

Genesis 4:17-26 “Introducing the future...”
CCH sermon for Jessica Pawlett’s thanksgiving.

V18

- I wonder what you make of that reading?!
 - A family tree of difficult to pronounce names dating back to the late bronze age.
 - Let’s put them on the screen!
 - they hardly seem relevant for the 21st century
 - let alone as a source of wise advice to Jessica as she grows up in this world.
- Yet over the last few weeks as we’ve studied Genesis 1-4
 - (and today is our last study),
 - (all the previous talks are on our website and youtube channel),
 - we’ve seen how accurately Genesis explains life, Creation, what’s gone wrong...
 - giving us lenses to view the world, ourselves, and God.
 - This book has been stunningly accurate and personally relevant.
- Indeed, at CCH we believe that the living God speaks to us through this book, even in the surprising and less appealing parts, and so we can expect God to speak to each one of us today.

SO LET’S PRAY FOR THAT.

- Previously we’ve met Generation 1: Adam & Eve.
- Last week we saw Generation 2: Cain & Abel.
- In this passage we see Generations 3 to 8: Enosh to Naamah
 - So let’s look at this section under 3 headings.
 - 1) The Good
 - 2) The Bad
 - 3) The Godly
- And we’ll see that this passage does in fact give great advice for how to understand and live in our world.

1) THE GOOD (v17-22) PROGRESS

- It's a very mixed passage, and soon we're going to see a second murder
 - only a few pages into the Bible.
- But before we get there, there's much that's good.
 - It starts in v 17 with a bit of birds and bees.
 - We might blush at the graphic language, but we need to see good news here.
 - Despite Adam and Eve's sin, despite Cain's murder of Abel, the family tree of humanity hasn't been wiped out already by their horrendous rejection of God.
 - It's a repeat of 4:1- the generations are going forward, humanity is multiplying and filling the earth like they were commissioned to do in chapter 1.
 - In fact we've got the first city.
 - The word can refer to a settlement of any size, but humanity is clearly advancing.
 - We then in v18 we get a bit of **Ancestry.com** down to generation 7. Lamech.
- And Lamech has some seriously impressive children.
- Their names are all a bit confusing, possibly all coming from the same word for "productive".
- "Amazon delivery for your teenager".
 - "Which one? Jabal, Jubal or Tubal?"
 - It must have been a bit confusing.
 - But they actually left quite a legacy.
- ▲ Emma & I watched an old 50s film recently, "High Society" featuring Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra.
 - It also has Louis Armstrong in it.
 - Now he has been called "the Father of Jazz".
 - So groundbreaking was his trumpeting style, that many see him as the kind of father figure for all that came after him in that musical genre.

- Well v20 Jabal is the “father of those who live in tents and raise livestock”. He’s a champion farmer.
 - v21 Jubal is the father of all who play stringed instruments and pipes. Here’s the first reference in the Bible to music and culture.
 - v22. TC forged all kinds of tools from bronze and iron. very useful.
 - v22 Tubal Cain’s sister is Naamah. We don’t know any more than that, but she gets a mention too, and I’d imagine she’s a high flyer too.
- So **agriculture, culture, technology**.
 - We’re only in chapter 4 of the Bible, but there’s much “progress”.
 - There’s much that is good.
- And this progress has continued down the centuries from the earliest of human history.
- It would be interesting to know if anyone is involved in their day job in any of these professions:
 - **Agriculture** and the production, transportation and sale of food? Shops etc.
 - **Culture**- any professional or part time musicians, or those in the entertainment business or the arts?
 - **Technology**. Anyone involved in the manufacture of machinery, or in the tech world?
 - Certainly all important in our service today! Lunch, music, Tech! Our world!
- Jessica has been born into a world that is evolving. There’s progress. I’ve called sermon “introducing the future”. All these things continue to advance today.
- When I was her age, a computer filled a room, here’s a picture of it – the [Cray 1](#).
 - costing £24M pounds in today’s money
 - with a whopping 8.39MB memory.
- by the time she gets her first mobile phone who knows what it will be able to do.
 - Genesis shows us a world where there are advances.
 - And we must give thanks to God for these- it’s all part of his good gift to humanity.

- But we also need to be aware of the limitations of those things.
 - Yes agriculture, culture, technology all progress.
 - But is it all good?
 - Tools for mass harvesting but (post COP26) at what expense to the planet?
 - More rap songs, but do they always make women feel comfortable.
 - Faster computers, but more bullying, more online
 - These fathers of agriculture, culture, technology in Genesis4 were from a family of murderers and all got wiped out by the flood.
 - Those things that we love, food, culture, technology, can't offer us any ultimate help to dig ourselves out of the hole that we've created for ourselves.
 - Because the heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart.
- So let's move on from
 - From progress to pain.
 - From culture to catastrophe.
 - From the good to the bad.

2) THE BAD (v19, 23-24) PRIDE

- There was a hint of the bad that we missed in verse 19.
- *"Lamech married 2 women, one named Adah and one named Zillah"*
- The writer doesn't draw attention to it with bells and whistles, but we should know from chapter 2 that this doesn't sound right.
 - In chapter 2 man will leave his father and mother and is united to his **wife** and they become one flesh.
 - Not his **wives**.

- Almost every time the Bible tells the story of people having more than one wife (polygamy) it's normally a complete disaster.
 - Jacob with Rachel and Leah
 - Abraham with Sarah and Hagar
 - Elkanah with Hannah and Peninah.
 - David and Solomon with multiple wives
- These verses are showing that a family can be brilliant, but deeply flawed.
- ▲ Even Old Louis Armstrong, who I mentioned, I looked him up on Wikipedia. Over his life he had 3 divorces and 4 wives. His first wife he met working as a prostitute. Quite sad.
- Progress and talent doesn't guarantee any kind of morality.
- But the real bad news comes in v23-24 and we'll look at this for a moment....
 - Listen to the tone as Lamech tells his story.
(It's in poetic form, so perhaps it was a song or even rap!)
 - Lamech said to his wives,

'Adah and Zillah, listen to me;
 wives of Lamech, hear my words.
 I have killed a man for wounding me,
 a young man for injuring me.
 If Cain is avenged seven times,
 then Lamech seventy-seven times.'

- This is really ugly.
 - Cain murdered his brother. That was bad enough.
 - But here in this second murder there doesn't seem to be any remorse.
 - He's bragging about it.
 - I've killed a man. The word could even be "young lad".
 - I guess he's showing off. I didn't just kill an old man at the bus stop.

- I'm a skilled assassin, I killed a young lad.
 - And why? Well because he wounded me.
 - Completely disproportionate revenge for what he suffered.
 - He'd obviously got himself into a fight,
 - and rather than settling for punching the other guy back (eye for an eye), he kills him.
 - And then to cap it all, he declares himself invincible.
- For those who weren't here last week, Cain killed his brother, and God was gutted and punished him by sending him far away was a restless wanderer.
 - But in his kindness he put a kind of protection on him. The mark of Cain.
 - If anyone kills Cain he'll suffer vengeance seven times over.
 - In other words, rather than Cain getting his full comeuppance of the death sentence which he deserved, God put a 7 times life sentence on anyone who would try and take him out to protect him.
 - Do you see therefore what **Lamech** is saying.
 - Anyone tries to pay me back for what I did, then there'll be 77 life sentences on their head.
 - In other words, don't mess with Lamech, I'm untouchable.
 - Not only has he got a massively overinflated ego,
 - But he also is taking God's place.
 - It was God's role to declare vengeance and protection, but he takes it into his own hands.
 - And like his ancestor Adam, he decides he would like to take God's throne.
 - Isn't he actually a little picture of us.
 - Oh, we may not have murdered, but as we were reminded last week, we've all done it in our minds. I wish that person wasn't around. What an idiot.
 - And don't we have an overinflated sense of our own importance.
 - So that when we are are slighted or missed out we go ballistic.
 - ▲

- The good= yes great progress in a world that is going forward.
- But the Bad= a world that is going forward with an increasing number of idiots.
- And how do you think God feels about this?
- I may be wrong on this, but I wonder whether the fact that God doesn't confront and curse his sin like he did with Adam and Cain tells us that God has given over Lamech.
- Lamech isn't even confronted, seems to be abandoned until death or the Flood comes like a Tsunami to wipe his family away.
- It's pretty sad isn't it?
- And I think we should be sobered by this, because the NT says there is no-one righteous not even one.
- And the death penalty now comes on all humanity- and you can read that again and again in ch 5.
 - And then he died
 - And then he died.
 - And do you know what. One day, unless Jesus returns
 - it will be my turn
 - and your turn
 - and dare I say it Jessica's turn.

And that's why v25-26, our final verses, come as something of a positive ending to our sermon, and to our sermon series. It's fairly subtle, but I think there is a real note of hope here. In an otherwise bleak situation.

3) THE GODLY (v25-26) PRAYER

- Let's read it v25-26. SETH.
- The Cain line is not mentioned any more.
- And there's a kind of fresh start.
- Perhaps it happened chronologically earlier than Lamech, but looking at the surprising ages in chapter 5, it could be that baby number 3 comes to Adam and Eve only at this point, but either way Eve has a baby.

- And I've called this the **godly** for 3 reasons...
 - Not because Seth and his family was necessarily better than Cain and his family.
- 3 reasons...
 1. There seems to be a fresh start. A contrast with Cain's line. God's line.
 2. There seems to be a kind of replacement going on.
 - If we had time to look at ch5 we'd see there's another Lamech.
 - It's like, delete line 1, let's restart with line 2.
 - And in doing so, thoughtful readers of Genesis 3 are thinking, "a new offspring of Eve, is this the serpent crusher we've been promised who is going to bring hope?"
 - Noah.
- So we have a fresh shoot from the family tree, perhaps giving us hope.
- What does this family do?
 1. It's only a passing comment, but they begin to call on the name of the Lord.
 2. And indeed, if Lamech 1's children were special, look who Lamech 2's child is.
 - 5:29. This is Lamech on the RHS of the family tree. NOAH!!
- So there's a clue for us here.
 - Yes progress, yet depravity.
 - Brilliance yet brutality.
 - So much Good, so much bad.
 - But it's not the end.
- A salvation figure. And the rest of the Bible tells his name.
 - Not actually Noah- he got out of the ark and sinned.
 - But a descendent of Seth's line much further down.
 - A Jewish carpenter in Nazareth.

And the NT says that everyone who calls on the name of JESUS will be saved.

That's what we long for Jessica, and it's what we long for our friends.

- And this is where I want to leave us today.
 - Will you follow v26's lead, and call on the name of the Lord.
 - It's talking about prayer.
 - Do you do that?
- Christian, do you do this?
 - Don't let the most important thing be squeezed out of your life. PRAYER.
 - How do you think you can survive life without it?
 - Prayer is not always easy.
 - Clue in the word- BEGIN!
 - **Begin** to call on the name of the Lord. Maybe you can start. With your wife. Family.
 - **Begin** to come to the prayer meeting where we can help one another to do it.
 - **Begin again!** Go for a walk and talk to God!
- Maybe you are unsure about Christianity. Fine. Friends here to answer your questions.
 - Well why not BEGIN trying praying. Why not start calling on God.
 - We are living in a broken world in broken bodies with broken priorities.
 - Why do you think you can fix life yourself?
 - We have to call on Jesus!
 - There may be masses of progress in your life at work, at school in one of these areas.
 - But if you don't cry out for help, you are going to go down the whirlpool of sin and death.
 - AT THAT TIME PEOPLE BEGAN TO CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD.
- Might it be said of someone here that it was little Jessica Pawlett and coming to church because of her, that they started calling on the name of the Lord, and saw their life turned around.

- ▲ Can I finish with the story of a man not called Cain but Shane who called on the name of the Lord.
 - Shane was in a max security prison, sharing a cell with a murderer called Robert Bull.
 - But Robert had started to call on the name of the Lord Jesus, and started telling Shane about his new found faith.
 - One phrase stuck in Shane's mind from what Robert said "I've been in prison for 15 years and I'm probably never getting out but I'm free"¹.
 - 'I said, "Jesus Christ, I know you died on a cross for me. Please, I don't like who I am, please forgive me." I started to feel tears coming into my eyes. I tried to hold it back. But it rose up, until suddenly I began crying my eyes out. I hadn't cried in years. I cried for about five minutes and I could feel a weight being lifted off me, 'Shane remembers. 'In that split second I knew it was real. I knew God existed, I knew Jesus had touched me and that I was going to live for him forever.'

The **good**, the **bad**. There's good and bad in all of us.

- But the **godly**. This is the godly thing to do "AT THAT TIME PEOPLE BEGAN TO CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD".
- And that's what we're going to do now.
- Moment of quiet then Ben & Jo, Jessica's godparents will lead us in prayer.

¹ <https://alpha.org.uk/blog/2015/2/13/shanes-story>