

A Tale of Two Enochs: Faith versus Faithlessness

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[0 : 00] Let's read together from Genesis chapter 4, verses 17 through chapter 5, verse 3. And then we'll have a little bit more in Genesis chapter 5.

! And then we'll flip over to Hebrews 11, which is what our sermon series is based on right now. So there's Bibles at the back. If you'd like one, feel free anytime to get up and grab one.

That's no problem at all. If you'd like a hard copy of a Bible, they're just on the back table. And if you're here tonight and you're exploring Christianity and you don't have a Bible, please take one of those with you.

We want you to take that. And we'll read together now from God's Word. It's also printed in the bulletin and will be on the screen as well. 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. Enoch was born Erod, and Erod fathered Mahu-jael, and Mahu-jael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech.

[1 : 04] And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah and the name of the other, Zillah. Adah were Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock.

His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. Zillah also bore Tubal-Cain. He was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron.

The sister of Tubal-Cain was Na'amah. And Lamech said to his wives, Ada and Zillah, hear my voice. You wives of Lamech, listen to what I say.

I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold. And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth.

For she said, God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him. To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. And at that time people began to call upon the name of the Lord.

[2 : 05] Chapter 5 says, This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female, he created them, and he blessed them, and he named them man when they were created.

And when Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. And then down to verse 18 to 24 of this chapter. When Jared had lived 162 years, he fathered Enoch.

Jared lived, after he fathered Enoch, 800 years, and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died. When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah, and Enoch walked with God.

And after he fathered Methuselah, 300 years, and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

And from our sermon series text, Hebrews 11, we read, Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

[3 : 18] For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

By faith, Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous. God commending him by accepting his gifts.

And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. By faith, Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death. And he was not found, because God had taken him.

Now, before he was taken, he was commended as having pleased God. And without faith, it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists, and that he rewards those who seek him.

This is God's word. Thank you, Corey. It's great to be back with you in St. Columbus, and to get to share with you on Enoch.

[4 : 20] Now, as Corey said, we're doing a series of sermons at the moment, going through Hebrews 11, which is one of the most important chapters in the whole Bible, in making sense of what it means to be a Christian, because the chapter begins with the definition of faith that Corey just read.

Faith is something that gives you assurance of what you hope for. So your hope is not just wishful thinking. It's not cognitive dissonance.

It's actually something somehow that assures you in life. And that assurance then shapes a deep conviction in this life, based on things that you can't see or that you haven't seen, and yet it grounds you, that conviction grounds you in how you live in this world of things that you can see.

And then not just that, but it gives you that definition, and then after that it gives you example after example after example of that definition lived out in the lives of people from the Bible, in the Old Testament.

So last week David preached on the first of those people, on Abel. Abel, the brother of Cain, who offered God a better sacrifice by faith, who was murdered by his brother Cain, and yet being dead by faith he still speaks.

[5 : 35] But tonight we're looking at Enoch. And we just read the verses there about Enoch who did not die, who was taken by God.

And what we're presented with there is a really strange story. And it's different to Abel's story in obvious ways. Abel is the story of someone who died, and Enoch is the story of someone who did not.

Abel is the story of someone who by faith did something. By faith he offered a better sacrifice than Cain. But Enoch is the story of someone to whom something was done by faith.

By faith he was taken. By faith he did not see death. And that God took him from this life, and he bypassed death entirely.

Now if you hear that and wonder, is that a metaphor? Or are you saying God really transported Enoch from earth straight to heaven?

[6 : 38] Well, so the word that Hebrews 11 uses here, which we have as something like taken in our English translation, comes up in a couple of other important places in the New Testament. Just to give you a sense of what this is really saying.

In the book of Acts, when it's talking about Joseph, the prince of Egypt who died there, his bones being transported from Egypt to Canaan, it's this word.

The bones began in one place and ended somewhere else. Paul uses the same word in Galatians, when he's talking about people who started off saying they believed the Christian message, and then who ended up saying that they didn't.

They started in one place, and they ended up in another. And what Hebrews 11 is really saying, is that there was a man called Enoch who started off in one place, in this world, in this life where we are, and ended up somewhere else, taken directly into the bosom of God, bypassing death entirely. And, of course, Enoch isn't the first person in Hebrews 11 to make that journey. Abel did the same thing. Abel went from this life to the next. Abel went from this world of sin and suffering and sorrow into the presence of God.

[7 : 55] But Abel made that journey through death, and Enoch didn't. And God simply took him. And after telling us that, the next verse then looks back on Enoch's life, on the kind of character of life that he had.

And that tells us about what faith looked like in his life. Enoch's life pleased God. He believed that God exists, and he believed that God rewards those who seek him.

In our culture, when you hear, he believed that God exists, maybe you hear that, and you think, okay, so he accepted an idea, and a dry idea, like something you would maybe accept because you've been to a philosophy lecture, an intellectual proposition, just like saying, I believe in gravity, or I believe in human rights, or I believe that white wine goes better than red wine with chicken.

But that's, when he says, when it's talking about you must believe that God exists, it's talking about something completely different. Now, if you read some other English translations of Hebrews 11, maybe you'll see a translation that says, whoever comes to God must believe that God is. Okay? It's a different way to translate the verse. It's a hard verse to translate into English. So that God is. That's the thing that you must believe. And it's not talking about the existence of God simply as an idea, as a proposition.

[9 : 28] Instead, what it's saying is what you find throughout the whole of the Bible in how God reveals himself to people. Okay? Think back to when God reveals himself to Moses.

Moses, the burning bush. And Moses asks God, who are you? What is your name? And God reveals his name by saying, I am who I am.

Okay? And Jesus identifies himself with this as well. You know, at one point when he's debating with the Pharisees about Abraham, and he said something that can sound really strange until you get that he's identifying himself as the God who spoke to Moses when Jesus said, before Abraham was, I am.

That he is who he is. That he is God who comes to you on his own terms. That he is not just an idea, that he is reality. That he is the living God. And that is how Enoch came to God.

Wanting God on God's own terms. Wanting the God who is. Wanting the living God. Wanting God. So Enoch is someone whose life is a life of desire for God.

[10 : 41] And Enoch wanted God as God really is. Knowing that everything that God showed Enoch about himself was so good. And so true. And so beautiful.

That God was what Enoch wanted. More than anything else. And God was happy to give Enoch the one thing that he wanted. And that is why God took Enoch directly to himself.

You see, who was Enoch? Well, Enoch is the man in the Bible whose wildest dream came true. Enoch is the man in the Bible who got everything he ever wanted.

Because the thing that he wanted was God. As God really is. And maybe at this point though you're wondering, well how do you know all that about Enoch just from this verse in Hebrews 11?

Because it doesn't say that much about him. How does, what was his actual life like? How does whoever wrote Hebrews 11 know what Enoch's life was like?

[11 : 42] And the answer to that is way back early on in the book of Genesis. And it's why we read those verses from Genesis 4 and Genesis 5.

So the Enoch that we're talking about, and you may have noticed that there were two Enochs in those readings. Two separate people, same name, they're actually cousins. But the Enoch that we're talking about in Hebrews 11 is the Enoch from Genesis 5, from the family tree of Seth. And where we find him in a really strange genealogy. And the story of Enoch there in Genesis 5 is a hard one for people to make sense of in our culture because the details that we get about him come to us in a genealogy.

And it's a strange one for us to read because the genealogy focuses on people's ages. And the ages seem almost impossible for us to imagine.

People living to be 900 years old. And the details of his life in the midst of all of that aren't obvious. Genesis 5 does not tell us what did Enoch do as a job.

[12 : 53] It doesn't tell us who he was married to. It doesn't give us any stories of things he did in his life. So for people from our culture, it'd be really easy to read Genesis 5 and think, well, we don't really know anything about Enoch or what his life was actually like.

Because we find him in a genealogy where all we see is names and numbers. But if that's what you do, the good news for you is you're doing it wrong.

And what I want to show you is that if you want to make, that we can make a lot of sense of Enoch as we find him in Genesis 5. But the way that you have to do that is by reading Genesis 4 and Genesis 5 together, side by side, the tale of the two Enochs.

One who lived by faith and one who didn't. And when you do that and you see them there, you see that the stories are family trees, each with an Enoch, as I said, these cousins.

And you see the shape of a life defined by faith, a life of walking with God, and you see a life that is the opposite. And it's in that contrast that you start to see what the Enoch who lived by faith was really like.

[14 : 06] So let's start off in Genesis 4 though, with the faithless Enoch. So Genesis 4, Corey read from the part where Cain has a son.

But Genesis 4 before that, just to give you a really short summary, it starts off in the background with Adam and Eve. They begin in the Garden of Eden. They're there in paradise. They walk with God. And they're led astray by a lying serpent.

They try to replace God. And they sin against him. And they're cast out of the garden. But as God does that, he gives Eve a promise that one day, one of her descendants will come and will undo the fall.

And the paradise will be restored. The paradise that has been lost. But the promise also has a key detail, which is that from now on, the descendants who come from them, the human race, the world, is going to be divided into two groups.

And one group will believe the promise that has been given to Eve. And the other group will side with the serpents. And they will live by his lies. And then what happens at the beginning of Genesis 4, as you'll know if you were here last week, is that this is immediately the case with their first two sons, Cain and Abel.

[15 : 23] And that Cain believes that the serpent's lies and Abel lives by the promise given to Eve. And then Cain kills Abel. And then God sends Cain out into the world to be someone who walks, but who walks as a loner.

He's a wanderer and a vagabond. And he's someone whose own parents walked with God, but he's the ultimate loner in the world. And that then is where we pick up the story in Genesis 4 where we read, because what comes from there on into the rest of Genesis 4 is a family tree.

It's what happens next with Cain and his family. Because Cain then, and it's a much easier family story, genealogy for us to make sense of, to read than what comes in Genesis 5.

So Cain has a son, and he names his son Enoch. And Cain is a rootless person who's wandering away from God, wandering away from humanity's true home, but he doesn't want his son Enoch to feel like that.

So look at what he does to try and make his son Enoch feel rooted somewhere, like he belongs somewhere, like he has a paradise to call his own. He finds a city, and he names the city Enoch.

[16 : 40] And that the message that this Enoch hears from his own father is, this world is yours. It has your name on it. Most of you will know who the artist Banksy is.

He paints things on walls that just appear. For a while, Banksy had a rival artist who would turn up whenever Banksy had just finished a painting, and the rival artist would add his own name to it to take credit for it.

Team Robo, apparently. I'm not sure if Team Robo is still doing this, but this is what Cain does for his son Enoch by stamping his son's name on this world.

Ownership. This is yours. This is the place that will satisfy your desires. So Enoch, this Enoch grows up there in a city named after himself, and he has a family, and in the chapter is his family tree, and in that family he has a descendant called Lamech.

And by this point, the unbelief that their family is based on really grows into its final boss form. It's really fully arbed at this point.

[17 : 55] Because Lamech was a complicated man. He has three sons, and they are exceptionally talented in different areas, in music, technology, agriculture.

Enoch Lamech, this guy, is the first man in the Bible to take two wives, Ada and Zillah, against the will of God. He confesses to being a murderer, like his ancestor Cain.

He controls his wives through fear and intimidation. He's talented with words. So when Corey read the chapter there, and Lamech starts saying, hear my voice, wives of Lamech, Ada and Zillah.

And he boasts about having killed a man. It's a piece of poetry. It's a song. It's a lyric. And he uses that gift to control people through the power of fear.

And above all that, what you can see from his poem is that this Lamech, this descendant of the faithless Enoch, he does not believe or live by the promise of forgiveness that was given to Eve.

[18 : 59] And you can see that because he said, if Cain's revenge is sevenfold, and maybe, incidentally, when Corey read that, you just glossed over it. Cain's revenge.

But actually what you see here is the lie that they live by. Because this is the family's origin story, as Cain has told it to his own descendants. That Cain wasn't the aggressor.

That Cain did the right thing. That he was just taking revenge. That it was actually Abel who started it. That Abel had it coming. That Abel was really the one who was in the wrong. So they live by this lie.

And then if that revenge for Cain was sevenfold, Lamech's will be 77fold. He does not believe in forgiveness. He believes in exponential vengeance and violence. You see, he believes in revenge rather than forgiveness. And he lives by a cycle of retribution, not grace. And his life is all about clinging to power in this worldly city by whatever means necessary. [20 : 09] And the family's values are actually so opposite the gospel that this is what Jesus was referring to when he taught in forgiveness. And he said to his disciples, if someone wrongs you, forgive them 77fold.

Jesus is saying, we must be the opposite of the family of Cain and Lamech and that other Enoch. So you see, there is an Enoch in the Bible before the Enoch that we meet in Hebrews 11. And this is the world that that Enoch creates and the family that comes after him. And it's a world where desire is disordered left, right, and center. And you don't have to spend too long looking at Genesis 4 to see that we're still in that world.

And that the world of Cain and his son Enoch and his descendant Lamech is still the world that we live in. Is it hard for you to imagine a world of petty egos, of power being worshipped, or women being treated as objects, or good things like art and music being misused for terrible purposes, where human beings stamp their own names in their tiny patches of this world as though they own the whole thing, and where we all expect something in this world to satisfy our ultimate desires? So that Enoch is really relatable. But showing you the other Enoch is harder work. That's what we're going to try and do.

[21 : 40] See, when Genesis 4 comes to an end and that first Enoch's family tree ends, we find another new character being introduced, and that is Seth. So this is another brother to Cain and Abel.

So Adam and Eve have this third son, Seth. And Seth, like Abel, believed in the promise that had been given to Eve. He's someone who looks for God. He prays. He calls on the name of the Lord. And those who come after him and his family do the same. And that then takes us into Genesis 5, which is another family tree. And that's where we find the Enoch who comes up in Hebrews 11. Now Genesis 5 is one of the hardest chapters in the Bible for people from our culture to make sense of. And that makes it hard for us to understand Enoch.

Like I said before, it's a list of names. And we didn't read the whole chapter, but if you remember what Corey read or if you have the Bible in front of you, it's a list of names. There are 10 generations, 10 names.

[22 : 38] So 10 names, each with three dates. So the age that this patriarch was when he became a father, and then the number of years that he lives for afterwards, and then the third number is the total number of years of his life.

So it's a really different way to tell a family story than what you find in Genesis 4, which is, you know, narrative and gritty details and songs. But it's a really important difference to grasp. And there are some things that are a strange parallel to Cain's family, because Cain's family is centered on Cain, an Enoch, and a Lamech. And Seth's family also has a Seth, well, it begins with a Seth instead of Cain, but then also another Enoch and another Lamech. But they're completely different people, because the thing that they live by is completely different. So the resemblances are really superficial. But when you get into, try to read Genesis 5, it's really hard to make sense of, because we're talking about such huge numbers. You know, it's where Methuselah is 969 and so on. And I think in our kind of culture, we don't really know how to read a text like this. Because in our culture, numbers are things we use to talk about quantity.

[23 : 59] So if I tell you I'm 43, that is entirely a description of quantity. It's just the number of years that I've been alive for. But, and it's an exact number, I can prove it to you, I can give you my birth certificate, we can do all kinds of measurements, we can track the age by the second as my life goes on.

But, it tells you nothing about the quality of my life, because we don't use numbers in that way. We use numbers for quantity instead of quality.

And in our culture, what do we say? Age is just a number. Right? But in the world of the ancient Near East, the early chapters of Genesis, age isn't just a number.

And numbers have distinct significance in terms of the qualities that they convey. So we're immediately getting into a very different culture of thinking about ages, numbers, and how numbers

tell a story to the kind of culture that we're in.

But in a way, that shouldn't really surprise us when we get into an ancient text like this. It's only really in the 17th century that it became normal to expect that everyone would think about their age is something that everyone should know in an exact sense.

[25 : 14] So if you go back to your own medieval ancestors, if you're from European descent, very few of them would be able to tell you exactly how old they were because they just didn't think in those categories.

That wasn't their experience. If someone was from a really privileged background, maybe someone would have written down somewhere the year of their birth. Most people would just wouldn't know how old they were. I was born the spring after the river flooded.

I was born, or they would explain their age in life stages. I'm obviously a child or I'm a man or I'm elderly. But if you go back much further into a very different culture again, to the world of the early chapters of Genesis, people had a very different way of thinking about numbers where numbers can denote quality rather than just quantity like in our culture.

So what do I mean by that? Think about it like this. In our culture, some numbers can denote something like a quality. They have a symbolic meaning.

Lots of hotels don't have a 13th floor because some people think that the number 13 symbolizes bad luck. But we have very few numbers like that. You know, 212 is just quantity.

[26 : 29] Nobody is probably thinking, oh, 212, that symbolizes something. Right? It's just that they're 212 of something. And in our culture, if we want to get to those symbolic meanings, we tend to use words rather than numbers.

But if you're an ancient Hebrew, you're from a different kind of culture. And for you, every letter of your alphabet has a numerical value. It's not really the case for us.

And numbers have a symbolic meaning to you. And you actually see this throughout the Bible.

You'll realize this retrospectively if you know the Bible a bit.

The number 7 symbolizes perfection, completion, seven days of creation, and so on. 12 symbolizes a different kind of completeness, 12 tribes, 12 apostles.

40 symbolizes trials, 40 days of reign on the ark, 40 years in the wilderness, 40 days in the wilderness. And 500 symbolizes completion in a different kind of way as well.

[27 : 36] And the numerical value of the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet is 500. Think of the temple. How wide is it? 500. How tall is it? 500. So numbers, if you're an ancient Hebrew, you live in a world where numbers convey something to you that numbers don't really convey to us.

But if you know the Bible a bit, you'll recognize at least some of these numbers. numbers. And here's the thing. If you were a native in that culture, you would simply look at and see numbers and see things in them that we don't.

Significances and symbols. And when you start to see Genesis 5 like that, this genealogy where Enoch appears, you start to see some hints of this.

The Enoch in this family tree is the seventh person in his genealogy. This place of significant symbolic perfection. The Lamech in this family tree when he died was 777.

Okay? Threefold perfection and completeness. And you know who's number seven in the other family tree in Genesis 4? It's the other Lamech.

[28 : 51] Okay? And there's a 777 there as well, but it's the opposite symbolically. What did he say? It's the seventh person in his family tree. If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, Lamech's will be 77 folds.

Okay? And in the Genesis 5 family tree, when Noah has his three sons, he is 500. Again, a different kind of completion like the temple. So even for us at such huge cultural distance with how we think about numbers and what they can tell us, some of the numbers in this family tree stand out even to us from our really foreign culture, although the meaning of most of the numbers is lost on us.

I'm trying to think of the best illustration for this from our culture, and I think it's like this, that it's a bit like computer code. If you're coding, you can write code with letters, and you can have words that if you know nothing about coding, you can look in and make a little bit of sense of.

But behind all of those, you can write code always in numbers, and that's really what it comes down to, all ones and zeros. I know almost nothing about coding, and I've told you pretty much everything that I know about it already.

So if I'm looking at code and it's all numbers, it's all lost on me because I don't know what I'm looking at. But if you have an expert coder who's looking at all these ones and zeros in their order, someone who knows the code can look at it, and then they see, oh, this is doing something.

[30 : 14] These things have meaning. This is all put together in a really complex, beautiful, meaningful way, and they see things that I can't see. So here's what I'm trying to say, that people from our culture look at Genesis 5, at this genealogy, and think, what a stupid chapter.

What kind of idiots would read this stuff? Who would care about Enoch in the middle of that? But do you know what? If you knew how to code, you'd look at it and you would take a deep breath and you would say, wow.

Compared to the people in Genesis 4, the people in Genesis 5 have the most numerically beautiful lives.

For all of these numbers and these symbols speak to us about how in a world that is broken and ruined by the fall, somehow these people, person after person, are symbolized by completion, by repair, by perfection perfection in the middle.

And place number seven in the middle, they have Enoch. Somehow they are restored and that theme recurs in their lives generation after generation.

[31 : 27] And like I said, in the middle of it all, there is this uniquely beautiful person in Enoch whose life is so pleasing to God that God takes him from life straight into his presence without death.

Enoch in this chapter who in every way is the polar opposite of the Enoch in the chapter before. You know, if you want to compare these two Enoch's, the thing that makes them different is desire. Cain's son Enoch is the son of a wanderer who is alienated from God. But Seth's son Enoch is someone who walks with God in this life and who walks straight out of this life without even going through the gates of death.

He walks with God in this world as though he was still in Eden. Cain's Enoch directed all of his desire into what he could find in this world.

Seth's son Enoch's desire was too big for this world to satisfy. And God gratified that desire by giving him himself. And the big question that comes to you then when we look at Genesis 4 and Genesis 5 together and faithless Enoch and the Enoch who lived by faith, the question that comes to you is which family tree do you want to be yours?

[32 : 53] Which Enoch do you want to be the one that you belong to, the one that you line up with? Like I said, in Cain's family, the seventh person in the row is Lamech.

And his life is the perfect expression of the lie of unbelief that the family starts off with. Do you know what? The generation, in his family tree it stops at generation number seven.

It's not life going on and flourishing exponentially forever. It hits rock bottom. And do you know who number, and I said number seven in Seth's family tree is Enoch.

But he's not the end. It goes on down to a tenth generation and that's also a symbolic number. And Enoch's descendants go on and on. And the symbolic things we're told about them are that their lives are marked by integrity and wholeness even in this broken world living side by side with the family from Genesis 4.

But the thing that is so striking is this. That if you are descended from that Enoch in Genesis 5 by coming after him and his family what you get is life in abundance.

[34 : 08] Okay, you get all these numbers of perfection and completion generation after generation after generation. But in the midst of that all of life in abundance for the descendants of Enoch in the midst of it all the exceptional person in the middle is someone whose life in this world is cut short as a young man in comparison to all of the others.

Enoch in Genesis 5 is taken from this world at the age of three, six, five. And in that way don't you see that Enoch in Genesis 5 is a type of Christ that he is that everything about him points forward to Jesus as the truly perfect person who at the age of 33 and the prime of life the one who lived a perfect life who desired God perfectly with everything in him for every second of his earthly life someone who truly deserved to bypass death entirely and to have all of his wishes granted and to be received victorious before his father that this Jesus dies that he does the thing that Enoch doesn't do and that this Jesus does that for you so that if you have faith in him that you will not perish but have eternal life and that you'll be like the people who come after

Enoch in Genesis 5 that you receive life in abundance life everlasting so you see when I'm asking you which Enoch do you want to belong to really what I'm asking you is do you believe the promise that was given to Eve or do you live by the lie that was given by the serpents the most compelling reason to want to belong to the family of Enoch from Genesis 5 and not the other Enoch of course it's not Enoch himself it is the Lord Jesus Christ whose life is prefigured let's pray our father in heaven we praise you for the gospel for this glorious hope that we have that the promise that you gave to Eve has come true in Jesus Christ we thank you for all those heroes of the faith who came before him whose remarkable lives in different ways were fulfilled in Jesus and we thank you that Jesus is the true and the better

Enoch more perfect still in every way the true 777 for us and the one who although he deserved to be taken from one place to another from this world of darkness that he came into his light deserved to be taken into light and glory with you that he nonetheless did what Enoch didn't do and that he endured the ultimate darkness of the cross the ultimate forsakenness and that he endured that for the joy that was set before him so Lord please convince us afresh to belong to Enoch from Genesis 5 from Hebrews 11 but not to Enoch alone but to be those who are united to the Christ who fulfilled everything that we see in him in Jesus name Amen