

The Consequences Of Sin

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[0 : 00] Let us now turn to the part of scripture that we read, book of Genesis chapter 4. Reading again at the beginning, Now Adam knew Eve's wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, I have produced a man with the help of the Lord, and again she bore his brother Abel.

I am not going to give a lecture on childbirth or the production of children, but this chapter reveals to us further evidence of the devastating consequences of sin.

Again and again the reality of the curse which God had pronounced to Adam as the penalty for breaking the condition of remaining in the state of innocence and in joint communion with God is set before us in these early chapters of Genesis.

You remember what the condition was. You may, says God, to our first parents surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.

And then the accompanying pronouncement by God, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die. Our first parents, they did just that.

[1 : 48] They were expelled from the garden of Eden. They did not die immediately in the physical sense. There was what you might say a postponement of the execution of the sentence in the physical sense.

But in their action of disobedience they carried the whole human race over the cliff edge with them spiritually.

Because in our first parents we sinned and fell. Paul spells out for us in the New Testament the result of the disobedience of our first parents.

Therefore just a sin came into the world through one man and death through sin. And so death spread to all men, many, and died through one man's trespass.

Because of one man's trespass death reigned through this one man. And this chapter sets before us in the verses read, how the curse upon Adams in disobedience now comes to rest in Adams immediate family.

[3 : 07] And yet even in death there is new life. Because the writer Moses speaks of the expected arrival of a child in the Adam home.

Remember this comes after the verdict pronounced upon them. That Adam gives to the title to his helpmate, the man called his wife, Snehmeev, because she was the mother of all living.

She was not a mother then, nor even a prospective mother, for she had not even conceived. But God had said I will surely multiply or increase your pain and childbearing.

In pain you shall bring forth children. And when Adam calls his wife Eve, which is more a title than a name, it shows how much reliance Adam attached to this promise that was given by God.

And just another thought in passing, this statement would appear to suggest an increase in trouble with everything to do with children.

[4 : 24] I will surely multiply or increase your pain. Now we associate with children or the birth of children a time of joy.

Don't we? We don't associate it with trouble, despite the pain that is experienced by the woman in childbearing.

But are we to think that Eve would have pain in childbearing before the pub? And that that pain is now made greater? Is that what the statement means?

I will surely multiply or increase your pain in childbearing. It seems to me that pain in childbearing was pre-fall as well as post-fall.

And that God has said here there will be an increase of trouble with everything that has to do with children.

[5 : 26] I don't think it's just the birth of children that is involved here, but that that will continue in various ways throughout a mother and a father's life, because sin has altered everything.

Those born in sin, as we all wear, dishonour parents at one time or another, and in our own lives experience the consequence of disobedience.

And we need to remember that we are all sinners and possess a sinful and a rebellious nature. But that is not the main thrust today. There is to be an addition to the Adamic home.

So this is something new, remember. It's not something they had ever before experienced. They were to become novice parents. Now for everyone here today who is a parent, you will know the sense of excitement, the sense of anticipation, and even the sense of worry as you await the birth of a child. Never mind a first child.

There is that sense of anticipation, sense of excitement, that sense of worry associated with the birth of every child I would content.

[7 : 01] What will he or she be like? Today many parents know the sex of the child before the child is born.

But for a first child, parents have no notion whatsoever of the sleepless nights, the nappy changes, the washing, the feeding, routines and all of that.

It's a whole new world. But for Mr. and Mrs. Adam, they had never seen this.

They had never seen it before. It was a totally new experience. And they had a hope. They had the anticipated hope of a deliverer.

Their hope is based on the word of God. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and you are offspring and are offspring and chapter of Lee. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. And I'm not sure that we can really appreciate their sense of anticipation.

[8 : 04] Here they were expelled from their former place of residence. They had lost their position of fellowship and communion with God. And could this anticipated birth be the beginning of something new?

Because when he had this child and she looked for the first time on the face of this child of her newborn son, did she consider that she was looking at one who was to be the promised deliverer? She may have been thinking that about her son. That Cain was the answer to the promise that had been given in Genesis 3.15. But if that is what she was thinking, we don't know, then she was hugely mistaken.

Because the deliverer promised there was looking much further forward than the son that Cain, that Eve brought into the world.

She calls out to the Lord and acknowledges that it is the Lord who had given her a child. But little did they know then, the horrific, devastated in effect of the power of sin that would unfold in their own immediate family.

[9 : 34] Now, they themselves, by their own free will, made the choice to disobey God. You know, it wasn't something that they were compelled to do. I think that requires to be emphasised.

It wasn't a decision that was foisted on our first parents. Remember the Charter Charism, both the question, did our first parents continue in the estate where they were created? And you remember the response? Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate where they were created, bisoning against God. In other words, they freely chose to follow this course of action.

And the sole responsibility for this sorry state of sin and the ensuing misery is ours and ours alone. And yet even under the curse, Eve is immediately aware that she would not have a children, were it not for the Lord.

Well, just four brief thoughts. First of all, two brothers. Secondly, thankful offerings. Thirdly, tenacious divine forbearance. And fourthly, translated and displaced.

Two brothers. The birth of the first son Cain is quickly followed by the birth of a second son. The impression is given that there wasn't a long interval between the birth of Cain and Abel.

[11 : 09] Maybe nine months, maybe a year, but the impression is given that it was fairly soon after the birth of Cain that Abel was born.

And the names of Cain and Abel are interesting. The name Cain is similar to the Hebrew word kana, which means to get. And so it seems to me that there's a play on the words when she says, I have gotten a man child by the help of the Lord.

And she calls some Cain Abel's name. Interestingly, in Hebrew spelling, the word can mean veber or amir breath.

I cannot be dogmatic about this, but you cannot but wonder whether we are meant to see in the name Abel a hint of the brevity of his life.

And though he becomes a righteous man, and again the Bible is silent on this, that's not important. What is important is that he became a righteous man. A righteous man, and yet his life was brought to us sudden and an abrupt end.

[12 : 26] It would be a huge mistake to think that the righteous man may claim to live longer than the unrighteous, or that the righteous man may expect to have a trouble-free life in contrast to the unrighteous man.

So here you have these two sons born into this home. Two sons and quick succession could be a handful for any mother. Because every mother here will testify if you have children in quick succession.

Many, many, many mothers get help from grandparents, but Eve didn't have that advantage. She couldn't go to mother or mother-in-law and say, will you help me with the children?

Will you hold Cain while I look after Abel? She couldn't do that, like many mothers are able to do today. She didn't even have a sister to go to help her with the children.

There is no details about the dates of birth or the age gap, as I said. No detail about the formative years. Abel of silence is pulled over these important early years of development.

[13 : 48] Because it is in these early years that our characters are frequently shaped, often by parental example and environment.

Given the information about their coming with offerings in adult years, it is more than likely that both these sons received instruction from their parents about God on the necessity of worship.

But yet there is no detail about family discussions about the original state in which their parents were created, did Adam and Eve have vivid memories of their time in the Garden of Eden, of their communion with God, because we don't even know how long Adam and Eve were there.

Although personally, and with just a personal view, I like to think that they were at least there on the first Lord's Day, that they spent it with God.

But you get the impression from the Bible that their tenure in the Garden was not long. You will know from your own experience, if you are a converted person here today, you will know how quickly you were assailed by the forces of darkness, trying to undermine your trust in the living Savior, seeking to discourage you and tempt you back into sin.

[15 : 27] You may in the first flush of conversing have thought that all of that was behind you and never again would you be tempted by sin. Sadly, it's not so.

But we do not have detail about this early period. We could assume that they shared in the same teaching and example, and maybe you are here today, and that is also true of you.

You have shared in the same teachings and example as a member, as every member of the family. Maybe you have siblings in Christ, and you are not in Christ, and you enjoy the same privileges.

Or maybe you are in Christ, and your siblings are not in Christ. In the lives of these two, the formative years that are glossed over, and we are introduced them as adults, in the respective preferred spheres of what?

And there is just a cryptic statement about their work lives. There is no elaboration as it were. The one is into livestock, the other into cultivation, on the production of food plants.

[16 : 49] Abel was a keeper of sheep, says the writer and Kenna Wadker of the ground. That is not a hint of conflict between these two brothers because of their occupations.

It's not their occupation that will bring division. It is the truth of the Lord which brings division between these brothers.

Two brothers then. Secondly, thankful offerings. In verses 3-5 we have recorded for us the worship experience of Cain and of Abel.

And we see God's acceptance of Abel's offering and God's rejection of Cain's offering. God makes a distinction in our acts of worship.

He wants our hearts. He wants us to come in faith and He is ready to judge some worship acceptable and some not. I think you can say that on the basis of what happens here.

[17 : 55] And in this passage, the family, the Adam family is gathering for worship. Cain and Abel both bring offerings.

It reminds us by the way that at this juncture in time, when there was no nation and no established order of priesthood, the family was the basic religious unit.

And Adam as the head of the home would have been the household priest. We see this even in the days of Abraham, where Abraham acts as a priest on behalf of his family.

But the principle of family religion instituted early in scripture is never lost throughout the whole of scripture.

Family religion continues to be a cold component of how we are to live as believers in the world.

[19 : 02] Even though the Lord has drawn us into a church as a body and given us ministers, yet the Father still has responsibilities in the home of spiritual leadership.

And so here Cain and Abel come together and they bring offerings. Much is not disclosed. We are told in the course of time, Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground and Abel also brought of the first born of his flock and of their fat porcs in the course of time.

Literally at the end of days which would seem to suggest a set time when these offerings were made.

Now often people tend to focus on the fact that Cain brought an offering from the soil and that Abel brought an animal sacrifice that involved the shedding of blood.

And the argument is made. There was a difference between the nature of the sacrifices that made Cain's unacceptable and Abel's acceptable.

[20 : 17] But you notice the text itself doesn't hint at that. In fact we're not told explicitly in this passage why God rejected Cain and why God accepted Abel's sacrifice.

There are only two hints. Seems to me in the passage as to why. First we need to recognise that since the passage does not tell us the exact meaning of God's rejection of one sacrifice, we shouldn't go too far in speculation.

Nor should we think that God is inconsistent or that he chooses a drama. There is nothing inconsistent about the action of God.

There are always reasons. The Lord didn't just choose to share with us explicitly what his reasons were. Having said that there are two hints given in the text and isn't it interesting.

Though that nothing is said about Cain's offering, look at the words of verse 3. He brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground. That's all that's said.

[21 : 37] And from that I think we can make several deductions. And one of the deductions we can make is this, that Cain was not an atheist.

He believed in the existence of God. He acknowledged the existence of God. He acknowledged the supremacy of God.

But his offering even on the face of it is works related. You might even say it was a beautiful offering. Perhaps a little later than this, if you're planting tatties and you go out for new tatties. Make your mouth drip, you salivate at the thought of eating them. Because you're looking forward to pleasant, pleasant eating.

And it may be that many thought that what Cain brought here was something pleasant and beautiful. And many people are like that.

[22 : 43] They wish to be accepted on the basis of what they do. That is a principle innate in the heart of man.

Because God commanded man initially do this and leave. And we think that somehow we can please God by what we do.

And the Bible reminds us without faith it is impossible to please God. I doubt that there are any here today who are openly dismissive of the Bible.

If you were, you would not be here. Most people struggle not in the area of openly rejecting the word of God, but rather an apathy or an indifference about the Bible.

Perhaps you are not interested personally in coming to be a believer who knows the word of God, who thirsts for the word of God, who drinks in the word of God day in and day out, in private and family devotions as well as incorporate study and worship.

[23 : 57] Perhaps your problem is not so much with an interest in the Bible. Perhaps your problem is with a practical denial of God's authority in your life.

You accept that the Bible is the word of God, and yet you live in ways that contradict your belief in the Bible as being the word of God.

You see, the believer acknowledges that the Bible is the authority that they live by. And the mark of a Christian is love for God's word.

The mark of a Christian is reciprocal love and response to God's great and deep love in their life. So that the Christian not only desires to be under the teaching of the Bible, but desires to be under the Bible for living.

Not just for teaching, but for living. I think it was John Calvin who made the observation that the Bible is the sceptre by which the heavenly king rules this church.

[25 : 15] So let us ask ourselves, what is our attitude to the word of God?

Are our lives governed by it? Do we believe what the Bible teaches? Would we consider that our lives were empty if we didn't have the word of God?

It reminds me of something I heard of a preacher long ago, perhaps a way back in the 17th century. And he was preaching and then he decided the congregation weren't switched on, so he took the Bible and he said, you don't need the word of God.

And he walked out from the lectern. Would there be a void in your life if you didn't have the Bible? If you didn't hear the Bible expounded, would your life be empty?

Because the Bible is asking us these questions. Abel's offering, there are two more details together.

[26 : 28] He brought the firstborn of his flock and of their fat porfs and so on. There seems to be a hint there that there was a costliness in Abel's sacrifice.

But again the emphasis, I must emphasize, is not on the costliness of the sacrifice. How else then? Where does the emphasis lie? Well you have to go to the New Testament to get an answer to the question. And in the letter to the Hebrews, the writer there tells us that it was faith that was the decisive element in the offering of sacrifice.

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than gain through which he was commanded as righteous, God commanding him. He accepted his gifts and through his faith, though he died he still speaks, by faith.

In other words, it is taught in the New Testament that Abel came to God in faith whereas Cain did not. It was by faith that Abel was declared righteous by the Lord.

[27 : 49] It's the doctrine at the very core of the Gospel, of the Good News. Offered us in Jesus Christ because it declares exactly what we see in the case of Abel.

How a sinner can be accepted and declared righteous by a holy God. We are not made righteous by works. That was Cain's mistake.

Yes Abel came on the basis of the blood of a substitute. Cain, because he didn't have faith, didn't see the need for such substitution.

He did not accept the way that was so graciously provided by God. And in 1 John 3 and 11 we read this, for this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

And John's point is to drive home the command of Christ to love one another. And in verse 12 he says, we should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one. And murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brothers were righteous.

[28 : 59] And so the New Testament first of all tells us that Abel came in faith, offering this sacrifice. Secondly, that Abel was a righteous man and that Cain's heart was not right with God.

But in this passage, what brings about the division between Abel and Cain? The division I would suggest is brought about by the presence of God.

The division is brought about by Cain's exposure to the truth of God in worship. That's what disrupts the peaceful relationship between the two brothers.

Or as they may be looked on as the two seeds. You remember God promised to establish enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent? Here are two brothers. As far as we know, I've been getting along. Fine.

But there is enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Here we see for the very first time the deadly antipathy of carnal religion to spiritual religion.

[30 : 17] Because Cain cannot abide to be in the presence of the spiritual mind. So, thankful offerings. One seeking to please God by His works. The other coming as one who trusted in God.

And is giving thanks to God for His grace. Thirdly, ten issues divine forbearance. Notice again in verses 6 and 7.

That after Cain's offering of the fruit of the soil, the Lord in His patience and mercy, He comes to entreat a sulk in Cain.

Here we see God's appeal to Cain. And God's warning to Cain. Why are you hungry? The Lord says to him. And it seems to me that the Lord is demonstrating humility.

Cain thinks the Lord has been unjust with him. And the Lord pleads with his angry mom.

[31 : 34] He appeals to his reason. And his concern for Cain is just as strong as his concern.

Will be later for truth and justice. Cain's expression gave him away. We are told his face is fat. We can hide what he fat.

You can see the anger. You can see the resentment in the face of this mom. And the Lord says to Cain, if he will do well, if he will repent, he will find restoration.

But he warns him, if sin masters him, danger will result. Verse 7, if you do well, will you not be accepted? If you do not well, sin is crouching at the door. It's desirous for you. But you must walk over it.

And that surely reminds us of at least two other passages in the New Testament which teach us how sin ensnares and deceives man.

[32 : 44] Once sin is entwined within us, it continues to expand and grow. James, the letter of James, chapter 1, verse 13, let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God, for God cannot be tempted.

With evil unto himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. And desirland as conceived gives birth to sin and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Can you hear in these words in James' letter an echo of God's words to Cain? Cain's sin is crouching at your door. Sin, in other words, is depicted as a wild animal, ready to pounce upon its victim. And if we do not master sin, it will master us and lead us into greater danger than we are already in.

Lick of Paul's words in Romans 7 where he speaks of the ensnaring character of sin. The same expanding character of sin and the heart sin, ceasing an opportunity, says the apostle.

Through the commandment producing me all kinds of covetous, for apart from the law sin lies dead. This passage reminds us of the ensnaring and the expanding power of sin.

[34 : 19] But even as we see Cain's inescalating, we see God's patience and mercy displayed and coming to speak with Cain. Tenacious divine forbearance, thankful offerings, two brothers, finally translated and displaced.

In verses 8 to 12, it's the fourth scene in this passage, we see the murder of Abel. It's a gory passage and God's sentence against Cain.

In verses 8 to 12, we see the results or the consequence of sin that has been nursed. You know how people sometimes are tempted to nurse a grudge. They have been offended.

What do they do? They work it over and over in their minds. They become more and more bitter and they begin to contemplate how they will be vindicated, how they will obtain revenge.

And it seems to me that's the kind of thought process that took over in the life of Cain. And the Lord comes to him and says, Cain, let it go.

[35 : 42] Master that sin, master that bitterness, master that resentment, for it will dominate your life. And what does Cain do? He allows the bitterness to grow and grow and grow.

It festers in his soul. And finally in verse 8, we see him kill his brother, first degree murder. Cain spoke to Abel as brother, the implication being that he wished to have Abel alone.

You don't know how he lured him, but he spoke to him. And so the writer says, when they were in the field, Cain goes up against his brother Abel and killed him.

In other words, it was premeditated murder or something done on the spur of the moment. His own brother from the same womb.

And you can see how sin enslaves, how it degrades, how it justifies evil actions to the extent of killing his own brother.

[36 : 59] So difficult to grasp, isn't it? If you have been brought up in a family where you have siblings and you love your siblings, it's so difficult to imagine that somehow you could rise up and kill someone who was your own flesh and blood.

Yet not as what this man did. And isn't it worth noting that the very first death in a fallen world was death by murder?

You know, we are almost enured against it. Almost daily in the media, you see people killed in the cities.

Thankfully not here, but in the cities. It has become a scourge of the last number of years. People killed on a regular basis. You are seeing the enslaving power of sin. The actions of others on the streets of our towns and cities.

[38 : 17] And to you it is this man. Killed. The fruition of God's curse against Adam for his sin in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die.

It is not just death by murder. In this case the murder of Adam's second born son by the first born. You cannot begin to imagine what Adam and Eve must have thought as they stood over the dead body of their son, Apo.

And so we see the consequences of the power of sin. And so God comes again looking for this one. Just like he had come looking for Adam after his sin. Notice Cain's disregard for both his brother and for the Lord.

[39 : 22] Where is Abel, your brother? It is an accusing God. Cain's response I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? You cannot read of any love for his brother in that language.

An insolent response to an omniscient God. Because of somehow God is on a wave.

A horus taking place. You see sin makes a heart hard and indiverent. And so in verse 10 the Lord begins to utter a curse.

And in verse 11 we see the full force of that curse. The Lord said, What have you done? The vice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground which has opened his mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

And so this man was sentenced to a life of toil and wandering. He had been a tiller of soil, a farmer. He is now told that the ground will no longer yield for him because of his sin.

[40 : 40] It is to be an omniscient God for the rest of his life. Notice where Cain is sent. He is sent to the land of Nard. We use the land of Nard if you see somebody dropping off to sleep.

But the land of Nard literally means wandering. He is sent to the land of wandering. That's his curse.

And no longer will the ground be responsive to him. Sin creates more misery. Misery for the victim's family.

More misery for the perpetrator. Does this relieve Cain's unease? No. It only serves to increase it. And so we see the consequence of sin nursed in the life of this man. And yet, able, whom Cain tried to silence and suppress, his witness still speaks to us in the word of God.

[41 : 53] God keeps alive the testimony of his faithful servants. Remember how the Bible speaks of things into which the angels long to look.

And it seems to me that this could be one of the things. Because here the angels see the wonder of redeeming grace in a sinner brought back to God.

Here is the first redeemed sinner to appear in heaven. Abel, what an event it must have been. A sinner redeemed by grace appearing in the holy courts of glory, cleansed and clothed in the righteousness of God's Son.

How the angels must have marveled at this mystery of grace. One writer puts it like this. It's a great occasion when this first soul representing a fallen race appeared in the unsealed light of the home of the unfallen.

So the angels are unfallen. He came by faith, ransomed by love at the cost of sacrifice.

[43 : 20] And the human writer puts it like this. Not what my hands have done can save my guilty soul. Not what the tiling flesh has borne can make my spirit whole.

Thy work alone, no Christ, can ease this weight of sin. Thy blood alone, no Lamb of God can give me peace within. No other word save thine, no other blood will do.

No strength save that which is divine can bear me safely through. I praise the God of grace. The fastest chosen one, he calls me his.

I call mine my God, my joy, my light. On the question for you and me today is, are we like him, recognizing that God exists, believing in the supremacy of God, but uninterested in God's way of salvation based on substitutionary atonement?

Are we here today preferring a works atonement seeking to wear commendation of God?

[44 : 33] It'll never happen. Or are we like able, coming through God's appointed way, the Lord Jesus Christ, recognizing your need of a substitute to die in a Roman place?

Which, with whom do we fraternize today with able harvest care?
With the righteous or the unrighteous? Two brothers, thankful offerings, tenacious divine
forbearance, translated and displaced.
Let us pray. O eternal God, help us to hear your voice today in your truce, that we may be found
coming in faith and humble dependence upon the grace that is proffered to us in Christ Jesus thy
Son, and the glorisable divine, amen.