 and Babylon in Revelation 18, while the other line follows men like Abraham, of whom Hebrews says:

Hebrews 11:10

"For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God."

- Two cities. One built from below, and one built from above. The line that calls on the Name doesn't abandon culture. Look at where Revelation ends.

Revelation 21:24–26

"By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations."

- The glory and honor of the nations—their craft, their music, their work—carried *into* the city of God. Culture isn't destroyed. It's brought home. Cain's line made things and lost them to the sword. The line that calls on the Name makes things and gets to bring them to the King.

Application: Call on the Name, and Carry Your Work Toward the City of God

- Where is your life pointing towards? Cain's descendants gathered around a city; Seth's gathered around a name. Whatever else this church does this week when we go out those doors, it is first to be a people calling on the name of the LORD.
- Walk with God in a world that keeps saying "and he died." Hope is not denial. It is a reminder that we have a God who brings redemption in the midst of our fallenness.
- And do your work in his name—not next to it, in it.

- "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17).
- **Build in the Name, walk with God, and your work won't be in vain. It will end in the city of God. Not for your own glory, but God's glory.**

CONCLUSION:

- Let's walk back through it. Cain's line built a city and filled it with good things—and left out the One who gave them. So build, make, and create, and ask whose name is on it.
- That kind of culture doesn't stay neutral. A name became a weapon, and mercy became a license. So receive mercy as mercy, and when you're wounded, spend Jesus' number, not Lamech's.
- Meanwhile a frail line began to call on the name of the LORD. They died, as everyone did, but one of them walked with God, and one of them named his son hope. So call on the Name together, walk with him, and do everything in his name.
- **Big Idea:** Two lines run out of Eden. One builds a name for itself. The other calls on the name of the LORD. And the difference is not whether we build—it's whether we worship the one true God.
- Let us be in the line that calls on the Name of the Lord as we live all of our life for His glory.

Benediction

Hebrews 13:20–21

"Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

—

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. The Wanderer Builds a City

Genesis 4:17–22 shows Cain's line building a city and filling it with agriculture, music, and technology. The text praises none of it and condemns none of it, but God is not mentioned in the entire passage.

What are you building right now—a career, a home, a reputation, a ministry? Whose name is on it, and what would it look like to build it "in the name of the Lord Jesus"?

2. The Song of the Sword

Lamech takes God's sevenfold protection of Cain and turns it into a boast of seventy-sevenfold revenge. Jesus takes the same number in Matthew 18:22 and spends it on forgiveness.

Where are you tempted to treat God's mercy as a loophole? Is there a wound you've been answering with a weapon—and what would it mean to spend Jesus' number instead?

3. The Line That Calls on the Name

Seth's line is a line of frail people who call on the LORD, die, and wait for the promise—and Enoch walks with God.

What does it look like for you to "call on the name of the LORD" this week, and what would it mean to walk with God in the ordinary parts of your day?