

APPLICATION

Think about someone who you hold anger in your heart towards. Let it go. Write a kind letter to them or sit down and repent to them, asking for forgiveness.

Read Genesis 4:1-26

- Why do you think God looked on Abel's offer with favor?
- What moments in your life have you felt your heart grow angry? What about sad or calloused? How are these different?
- How does God approach Cain? What questions does He ask?
- How does Cain respond to God's inquiries of him?
- What would have happened if Cain had asked for forgiveness?
- In this story how do you see the brokenness of sin effect the relationships of God and man, man and man, and man and creation? How are these relationships affected by your own sin? Which one is most affected at the moment?
- How do you see God's guidance in vs.7 vital to your own walk?
- What stood out to you the most in this week's sermon?
- How is the ground a major theme in this story? vs. 3,10,12,14

Inductive Bible Study

- Write "Yada" above "lay" in 4:1
- Underline "some" in verse 4:3
- Highlight verse 4:9 and reference Genesis 3:9 in the margin
- Use the Blue Letter Bible app to look up the OT names

For Parents:

This week's lesson is great if you have multiple children. Tell them this story of Cain and Abel in the car. Talk to them about how they are to treat their siblings. Sometimes we will get mad at each other, but love is always the answer. It's ok to upset. It's ok to not get along. But we must learn, through constant effort, to master our anger and to be kind to one another. When a child lashes out at another, pull them aside and calmly talk with them about what is going on inside them. Then give an opportunity for love to be brought forth instead of hurt.



Cain and Abel • Session 8

If you turn on the news, the first thing you are likely to see is a story of flashing blue lights and yellow police tape. Every day of the week, somewhere in our city, great atrocities are committed. Every day we are confronted with the reality that humans harm one another. Our world is fraught with wars and violence and murder.

But we should not be surprised in thinking that the modern world is more civilized than the ancient one. In fact, the twentieth century stood as the unchallenged century of violence. Hundreds of millions died unnatural deaths. More than any century that came before. The modern state has proven itself the Cain of all Cain's. We might blame tyrannical leaders or intellectual radicals like Marx and Sartr. We may even blame some prominent "-ism" or invisible system as the great destroyer of man. That is certainly the narrative presented us.

What does the Bible call this great murderer of man? The answer is sin. The sin that plagues human hearts is the gravest issue humanity faces. Billy Graham is famous for saying, "It's not the bombs but the human hearts at the back of the bombs..." We know it is true. We watch and are enraptured by famous killers; they make books and tv series about these terrible human beings. It is not just humanity. It's us. Sin isn't just "out there in the streets." It is in *us*. We cultivate it in dark rooms, late at night, away from others. We, ourselves, are not clean. Perhaps you have done well to obey the laws of our land, but have you obeyed the law Christ taught? Anyone who harbors hate in this heart has murdered his brother (Matthew 5:21-22, 1st John 3:15).

Here in Genesis 4, sin and homicide are at center stage. This is far more than the first murder, it is the “Way of Cain” (Jude 1:11). This early, unforgettable story reveals the corruption and slide of the heart away from God *into notorious sin*. It is elementary and primal. It throws light on the essential capacity we all have by painting a picture of sin lying dormant in the deep recesses of our hearts.

This story is a picture of every human in all ages and places. That God will look on something with favor. He asks each of us to do what is good/pleasing. But we all must now contend with our own sinful hearts. We not only have an adversary - Satan, and not only have to struggle with the thorns and thistles of this Earth and the pains felt in the body, but we also must wrestle with our own emotions and psychological pulls and whims. And these are the whims that drive our gravest of actions. Our own hearts are more deceptive than all else (Jeremiah 17:9, Mark 7:31-23) (Jeremiah 22:17 and 1 John 3:20).

I. Master sin by first guarding your attitude

The difference between Cain and Able was that of heart attitude. Cain came to God on Cain’s own terms. Abel came to God on God’s own terms. Cain wanted it all his way and his spirit was unwilling to care for his brother (Hebrew 11:4). The giveaway is Cain’s own anger and his own countenance *when Able is accepted*. He stands at a crossroads: Either accept God’s guidance as gracious communication and try again to do right, or continue down the path his heart is pulling him in.

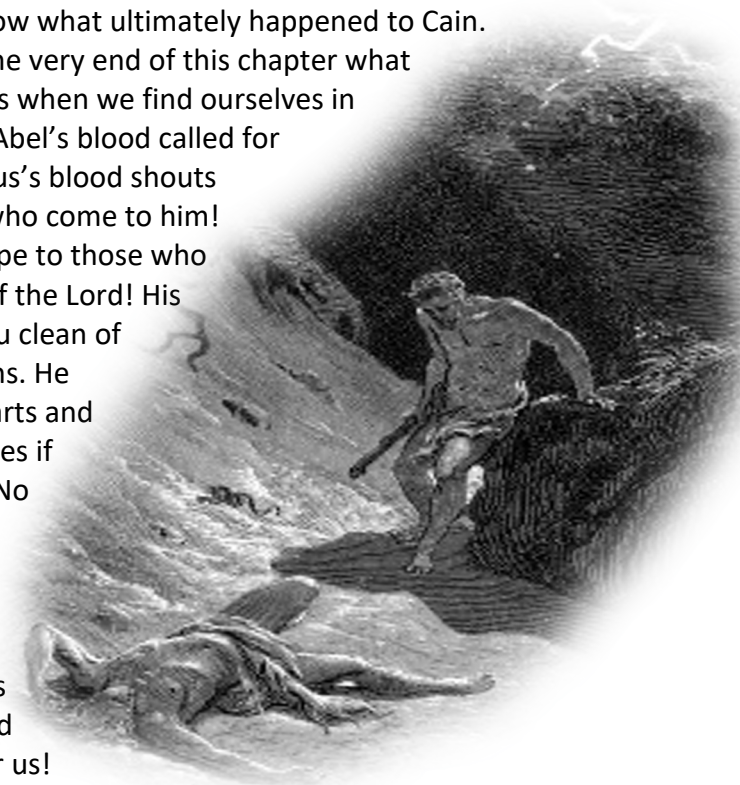
II. Sin can master your life if you allow it

Blazing resentment welled up in Cain against God and against his brother. His anger prevented him from caring for his brother. God seeing Cain’s anger boiling comes and intervenes with some questions. God then paints a picture of sin as a beast that wants to devour him. If Cain does not master it, he will be its victim. Sadly, even God’s graphic words bounce off Cain’s hardened heart for Cain, in haste and violent impulse, kills his younger brother. Yet, God is right there and sees it all. Cain then, like his father Adam, tries to cover up it up and lies. Cain is cursed to wander. He is cursed from the ground. He is like the snake cursed to eat dirt and crawl. Cain’s relationships will be broken, and the earth is now his enemy - the very earth he had once worked and watered, now that he watered it

with Abel’s blood, shall produce death for him instead of life.

III. Sin is mastered by focusing on the Lord

We do not know what ultimately happened to Cain. But we do see at the very end of this chapter what God asks each of us when we find ourselves in similar situations. Abel’s blood called for vengeance but Jesus’s blood shouts forgiveness to all who come to him! There is a great hope to those who Call on the name of the Lord! His blood will wash you clean of all those hidden sins. He will purify dark hearts and your corrupt motives if you come to Him. No one is beyond his forgiveness. No sin is too big for him. In fact, he paid for it all. Every sin, was laid on him and he tasted death for us!



Not what these hands have done, can save this guilty soul. Not what this toiling flesh has borne, can make my spirit whole. Thy grace alone, O God, to me can pardon speak. Thy power alone, O Son of God, can this sore bondage break. – Horatius Bonar 1861

Major Lessons:

- *Cain and Abel both give offerings, yet God looks with favor on one.*
- *Cain shows us a picture of our own hearts. They can become angry, are deceptive, and sin is crouching waiting to strike. (Ephesians 4:26-27, 1st Peter 5:1-9, James 1:14-15)*
- *What does God ask of us? That we do right! (Hosea 6:6, Amos 5:21-27, Isaiah 1:10-17, Micah 6:8, Zechariah 7:9, Malachi 2:6)*