

# Hearts Aflame: How to See Jesus in All of Scripture (Part 6)

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## Introduction

### The Text

They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” (Luke 24:32)

### Catching Up to Speed

- A. I imagine we need some quick catching up to speed here as we jump back into what we were doing before Christmas and the Week of Prayer. It’s been a month or so now that we’ve been out of Luke’s gospel and, in particular, out of that little mini-series we’d launched that had been inspired by that powerful little story here in [Luke 24](#) about the two on the road to Emmaus.
- B. I only read a verse from it here, [v. 32](#), as that’s the piece that really captures the essence of what we’re doing. You remember, don’t you?
1. These two disciples were depressed and downtrodden. They’d just watched Jesus get crucified and with him went their hope of a better life and things. And so they’re traveling back from Jerusalem “[looking sad](#),” we’re told in [v. 17](#).
  2. And then, of all things, Jesus himself, now raised from the dead, cloaking his identity from them in some way, comes to walk this road alongside them. They certainly never expected to see him again. And somehow they don’t recognize him even now.
  3. And as Jesus is talking with them and hearing of their despondency concerning the crucifixion and things, he rebukes their unbelief and begins to facilitate perhaps the most eye-opening Bible study that’s ever been, [vv. 25-27](#): “<sup>25</sup> And he said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?’ <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”
  4. Now, what exactly he showed them here, we don’t know. But what we do know is the effect it had on these two disciples. That’s what they refer to in [v. 32](#): “[Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?](#)”
- C. And, as I’ve been saying through the course of this mini-series, for weeks now: that’s what I want for us. I want us to be able to open the Bible—not just the NT where Jesus and the gospel are spoken of more plainly, but especially the OT as Jesus does here (“[Moses](#),” “[the Prophets](#),” and “[all the](#)

Scriptures”)—and I want us to see Jesus there in such a way that our hearts, as with these disciples, truly do catch fire and burn within us.

1. When we get the grace that’s there, when we get the glory that’s there, when we see Jesus on every page, and fellowship with him in those unexpected places, our despondency turns to joy, the coldness of our heart gives way to a new and surprising heat.
- D. It’s as Spurgeon has said: just as all roads lead to London, so too all Scripture leads to Christ.
1. The question for us, then, is: have we traveled those backroads, through the country and things? Have we taken in the new vistas afforded us there? Do even know how?
- E. And that’s why I’m spending so much time on this. The whole point of this mini-series is to help us travel and grow familiar with those backroads. To help us see Jesus.
1. We need the gospel every day of our lives. And thanks be to God he’s put in on every page of our Bible.

## Part 6

- A. So, this is now part six. And you remember we’re making our way through the hub diagram I presented a while back.
1. The idea with the diagram is that Jesus is the hub of the wheel that is the Christian life. If he’s at the center, it turns, it goes somewhere. If he’s not, it doesn’t.
  2. And the twelve spokes coming out from this hub really are twelve different ways we can see Jesus and the gospel in the Scriptures as a way of keeping him ever before us.
- B. We’ve covered the first nine to this point and this morning: Jesus is (1) the Realization of Every Promise; (2) the Fulfillment of Every Prophecy; (3) the Essence of Every Symbol; (4) the Substance of Every Shadow; (5) the Apex of Every Attribute; and (6) the Unveiling of Every Mystery; (7) the Epitome of Every Theme; (8) the Climax of Every Story; and (9) the Obedience of Every Command.
1. And now this morning we’re just going to look at one more: Spoke #10: Jesus Is the Solution of Every Problem. So let’s get to it!

## Spoke #10: Jesus Is the Solution of Every Problem

### Problems in Every Domain

- A. When you actually sit down to read the OT, you come to find with little effort, right there on the surface, that there are a great deal of problems that need addressing.
1. Now to be clear, I’m thinking here, not so much of exegetical or interpretive problems, but of existential problems if you know what I mean.
- B. The Bible identifies and discusses these problems that arise in every domain of our existence as human beings.

1. We could talk about emotional problems, spiritual problems, theological problems, vocational problems, natural problems, physical problems, social and relational problems, and on and on.
  - a. Each of these in their own right could be investigated and considered deeply. And all find their solution in one way or another in the person and work of Jesus and the cross.
- C. But of course, for this sermon to have any teeth, to gain any real traction, I can't effectively touch on all the various problems for which Jesus is the solution. I thought it best, therefore, to just pick one and come at it with a particular OT text as our starting point.
  1. So I thought about the problem of relational discord, interpersonal strife, the fact that human beings can't seem to get along. We're always fighting and hurting each other.
    - a. Anyone struggling in their relationships lately? Anyone feeling isolated or alone? Anyone struggling with prejudice or bias? Anyone got wounds or trigger points from past relationships? Anyone dealing with bitterness or anger or fear or anxiety because of interpersonal dynamics? Is this going to be relevant? It goes without saying, right?!

## Genesis 4

- A. So I just imagined you reading your Bible and coming to [Gen. 4](#) and the somewhat quintessential example of Cain and Abel. Here's the initial budding of human community, and right away, the problem of social conflict and enmity presents itself. It's a big problem. So let's consider it.
- B. It seemed best to me that we just take a moment to actually read a bit of the story. Though some of us may indeed be familiar with it, it wouldn't hurt to refamiliarize ourselves again. I do anticipate we'll see it all in new and fresh ways this morning.
- C. We'll be looking in a moment at all of [Gen. 4](#), really, but let's at least read the first 16 verses here: <sup>1</sup> Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, 'I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.'<sup>2</sup> And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.<sup>3</sup> In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground,<sup>4</sup> 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,<sup>5</sup> but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.<sup>6</sup> The LORD said to Cain, 'Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen?'<sup>7</sup> 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.'<sup>8</sup> Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' He said, 'I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?'<sup>10</sup> And the LORD said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.'<sup>11</sup> And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.<sup>12</sup> 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.'<sup>13</sup> Cain said to the LORD, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear.'<sup>14</sup> Behold, you have driven

me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.’<sup>15</sup> Then the LORD said to him, ‘Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.’ And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him.<sup>16</sup> Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden” (vv. 1–16).

## The Depth and Breadth of the Problem

- A. It’s a pretty disheartening and troubling story, really. But there are a few observations I wanted to make here as a way of accenting in particular the depth and breadth of the problem we’re considering . . .

### Observation #1: The Combatants Are Brothers

- A. The first thing to note is that Cain and Abel are brothers. We’re talking about members of the same nuclear family. They’ve grown up together, played ball together, laughed around the table together. And now the one hates the other to the point of murdering him.
  - 1. It’s one thing if this conflict ensued between members of different clans or families. But these are kinsmen, these brothers.
    - a. It’s meant to jar us and show us just how deep and “close to home” (pun intended) the problem really is.
- B. And, of course, with this we are reminded that, while the home can and should be a place of nurturing and health, it can also be a place that’s destructive.
  - 1. I have no doubt some of you know far more about this than you’d like. The stuff that’s gone on in your family, you can hardly speak of it.
    - a. Some of our deepest wounds can come from these closest family relationships. Because we’re sinners. And sinners sin against, not just God, but those around them, those closest to them. These two are brothers.

### Observation #2: The Context Is Worship

- A. So far as the story goes, what’s the context for this conflict? Well, did you notice? It’s worship. That’s the irony . . . and the warning. The whole matter turns on offerings made to God and his response in it all.
- B. Now to be clear, the issue with the offerings, and why God “[had regard](#)” for one but not the other, is not having to do so much with the offerings themselves as much as it has to do with the heart of the one making the offering.
  - 1. You can get a sense of it even in the way the offerings are described. Cain, we’re told, simply offers “[of the fruit of the ground](#)” but Abel offers “[the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions](#)” (vv. 3-4). He gives the best of the best. It’s a hint at what’s going on in the heart.

- C. It's something the NT later makes plain.
  - 1. John says that Cain was *"was of the evil one"* and *"his own deeds were evil"* (1 John 3:12). There was something off at the root of this religious activity. He was perhaps competing or trying to one-up his brother, or attempting to secure some blessing from God on the basis of his own works—to put God in his debt, as it were.
  - 2. But Abel, we're told in Heb. 11:4, had a heart of a different sort. He made his offering to God *"by faith"* and as such was counted *"righteous"* and acceptable.
- D. The fact that the context of this bloody conflict is worship underscores the abhorrent depravity coiled up in the fallen nature of man.
  - 1. It's one thing if they're out on the sports field or at the office or in the family room when the issue surfaces, but the whole thing really happens in the church, you could say. It has to do with God.
- E. We're reminded then that religion itself, when taken up in the hands of the flesh and fallen nature of man, can be just as much a tool for evil as anything else.
  - 1. Just like the family, the church should be a place of restoration and healing, but often here there's destructive judgmentalism, posturing of the flesh, division over and against others and those not in your tribe.
    - a. And, again, some of our deepest wounds come from church people, don't they? You got stories? I know you do.

### Observation #3: The Callouses Are Granitized

- A. The hardness, the recalcitrance of Cain in the face of God is simply stunning. There are three layers to this, as I see it.

#### LAYER #1: HE WON'T BE TALKED OUT OF IT

- A. If we ever thought that God was simply playing favorites here, and poor Cain was the victim, well vv. 6-7 really make that interpretation untenable.
  - 1. For there we see God comes not against Cain, but for him—not to spite him or throw salt in his wounds, but to warn and plead with him to repent and turn aright: *"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."*
- B. It's a powerful image he gives here. This picture of sin *"crouching at the door"*—it's language elsewhere used to describe the way lion crouches in wait for its prey (cf. Gen 49:9). So it's a serious situation. And God is warning him of the dangers.

1. But, as one commentator says, “while Eve had [to be] talked into her sin, Cain will not have even God talk him out of it” (TOTC). What a statement!

a. What a warning to us as well! Oh how often we know what God says of this or that sin, and yet we pick it up to play with it anyway. Sin is not a puppy. It’s a lion. And it’s desire is for you.

C. Cain doesn’t master or mortify the monster. He feeds it, he acquiesces to it. And then, amazingly, even after he’s committed the deed, he won’t own up to it . . .

#### LAYER #2: HE WON’T OWN UP TO IT

A. So God comes to him there in v. 9 and asks: “Where is Abel your brother?” To which Cain responds with those soul-chilling words: “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?” How depraved! How twisted! How callous! He just murdered his brother in cold-blood and he feels nothing.

1. God gives him a chance to confess and repent, to show some sign of remorse, but there is no movement whatsoever . . . save in the opposite direction. He only gets colder and harder, it would seem.

B. So God weighs in, vv. 10-11: “<sup>10</sup> And the LORD said, ‘What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground. <sup>11</sup> And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. <sup>12</sup> 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.’”

1. In many ways, this is leniency. This is kindness from the Lord. Cain deserves that which is outlined here and more.

a. But, nevertheless, the callousness runs harder still. Not only will he not be talked out of it, nor will he own up to it, he also won’t accept the consequences for it . . .

#### LAYER #3: HE WON’T ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCES FOR IT

A. So, even after all of this, he still has the audacity to object to God’s ruling: vv. 13-14: “<sup>13</sup> Cain said to the LORD, ‘My punishment is greater than I can bear. <sup>14</sup> Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.’”

B. One might compare this to the penitent thief’s words in Luke 23 where he’s rebuking the other thief saying: “<sup>40</sup> Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? <sup>41</sup> And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds . . .” (vv. 40–41).

1. But there’s none of that here with Cain. The callouses are as hard as granite.

#### Observation #4: The Culture Is Developing

A. Now, with this we move beyond the verses I read from Gen. 4. But I can sum it up for you. For our purposes this very well may be the most relevant observation I’ll make.

1. Because you see, Cain goes out from God's presence, "east of Eden," we're told there in [v. 16](#)—traveling further in the direction which Adam and Eve had been driven by God when they were cast out of Eden in the first place (cf. [Gen. 3:24](#)). He moves further away from the realm of God and deeper into the place of darkness and death, we could say.
  - a. And what does he do, there east of Eden, in "the land of Nod"?
- B. Well, it's very interesting. We're told in [v. 17](#) that he "built a city." It's the very first mention of such a thing in all the Bible.
  1. And with this city comes, as we would expect, the development of culture. So in [vv. 18-24](#) we're told of the descendants of Cain and how from them came the first developments of things such as animal husbandry, music with pipe and lyre, and metal-working with bronze and iron. Culture was being developed. What an exciting thing for the human race!
  2. But here's what we must see: all this culture was being shaped and developed with egoism at its center, driven by self-absorption and vainglory. Alongside the development of all that we just mentioned, sin is right there flourishing along with it.
    - a. And, hence, division and enmity and relational strife—this problem persists and even worsens.
- C. So we're told of Cain's ancestor Lamech, the most brutish of the bunch. Things have not gotten better with him, but worse. And we see with him the culture of oppression and violence that was growing up like weeds among all the other developments, choking it all out, tainting it all.
  1. So he's the first man we're told of who decides one wife isn't enough for him. He needs two wives. Though in [Gen. 2](#) we see clearly that God's design was for man to leave and cleave to his wife (singular), men in this city, in this culture, started to demand more. It's oppression. It's relational unhealth. It's you exist for me, not me for you.
  2. And furthermore, if Cain was a man of anger and violence, Lamech even more so. Hence his boast in [vv. 23-24](#): " <sup>23</sup> I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. <sup>24</sup> If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold." He's exulting in the severity of his aggression and vindictiveness. It's deplorable.
- D. But I say it's particularly relevant to us because this is the history of city-building and culture-making. This is the story not just of Cain's descendants, but of the human race, whether we like it or not.
  1. We can say: "Oh there's a few bad apples out there, but we're all inherently good."
    - a. But I want to ask: what history books are you reading?! It's oppression and violence on repeat. Oh sure there's some heroism in there and valor and nobility, but on the whole it's shot through with stuff just like this.
- E. That's why I can't even let my kids watch the news. The stuff we do to each other is devastating.

1. So I had it on in the background and then they're asking: "Daddy, what did Prince Andrew do that got him into so much trouble?" "Daddy, if a bomb went off here like it did there would it kill us?" "Daddy, why would a guy do that to his own family with a gun?"
  - a. You just say forget it and turn it off. Because we're wicked. And we hurt each other. And just as in Cain's day, so too now.
- F. Even with the development of all our culture and science and technology and things. Listen, evil just grows up right along with it.
  1. I just saw a headline the other day that exemplifies this perfectly. It said something like: "while the metaverse provides exciting opportunities for developers it also provides new opportunities for cyber-criminals." There you go.
    - a. So we develop something that may be good, I don't know, but we figure out how to use it to exploit and hurt each other.
- G. It's the heart of sin. It's the problem of relational discord. It's not just on the pages of the Bible. It's the world that we live in.
  1. So what do we do?!

## Traveling the Backroads

- A. Well, I'll tell you one thing that we do. We learn to travel the backroads of Scripture to Jesus.
  1. You see, God very quickly mounts a countermovement against this culture of death and self-service, and he's going to bring people back together. He's going to fix relationships and make things right. He's going to develop a culture, not around oppression and violence but around self-sacrifice and love.
- B. Now, there's plenty hinting at such a thing right here in [Gen. 4](#), but I'll hold off on this and circle back to it momentarily. I wanted to paint in broad strokes here for a bit—just show you the trajectory God has us on.
- C. I thought first of [Gen. 12](#), of course, where God tells Abraham: "Listen, I'm going to bless you and your family. But through you and your family we're going to bless all the families of the earth."
  1. Something different is coming. A counter-culture, a cross-culture. A new way of relating—instead of oppressing and hurting . . . blessing.
- D. The next text I thought of for some reason, it's always struck me, is in [Isa. 19](#), where the prophet, looking off into the distant future says remarkably: "<sup>23</sup> In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and Assyria will come into Egypt, and Egypt into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. <sup>24</sup> In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, <sup>25</sup> whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance'" (vv. 23–25).



1. Now, I say this is remarkable, because one can honestly scarcely imagine a Jewish man saying such a thing. You remember, Egypt and Assyria, these are two of the arch-enemies of the Jewish people. They conquered and enslaved them. It was the culture of Cain on steroids.
  2. And yet here God speaks through the prophet of a day when they will be equally God's people as much as the Jews?!
    - a. The words must have first caught in Isaiah's throat. No doubt, he tried to swallow them back down. I don't want to say that. How could such a thing be?
      - i. And yet it is. Because God is on the move to put an end to the division and strife and reunite humanity in himself.
- E. And pondering [Isa. 11](#), led me back to [Isa. 2](#), a wonderful prophecy that broadens things out beyond just the Egyptians and Assyrians. There we read this: “<sup>2</sup> It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it,<sup>3</sup> and many peoples shall come, and say: ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (vv. 2–4).
1. The nations are described as miraculously streaming, not down and away from the mountain of God, but up and to it. They will come flowing in to God's presence.
  2. And there we're told with such vivid imagery that “they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks” (v. 4).
    - a. Oh the metal-makers from Cain, no doubt they used their new technology to make weapons of war. But here now we see a new culture forming. One that's not violent and destructive, but restorative and fruitful.
- F. But, with the mention of all this happening “in the latter days” (v. 2), that led me to think of Peter's first sermon in [Acts 2](#) where he says that now these “last days” (v. 17), that all the prophets like Isaiah looked forward to, are here—we're living in them!
1. This makes sense of that was happening just prior in [Acts](#). You remember, the Spirit of God is poured out and people start speaking of God's glory in all the various tongues of the nations, the languages of all the families of the earth.
    - a. It's a picture of what the prophet was saying, how in the last days God would bring all these peoples together as one.

G. And then, of course, we have to ask the question, but how?! How is this happening, how is God accomplishing all of this?

1. Ah yes, well it's the death and resurrection of Jesus is it not? That's the climactic event that is really setting all of this into motion. That's what God has been moving towards all along, even back in [Gen. 4](#).

### 3 Hints

A. And now we're ready to come back to consider a few of those hints I mentioned. I'll show you just three of them . . .

#### Hint #1: The Birth of Seth

A. Right at the end of [Gen. 4](#), just when we might think all hope is lost, there's this brief and seemingly random note made about another boy born to Adam and Eve.

1. So we read in [vv. 25-26](#): “<sup>25</sup> 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.’<sup>26</sup> To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.”

B. Eve here gives this shoutout, as it were, looking back to the promise of [Gen. 3:15](#), where God said that he would provide an “[offspring](#)” to the woman who would ultimately overcome the serpent and the curse, though he himself would be wounded in some way in the process.

1. So Eve is exulting in God's provision here and his remembrance of that promise: “Our hope of one coming in that line didn't die with Abel. It's alive now in Seth.”

C. But more than this, when you bring Abel and Seth together you really have this piecemeal picture of the death and resurrection of Christ, don't you? You have an innocent one murdered and another rising from the ashes, as it were.

1. And the net effect of all this is that people begin, at last, to call upon the name of the Lord.

D. So right on the tails of the description of the cultural devolution and corruption from Cain, we get this hint here that God is not done, that he's working to establish yet another culture, founded on something entirely different.

#### Hint #2: The Merciful Mark

A. There's yet another hint we detect in this mark God gives to Cain.

B. As I've already noted, Cain's punishment may have been greater than he could bear ([Gen. 4:13](#)) but it is still much less than he deserved. And that has to be reflected upon.

1. He just killed his brother in cold-blood, in rejection of God's warning, then denies, then bellyaches that there are consequences at all.

- a. This man doesn't just deserve to be a bit lonely and have a harder time gardening or whatever.
  - b. He deserves the wrath of almighty God to be unleashed upon him.
- C. But instead he gets a mark: ["And the LORD put a mark on Cain . . ." \(v. 15\)](#).
  - 1. And it's not a mark of punishment. It's a mark of mercy. It's a mark, not to set him up as a target or to shame him, it's a mark to protect him. "If anyone hurts Cain in vengeance for Abel they will have to answer to me." That is what God is saying.
    - a. It's an astounding act of mercy when you think about it, for a guilty, unrepentant, self-absorbed sinner.
- D. But this gives us window, does it not, into the mercy heart of our Father and anticipates the kind of extravagant grace he will bestow upon unworthy sinners in Christ.
  - 1. And it's a foreshadow perhaps of the fact that the children of God shall in some way, the book of [Revelation](#) tells us, have God's name put upon their foreheads as a sort of sign and seal of their relationship with him ([Rev. 22:4](#); cf. [3:12](#); [7:3](#); [14:1](#)). He will put his mark on us, as it were, for salvation and glory—though, of course, we're unworthy of it!

### Hint #3: What Cain Is So Afraid of Jesus Ultimately Receives

- A. Another pastor first brought this to my attention, but consider it. When Cain objects to the judgment of God, what does he say? [" <sup>13</sup> My punishment is greater than I can bear. <sup>14</sup> Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me" \(vv. 13-14\)](#).
  - 1. There are essentially three things here he's afraid of, if you noticed: (1) I'll be ["hidden"](#) from your face; (2) I'll be a ["wanderer on the earth"](#); and (3) ["whoever finds me will kill me."](#)
    - a. Well, to Cain God says: ["No, I'll protect you from some of this."](#)
- B. But here's what we must see: all of this came in full for Jesus:
  - 1. He was the wander on the earth, with ["nowhere to lay his head"](#) ([Luke 9:58](#)).
  - 2. He was found in Gethsemane and taken away to be killed.
  - 3. And as he hung there on the cross, it was Jesus who was hidden, as it were, from the Father's face: ["My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"](#) ([Matt. 27:46](#)).
  - a. It was Jesus, not Cain, who would bear the brunt of this judgment—not because he deserved it, but because he loves and he saves . . . and this is the only way to reconcile sinners to a holy God . . . and it's the only way sinners can begin to be reconciled to one another as well!

## A Better Word and a Better Culture

- A. I love this, the author of Hebrews says that Jesus' blood "speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" (Heb. 12:24).
1. You remember, God says to Cain back in [Gen. 4:10](#): "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground." It's crying out for what? Vengeance. Justice. It's a voice of condemnation for Cain.
  2. Oh but the blood of Jesus speaks a better word. Not a word of condemnation but a word of salvation, forgiveness, justification.
- B. And it's around, not Cain, but Christ that this new culture, this cross-culture, can be fully developed. This is how the vision of [Isa. 2](#) starts to take shape.
1. It's as if we drive our swords into Jesus as he hangs there on the cross, but when we go to pull them out, to our great surprise, we find they've become plowshares.
  2. It's as if we thrust in our spears in rage against God and his Anointed at Calvary, but when we pull them back to have another go, to our great surprise, we find they've become pruning hooks.
    - a. In other words, Jesus takes our weapons of destruction and, by grace, turns them into tools of cultivation and development and rebuilding.
- C. He takes our culture of sin and death and turns into a culture of love and life . . .
1. Back in [Gen. 4](#), you remember, Lamech married numerous women and oppressed them. That's the kind of culture that was being created in Cain.
    - a. But now, in Jesus, the church is made his bride and he doesn't exploit and oppress . . . he nourishes and cherishes and gives his life for her, for you. [Eph. 5:25-27](#): " <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."
      - i. Do you know the love of Christ for you like this? What a thought!
      - ii. And did you catch the connection to the kind of culture this kind of love from God creates? Paul goes off on the love of Christ for us as his bride, but his whole point is that this ought to transform the way dudes deal with their own ladies in the home.
        - (1) This is not just spiritual mysticism or theology here. This is a new culture, a new way of life, developed on and around the cross.
  2. Back in [Gen. 4](#), you remember, Lamech punished any who got in his way and boasted in his brutality: " <sup>23</sup> I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. <sup>24</sup> If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold" (vv. 23-24).

- a. But now, in Jesus, the current flows in precisely the opposite direction. It was likely this taunt of Lamech that he had in his mind when he answered Peter's question "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" (Matt. 18:21). Do you remember how he responds? "22 Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times'" (v. 22).
  - i. It's the same ridiculous number but running in the precisely opposite direction—not towards wrath but towards mercy. That's the kind of culture he's created.
  - ii. And we can't forget the parable that he goes on to tell as to why we should be this way. He says, listen, if you're a servant and you owe the king some 6 billion dollars and he clears that debt for you, how are you going to go out from there and demand your fellow servant pay you back for pocket change? Even if what he owes is in the thousands of dollars, it's still nothing compared to what you've been forgiven by God in Christ. That's the point.
    - (1) It's a new culture. A new way of handling offence. It's developed in and around the cross.

## Hearts Aflame

- A. Doesn't seeing this, change the way you read [Gen. 4](#)?
  - 1. No longer is this just some distant story about some dysfunctional family.
  - 2. It's a story ultimately about how God is coming in Christ to rescue the world and heal our broken hearts and our broken relationships and our broken culture through the cross.
    - a. Doesn't that cause something to burn within you? Doesn't that light a fire in your heart?
- B. So did Jesus took these two disciples on the road to Emmaus to [Gen. 4](#) and show them all this during that Bible study he facilitated? I don't know. Maybe he did. Maybe he didn't. He certainly could have.
  - 1. But one thing I do know for sure is: Jesus is the solution of every problem!