Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

The Bible reveals that there is, in heaven, a **Book of Life**. And before the creation of the world, all the names of those whom the Father chose to salvation were written down in that book. And all these people will be presented to the Lord Jesus on Judgment Day, and will live with Him in the new heavens and new earth.

Now, when the Bible speaks about election or God’s choosing, it does so in the **context of love**. For example, in relation to His choosing of Israel to be His special Old Testament people, the language of Scripture is that God “*set His heart in love on [them] and chose [them].*” And **Ephesians 1:4-5** says, “*In love He predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ*.” So, don’t ever think of election as like God choosing random marbles out of a jar full of unmarked, identical marbles. Instead, think of God going “I choose Adam! I choose Eve! I choose Joshua! I choose Ruth!” It is a loving, intimate, and personal choosing. And if you are a follower of Jesus, then this is true of you also! The Father chose you, in love, before the creation of the world. And the name of each person whom the Father chose in love was written down in the Book of life.

And the reason we have begun with this thought is because our chapter is **a list of names**. And it is in the form of what we call a **genealogy**. And let’s be honest, no child or adult, when asked to pick a favourite part of the Bible to read, ever chose a genealogy. And that is because the names are hard to pronounce and there is always a lot of repetition, but not a lot of action. And yet, 2 Timothy 3:16 is clear that “*all Scripture is … profitable for teaching, for reproof*,” etc. So, there **are gospel lessons to be learned from genealogies**. And that is our aim with this genealogy in chapter 5 – to see the gospel lessons that the Lord desires us to see. And the chief lesson is that **eternal life is the hope of all those who believe in Christ and His promises**. But to see this we will first need to remind ourselves again of the Fall background of this genealogy. And then we will be ready to work through the genealogy, noting how it reveals that eternal life is the hope of all those who believe in Christ and His promises. And there will be a number of points of application that arise from our consideration of this passage also.

1. Well, first of all, let’s consider **the Fall Background** that is the context of this genealogy.
   1. It is in Genesis 3 that we read about Adam and his wife eating the forbidden fruit. And God then revealed the curse of sin that they had brought on creation.
      1. It included **the very first gospel promise**. God said that a descendant of Eve would one day defeat the devil and the curse. And the Old Testament speaks about this descendant as Messiah. Later in the Bible we learn that this is the Lord Jesus.
      2. But God also revealed that from that day forward there would be **two lines in humanity** – the seed of the serpent, unbelievers, those who reject God and His law and His Messiah, and the seed of the woman, believers, those who believe in God and His law and His Messiah. And there would be an enmity or hostility between these two lines, all throughout human history. And this enmity is the background for what is recorded in all of Scripture.
      3. But the curse would also **affect everyone and everything in creation** – our bodies and minds, the material of creation, and our work and relationships – it is all now under the curse. It is hard going and painful and twisted and frustrating and limited. And at the end is death.
   2. So, we saw last time that Genesis 4 is a vivid picture of the seed of the serpent line in this cursed creation. Cain rejected God, and he and his descendants wanted to live life on their own terms. And so, the last half of Genesis 4 describes the first secular – or having nothing to do with God – society. There is some beauty, but the dominant theme is a spreading beastliness, as we see the increasing effects of the curse of sin. And we saw clear parallels between that early, secular society and New Zealand society today.
   3. Well, this spreading beastliness will get much worse in Genesis 6, leading, ultimately, to the global flood. But first we get Genesis 5. And Genesis 5 is introduced by **Seth and Enosh** at end of chapter 4. For with them we are told that “*people began to call on the name of the Lord*.” And so, Genesis 5 is about the seed of the woman line, the sacred line, the line of faith in God and His promises. So, boys and girls, if these two chapters were paintings, chapter 4 would be dark colours, with jagged edges and thick stripes. But chapter 5 would be bright and beautiful colours, with nice, tidy edges. These are God’s people. And there is much for us to learn from how these two lines are contrasted.
   4. But even before we get into the detail of chapter 5, think back to what I said in the introduction about the Book of Life. Revelation is very clear that it is only those whose names are in the Book of Life who will enjoy the life of perfect blessedness in the new heavens and new earth. Those whose names are not found in the book of life, as we see in **Revelation 20:15**, will be “*thrown into the lake of fire*.” So, broadly speaking, at the end of time, Cain and his descendants will be thrown into the lake of fire, but Seth and his descendants will be welcomed into the joy and blessedness of the new heavens and new earth. And that makes Genesis 5 an urgent call to faith – believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that you may inherit eternal life.
2. OK then. With that background in view, let us consider **the seed of the woman line**, the sacred line, the faith in God and His promises’ line, as we see it in the genealogy of Genesis 5.
   1. Chapter 5 begins with “*This is the book of the generations of Adam*.” It is one of 10 “these are the generations” phrases that mark out the 10 main sections of Genesis. And this one is special and unique because it says, “*This is* ***the book*** *of the generations of Adam*.” None of the other ten mention a book. So, it is likely that this genealogy, because it was recognized to be the original line of faith, was written down and passed from generation to generation. And I point this out because of how the New Testament begins; listen to **Matthew 1:1**: “*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ*.” Now, that genealogy only goes back as far as Abraham. But the genealogy of the Lord Jesus in Luke 3 goes all the way back to Adam. And it includes all the names from this genealogy in Genesis 5. So, two points in relation to this:
      1. First, **the Bible is genuine history**. These are real people. These are our ancestors. The records probably don’t exist today, but if they did, you would be able to trace your ancestry all the way back to Adam. And that is fascinating to think about.
      2. And **Genesis 5 and Matthew 1** **reveal just how carefully God has supervised the transmission of the Scriptures throughout the generations of humanity**. Because of how long those early humans lived, Moses, who wrote Genesis, could have spoken to his grandfather, who had spoken with a forbear, who had talked with Adam. That is how fresh this history was. And this is further evidence of the reliability and trustworthiness of the Bible.
      3. And this is important because **1 Corinthians 15:45** says, “*Thus it is written,* *"The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit*.” And by the “last Adam” is meant the Lord Jesus. He came to undo and put right what the first Adam did. And to do this, He had to be fully human; He had to be a descendant of Adam and Eve. And the genealogies are proof that Jesus ticks that box, so to speak. So, more importantly than having a physical link to Adam, we need a spiritual link to Jesus Christ. And that comes by faith alone. We must believe that He is the Son of God and the son of man, who died and rose again for the forgiveness of sins. And I hope you believe that!
   2. And faith is Messiah Jesus is what this genealogy is about. **Verses 1-2** are a short review of Genesis 1, and especially of the creation of the first man and woman *in the image and likeness of God*. And the way that this is expressed highlights faith and hope in the promise of God about a Messiah and eternal life. You see, every human being, believer or unbeliever, is created in the image of God in the narrow sense. We are all *spiritual* beings, *rational* beings, *moral* beings, and we will *live*, *eternally*. But that is not what is in view here. For this was true of Cain also. But the son of Adam that is mentioned here is **Seth**. And we read in verse 3 that “*Adam … fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth*.”
      1. You see, after God came to Adam and his wife, and revealed the curse and His promise to send Messiah, we know that Adam believed in God’s promise because he changed the name of his wife to Eve, which means “*mother of all living*.” And when we looked at that episode, we saw that this was a profession of faith. Adam now understood and believed that death was not the end; that he would still enjoy life beyond death, because of this promised Messiah. So, it is faith in Messiah that make us image-bearers of God in the fullest sense. For now we think God’s thoughts after Him. Now we know that our only hope for forgiveness of sins and eternal life is the Lord Jesus Christ. And now we want to live according to the law of God. And because Seth shared this belief and worldview, he was in the likeness or image of Adam. So, this is the genealogy of faith.
   3. And we see this in our next point also. For a part of being in the image of God in this fullest sense is understanding our calling to “*be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth*.” And this is not just in the sense of biological reproduction, but in the sense of **believing in the promise of the Lord to show His covenant faithfulness to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments**. So, as followers of Christ, we understand that children are a blessing and heritage from the Lord, and we welcome the opportunity to raise up another generation of those who might fear the Lord in this life and enjoy eternal life in the next. And that is also a part of what this genealogy in Genesis 5 is about – Fathers and mothers having children and bringing them up in the fear of the Lord.
      1. And I hope and pray that that is the goal and desire of all the parents, current and future, here today; that by God’s grace we might bring into the world those who we will be with, as brothers and sisters, in eternity!
   4. But alongside the picture of life in Genesis 5, what is another phrase that is repeated in connection with each succeeding individual? “***And he died***.” As part of the curse and consequences of sin that God revealed in Genesis 3, He said, “*By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return*.” So, despite being in the sacred line, the line of hope and faith, all these died. And that is a jarring note that we must not ignore or lightly skip over. Some of us have not long ago lost a loved one to death. Some of us are getting older or dealing with illness, which means that death may not be far away. And none of us know when we will die. But we will all die.
   5. Well, I just said that all the people in Genesis 5 died. But that is not quite true, is it. For in verse 21 we read about **Enoch**. Enoch means ‘dedication.’ And we are told that Enoch “*walked with God*.” It is just three words but talk about a phrase that is full of meaning!
      1. Back in Genesis 3 we learned that it was the custom of God to come down to the Garden of Eden to **literally walk and talk with Adam and his wife** in cool of the evening. But that was when Adam and his wife were in their sinless state. After they had sinned, God could not continue to do this with them, and they were banished from the Garden. So, it is likely that this phrase here does not mean that Enoch *literally* walked and talked with God. So, what does it mean?
         1. **Hebrews 11:6** says this about Enoch: 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*.”
         2. So, Enoch believed in God and His promises. He delighted in God, and God delighted in him. They loved to fellowship together. Enoch would have prayed, continually, and sought the Lord’s will, in relation to everything. And Enoch would have endeavoured, earnestly, to live in obedience to all God’s commandments.
      2. But Enoch’s dedication to the Lord was not just about their private fellowship and worship and his own holy living. And we see this in **the name that he gave to his son, Methusaleh**. The name means ‘When he dies, it comes.’ And Methusaleh died in the year that the flood came. So, Enoch clearly knew, from the Lord, that a judgment was coming. We don’t know how much he knew, but the naming of his son was a public declaration to all to repent and seek the Lord.
         1. And this is plainly stated in the **Book of Jude**. For there we read, in relation to unbelieving and wicked persons, “*It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against Him*.” So, Enoch warned people of a coming judgment and called them to repent.
         2. And on this point, look back at **Genesis 4:17-18**. We just heard from Jude that Enoch was the **seventh from Adam**, in the line of Seth. But who was seventh from Adam in the line of Cain? Adam, Cain, Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Methushael, Lamech. So, in the godly line we have Enoch who *walked with God*. In the ungodly line, we have Lamech who *committed bigamy and murder and was full of pride and arrogance and unbelief*. So, it is probably Lamech and those like him to whom Enoch preached the gospel of repentance.
      3. Well, **Hebrews 11:6**, as we read earlier, says that God “*rewards those who seek Him*.” And Enoch’s reward was absolutely stunning! We read in verse 24, “*Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him*.” **Hebrews 11:5** describes it like this: “*By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him*.” And this makes Enoch one of only two people in Bible history that did not die. Do you boys and girls know who the other one is? Elijah. He went up to heaven in a flaming chariot. But only Enoch and Elijah did not experience death. They were sinners, because they were human. And we are even told about some of Elijah’s sins in Scripture. And “*the wages of sin is death*,” we read in Romans 6:23. But despite their sinful nature and their personal sins, God graciously permitted these two men to not experience death. Wow! Surely, we would all love to not have to die!
      4. But before we move on from Enoch, there is an important lesson here about all that walking with the Lord involves. It means delighting in the Lord. It means private devotions and public worship. It means a personal commitment to holy living. But it also means **publicly calling sinners to repentance**. And we need to hear this today because we live in a world of unbelievers, and sadly this is true of many in the wider church also, who have no problem with private Christianity. If you want to spend hours studying the Bible and praying, that is fine. And if you want to live a certain way, that is fine, too. But publicly calling on sinners to repent? Oh no. That is hate speech. That is being judgmental. That is conversion therapy. That is not being loving.
         1. Well, Enoch pleased the Lord, which included publicly called sinners to repent.
         2. And how is the publicly ministry of the Lord Jesus summarized throughout the Gospels? “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*.” “*Unless you repent, you will … perish*.”
         3. And how is the Gospel summarized by the Apostles? “*Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted* out.” Sinners “*should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance*.”
         4. So, if we are to be like Enoch, and like the Lord Jesus, and like the Apostles, **we too must publicly call sinners to repentance**. Our world says just love and affirm those caught up in sin. And many professing Christians place happy families or job security or being liked above God’s expectation that we call on sinners to repent. But let that not be true of us. Yes, we must speak the truth in love, but may we be those who call sinners to repent of their sins and believe in Jesus, because if they do not, they will be condemned to hell. And that is the truth.
   6. Well, that brings us, as our last major point from this genealogy, to verses 28-32 and the other **Lamech**, the godly Lamech. For this Lamech also believed in God and His promises about Messiah and eternal life. And in verse 29, after the birth of his son, Noah, he said, “*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*.” Noah means ‘rest.’ And Lamech clearly longed for rest and eternal life. And he thought that his son might be the one whom God had promised would bring eternal life and a restored creation. Well, Noah was a saviour, in one sense, for it was through him that the Lord preserved humanity when He judged the world with the flood. But Noah was not *the* Saviour. The Saviour is the Lord Jesus Christ.
      1. And He is where this genealogy ultimately points us. For it is only by faith in Jesus Christ that we sinners find real rest – the forgiveness of our sins, the taking away of our guilt and shame, and being set free from the tyranny of sin and the devil.
      2. And it is only by faith in Jesus that we inherit eternal life in the re-created new heavens and new earth.

I said at the beginning of the sermon that the theme of Genesis 5 is that ETERNAL LIFE IS THE HOPE OF ALL THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN CHRIST AND HIS PROMISES. It was the hope of Seth and Enoch and Lamech and Noah and these others. And it belongs to those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ. For they are those whose names are in the Book of Life. Are you a believer? Have you received Jesus Christ and believed in His name? May it be so! Amen.