

First Things – Genesis

Genesis 4:25-26

“Family Ties”

1. GOD BLESSING THE LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE

- A. A home once burdened with grief
- B. A home now blessed with grace

2. GOD BUILDING THE LINE OF HIS PEOPLE

- A. What this line proclaimed
- B. Who this line produced

3. GOD BECOMING THE LORD OF HIS PEOPLE

- A. They understood their frailty
- B. They utilized their faith

1. Several years ago, my dad became interested in genealogy. Earlier this year, I was able to see the fruit of his research, when he sent me a copy of my family tree.
2. In that family tree, he traces the Trivette side of my family back some 9 generations, to John Trivette, who was born somewhere around the year 1770, and died in 1825.
3. One of the interesting things that my dad found was that John and his brother, Richard Trivette, were listed in 1792 as members of the Bear Creek Baptist Church in what is now Davie County, North Carolina.
4. However, something happened that same year, because on May 4, 1792, Richard was excommunicated from the church for, “neglecting to hear the church.”
5. I am sure he is not the only Trivette in history who had to be brought before the church, but I take *some* pride in the fact that I come from John and not Richard, the excommunicated Trivette.
6. In the latter portion of Genesis chapter 4, the Bible records for us the family line of Cain, Adam and Eve’s first son.
7. After taking us all the way up through seven generations, to an interesting character named Lamech, the Word of God then backs up and traces for us another line, this one through a third son of Adam and Eve, named Seth.
8. The contrast in these two family lines is stark, and it is obvious that the godly line is the one that comes from Seth.
9. As we look at the record of Seth and his family ties recorded for us in Genesis 4, we are pointed to the work of God in history, and the goodness of God towards His people.

10. Examining this passage, we are challenged to think about our own family ties, and to which of these two lines we belong.

11. Look at this text with me, and notice what we see in it. First of all, here we find:

I. GOD BLESSING THE LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE

1. There are some who view the God of the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, as a harsh, violent, wrathful deity, who is without compassion on those who do not do His bidding.

2. Those who feel that way have obviously not *seriously* read the Bible. As we have worked our way through these opening chapters of Genesis, what we have seen is that God is merciful, longsuffering, and gracious to His creatures, in spite of the fact that they have rebelled against Him.

3. Once again, at the close of this fourth chapter, we find another token of God's goodness and grace towards the original sinners, Adam and Eve.

4. Verse 25 says, *"And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew."*

5. Consider with me the blessings of God revealed in this verse of Scripture. Looking at this verse we see:

A. A home once burdened with grief

1. This is the first we have seen of Adam and Eve since the murder of Abel, and the Spirit does not record for us all of the details, but we can certainly imagine the heartache that came to them when they realized what had happened between their two boys.

2. Imagine Eve standing over the cold, lifeless body of Abel, realizing in that moment the plague of death her own sin had unleashed.

3. Saintly old Matthew Henry imagines how painful the murder of Abel and the rebellion of Cain must have been to these first parents.

4. He suggests that in their hearts they must have felt as if their original sin had now cost them "both of their sons in one day."

5. Genesis 4:25 is a joyous verse, filled with optimism and hope, but we must not forget that it is set against the backdrop of the first murder, and a family's grief that we can only begin to imagine.
6. We as God's people today can relate to Eve's joy in verse 25, and the gratitude she felt for God's blessings. However, we can also relate to the grief that sin can cause.
7. Many of you have at times wept bitter tears over decisions you made in the past. You look back with regret on days when you rebelled against God and had to reap the bitter harvest for your sins.
8. You understand the meaning of Romans 6:21, where Paul asks, *"What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death."*
9. We celebrate with Eve the birth of her third son, but we do so mindful of grief that came with the sin of her first son, and the murder of her second.
10. When we look at verse 25, and the blessings of God on His people, we see not only a home once burdened with grief, but we see also further:

B. A home now blessed with grace

1. Look again at this text. It says, *"And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth..."*
2. Once again, we see that though they had fallen from their original state, Adam and Eve had not fallen so far that God could not or would not bless them.
3. Sinners though they were, they were still God's creatures, and He was gracious to them in giving them another son, even after sin had led to the loss of their first two.
4. We as God's people should be thankful today that though we were fallen sinners, God still loved us, and showed His grace to us in the person of Jesus.
5. Romans 5:8 says, *"...God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*
6. Like Adam and Eve, our lives have not always been pleasant and painless. We too have been burdened with grief.
7. Yet, today we can lift our hands toward heaven and testify that God has been good to us in spite of it all. We have been blessed as His children.

8. Alan Gardiner died in 1851 at the age of 57 while serving as a missionary on an island just off of the tip of South America. When they found his body, his diary was discovered nearby, and in it were stories of hunger, thirst, suffering, and hardship.

9. Yet, the last entry of the diary, written with a shaking hand, said this, "I am overwhelmed with a sense of the goodness of God."ⁱ

10. As we watch Adam and Eve welcome this new son into their home, we realize that like them we have felt the grief this life can bring, but we have also known the goodness of the Lord in the blessings He has given to us.

11. Notice a second truth we see in this text. We see here not only *God blessing the lives of His people*, but we also see here:

II. GOD BUILDING THE LINE OF HIS PEOPLE

1. As we noted earlier, Genesis chapter 4 records for us two separate lines that descended from Adam and Eve.

2. The first is the lineage of Cain, given to us in verses 17-24. Beginning in verse 25, and on into the fifth chapter, we have the lineage of Seth, Adam and Eve's third son.

3. It is interesting to note what Eve said at the birth of Seth. She declared in verse 25, "*God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.*"

4. Notice that word "seed". Again, we are pointed back to the important promise given in Genesis 3:15. In fact, most of what is recorded in this chapter, and throughout the Bible goes back to that particular prophecy.

5. There God swore to the serpent, "*...I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*"

6. Eve recognized Seth to be that promised "seed" of the woman, and he did in fact mark the beginning of the family line of God's people on earth.

7. Consider with me this idea of the lineage of people that God began with the birth of Seth. First of all, consider:

A. What this line proclaimed

1. Again, look at verse 25. This third son was named Seth, and the verse goes on to give the explanation of his name.

2. Eve said she called him Seth because the Lord had “appointed” another seed in place of Abel, who had been murdered by Cain.

3. While there is some debate, the name “Seth” seems to mean “the appointed one, or the compensation.”ⁱⁱ Think about that for a moment.

4. God promised that there would be a conflict and a tension between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, but in the end the seed of the woman would ultimately prevail.

5. The first casualty in that conflict was righteous Abel, who was murdered by his brother Cain, who John says was “of that wicked one.” (I John 3:12)

6. Now, Seth is born, and Eve recognizes that God is still going to keep His promise. The wicked one may have slew Abel, but God had overruled and appointed another seed of the woman.

7. Verse 26 tells us that Seth also had a son, and then the chapter 5 tells us of those who descended from that son.

8. In other words, this line that came from Seth proclaimed to the Serpent and His seed that they had not won. Though they had slain Abel, they had not stopped God and His people.

9. It reminds me of what our Lord Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, “...I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

10. Jesus is building His body, and though the serpent still rages against us, all the descendents of Seth still proclaim that He has not defeated us.

11. In this line of people that we see God building, I want you to think not only about what this line proclaims, but also about:

B. Who this line produced

1. Look at verse 26. It says, “*And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos (or Enosh, depending on the translation)...*”

2. It is important to note that we find these same names recorded for us in the New Testament. Luke chapter 3 ends in verse 38 with these words, “*Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.*”

3. That verse is the end of lengthy genealogy that begins in Luke 3:23 with these words, “*And Jesus himself...*”

4. Now, do you see the significance of the birth of Seth? Now, do you see God working out His plan in spite of the efforts of the Serpent and his seed?
5. It is all about Jesus! From the beginning of time, God was looking toward the fullness of time when He would send forth His only begotten Son, *the Promised Seed* who would crush the head of the Serpent.
6. We rejoice with Eve at the birth of Seth, because we are able to look beyond Seth to the Savior who came from his line.
7. A plaque in Hodgenville, KY, near the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln records a conversation that supposedly took place the day after Lincoln was born.
8. Explaining that nothing exciting had happened in the rural community, a resident said, "Nothin', nothin' a'tall, 'cept fer a new baby born t' Tom Lincoln's. Nothin' ever happens out here."
9. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, only a handful even knew about, but we now recognize the magnitude of that birth on the lineage of God's people and the course of human history.
10. Looking at the close of Genesis 4, we are reminded that God has been busy building the line of His people, up to Christ and now from Him, for His glory.
11. There is a further truth we see here as well. We see not only *God blessing the lives of His people*, and *God building the line of His people*, but we see also thirdly:

III. GOD BECOMING THE LORD OF HIS PEOPLE

1. Before we leave this fourth chapter of Genesis, I don't want to overlook the last statement of verse 26. We are told of the birth of Enos, and then it says, "*...then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.*"
2. In light of all that has been said in this chapter in describing the descendants of Cain, this is a very interesting statement.
3. This closing statement of the chapter really sums up the difference between the lineage of Cain, who was the seed of the serpent, and the lineage of Seth, the first in the line of the people of God.
4. This closing statement indicates the relationship that Seth's descendants had with the Lord, and speaks to us as God's people in this day.

5. Consider what this closing statement tells us about God and His people. First of all, it tells us that:

B. They understood their frailty

1. I have mentioned the lineage of Cain, though we have not taken the time to read it. When you read all that is recorded about them in this chapter, however, you see that Cain's descendants were an industrious and productive people.
2. They built cities, founded the arts, and advanced in technology and learning.
3. They were also a very independent and prideful people, who showed no signs of godliness. The last of Cain's descendents mentioned in this chapter is a man named Lamech.
4. In verses 23 and 24, we have a piece of little song that Lamech shared with his two wives. The song is a story about him taking deadly revenge on a young man that had wounded him.
5. Dr. Russell Moore, of Southern Seminary, says this little song of Lamech's is the equivalent of "I shot a man in Reno, just to watch him die."
6. I don't know about that, but the attitude of Lamech is reflective of the haughtiness and harshness of Cain's descendents.
7. In contrast with this, we read in verse 26 that when Seth's first son was born, he chose to name him Enos, which means "frail".
8. Cain's line is filled with proud, strong, independent, but virtually godless men. Seth's line begins with a man whose very name pointed to his dependence upon God.
9. In Seth and Enos we are reminded that the people of God are a humble people, who recognize their desperate need for the grace of God.
10. Jesus told His disciples in John 15:5, "...without me ye can do nothing." We, as God's people today are frail, and will fail apart from the sustaining grace of Jesus in our lives.
11. As we look at this closing statement of verse 26, and think about the people of God in these early days, we see not only that they understood their frailty, but we see also that:

B. They utilized their faith

1. Again, verse 26 closes with the statement, "...then began men to call upon the name of the LORD."

2. While Cain's descendents were building cities, and naming them after themselves and their sons, Seth's descendents were building altars, and naming them after the Lord their God.

3. Cain's descendents used their hands to innovate and invent. Seth's descendents utilized their faith to seek the Lord, and invoke His name before men.

4. One line worked in the flesh. The other worshiped in the Spirit. One line tackled the earth. The other touched heaven.

5. One family left their mark on this world. The other family lives on in the world that is to come. They were "the just" who lived by faith, and they are our ancestors in Christ.

6. R. Kent Hughes, in his wonderful book on Genesis, says this about this passage in chapter 4. He says:

"Our text provides us a paradigm, an outline to understand civilization and culture today and its...rise with increase and abundance...It rises impressively, but in its rise there is demise because of sin. The only hope is to call upon the name of the Lord. This is the only hope for culture. This is the only hope for your soul."ⁱⁱⁱ

7. If we are truly the descendants of Seth, part of this godly line, then we will be a people of humble faith. We will seek the Lord, and call on His name, even in the midst of a world that prides itself on all it has done without God.

1. All my life I have been asked, "Are you Ken's son?" I have always been glad to say, "Yes, I am." I am thankful for the heritage of my family.

2. Even more than I am thankful to be a son of Ken, however, I am even more thankful to be a son of God.

3. I am glad that one day, by God's grace, I left the lineage of those who rebelled against God, and was born again into the lineage of those who call on the name of the Lord.

4. What about you? What are your family ties? Can you trace yourself to the people of God, or are you more like that prideful, sinful family of Cain.

5. In John 1:11, we are told that Jesus came to this earth, and most men would not receive Him. However, verse 12 says, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

6. Whoever will humble himself and call upon the name of the Lord, can join that long family line that started with a third son named Seth, and looks to God's only Son, Jesus. That can be your family ties.

ⁱ Goodness of God, *sermonillustrations.com*, accessed 11/4/10, http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/g/god_goodness_of.htm

ⁱⁱ Keil, C.F., and Delitzsch, F., Commentary on the Old Testament: Volume 1, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1980), p. 119

ⁱⁱⁱ Hughes, R. Kent, Genesis: Beginning and Blessing, (Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL, 2004), p. 116