

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 4/2/2000 Brad Brandt

Genesis 4:13-26 "Two Types of People in the World"*

Proposition: From God's perspective there are two types of people in the world, and we see both in Genesis 4:13-26.

I. There are people like Cain (13-24).

A. Cain lacked reverence for God (13-16).

1. He complained about God's penalty (13-14).

2. He received God's mercy (15).

3. He left God's presence (16).

B. His descendants lacked reverence for God (17-24).

1. Society crumbles when people forget God (17-18).

- Cain had a family.

- Cain built a city.

- Cain ignored God.

2. Society crumbles when people mock God (19-24).

- Lamech was flippant towards God's will (19).

- Lamech was flippant towards God's image (23).

- Lamech was flippant towards God's Word (24).

II. There are people like Seth (25-26).

A. God preserved a godly line.

B. God preserves a remnant that seeks Him.

1. Calling on God is an admission of our need.

2. Calling on God is an admission of His worth.

Implications: Since there are only two types of people...

1. Call on the Lord for salvation today.

2. Call on the Lord for living every day.

This week I was reading a gruesome, true story. The account detailed a vicious, pre-meditated, cold blooded murder. It also spoke of an intense family breakdown linked to a sibling rivalry. A spin-off of the initial event included a polygamous relationship involving a man who took brutal revenge on someone who hurt him by killing the person.

It's true. We are watching society deteriorate right before our eyes.

How does a society crumble? Sociologists would verify that many civilizations have come and gone. What causes a society to fall apart? The Bible addresses that question for us, and does so by taking us back to the very first civilization.

By the way, I should mention where I read the aforementioned story. It wasn't in *The Times* or *USA Today*. I read it in the Bible, in Genesis 4.

The truth is, people today are fundamentally no different than they were in Bible times. And if we want to get an accurate understanding of why *our* society is crumbling, we need to grasp why the *first* society crumbled. It has to do with the fact that there are *two types of people in the world*.

There are many ways society categorizes people. They categorize people according to economics--there are upper class people, middle class people, and lower class people. People are grouped according to skin color, family nationality, and religious tags.

What about from God's perspective? This may surprise you, but from God's perspective there are two types of people in the world. We see both of them in Genesis 4:13-26.

I. There are people like Cain (13-24).

Let's set the stage. Adam and Eve sinned against God and were cast from the garden in Genesis 3. In chapter 4 God graced the first couple with children, two that are mentioned in verses 1-2, Cain and Abel.

Don't miss the fact that these two sons represent two lines, two types of people in the world. Abel represents the godly line for he was a man of God. When Abel brought his offering to God, the Lord was pleased (4).

Not so with Cain. Cain represents the ungodly line, for he was a man who had enough religion to be dangerous. Like Abel, Cain brought an offering to God, but God was not pleased with Cain and his offering (5). Why not? Was something wrong with the offering? No. Something was wrong with Cain, namely, his heart. Hebrews 11:4 commends Abel because he was a man of *faith*. But what Abel possessed, Cain lacked.

He had religion, but he was missing true, biblical *faith*.

Ponder that. Cain was raised in the same home with Abel. He received the same opportunities Abel received. His parents told him the same stories--about God, about the consequences of sin, about God's promise of a coming deliverer, and more.

But Cain had a problem. He developed a facade of religion. He put on the externals, the religious show, yet God was not real in his life.

God tried to get his attention. How? First He pointed out to him that his religion was unacceptable. What was Cain's response? He got mad (5). He brooded and became downcast.

God gave him the opportunity to change. In verses 6-7 he asked him, "Cain, if you do what is right, will you not be accepted?" But instead of doing right, Cain did the unthinkable. He got rid of the person whose presence reminded him of his unacceptable condition before God. He murdered his brother, Abel.

In verses 10-12, God again conversed with Cain, this time pronouncing judgment upon him. He touched Cain where it would hurt the most. Cain loved his work more than he loved God, so God said, "Cain, when you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

How did Cain respond? Did he repent, fall down on his knees, and cry out, "Oh, God, I'm so sorry! I was wrong. I deserve what you said, every bit of it. Be merciful to me a sinner!"?

By the way, 2 Corinthians 7:10 indicates that is how a person who is serious about pleasing God will respond, with godly sorrow that results in repentance. Is that how Cain responded? No, not at all. What was true of Cain? According to verses 13-16...

A. Cain lacked reverence for God (13-16). How does irreverence for God reveal itself? In Cain's case, three things happened.

1. *He complained about God's penalty (13-14).* "Cain said to the LORD, 'My punishment is more than I can bear.' Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

Remember, Moses wrote Genesis in about the fifteenth century B.C. The Israelites were preparing to enter the Promised Land and face the pagan Canaanites. Moses wanted his people to know that the Canaanites had a heritage. Their paganism went all the way back to Genesis 4.

Know this. Genesis 4 is more than a story about Cain. It's a story about what people are like when they turn from God.

Notice Cain's complaint about his punishment. He makes a series of statements to God, the first in verse 13, "My punishment is more than I can bear." See the downward cycle? Cain's anger led to depression which led to Cain's murder and cover-up attempt which here results in despondency. "What's the use?" is Cain's cry?

Cain continues in verse 14, "Today you are driving me from the land." Hold on, Cain. It's not God's fault you killed your brother. And notice what bugs Cain. God is driving him from the what? The *land* [KJV, "face of the earth"]. The Hebrew word is *adamah*, the same word used in verse 3 where we're told that Cain brought some "fruits of the soil" to God.

What kind of offering did Cain bring? One from the *adamah*. What worries Cain now? God is taking away what he loves most. Here was Cain's problem. He loved the *land* more than he loved the Creator of the land.

Realize this, my friend. God will not play second fiddle in your life. A man says, "I'd do *anything* to get a good paying job." Anything? A mother says, "I'd do *anything* to keep my child." Anything? Would you disobey God and His Word? You see, even good things can become idols when we give them higher importance than God. Like Cain did.

He continues his complaint, "And I will be hidden from your presence." Wait a minute. That's not what God said, is it? Where did Cain get that idea? What's more, is Cain really concerned about being far from God, or is he using God's judgment to justify a course he'd already chosen--to live his life independent of God?

On the surface Cain sounds bothered about losing God's presence. But does that really matter to Cain? He says it does, but talk is cheap. Is Cain repentant? He is not.

True repentance involves more than feeling sorry and shedding a few tears. What's Cain upset about? He's not sorry about his sin, but about what? The *consequences* of his sin. He has no remorse over his sin.

His final complaint is the most amazing, "Someone might kill me!" How ironic! The killer is worried about being killed, about *his* rights. G. Aalders is right when he says (125), "True repentance does not complain about the severity of the punishment."

An evidence of true repentance is a willingness to face up to one's sin, accept the due consequences, and make restitution if possible. Do you see that in Cain?

Cain's protest stands in stark contrast to the words of another condemned man. Who said these words? "We

are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve (Luke 23:41)." The thief on the cross said that, and to Him Jesus responded, "Today you will be with me in paradise."

By the way, where did all these people come from of whom Cain is fearful? Where did they originate? The answer certainly is not that there was a race of human beings in existence before Adam. Apparently, Adam and Eve had other children.

Remember, in the Bible God does not tell us everything we might *want* to know, but He does tell us everything we *need* to know.

We need to realize that a mighty civilization flourished on the earth before Noah's flood. Prior to the flood, the first world had some type of a water canopy around it (1:6-8) which apparently shielded the inhabitants from the sun's harmful radiation. Perhaps that explains why before the flood people lived much longer lives--Adam was 930 years old when he died (5:5), Seth was 912, and Methuselah 969.

Creation-scientist and author, Henry Morris, in his book *The Beginning of the World*, observes (pp. 79-80), "Although we have no exact figures, it is possible to make a more or less reasonable guess as to how the population may have developed. Assuming that each family had only six children, and assuming that each generation (the time required for one cycle of birth, growth, marriage, and childbearing) took 100 years, and also that the average lifespan was five generations, then the population at the end of Adam's 930 years of life would have been approximately 80,000. At the time of the flood (1656 years after Adam's creation), the population would have been about 235,000,000 people. If a generation were 90 years instead of 100 years, the two numbers would be about 250,000 and 1,750,000,000 respectively."

By the time Adam died, the world had some 80,000 people (and if each family averaged eight children instead of six, there would have been a million people). Talk about a family reunion! It's very conceivable that there were over a billion people alive when Noah's flood came.

So Cain complained about his penalty. Then what happened?

2. *He received God's mercy (15)*. "But the LORD said to him, 'Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over.' Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him."

After Adam and Eve sinned, what did God give them? Clothing (3:21). Why? The clothing would remind them of their sin and God's merciful provision. After Cain sinned, what did God give him? A *mark*. Why? Cain's mark accomplished the same twofold purpose. God gave it to him as a reminder of sin's consequences and of divine mercy.

We may have a cheap view of life in our culture, but the shedding of blood is a big deal to God. The question arises, "What about capital punishment? Since God spared Cain, doesn't that mean capital punishment is wrong?" The answer is no. There are other factors involved in settling this critical issue.

First, what God did with Cain was a demonstration of His mercy. Second, Cain's natural sense of justice told him that since he shed a man's blood, his own blood might well be shed. He knew that as a murderer, his own life could be taken. A third factor--under the Mosaic law God commanded the practice of capital punishment for certain crimes. And fourth, in our day--in this day of grace--God's Word says that God has ordained government to represent Him in carrying out justice. Romans 13:4 states, "For he [the government] is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear *the sword* for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer." And Paul knew the Romans didn't use the sword merely to slap wrists.

Cain deserved to die, but he didn't. He didn't receive what he deserved. That's not the norm. That's mercy.

And how did Cain respond to God's mercy?

3. *He left God's presence (16)*. "So Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden."

Those are tragic words, at least to a person of faith they are. There's nothing worse than being cut off from God. Nothing. But if you're not a person of faith, if you don't know God, it doesn't matter to you. I agree with commentator Derek Kidner, that Cain's departure was both his sentence and his choice (77).

So Cain left God's presence. He settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden (hence John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*). Cain became a self-focused fugitive, a wanderer, a man who lacked reverence for God and paid a terrible price for it.

Maybe you can relate.

Sadly, it got worse. The course Cain chose became the course many others chose. Soon a whole bunch of "Cain-like-people" came along. Who were they? Cain's descendants. What did they have in common with Cain? They too...

B. His descendants lacked reverence for God (17-24). What happened in Cain's life spread to a whole civilization. He went downhill. He crumbled morally. And so did an entire society. How does a society crumble? It happens when people make two decisions, the same two decisions illustrated by Cain's descendants.

1. *Society crumbles when people forget God (17-18)*. "Cain lay with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch. To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael was the father of Methushael, and Methushael was the father of Lamech."

Here's where it starts. Society deteriorates when people forget God. Just like Cain did. Verse 16 tells us that Cain left the Lord's presence. In verses 17-18 we learn what Cain did next--he made three choices.

- Cain had a family. The text states that Cain "knew his wife." That raises the infamous question, "Where did Cain get his wife?" As we observed, she must have been his sister, another child born to Adam and Eve (see Gen 5:4 which specifically says that Adam had "other sons and daughters").

Cain's wife bore him a son who was named Enoch (not to be confused with the godly Enoch in Genesis 5:24). So Cain had a family. Then what did he do?

- Cain built a city. In the Hebrew, the term "city" can be applied to any human settlement, small or great (Kidner, 77). Cain named the city after his son, Enoch.

Why would Cain build a city? Remember, what was his penalty from God? "You will be a *restless wanderer*." Apparently, Cain built a city to try to offset the penalty God imposed on him. He didn't want to be alone. He wanted people around him, so he built a city.

Cities are amazing places, aren't they? Lots of people. They offer convenience. In a sense, a city is man's attempt to pool resources.

Cain didn't want to be a fugitive, so he settled down, had a family, and built a city. He tried to prove he was okay without God, like so many do today. In short he made this choice...

- Cain ignored God. Answer this. What did Cain do after becoming a father? Did he thank God? Apparently

not. The biblical record says he built a city. Notice something by its absence. There's no mention of God in this section. When Eve bore a son, she attributed it to God (4:1). Not so Cain. He ignored God.

Think about it. What's the first step in the crumbling of a society? People make a decision, like Cain, to forget God. The issue isn't that having sons and building cities is wrong. The problem is when we forget God, and leave Him out of the picture.

What's worse, forgetting God leads to an even worse decision.

2. *Society crumbles when people mock God (19-24)*. Lamech is a classic case in point. Lamech represents the seventh generation of mankind on Cain's side. No doubt, he reflects the spirit of his age. He mocked God in three ways.

- Lamech was flippant towards God's will (19). "Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah."

Do you see a problem here? What did Lamech do? He took two wives. Now there's a red flag! Polygamy. What is God's intent for the family according to Genesis 2:24? One man and one woman for life. That was God's revealed will. Lamech didn't care.

In verses 20-22 we're given some details about Lamech's children, "Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute. Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain's sister was Naamah."

Notice the description of the developing civilization. One of Lamech's children was a tent-dweller, another the father of those who play musical instruments. Another forged tools. What's the point?

Don't get the idea that musical instruments are bad, or that metal-working and raising livestock are wrong just because Cain's line did these things. Technology isn't the problem. Technology in the hands of people who forget and mock God *is* the problem.

The problem isn't so much what Cain's descendants did. It's what they *didn't* do.

Listen carefully. A life without God at the center is an offense to the Creator. Why did He make us? For His pleasure, for His glory, for His worship (Rom 11:36). Lamech mocked God in a second way. First he was flippant towards God's will. Second...

- Lamech was flippant towards God's image (23). Verse 23 is stunning. Do you know what Lamech did? He made up a poem for his wives, quite possibly a song: "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.'"

Did you hear that? Lamech made a game out of mocking God. He penned a song about violence, *his* violence.

The descendants of Cain were inventors. They invented urbanization (17), the arts (21), mechanical skills and metal-working (22). Here they invent something else. *Violence*. Henri Blocher comments (199), "The horrendous song of Lamech glorifies his absurdly exaggerated lust for vengeance."

His poetry oozes hatred. Far from being remorseful, he actually celebrates his crimes. Talk about a cheap view of human life! Lamech boasted that he killed a man for merely wounding him—an act which goes far beyond an eye for an eye. In fact, he said he killed a "young man" for hurting him. The Hebrew word *yeled* is actually "child."

Do you wonder why our society is becoming increasingly violent? We need not wonder. Look at Lamech. Learn from Lamech. Lamech's haughty, irreverent attitude towards God led to a scornful attitude towards other people.

I hear it all the time, "Things are so bad today!" Wait. It took but six generations to go from a perfect world to a man who boasted about committing murder.

May I speak frankly? We may not kill somebody, but if we adopt a flippant attitude towards God's image, it won't stop there. "It's only a movie," we say. "It's not real," as we watch a man kill another man in the name of entertainment. For Lamech it got worse.

- Lamech was flippant towards God's Word (24). "If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times." What's Lamech doing? He's mocking what God told Cain back in 4:15. In effect Lamech is saying, "Ha! If God promises a seven-fold vengeance on the person who kills Cain, I guarantee that I will inflict a seventy-seven-fold vengeance on anyone who even *hurts* me!"

Know this. Sin always leads to more sin. Cain's refusal to live for God led to an entire family that ignored God, until along came a man who made Cain look like a saint!

By the way, if we assume there are no gaps in the genealogy of verse 18, it's quite possible that Cain was alive when Lamech made his irreverent claim. In fact, Adam himself may well have been.

The point is this. Deal with sin. Don't ignore it. Deal with it. There is a remedy. His name is Jesus Christ. Don't tolerate a flippant attitude of God's will, God's image, and God's Word.

Thankfully, there are *two* types of people in the world. First there are people like Cain, but Genesis 4 concludes with the spotlight on a second type of person...

II. There are people like Seth (25-26).

"Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, 'God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.' Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD."

Apparently, verse 25 is not placed chronologically, but thematically. It tells us that Adam and Eve had another son, one to take the place of Abel. His name was Seth. Seth's arrival teaches us two truths about God's plan.

A. God preserved a godly line. Eve knew that. She acknowledged the source of her son ("God has given me another child") and the significance of her son ("in place of Abel"). What's happening? Two lines are developing on earth—people like Cain and people like Seth. God preserved a godly line just like He promised He would (3:15).

B. God preserves a remnant that seeks Him. Yes, God has a remnant. Society will crumble, but God has a remnant. And don't miss the contrast. Cain's line is known for work, inventions, building cities, and art. What's Seth's line know for? Verse 26 concludes, "At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD."

When did it happen? *At that time*. When was that? Right after Seth had a son and named him Enosh.

It's noteworthy that for the first time the father rather than the mother names the child. Eve named Cain (1). Then Eve named Seth (25). But Seth named Enosh (26). And then, at that time men began to call on the name of the Lord.

Why? Why do we call on God? For two reasons...

1. *Calling on God is an admission of our need.* Maybe Enosh got sick one day, and Seth felt hopeless. So he called on God. The text indicates that it was after Seth had a son that men began to call on the Lord.

Maybe Seth saw the moral decline in society, looked at his newborn son, and was gripped with the fact that if his son was going to survive he needed God! Moms and dads, can you relate?

Do you ever feel overwhelmed when you ponder the challenges facing your children? I do. What are we doing about it? Let's be honest. We can love them, try to protect them, encourage them—and that's fine. We can give them the best education money can buy. BUT, if we fail to call on the Lord in their behalf, we've missed it.

How much time do you spend in a week's time calling on the Lord? Could it be that our failure to call on God is due to our self-sufficient pride? The fact is this, calling on God is an admission of *our need*. What's more...

2. *Calling on God is an admission of His worth.* Throughout the book of Genesis, "to call on the name of the LORD" is an umbrella phrase for worship. In Genesis 12:8 Abraham went to Bethel, and "There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD." In Genesis 13:4 Abraham returned to the same place and there he "called on the name of the LORD."

And like father, like son. In Genesis 26:25, "Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD." In Genesis 33:20 the grandson Jacob likewise built an altar.

In 1 Kings 18:24 Elijah called on the name of the LORD. In Joel 2:32 the prophet Joel said, "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."

You see, the people who please God are not the most talented people, nor the people who never blow it. God's kind of people are those who have a passion for God's worth, so much so that they *call on Him*.

Listen carefully. There are only two types of people in the world. There are people like Seth, and there are people like Cain. There are people who rely on God and people who are self-reliant; people who worship God and people who don't; people whose lives revolve around God and people whose lives don't. In short, there are people who call on God, and there are people who don't. Since that's true...

Implications: Since there are only two types of people... I challenge you to consider two implications. 1. *Call on the Lord for salvation today.* The Bible is clear, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Rom 10:13)."

Answer this. Have you ever called on the Lord for salvation? Have you ever admitted your sin and guilt to Him, and acknowledged your utter spiritual bankruptcy? Have you ever admitted the truth about Jesus Christ, that He lived a perfect life, died, and rose again, and grasped the fact that God saves only those who repent and place their faith in Him? Have you ever *called on the Lord* and asked Him to save you?

If not, today is the day of salvation. Call on the Lord for salvation today.

But don't stop there. That's only the beginning. We need the Lord every day, don't we? What do you do when you face a jam? What do you do when things go well? You either call on God, or you don't. It's that simple.

And to be quite honest, in the American church we don't call much. We don't seem to grasp how utterly dependent on God we are. We naively think we can fix our problems, and work ourselves out of jams. But

Jesus said, "Without Me you can do *nothing* (John 15:5)."

Let's stop kidding ourselves. Far too many churches are powerless these days because they've forgotten the power source. And far too many Christians are living defeated lives for the same reason.

It's time to change. Jesus meant what He said when He made this incredible promise, "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it (John 14:13-14)."

The fact is this. God delights when His people call on Him! But if we don't call, why should we be surprised if we don't seem Him work? Do you see God working in your life? Have you been calling on Him?

There are only two types of people in this world, people who call on the Lord and people who don't. So call on the Lord for salvation today. And then...

2. *Call on the Lord for living every day.* He is worthy.