



Life Group Study Notes

"We Are Family: First Family"

Ps. James Lowe - August 6, 2017

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- If you described your family in which you grew up as a food, what would it be? Why?
- What did you like about the family you grew up in?
- If you could have changed one thing about the family you grew up in, what would it be?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Genesis 1:26-28 MSG *God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, And, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth." God created human beings; he created them godlike, Reflecting God's nature. He created them male and female. God blessed them: "Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge! Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth."*

- God's original design and purpose for us was to create families, to develop culture, and to fill the earth. We were intended to do this in relationship with God, which also means that our families were intended to be safe, healthy, nurturing environments.

Genesis 4:2-7 ESV *Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it."*

- Sadly, the first family did not experience what God intended. The first parents had rebelled against God, and now one of their sons went down the wrong path.
- Abel was favored by the Lord, but Cain was not. Hebrews 11:4 tells us that by faith Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. In some way Abel's heart was in a better place than Cain's. Perhaps he had heard from his parents about how God clothed them with animal skins. Perhaps it was simply the posture of his heart before God in terms of faith and humility. In either case, the problem lay with Cain, whose heart was not right before the Lord or toward his brother.

- God appealed to Cain to change the attitude of his heart. God in his mercy reaches out to us when we are not right before him. He doesn't just reject us. He sent his Son into the world to die for our sins and now reaches out to us through the Gospel and the ministry of the Holy Spirit to bring us to repentance and reconciliation with God and others, including our families.

Genesis 4:8-12 ESV *Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."*

- Even after Cain murdered his brother, God in mercy still reached out to him, appealing to his conscience and offering him every opportunity to admit his terrible sin and repent to God. God is extraordinarily gracious toward all of us.
- When Jesus was crucified, a murderer (Barabbas) was set free by Pilate instead of Jesus, who was innocent. This was poignantly symbolic. Jesus died for the forgiveness of all sins, even the sins of someone who murdered others. This has always been God's heart and is reflected in his reaching out to Cain.

Genesis 4:17 ESV *Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.*

- Cain and his descendants went on to live apart from the Lord. They were productive and could be thought of as successful, but they began creating a culture that did not honor God. The story continues in Genesis 4 with more murder and vengeance taking place. In the next chapters the violence and evil becomes so prolific that God actually experiences deep pain and regrets having made humans.
- Yet we know that God had always intended to reach out in mercy to sinful humanity. The Bible tells us that God's plan for Christ to die for our sins was determined before creation had even taken place. He gave of his own family, so to speak, by sending his Son into the world to die for our sins, so that we might be forgiven, be reconciled to him, and be transformed to reflect his righteousness. Through the gift of his Holy Spirit we can not only grow in relationship with God, but also grow in reconciliation and relationship with our families so that though broken they can still be places of healing and fruitfulness.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose one of the points below, and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.

- How has God shown you continued mercy and grace?
- How has God used you to be an agent of healing in your family?
- How could God use you in a greater way to be a healing agent in your family?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Thank God that he continues to be merciful and gracious to you.
- Ask God to help you see where you need to come to him and ask for forgiveness and help so that you can walk closer to him and be a healing agent in your family.
- Ask God for grace, wisdom, and power to be a healing agent in your family.