

The Flourishing of Every Human Life

Transcript with headings

Introduction

In 1951, there was a woman here in Louisville who got pregnant a little later in life. Her friends and close people in her community encouraged her to have an abortion. And thankfully, she chose life. Because that woman's name was Dorothy Flora, and that baby was Greg Bowman. So we're thankful for you, Greg. We love you, brother. We're thankful for your life—not just what you do, but who you are as an image-bearer.

We're not going to be the type of church that just values professionalism, that gets our cues about what power is from the world. We are a church that honors what God honors. And Greg, you did a great job, brother. And I think for all of us, that sense of, "This is uncomfortable," or "It'd be easier if this was read in two minutes"—that feeling that we all have, we really need to push against that. Because when we look to the world and what they tell us about what is good, and what is powerful, what is presentable, what is usable... we're going to push people like brother Greg away. But Greg, you are valuable, you are loved, you are cherished, and you are fearfully and wonderfully made. And every day of your life, you are a gift to so many people, brother. We're thankful for you.

What makes someone worthy of life? What grounds human dignity and worth and value? What is the value of human life? In 1984, President Ronald Reagan issued a proclamation declaring National Sanctity of Human Life Day, which we here at Fellowship observe every January. In this proclamation, he said that the erosion of our sense of worth and dignity of every individual in this country continues. It's eroding. And unfortunately, that was 1984; unfortunately, that erosion has continued until this day, and it can be seen everywhere throughout our society.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, there were 1,038,000 abortions provided in 2024. That's one for every 30 seconds in 2024. And abortion is one of the most visible expressions of the loss of our moral clarity in society, but it's not the only way that human life is devalued.

According to FBI data in 2024, there was a murder every 31 minutes, sexual assault every 4.1 minutes, a robbery every 2.6 minutes, and aggravated assault every 36 seconds.

These are stats, but these numbers represent real people, real lives, real families, real loss that comes as human life is devalued—and then people become usable, and expendable, and extinguishable. See, when a society devalues the worth and dignity of every human, it is seen in all of our government policies and it is seen in our individual practices. Ideas have consequences, and bad ideas have casualties. We see it everywhere.

The Unraveling

We've been in Genesis 1 and 2 for a few weeks, looking at God's design for the flourishing of creation. But after hearing those statistics, or watching the news, or just quickly scrolling through social media, you could get the idea that God's given up on that design. He's kind of washed his hands of this and stepped away from the mess that we've created. But thankfully, Scripture tells us a different story. In the Bible, we find that the devaluing and mistreatment of humans that we see today is nothing new. It's not a new problem. The erosion that Reagan wrote about, the erosion that we see today—it began many, many years ago. But since then, God has also been committed to the work that He began in creation.

And so the question for us today is: in a world that's so far unraveled from its good design, how can we partner with God in His commitment to the flourishing of every human life, not just some? And for that, we need to go back to Genesis.

So far in this series, we've seen that God created the world good, and He created it to flourish under His Word. When we trust what God says about us, when we embrace the identity He has given us, and we live out His purposes in this world, it leads to true flourishing—not just in our lives, but for all of creation. That's God's design for flourishing. But... we haven't spent a lot of time in Chapter 3. And in Chapter 3, things begin to change, right? With the entrance of sin in 3 and the fall of man, all of that kind of begins to unravel. Things become disordered as mankind sets itself up as the authority to determine what is good and evil apart from God. Disorder. Humanity becomes disoriented as we no longer look to God to define us, but we look to our work and to what we can do; we look inwardly to define ourselves apart from God. Disorientation. And then the world becomes distorted as man and woman begin to work not for God and His purposes, but for our own selfish purposes—to try to build our own kingdoms, exploiting creation and others along the way. Disorder, disorientation, distortion. The unraveling began after they ate the fruit in the garden. And we see the effects today.

Chapter 4

As the dust settles at the end of Chapter 3, the question that is really lingering is: What's next? We read at the end of Chapter 3 that they leave the garden, away from the presence of the Lord, out into the east of Eden. And as the dust settles from the fall, how are things going to turn out? Will things be different? Have they learned their lesson?

Well, as the story continues in Chapter 4, we find that Adam and Eve obey the creation mandate to be fruitful and multiply, and they have Cain and Abel. But not only are they being fruitful and multiplying themselves, we find quickly that they're fruitful and multiplying their sin as well. See, Cain and Abel, they both have different jobs, and they bring an offering, a tribute offering to the Lord—an offering that would have said, "You are Lord, You are King, we are not. We want to honor You." And while the Lord accepts Abel's offering, we read that the Lord had no regard for Cain's offering.

And instead of Cain seeing the problem in here, he begins—like his parents—to point to the problem out there. Like, he didn't ask, "Why didn't God accept my offering? Why didn't God receive what I had to give Him?" Instead, he gets angry and blames God, and is jealous of his

brother about what's happening out there. And so God comes to him in Chapter 4 and He warns him. He says:

"Sin is crouching at your door. Sin is nearby. Its desire is contrary to you, and you must rule over it."

See, the threat that we saw in the garden has moved inward. The serpent was outside of Adam and Eve, but now sin is dwelling in his heart. And the dominion and subduing that man is to have over creation—now he's struggling with that in his own heart. He says, *"You must rule over sin."* It will be active and aggressive in your life. And unfortunately, Cain gives in. He follows those desires. He invites Abel out into a field, and while he's in the field with his brother, he destroys his brother. He kills his brother.

And at this point in the story, it's just right to pause. Have you ever been watching a movie or reading a book, and then all of a sudden the plot turns like out of nowhere? Like, where did that come from? That's not what I was expecting. That escalated quickly. That's what Genesis 4 should feel like. We've gone from eating fruit to murder. From juice to blood really quick—blood being spilt on the ground and crying out to the Lord. Like, things changed really fast. And the abrupt change... it should feel jarring to us. It's meant to.

The quick fall from Genesis 3 to what we see in Genesis 4 shows us just how quickly sin spreads as God's authority is cast aside, and just how impactful that rejection of God is. When we minimize sin... when we turn from God and say, "I no longer want You to be my authority, I'm going to decide what's good and what's evil, I'm going to do what I want"—the impact is felt throughout creation. And right here, the move from eating fruit to murder highlights just how significant sin is. I think in our own lives, we minimize sin. We make it out to be small. We think it's not that big of a deal. "I'm not hurting anyone." We think we can contain it and keep it in. But Genesis and the rest of Scripture paints a much bleaker, much deeper and darker picture about our sin. Sin is catastrophic.

And every one of us, deep down, are no better than Cain. Because of social conditioning or because of shame, you might not have murdered anyone yet. But deep down, we're the same. As Jesus says, if you have anger in your heart, you're on the same level as Cain. Sin is crouching at the door of our hearts. And this is a warning to us about the seriousness of sin. The reality of our insurrection. The depth of our depravity. Just how quickly jealousy and anger can turn to something like murder—or exploiting other people, or using them for our good, or oppressing them. It's in all of us. And we see it right away in Scripture.

Lamech

So Cain is judged towards the middle of Chapter 4. But God mercifully marks him so that he won't be murdered or killed by anyone else. See God's mercy there. And then in verse 16 of Chapter 4, he leaves the presence of the Lord, like his father did, and he heads east of Eden to set up a city. Okay, maybe now he's learned his lesson. Maybe now humanity will figure things out. Maybe now things will be different.

But then we read at the end of Chapter 4 that he has a descendant named Lamech. And Lamech wasn't any better. We find that Lamech has two wives—which Moses and God here don't comment against polygamy, but right away we see things changing in God's design. God created man and woman to be in a one-flesh union, in marriage. And yet, we already see the distortion of that as polygamy is introduced into the gene pool.

And then after that, Lamech sings this song. He kind of brags to his wives in verses 23 and 24. Somebody came up and punched him, so he turned around and killed the guy. Murdered the guy. And he's bragging about it. And he says in verse 24:

"If Cain's revenge was sevenfold, then Lamech's revenge is going to be seventy-sevenfold."

Meaning: nobody's going to mess with me. I have the power here. I'm the king here. I'm going to do what I want and nobody's going to mess with me. That's Lamech. Again, one chapter removed from Genesis 3. We're not far. Things are unraveling. Things are spiraling. And that seventy-sevenfold... how contrary is that to the heart of God? Where later on in Scripture, we see Jesus say if anyone wrongs you, you are to forgive him seventy-sevenfold. Things are spiraling and unraveling fast.

Down to Noah

So the story continues. Maybe it'll change this time. We get to a man named Noah. Now Noah, his name is one filled with hope. There was a promise in *Genesis 3:15* that a seed would come from the woman who would crush the head of the serpent and deal with the effects of the fall. And there's this kind of forward-leaning anticipation even early on in Genesis about... maybe this one's going to be the one to come. So Seth was named Seth because he was the appointed one—hopefully that he's the one, but he wasn't it. Noah comes along, and we see in verse 29 of Chapter 5... Noah, his name means rest or relief. It says:

"Out of the ground that the Lord has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands."

Maybe this one will be the one to help us with the effects of the fall. Maybe this one will be the one to stop this unraveling that's happening. Maybe he's the one.

But then we read in Chapter 6, verse 5:

"Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

You can't get any more bleak than that. You can't get a worse picture than that. Wickedness and evil are spreading throughout the earth. God created mankind in His image to reflect His glory and His goodness and His love throughout creation. And yet, what's filling the earth now? What's going to the ends of the earth? It's evil and wickedness.

Look down at verse 11:

"Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, 'I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.'"

Things are bad and they're only getting worse. Corruption, violence, evil filling the earth instead of God's righteousness. Things are spiraling down quickly.

And so God decides to start over. We see he preserves Noah and Noah's family by His mercy, by His grace. He has Noah—who was meant to have dominion and subdue the creatures on earth—He has him bring two of every kind onto the boat. And so we see God's preservation of humanity, preservation of life in the midst of judgment. So He sends the flood, and for 40 days, 40 nights it rains.

And then we get to the end of Chapter 7 and into 8, and we find that the waters begin to recede, and the earth emerges. And then a dove goes out. And then the animals are blessed and said to be fruitful and multiply. And then one man comes out of the boat. What does this remind us of? It's meant to remind us of Genesis 1, right? It's a new creation. A new beginning is happening. God haven't given up on creation.

And yet... in Chapter 8, verse 21 and 22, we find that not everything is new. There is an old problem. Look at 21:

"And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, 'I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.'"

God makes a promise with this new beginning, with this starting over. He makes a promise that even though the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth—He says He's not going to again destroy the earth with a flood. That's mercy, where judgment is deserved. He's saying: things are going to be bad. Like, as man and women are fruitful and multiply in the earth, his heart is going to be evil from youth. God knows that's going to happen. And yet He says, *"But I'm not going to destroy the earth that way again."* Do we have a new beginning here in Chapter 8 going into Chapter 9? But that old problem remains. God knows that the hearts of man will be bent towards sin.

Blessing and Purpose

And yet in Chapter 9, verse 1, the next thing we find is that God speaks blessing again. Look at Chapter 9, verse 1:

"And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.'"

We find this new beginning is happening in the midst of a fallen world that has unraveled from God's good design. But into that darkness, into that bleakness, God's Word speaks a word of blessing. And just notice the mercy of God in this. Like, He could have given up on humanity. He could have said, "I'm done with this plan. I'm wiping my hands of this. I'm moving on." But He doesn't. He doesn't do that. He hasn't given up on His good creation. In spite of the wickedness of man in their hearts from their youth, Noah and his family are graciously blessed and still given purpose. He says, *"Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth,"* echoing *Genesis 1:28*. A reminder of God's good design. He hasn't given up. We see in this that God is committed to life, even in a world of death. His plans to see creation flourish won't be thwarted by sinful humanity. And so He speaks a blessing over Noah and his family and reminds them of their purpose on earth.

But things are going to look different in this new world. Look at verses 2 and 3:

"The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything."

Things are different in this new world.

My family growing up, we always had dogs. I had a Border Collie for many years. And then going into marriage, we had two German Shepherds, and we had two Huskies. And then when we moved back here, we got this dog named Dash. I've talked about him. He's my bud. Love all that he does to our house. And he's... he's an interesting dog. He's got this irrational fear of men. I might have mentioned this before, but one man in particular is Luke Seay. Luke, where you at? Look, Luke is a great-looking guy. Sharp man. Not intimidating in any way. And yet anytime he comes in for home group, Dash just loses it. He's barking, the hair on the back of his neck stands up, he's just shaking. He's got this irrational fear of Luke. And other men, but especially Luke.

Before the fall, and it seems at least before the flood, there was harmony between man and beast. In the garden, we saw Adam and Eve naming the animals, categorizing the animals. And I could just have this picture in my head of Adam and Eve just kind of frolicking with different animals in a field. But now, something has changed. God puts a fear, it says, in the beasts—in the animals. That man is to have dominion over and to subdue. There's a fracture in the relationship. And so animals now flee humans. And they start shaking when they see Luke. Things are not as they should be. Something is different.

And part of the fear here that comes is because now humans are able to eat animals. We see here in this passage that humanity is given the freedom, is permitted to eat meat from any animal. God grants this extensive right to humans to begin to eat the creatures for sustenance and to protect themselves and survival. And so, it's not wrong to eat meat. We find that there.

But that's different. That's different. And the eating of meat now is just a constant reminder—it's a gift, I'm thankful for it, love me some steak—but it's a reminder that things aren't as they should be. Things have changed. It's not wrong, but things have changed. The unraveling continues in creation. There's a fractured relationship with animals where they fear us and we can eat them.

The Prohibition on Blood

And so God, knowing that creation is broken and man is sinful... now He needs to remind us that He is still the authority. That He is still King. That He is the one who governs and ordains life. And so He immediately puts up a boundary. Look at verse 4:

"But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood."

Genesis 9:4 draws a firm boundary. Lest we go and just do whatever we want. It's a reminder that God is Lord, that He is the Lord of life. Flesh with its blood—its life—must not be eaten, it says here. Why is that?

Well, blood represents life. Think about it. You got blood coursing through your veins. Blood coursing through the veins of animals. As it's running, you're alive. When it stops, you're dead. Or when it's let out, it's dead. In Scripture, blood and life are explicitly connected. *Leviticus 17:11* says that *"the life of the flesh is in the blood."* Life flows from God, belongs to God, answers to God. And blood is a representation of that. And so that means when God grants permission to take life for sustenance or survival, it must be handled with reverence. Life can't be treated as just expendable, or trivial, or consumable on our own terms. We have to submit to God, the giver of life. And so this prohibition against eating blood functions as a continual reminder to us that life is sacred. That it is from Him. And it's not to be treated lightly. Other cultures—think about Genesis wandering in the wilderness when they're receiving this—other cultures at that time would drink blood as an offering or to get the power out of the blood. It still goes on. I had a buddy in India, his family would go to the temple and drink blood as an offering. Like, this is a thing that happens in the world. And it just shows how contrary to the design humanity has unraveled and fallen. It's not meant—we're not meant to drink the blood. Life is God's. And there's this connection between the blood and life that we're not meant to cross the boundaries that He sets up there. And so this boundary guards it. It guards that for us.

The Reckoning for Human Life

But also, we see here that if God wants us to pay this much respect to the animals that He gives us... so we don't just go out and start killing all the animals we see and just eating them right there like savages... If He cares that much about the animals, how much more does He care about humans? And that's what we see next from Chapter 9, verses 5 and 6:

"And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man."

Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image."

In verses 5 and 6 here, God asserts accountability for life. The restriction of blood now finds its mirror in God's demands for an accounting of human blood. Blood and life remain inseparable. He says, *"Your blood, your life."* God Himself requires a reckoning for the taking of life, whether by an animal here or by human violence in verse 6. Both fall under the authority of God, and both fall under divine judgment. God draws a hard line in the sand. And it shows us that life is sacred, and its loss is never to be treated lightly.

And why is that? Well, He tells us in verse 6—the second half of verse 6: *"For God made man in his own image."* We're made in God's image. And so to take the life of another human, or to extend it to mistreat and oppress another human, is not just an affront against that person. It is ultimately an affront against God, the giver of life, and whose image that person is made. We find here that even after the fall, even after the flood, man is still in God's image. Even with sin in our hearts, even though the image is marred, we're still made in God's image. Every person from the womb and all the way until the tomb is made in the image of God and to be treated with dignity and honor, respect, value. Because we're made in His image.

And so to take that life is to treat life lightly. And God does not treat life lightly. And so what we see here is that the prescribed human response to murder should match the gravity of the action. When rightly administered, capital punishment affirms the worth of the life lost by treating the taking of life as a grave moral sin. We treat it lightly when we take someone's life. God doesn't treat it lightly. And so justly and rightly administered, what we see here is God setting up governments to say, "Hey, the taking of life is a big deal and it needs to be punished rightly." Which here is a life for a life. God doesn't take life lightly. God is committed to life. He is committed to it. And when his life is taken, He judges it. He judges it.

Conclusion

Murdering another person puts you in the place of God. It's saying that I am going to determine when your life ends. It's saying that you don't deserve to live anymore; I'm going to take it. It's sitting on God's throne and saying, "I get to determine who gives and takes away life." And God won't have any of that. And so, understandably, right after the flood, wickedness is filling the earth, is going to fill the earth. Evil is going to fill the earth, along with image-bearers. And so God draws boundaries. Saying, "Listen, I care about life. And you guys are going to be tempted to just be taking everyone's life and killing all the animals all the time." And so He gives mercifully... gives boundaries to restrain sin. It ultimately won't stop sin, but it restrains sin. God giving boundaries are good for society.

And then He says in verse 7: *"Be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it."* And so, we see in these passages from Chapter 3 through 9 that God hasn't given up on His original design. That even though corruption and evil and violence are going to continue to

fill the earth as man is fruitful and multiplies, God is going to be committed to life. Not only preserving life through Noah and their seed, but also through putting boundaries around us because we're so sinful we're going to tend to oppress one another and hurt one another and murder one another and kill all the animals along the way. We need boundaries. And God does that because He is committed to life.

So the question for us that I posed earlier is: how can we partner with God in His commitment to life? Every human life. Not just some.

1. Trust God's Authority

Well first, we need to trust God's authority. Trust God's authority. This unraveling started with the rejection of God's authority—with saying, "God, we don't need You. We're not going to listen to You. We're going to determine what's good and evil." And so in order to partner with God in His commitment to life, we need to say that You are the author of life, You are the creator, You are the sustainer, You're the one who knows what true flourishing is. And so we submit ourselves to You. Our culture and our society has a voice that doesn't reflect God. We have to continue to go back to the Word of God and let it shape what we think and how we act and what we believe to be true about good and evil. We have to be a people that are submitted to and trusting God's authority. We don't get to decide to end lives—whether they're in the womb, or they're on a hospital bed through physician-assisted suicide. We don't get to determine those things. We trust God. He is the giver of life. People aren't accidents. People aren't expendable or exploitable or for us to snuff out.

Yes, at end of life... we through our advancements in healthcare and technology, we can keep people alive longer. And so choosing to take people off of, say, a ventilator or something like that... that's different than physician-assisted suicide. But the point is, we should not be actively seeking to end people's lives. We gotta trust God's authority. And trust that He is God and we are not. Flourishing begins when we stop assuming that we have the right to determine which lives matter.

2. Pray and Promote God's ways

Second: Pray and promote God's ways. Pray and promote God's ways. We can't change hearts. Our actions can't change people's hearts. Our words can't change people's hearts. Only God can change hearts. And He's really good at it. And so we need to be a people that pray that God's ways would be known and loved and cherished. That He would be changing the hearts of men. That He would be changing the hearts of kings. Like we see in Proverbs: the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord. He is able to change hearts. And so we need to pray to that end. Think about Nehemiah. When he found out about the devastation that was going on in Jerusalem, what was the first thing he did? He got on his knees and he prayed. He sought the Lord. He asked God to act in power. And then he got up and did something about it. He said, "Lord, strengthen my hands," and he went to work. That posture of prayer needs to mark us.

And then promote God's ways. To promote just means to further the progress of something, especially a cause, venture, or aim. To support or actively encourage. We as God's people have the privilege and honor to promote the ways of God—the righteousness of God—in our country. Now I want to counter something, because some people say, "Well, we shouldn't legislate our religion and we shouldn't push that." Everyone's legislating their religion. Everyone is pushing their worldview. So whose voice is going to be louder? We truly believe that the ways of God lead to flourishing. So why would we not want to promote that in society? Why would we not want elected officials to create laws and pass legislation that's in line with Scripture? If not, whose views are going to get pushed? Anti-flourishing. Anti-creation is going to get pushed. And so be about using your voice in society and through your words and through your works promoting the ways of God. Being salt and light in this world. We don't have to be quiet. We're not the only ones pushing our religion. For some reason, we feel like we gotta be quiet or be scared about it. No. God's ways lead to flourishing. May we be about that in our country as well. Promote God's ways. Ideas have consequences. Bad ideas have casualties. And we're seeing it throughout our country. Let's promote better ideas.

3. Reflect God's mercy

All right, lastly: Reflect God's mercy. Reflect God's mercy. Because we live under God's authority, we should treat people as image-bearers that are worthy of dignity and honor and trust. We shouldn't treat people as constant burdens or problems or threats.

I was reading in *Genesis 16* this week, the story of Hagar and Sarah and Abram and their piece of work. Sarah gets... she got Hagar her servant to be the... you know, to sleep with Abram so she can carry on the seed. Well, it's interesting... again, I'm just thinking a lot about Israel wandering in the wilderness hearing the book of Genesis for the first time. Multiple times in that passage it says "Hagar the Egyptian," "Hagar the Egyptian." So you're wandering in the wilderness, you hear that... you're like, "What? The people that we were just 400 years enslaved by these people? Like... she was with Abram? Like, what's going on there?" So then Hagar has a baby and then Sarah gets jealous and there's this thing going on there, so they kick her out. Or they kick her out. And it was so interesting... in that passage, it says that God pursued... God went after Hagar the Egyptian. That would make no sense to Israel wandering in the wilderness. That's God's heart. And he does it again in Chapter 21. God goes after the Egyptian. After the enemy. That's the heart of God. That's the mercy of God. He pursues his enemies. And the evidence is that He pursued you. And He pursued me. When we were at enmity with God.

Our words and our actions need to reflect more of God's mercy than our president. Do you hear me? I mean the stuff he's been saying lately... I'm off script now. But for real guys. Just the way that he speaks about entire groups of people. Like what's going on in Minnesota. Right? Yeah, like countries need strong borders. You don't have borders, you don't have a country. I get that. But these people are there. And to use the words that he's been using—which I'm not going to say and some I can't even say up here—about the whole of the immigration population in Minnesota... like what does that do to the common American's perception of immigrants? Or people who look different than us? It devalues them. It dehumanizes them. They're all imbeciles,

they're all... again, I can't say all the words that he uses. But what that does in the mind of you and me is it begins to lower their value. And then it justifies the mistreatment of those people.

That's not... should not be our heart. Those should not be our words. Our words should reflect God. Jesus. The way He speaks about the least of these. The marginalized. So again, I'm not getting into immigration policy. I'm just saying: what's your heart posture towards these people? How do you speak about them? And one of the big indictments on the pro-life cause is that we only care about people in the womb, we don't care about... Okay, that's hogwash. But we do care. But the way we speak sometimes shows that we don't care about people who are marginalized in our society. Or the way that we post, or whatever. So would it not even further our cause more if those of us who are very outspoken about abortion and supporting those policies... if we also just just dropped a note on Facebook or whatever you're on and just be like, "Man, this is really sad the way that some of these immigrants—or even not even immigrants, some people who are American citizens who look like immigrants—are being mistreated." Doesn't that push back against that narrative a little bit? We need to reflect God's mercy more than our president.

4. Expect God's redemption

All right, lastly. Expect God's redemption. What's interesting about the unfolding of Genesis 6 through 9... you see God cleanses the earth, and yet sin remains. And then in Chapter 9, we see God draw boundaries around how they should relate to animals and to other humans—to restrain sin. Restraining sin is good. Vote to restrain sin. But ultimately, it doesn't stop it. The unraveling has continued to this day. And so we find ourselves now, in 2026, with a world that is still unraveling. Restraining helps, but it doesn't fix the heart issue. And so, in the rest of Chapter 9, we see this Noahic Covenant as it's called, where God makes a promise to creation to never destroy it again through a flood.

This promise that God will not do what He did in Genesis 6 and following. And the Noahic Covenant then flows into the Abrahamic Covenant, where God says that through the line of Noah comes Abraham, and Abraham is blessed to be a blessing. And He says, "Through you, there's going to be one that comes who brings blessing to the ends of the earth." And then that eventually lands on David. And God says that through David, a King is going to come who is going to set up a kingdom of righteousness and justice in all the earth. Where there'll be no more abortions, and be no more murder, be no more exploitation and oppression.

And then one day, that baby comes. Matthew begins by saying, "*This is the book of the genealogy of the son of Abraham, the son of David.*" The fulfillment of all these covenants before. All these covenants that couldn't change the heart of man, that couldn't wash away sin. And He comes, and He says, "*If you drink My blood, and if you eat My body, then you'll have life.*" And He comes and ushers in, through His death... heart change. That couldn't happen from these other covenants. Heart change that couldn't happen. The rest that Noah's name meant to bring—the relief from our sin—it never came. God's people were waiting for it.

And then Jesus comes upon the scene and says, "You will be washed from the inside out when you have the new birth." My Spirit will come within you and be like a well of living water that wells up to eternal life, cleansing you. And so, as we work in our society to see God's ways promoted and God's righteousness permeate all of society, we need to know that yes, the restraining of sin is good, but ultimately we need the redemption of sin. We need hearts truly changed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And this is good news. This is good news for those of you who have made decisions in the past—whether it's abortion or pushing someone towards abortion. The good news of the Gospel is that that doesn't define you. That God offers forgiveness for your sins. A cleansing. That He was murdered on our behalf on a cross. That there's mercy to be found in Jesus Christ. That doesn't define you. That's good news for those of us who have given ourselves over to a life of sin.

But it's also good news for those who don't know yet. That God changes hearts. That He's bringing redemption. That He has dealt with the source of the sin—the cause of the unraveling. And that when we pray and we promote, we can trust that He is the God who changes hearts. *Acts 16*, Lydia says that God opened up her heart to understand the things that were being taught. God changes hearts. And so we can expect redemption—not just in our lives, but in the lives of others. And we work towards that end. Because we submit ourselves to a God who is committed to life.

So church, as we wrap this up... God has made His position clear in Scripture. He is committed to life. Life belongs to Him. He sets its value. He demands an accounting for it. He protects it. He's at work to preserve life because humans are made in His image. And we live in a world that keeps trying to decide which lives matter and which lives don't matter. Which lives are expendable? Which lives are worth protecting? Who's valuable? Who's the powerful and the strong? But that path always leads to violence. It leads to exploitation, dehumanization, and exhaustion. But God shows us a better way. And He invites us to join Him in it.

Flourishing takes root in a society where His authority is trusted, where His ways are promoted, where His mercy is reflected, and where His redemption is expected. And so, are we going to be about that? Are we going to join our Father in His commitment to life? Not just in our lives, not just in this church, but in this society. Are we going to work for the welfare of the city that God has placed us in? So that His flourishing—true flourishing—comes. Not just in our lives, but in our city, and in our nation, and in our world. Can we join and partner with our God in His commitment to life? May we do that.