

**Genesis 4: 16-26; “Will you be proud or Pray?”, Sermon # 16
in the series - “Beginnings”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on January 30th, 2005, in the Morning Worship Service.**

Last week I spoke to you about Cain’s going out from the presence of the Lord. I asked the question, “What will reprobates (those rejected by God) and worldly men, pursue in this life when they leave the presence of God? If they cannot find acceptance and blessing on their own terms, what will they do? I told you that they will pursue a life of total disregard for God and His glory. Instead of worship with God’s people and a life of building character by the grace of Christ, and building the City of God as workers together with God; they build their own city, and they will live to their own glory and pleasure because they pride themselves on the strength of their own reasoning and ability. We saw that because Cain went out from the presence of God, that his descendants didn’t learn the ways of the Lord, but rather a sinful independence from God as their names seem to indicate. Enoch means “trained up”. He was trained up, but not in the ways of the Lord. He was trained up in the ways of the world. Irad means “wild donkey”. Mehujael means “presumptuous beyond measure”. Methushael means, “asking death”. All these names indicate to us how sinful, worldly men think. They conclude that their own thoughts are correct on everything that they consider, and they do all their “great works“ and “good works“, without reference to God and His Word. The root sin that causes men and women and children to live this way is pride. When we think too highly of ourselves, of our own wisdom, of our own strength, we will never listen to God or live to God. Instead, we think that we are the great ones. We want to become greater and greater. We falsely believe that we are becoming greater and greater and, because of that, God is dishonored and other people are hurt, and sometimes killed. This is our focus this morning. There are evidences of great pride in Cain’s family and descendants which we see displayed in the verses that I have read to you. And, if we look very closely at the last two verses, we can see evidences of family humility in Adam and Eve. There is an entirely different attitude evidenced, as we shall see as we go on.

So this morning I would like to show you the evidences of pride and humility from these verses, and have each of you ask yourself this question. Ask yourself this; “As I look at my own life, do I see evidences of pride or do I see evidences of humility?” Now I know that we should ask ourselves this question in two senses. First, I should ask it in the overall sense; “Does pride characterize my life ?” If it does, then I am not a believer. And then I should ask it in a more specific sense; “How does pride evidence itself in my life?” This question is being posed to both believers and unbelievers so that our sins may be dealt with by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are 3 evidences of pride which we find in Cain’s son Lamech which we do not find in those humble persons of the godly line of Seth. Let me give them to you.

1st- The first evidence of pride that we see in Lamech is found in the words, “He took for himself,” (verse 19)

“Then Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah.” Pride always takes for itself. Self is everything with proud people. It has to have more than what God has instituted. It has to add more to itself and have more for itself than God thinks is good and wise. Pride can be seen in Lamech, because he was interested more in quantity than in quality. He believed that if one wife was good, then two would be better. His power, influence, and pleasures would be greater if he had two wives. So he thinks. But he has to violate God’s intent in giving the institution of marriage to do so. In Genesis 2: 18, God had said that He would make Adam “a helper suitable for him.” In Genesis 2: 24, when marriage is instituted, the comment from Moses by the Holy Spirit is, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” He does not say, “joined to his wives”, or that, “the three shall become one flesh”; it is obvious that the two become one flesh. It should be very evident to all of us here this morning that God, in giving us marriage, has given us enough in one man and one woman in this kind of relationship, to last us a lifetime. It is only pride that makes us think that we need more. Pride, instead of making a thorough study of the depths of blessing that God has given to us in giving us our wife or husband in marriage; wrongly concludes that the depths are not there at all, or that they are not enough and they are not exclusive.

If two people are to truly “have one another”, to belong to each other in marriage, and to know that marriage is meant to fulfill all of our deepest emotional and physical needs, in the giving of ourselves entirely to one another; then, how can it be shared with another as well? This is not true possession, this is robbery. God knew this and so instituted marriage in the way that He did. He also knew that marriage pictures the holy and intimate and exclusive union between Christ and His Church. Christ does not have His “brides”, He has His bride. There is great damage and destruction done to the institution of marriage, in its purpose and in its glory, when God’s definition of it is changed. Whether it is polygamy or homosexuality, they both violate the sanctity of marriage, and they both are based upon the sin of pride. They both are saying to God and to men, “I know better than you what I am like and what I need. “ They are both not interested in being faithful to God and to give themselves entirely to the one whom God would choose for them. There has to be more or different, than what God would give or approve of. A person like this will take for himself or herself.

Contrast this now, if you will with the meekness and humility of Adam and Eve in verse 25- “And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, ‘For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed’.” We see a couple who have been grieving the loss of their son Abel, who they now recognize as the one who lived by faith in the promise of God. We see a

couple who have been grieving the loss of their son Cain, as the one from whom they expected great things, but instead became a murderer; and who now has gone out from the presence of the Lord. They could have blamed each other. They could have thought about divorce. They could have nursed their own personal hurts, but they do not. They do not grieve indefinitely. They, in faith, are going to draw near to each other. They are not going to take for themselves; they are going to look for God's appointment. They are going to renew the covenant of marriage. They will have sexual relations again. They are going to have another child if God wills. They could have said, "Our marriage is cursed. Why even try?" But they show their love to each other. And when they have Seth, Eve says, "For God has appointed another seed for me." They looked to God for the answer. The answer was of His appointment. They do not violate His institution. Instead they are faithful to it, and God rewards their faith. This shows their humility and their meekness. They do not take for themselves, they give to each other that exclusive love which God can renew over and over again in marriage.

2ndly- The second evidence of pride that we see in Lamech is found in the words directed to his wives, "Hear my voice."

(Verse 23)

Pride will often show itself in the way that we speak to our wife. In this case; Lamech speaking to his wives, shows forth his pride. He speaks to them with a demanding tone of voice and in a commanding way. "Hear me, listen to my speech," he says to them. He has to assert his leadership, he thinks; he has to straighten them out. They have to understand that he is in charge and he is the one who they must listen to. I hope that you see that when a man speaks to his wife in this way, that it is pride that motivates him to do so. Lamech's wives are no doubt concerned about the way that he has conducted himself in the past, and are more than a little afraid that the law is going to catch up with him because of the way he speaks and acts. But is Lamech concerned? No way! His wives are probably wondering if they will even have a husband to protect them and to provide for their needs; but all Lamech is concerned about is showing them that he is quite convinced that he can get away with murder if he thinks it's justified. He wants his wives to understand that nobody pushes him around. He is tough enough to handle anyone who comes to him with a complaint about his conduct. This is the attitude of a proud heart. Lamech wants to cultivate this kind of image and reputation. Being forceful with people is the way to get your own way in things, he thinks. I think that his wives were afraid of him themselves. Lamech is violating God's good principles of communication. It says in Proverbs 18: 2, "A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart." A man should live with his wife in an understanding way, but how can he when he is only interested in expressing his own heart? How can he if he never really tries to understand how his wife thinks or feels? The reason that he is this way is because he is proud. Proverbs 14: 3 says, "In the mouth of a fool is a rod of pride, but the lips of the wise will preserve them." In the fool's speech there is a rod to hurt

others with, a rod to tell them that they will not get him to see things from an understanding or a righteous point of view. He will not listen to reason, because he has drawn the conclusions and has all the arguments, even before his wife, or others open their mouths to speak. His mouth is a rod of pride and he will hurt others and he will hurt himself with it, and no one will be able to say anything to him because he thinks so highly of his own thoughts and reasoning. He will fall into a pit of his own making, where not many people will really want to listen to his strong assertions and his arrogant demands. It says in Proverbs 29: 11 - "A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back." It is not a good thing when we find ourselves always telling everything that is upon our heart or in our mind. Venting all our feelings shows tremendous pride because I have to be the only one who is heard and agreed with, and no one else. A wise man is a man of self-control. And self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5: 23) When we find ourselves holding back what we are feeling, giving it over to God in prayer, realizing that we don't have to speak everything that we may be thinking and feeling, then we are wise.

3rdly- The third evidence of pride that we see in Lamech is found in the words, "For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me."

Pride causes a person to be very "touchy" in his or her reactions to what others have said to them or done to them. And that sin in them will cause them to react in impatience and anger, and it may even lead to murder. It is very boastful and self-justifying when it does so. 'For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me.' This is a boast of Lamech's and a threat to anyone who would attempt to bring him to see where his sin lay. He is so confident that he has done the right and wise thing in murdering this young man who hurt him; that he boasts that if Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy seven fold. We are not told what kind of hurt that Lamech received from this young man or who this young man was. But I think that this young man was another of Adam and Eve's sons or grandsons who was righteous, and he had attempted to show Lamech that he was sinning in some aspect of his speech or conduct; and that it was probably Lamech who had attempted to hurt this young man first, and then, when in trying to defend himself, the young man wounded Lamech; then Lamech killed him. Now Lamech is boasting that he is perfectly justified in this murder, and that even God will protect him and avenge him if anyone shall say otherwise. This all proceeds from the pride of his heart. It reminds me of Cain's saying, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Pride in our hearts will often persuade us that we are justified in hurting others, because we do not want to face some aspect of our sin which has been pointed out to us. Listen to Proverbs 14: 16- "A wise man fears and departs from evil, but a fool rages and is self-confident. A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, and a man of wicked intentions is hated." Lamech is the quick tempered fool of this passage. But let us apply this to ourselves. Are we quick tempered? Do we

fear and depart from evil or do we rage? Are we self-confident in our sinful attitudes? Listen to a few verses. Proverbs 21: 19- “Better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman.” Proverbs 22: 24- “Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go. Lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.” Proverbs 29: 22- “ An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression. A man’s pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor. Ecclesiastes 7: 8,9- “The end of a thing is better than its beginning; the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools.”

What is the antidote for sinful pride which leads to selfishness, speaking in a demanding way, justifying ourselves in anger and murder? It is humility of spirit. And do you know how this is obtained? It is obtained by prayer. I’m sure that it must have grieved Adam and Eve to see all the evidences of pride in these descendants of Cain. But what did they do? Return evil for evil? Fall into a complaining spirit? No; at the end of verse 26 it says, “Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord. Adam and Eve and all that were righteous in that day did not want to see more and more evil in their own children or the children of others. The answer was that they began to call on the Name of the Lord. 2 Chronicles 7: 14 says, “If my people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” Will you not see that without Jesus Christ’s death on the cross that pride would forever reign in men’s hearts? “When I survey the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of glory died, my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.” Will it be pride or humility with you? Will it be heaven or hell? Will it be a gracious spirit or an angry spirit? Christ is the savior of sinners and the sanctifier of His people. Call upon Him and you will be changed, and helped on the road to glory. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your cares upon Him for He cares for you. Let us pray.

