

Hope Despite the Fall (Genesis 5:1-32)

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Preacher: Sam Cutforth

[0 : 0 0] All right, so if you have your Bibles, please, I'd love for you to take them out. We're going to have a look at Genesis 5 in just a moment. But I'd love to, again, welcome Sam. He's going to come up in a moment.

I will read the scriptures for him. I think Sam was like, who's reading this one? Is it going to be you? Is it going to be me? So thank you, brother, for not reading this one. I'll take this one.

So please, if you turn to Genesis 5, you'll see what I mean when we start reading. So, yeah, if you can have that out in front of you, and I'll be reading from the NIV off the screen.

This is the word of the Lord. This is the written account of Adam's line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them.

And when they were created, he called them man. When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image, and he named him Seth.

[1 : 0 9] After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died. When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father of Enosh.

And after he became the father of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.

When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kinnaan. And after he became the father of Kinnaan, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.

When Kinnaan had lived 70 years, he became the father of Mahalalel. And after he became the father of Mahalalel, Kinnaan lived 840 years and had other sons and daughters.

Altogether, Kinnaan lived 910 years, and then he died. When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he became the father of Jared.

[2 : 1 4] And after he became the father of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died.

When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. And after he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters.

Altogether, Jared lived 962 years, and then he died. When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah.

And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years.

Enoch walked with God. Then he was no more, because God took him away. When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech.

[3 : 14] And after he became the father of Lamech, Methuselah lived 782 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.

When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son. He named him Noah and said, He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground that the Lord has cursed.

And after Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.

And after Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. This is the word of the Lord.

I'd like to invite Sam now to come in and share for us. I spoke to you guys last time on Zoom, and then sometime before that, I have been here in person.

[4 : 41] But I send greetings from my wife and two daughters. There will be a picture of them later on. Here they are. It's a bit difficult looking after two little kids by herself, so Anna's just at home.

But I thought I'd just offer one piece of advice for you as a father. As someone who's just a little bit older than you from this passage, I couldn't fit this application in my sermon.

It didn't quite fit. But I'm sure you guys are all aware that sometimes your parents bug you. They bug you out of love. They love you, but they kind of bug you. So they'll say, When are you going to get a boyfriend?

When are you going to get a girlfriend? And then it doesn't stop there. You get a boyfriend or a girlfriend. And they say, When are you going to get married? You know, when are you going to get married and move out of the house? And then unfortunately it doesn't stop there.

They say, When are you going to have grandkids for us? The good news is that once you do have grandkids, it stops because they love your grandkids, and they don't care so much about you. So they stop bugging you.

[5 : 37] But until you get to that point, a wonderful verse for you to memorize. I know you've memorized that very important other verse, but the one there at the very end of chapter 5, that Noah was 500 years old before he had a child.

So you might just like to say to your parents, Just remember Lamech. He waited 500 years before he got his grandkids. So I couldn't fit that in my sermon, but that's one piece of advice for you.

Let's just pray as we get into Genesis 5. Heavenly Father, we do give thanks to you for this unique but wonderful passage that we can look at now.

And I just pray you would fill each one of us with a wonderful hope that we are your children, that we have a wonderful living hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, last week in chapter 4, you were introduced to a rather wicked and fallen world, a world that was all of a sudden after the fall filled with jealousy and murder and boasting about jealousy and murder.

[6 : 46] Look what sin has done. Look what sin has become. And it's a world that's not too hard for us to relate to or too hard for us to believe because we too live in this exact same world that's wicked and fallen.

We see it and we feel it when wars start happening as they are now. We sense it in kind of controversial conversations that turn into anger and broken relationships and friendships.

We feel it really in ourselves whenever we sin and fail. But despite the fall, despite the wickedness that is so obvious there in characters such as Lamech that you saw last week, there is hope.

Today's passage is a passage of hope here in this genealogy. Real meaningful hope that even when we see the fall, even when we see wickedness around us, even when we feel it to our very bones and our very hearts, there is hope.

Now, I know that sounds like a bit of a big ask considering what William just read for us. One of those rather boring, long genealogies that we kind of skim read as we're going through the Old Testament.

[7 : 57] And as you were listening to it this morning, you may have wondered, what on earth is Sam going to do with this passage? Or perhaps you thought, poor Sam, William obviously gave the dud passage to the guest speaker.

And he's like, I don't know what to say about this here. Sam, you can have it. But it is at times like these that I think, you know, all scripture is God-breathed, all of it, and it's profitable for us.

And I can really relate to you if you feel these genealogies are a bit boring, particularly through school. I never really enjoyed history that much. But my mum did actually take quite a bit of time to teach me about my family history.

And on reflection now, I realise that it really did, my history, my family genealogy, did really shape the person that I am today. My great-great-grandfather, Richard Cupforth, he was one of the first to settle here in New Zealand from England.

And the reason that he settled here was for religious freedom. Here he is. He was called at the time a non-conformist, which was someone who didn't conform to the Church of England, which was like the only church that you could attend.

[9 : 09] But he was a Baptist. He boarded a ship for England called the Hanover. And while he was on that ship, he met my great-great-grandmother there, Emily Pettit. And they actually got married upon landing in New Zealand.

And they settled here and enjoyed the religious freedom that they were after. They were Baptists through and through. And they're not the only Baptists in my family.

In fact, an aunt of mine did some digging into our family tree a while back and found that my dad was the 17th Baptist pastor in my family, making me the 18th Baptist pastor and my brother the 19th.

And I have no doubt that part of the reason that I stand here before you today as a pastor is because of this long line of pastors and people committed to God and to following him and believing in him.

And so here I stand, a product in many ways of my great-great-grandfather who wanted religious freedom and came here to New Zealand. And also, I guess, because of my father, who was a pastor while I was growing up.

[10 : 15] Now, you see, your family history, your family tree, your genealogy does affect the person that you are today. It can tell you things about yourself. So even though Genesis 5 is not the most engaging read for us, we do know that it's going to teach us something about the people we see here in the story.

It's going to teach us something about the beginning of history, the beginning of mankind, us, humanity, and a little bit about us as well. And what it teaches us is that there's hope for humanity.

As I said, there's hope for humanity despite the fall. In chapter 5, we're going to see a very godly line, or a fairly godly line of Seth, and that's in contrast to the wicked line of Cain that you saw last week.

Chapter 4, there's downward spiral of sin, whereas chapter 5 is going to show us our glimmers of hope for our world and for humanity. And the first glimmer of hope for humanity that I want to point out for you, that is recorded for us, is that we are still made in the image of God.

We still retain the image of God. That's the first reason for hope. Look with me there at verse 1 and 2. It says, This little verse here is kind of like a reset after the downer of chapter 4.

[11 : 49] It's a reset and reminder of creation in Genesis 1 and 2. You see, God created man, humanity. He made them in his likeness. He made them male and female.

And then despite sin, despite us being marred, despite the fall and the horror of Cain's line, the image of God is passed from Adam to his children.

You see, we're still experiencing the blessing of Genesis 1, to be made in God's image, to be lifted up above all creation. You see, there is still hope despite the fall, because each of us is made in the image of God.

And if you feel hopeless, if you feel discouraged, the image of God, being made in God's likeness, is a wonderful place to begin, to build you up and to encourage you.

It starts at the very core of being a human being, God making you, creating you, and loving you. You need more than this. We need the Lord Jesus Christ to truly be lifted up and made righteous and perfect before him.

[12 : 50] But in the image of God, we find comfort and hope and discouragement, despite anything we might see around us. The second thing we see, the second reason we can have hope for us and for humanity is because humanity keeps going.

It is obeying God and fulfilling its purpose to multiply and fill the earth. We see this in verses 3 to 33 through these kind of repeated patterns which occur in the genealogy.

As you look at this pattern, you see that humanity experiences both the curse, as God said, of the fall, and yet it continues to enjoy the blessings of God as well. We see the effects of the fall through the recording of the person's death.

Most genealogies in the Bible don't mention the person's death, just how long they lived, but this one does. It kind of, I guess, it triggers that memory that God said, when you leave the garden, you're going to die.

And after each person that's mentioned, they die. And so it triggers this reminder of us that they are still experiencing the curse. And so we see that through Enosh and through all those there.

[14 : 01] And my favorite is Mahalalal, who lived 895 years. If I have a son, I'll consider that name. But you see, there is no tree of life.

There's no presence of God for them to enjoy. And so as they're banished from the garden, they die and they experience the curse through death. But also, humanity is experiencing the blessing of God through multiplication.

That's why I mentioned they have more sons and daughters. Not all genealogies mention they had more sons and daughters. Normally they just mention the oldest son. But here we see a multiplication of humanity, of God's people, spreading out, being fruitful and multiplying, as was said in Genesis 1.28.

And here we're showing that humanity is doing that. God is blessing them and expanding to become a great nation and a great people, bringing life into this world.

And actually, as you think about it, God could have just cut it off. God could have just ended humanity. It was well within his right to bring death to Adam and Eve right there and then.

[15 : 14] And any moment afterwards, as he saw the wickedness of Cain's line and Lamech, he could have just ended it then. But no, God keeps bringing life. God keeps bringing children.

God keeps bringing more and more of his image bearers into this world because he loves humanity, because he has a plan to lift us up and save us. And he is going to bring the Lord Jesus Christ through humanity that we may be saved.

So we learn in Genesis 5 that there's hope for humanity. Even though they're experiencing the curse through death, they're also experiencing the blessing of God through life and children and family.

There is hope for humanity despite the fall. And thirdly, we see hope for humanity because there are still godly people. There are still godly people such as Enoch and Noah.

Remember, the very attentive reader would have noticed that Enoch and Noah break the pattern. Or you would have just been so lulled into boredom that you were like, oh, something else is being said.

[16:17] What is this? And so whenever you see something in the Old Testament that kind of jumps off the page at you, something a little bit different, something a little bit unique in the story, it's always worth paying attention to that because that could be the most important part of the story.

But the pattern is that they live this many years, then they had their son, they live this many more years, then after that their days were this many and they die. That's this repeated pattern over and over.

But Enoch and Noah break that. And so look at Enoch. The pattern is broken in verse 22 and 24. In verse 22 we read that Enoch walked with God.

Enoch walked with God. A little bit of extra information for us about this man. And this should really jump off at us, off the page, because we remember in Genesis 3, 8 that God was walking with Adam and Eve in the garden.

Before the fall, this picture of a close relationship where God's right there and they walk together. Now we don't walk too many places. We catch the bus, we drive, we take the train.

[17:26] But you know, God was doing that. He was driving with them, he was walking with them, he was catching the train with them. God was there with them, walking in the garden. And this implies that there is still a close relationship that was possible for Enoch, even though he had to leave the Garden of Eden.

Enoch still lived with God in a daily walk with him, experiencing a wonderful relationship. What hope, what goodness that we can keep coming to God, even when we feel the effects of sin, and even when the world around us is full of sin.

And here are the contrast between Cain's line and Seth's line becomes particularly noticeable, because Enoch is the fifth generation in the line of Seth, well, guess who's the fifth in the line of Cain?

Lamech is. Lamech is the fifth and he's the most godless in the line of Cain. It's said of him, I've killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. He's bragging about his evil, his wickedness.

And so that's Lamech, the fifth after Cain. Well, Enoch, the fifth in Seth's line, he's the godliness. He's the godliest. He walks with God. God's with him in this relationship.

[18:41] You see, there's still hope for humanity. You and I, we can walk close to the Lord. But there's more to be said for Enoch. Because he walked with God, he avoided the curse of death.

There in verse 24. Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him. That is, he didn't die. He was not, he disappeared. And I wonder what it was like for Enoch to be no more, to not be around anymore.

Did a chariot come and take him away, like Elijah? Or did his wife kind of wake up one morning and he was gone and they sent out search parties to try find him?

Or they just thought, no, God took him. He was so godly. He was good. He was so godly. He was so godly. And he was so godly. And he was going into a box.

And he was like, I'm going to disappear. And God took him right there and then. I don't think so. But that's the type of thing that I think about. And he was so godly. And God was so good to him in his godliness that he was able to avoid death.

[19 : 47] He was able to avoid the curse. You see in Enoch that death could be conquered and defeated and avoided. The curse could be reversed.

And so there's this wonderful hope that not only can we walk with God, but he too can reverse the curse and triumph and overcome death.

Next we see Noah. He breaks the pattern in verse 29. Noah's father, Lamech. He's not the same Lamech from Cain's side. He just seems to have heaps of imagination with names.

But Noah's father, he makes a prophecy about Noah. Verse 29, he says, Out of the ground the Lord has cursed. This one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.

He calls him Noah. Noah's name literally means rest. Because I guess he was hoping that Noah was going to bring relief from the curse. Relief from the painful toil they were experiencing.

[20 : 47] Here we see the people at the time themselves were still hopeful. They were still looking for the one who was prophesied in Genesis 3 who would come and crush the serpent. And in the same way when Eve had Cain, she said, Ah, I've got a man.

Meaning, ah, maybe Cain is the one. The man who is going to come and deal with this curse and deal with this sin. But unfortunately, as the story plays out, no, it wasn't Cain.

Well, here they are many generations later saying, Ah, maybe Noah is the one who's going to bring rest. Maybe Noah's the one who's going to take this horrible curse from us. Maybe he's the savior we've been looking for.

And once again, we can compare Cain's line to Seth's line. Cain's line, it's cursed. He's told the ground will no longer yield him harvest and so he has to be a wanderer.

Well, over here, Seth's line, they were looking forward to relief, hopeful that the pain of toil and the curse would be lifted from them. A big contrast.

[21 : 49] You see, both Enoch and Noah, they stand out. They stand out as beacons of hope that we can come to God, that we can know his rest and his peace.

You see, there's hope for humanity because we still carry God's likeness. There is hope for humanity because humanity continues bringing wonderful life into this world, one generation after the next.

There is hope for humanity because we can walk with God and avoid the curse. There is hope for humanity because God promised that a man was coming who would defeat Satan. And that man, it might be Noah.

There is hope for humanity because while we have seen the godlessness through Cain's line, we have also seen the godliness through Seth's line. There is hope despite the fall.

So you and I, we can be hopeful in this life as well. I want us to have hope when we look around and see things falling apart or things going wrong and out there or in our own life, in our own families, in our own experience, we know that there can be hope.

[23 : 00] I want us to have hope because each one of us is still wonderfully made in the image of God. It's been marred. It's been covered. It's not perfect, but it is there.

We are valuable and worth a lot to our God. So much so that he brought us with his precious blood. Now we're called to be his representatives here on earth, imaging forth who he is and what he is like.

No matter what kind of experiences of the fall you have been through and sin in your life, no matter how kind of dodgy your family tree is, you can know hope.

You are made in the image of God and he has made you to shine forth his goodness and his glory if you will come to him and walk with him. You are very, very valuable, each one of you, to the Lord God.

He, God, despite the fall, he hasn't just cast us off. Despite your individual sin, your problems, your failings, he hasn't cast you off. He loves you.

[24 : 13] You're in his image. He's brought you and he's calling you to himself. And we can, as we look at this passage, we can see that we can go to God and we can walk with him.

Enoch shows us that despite, no doubt, the evil that surrounded him, you know, God's going to judge the world. God's going to find only Noah, a righteous man.

And so Enoch's in a world where people probably don't think that well of him. Despite that, he can walk with God. He's commended for his faith in Hebrews 11.5.

And he's part of a great cloud of witnesses that are kind of cheering us on and encouraging us to throw aside our sin and run the race with endurance. Get close to God.

Walk closely with him. You can experience wonderful rest and joy with him. And, of course, the greatest reason for us to have hope is because of our wonderful Savior, Jesus.

[25 : 11] Because although people at that time in Genesis were kind of looking and waiting for this promised one to come, they thought maybe it was Cain. Oh, no, it wasn't. Maybe it was Noah.

Oh, he's not going to live up to all the hype. But it is Jesus who comes and looks after us. It is Jesus who comes to give us rest and to give us relief from this horrible curse.

He brings us relief as he forgives us from our sins, as he gives us the power to walk in his ways and not feel the horror of sin in our life.

You see, Jesus has dealt with the curse. He's dealt with sin. And he has lifted us up out of the fall, giving us strength to walk near to him.

And in each one of us, it doesn't always feel like this, but in each one of us, he is slowly unraveling the curse of sin in our life.

[26 : 11] And this will be fully realized, although we get it in part now, it will be fully realized when he returns again. And in Revelation, we're speaking about having rest in God's presence by streams of living water.

He will completely do away with the curse for all who have faith in him. He will bring relief and rest to the whole world. And at Matthew 11, 28, Jesus said of himself, Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

You see, Jesus is in the business of giving rest, like they look forward to in Noah. But Jesus brings us rest from the burden, the burden of sin, the burden of doing things in our own strengths.

Jesus is the one who brings wonderful, true, and lasting rest. And we have our ultimate hope that one day he will return to take us to be with him, that we may be in God's presence day and night.

[27 : 25] Heavenly Father, we give thanks for these flickers of hope that we see in this genealogy.

Lord, I pray that no one would walk out of this room without a joy and thankfulness in their heart, without looking into their future with a bright hope, knowing that you work in them, knowing that you want to reverse the curse and the effects of sin, Lord God, that you want them to walk near to you, and all that is possible because of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So please fill each one of us with hope, I pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.