



TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

Talk Genesis 4:1-12: Cain and Abel

Lesson 11

1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." 2 Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. 4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. 6 So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." 8 Now Cain talked with Abel his brother;^[a] and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. 9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" 10 And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. 11 So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth."

Background Notes

Question: Who was the first person ever born? Answer: Cain! If you said "Adam!" you were wrong, of course, because Adam was not born. Adam was created, created by God. Now whether Adam had a navel or not, I'll let you decide the answer to that question! In any case, Cain was the first person ever born.

Can you imagine that event? I would guess that Adam helped deliver the child. We read in verse 1 that Eve said, "*I have acquired a man from the LORD.*" It may be that she thought Cain was the promised redeemer. How disappointed and heartbroken Adam and Eve must have been when they saw their first-born turn away from the Lord and murder his brother. How sad! Many Christian parents have been disappointed, as were Adam and Eve, to see one or more of their children turn away from the Lord. Maybe there are some Christian parents here today who are in that category. Let me assure you, on the basis of this Scripture, that you are not the first parents to suffer great disappointment and heartache concerning your children, and maybe just a matter of realizing this from Genesis chapter 4 can be an encouragement and comfort to you as well.

In verse 5, we see that Cain was angry. He was miffed that God had not accepted his sacrifice. So God said to Cain in verse 7, "*If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.*" God gave Cain a second chance, but warned Cain that if he did not take it, then "sin lies at the door."

What does that mean? It has been suggested that God was telling Cain there was a sin offering available at the door. In view of the context, I don't think that is the meaning. It seems that God was telling Cain that if he didn't accept God's means of grace, then sin and its effects will overcome him. Cain, in his anger, may have already been plotting Abel's murder.

The only way to keep sin in check is to accept God's means of grace. That was true then, and that is true today. The only way to have victory over sin in our lives is to accept God's means of grace, which is found in Christ alone.

Doctrinal Points

1. God does not accept Cain-type offerings.

Cain was a tiller of the ground, a farmer. Nothing wrong with being farmer, right? So Cain appears to have done the most natural thing -- he brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. *"And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD"* (v3). He brought of the fruit of his labor and gave it to the Lord. Now what's wrong with that? It sounds like Cain was trying to be a godly person. He gave to the Lord something he had worked hard for! But verse 5 says that, *"but He did not respect Cain and his offering."* Why didn't God accept Cain's offering? After all, Abel was a shepherd and God accepted his offering of a sheep. Why would God reject an offering from Cain's area of labor?

How many of you have ever felt sorry for Cain? Well, at this point in the account we must assume that God had already revealed what the acceptable offering was, the acceptable way of sacrifice. In fact, I think it's more than a mere assumption -- it's a fact. How can I say that with any degree of authority? Turn to Hebrews 11:4, the great faith chapter in the Bible, *"By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,"...* Abel's sacrifice was offered by **faith**. What does this mean? Throughout the Bible, **"faith"** is defined as **believing God and acting on what God has said or revealed**. Faith, as defined in the Bible, is never a blind leap! It is always a reasonable step, based on what God has spoken or revealed.

So it's clear that God had revealed the way of sacrifice, and both Cain and Abel knew what God had said. They both knew the right way to approach God. Abel believed, and by faith he brought an animal sacrifice. Cain didn't believe and decided to come **his own way**. Cain and his offering of the fruit of the ground were not accepted. Cain's rejection was not because he was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd. God wasn't playing favorites with what they did in life. No, Cain was rejected because he came his **own way** -- not **God's way**.

The same is true today;. God doesn't accept Cain-type offerings. In Jude 1:11 we read, *"Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain."* Who is "they" in this verse? "They" are the false teachers that Jude is denouncing. And what's "the way of Cain"? Cain tried to come to God in your own way, on your own terms.

God does not accept Cain-type offerings. We must come to God in God's way. John 14:6, *"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."* The Bible couldn't say it any plainer. The only acceptable approach to God is through the Lord Jesus Christ. That's God's way, yet people continue to try to bring offerings to God of their own making.

I recently talked to a man who thought he was going to heaven because of the three things: he had never cheated on his wife, he loved his family, and he practiced good business ethics. This was his offering to the Lord. This was going to get him into heaven. Well, these things are good, but they are not acceptable as an approach to God for salvation. These are Cain-type offerings. If you want your sins to be forgiven, remember: we must come to God in the way **God** has provided. God doesn't accept Cain-type offerings.

2. God does accept Abel-type offerings.

Abel came God's way. God's way was the way of animal sacrifice. Now, why did God choose the way of animal sacrifice? I think everyone here this morning knows the answer to that question, right? Abel's sacrifice looked forward to the one Great Sacrifice that was to come in the future. Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, would go to the cross and die for the sins of the world. That one Great Sacrifice is pictured in the way of sacrifice throughout the Old Testament.

Let's read Hebrews 11:4 once again: *"By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks."* Abel believed God, and acted on the basis of what God had said. This is what faith is all about. Thus Abel came to God, believing what God had revealed -- he offered to God by faith. Abel, though dead, still speaks. How? He speaks to us as through Scripture, as a model for everyone who wants to please God.

Abel came to God in God's way, not in his own way. What is God's way today? God's way today is to approach God on the basis of the one Great Offering that was pictured in Abel's sacrifice -- the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ himself. God does accept Abel-type offerings.

Practical Application: We are our brother's keeper.

What about practical application from this first half of Genesis 4? We **are** our brother's keeper! After Cain murdered Abel, God confronted him. Let's take a look at verse 9, *"Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"* Now, what is God's answer to Cain's callous question here? Look at verse 10, *"And He said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground.'"* Notice, even though Abel's voice was silent, his blood cried out for justice -- and God heard that cry. Cain was totally responsible and he would be judged.

Written between the lines of God's answer to Cain was **"Yes, you are your brother's keeper!"** And so are we. We are our brother's keeper. Listen to the words of I John 3:11-12, *"For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, 12 not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous."* 1 John is a letter written to believers. We are warned here not to be like Cain in our attitude towards one another! Oh, we may not murder one another, but we may be jealous of others, and we may even hate others because their lives are more righteous than ours.

Is anyone here today in that category? Do you refuse to love your brother or sister in Christ? Do you have a Cain-like spirit? We all are warned about this in I John 3:11-12. Remember, we **are** our brother's keeper. We have a responsibility to love our brothers and

sisters, to watch out for them, and not exhibit a Cain-like spirit. I John 3:11-12 is written to believers. Remember, we **are** our brother's keeper!