

Raising Cain

Read Genesis 4:1-16

4 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; 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."

13 And Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! 14 Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me."

15 And the Lord said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him. 16 Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden.

Verse 6 – When it was apparent that Cain was sulking around, was the God of the Universe obligated to address Cain? Was the Creator of the Universe obligated to even take pity on Cain to fix what we now know was Cain's problem? No, absolutely not. But yet God spoke.

God loved Cain and that is why He rejected Cain's sacrifice when there was a problem in Cain's life that needed to be FIRST addressed before the sacrifice could be accepted!

1. God speaks to us in our darkest hours because He loves us.

Notice how God is treating Cain; like we do our toddlers. What happened Nik? Why the long face? (As if we don't already know why our children are sad or upset).

God is very pointed and direct: Why are you angry? And why is your countenance fallen (face sad looking).

What is God trying to accomplish? God is teaching Cain how to be self-aware, how to self-examine and how to problem solve. But Cain is simply not getting it!

Cain should have been honest and acknowledged that his anger stemmed from his sacrifice being rejected by God. And that he needed to figure out how to present a proper sacrifice. Instead, Cain chose to project his anger on Abel, his brother as if Abel had any influence on God rejecting Cain's sacrifice! All of a sudden, its Abel's fault that Cain's sacrifice was not accepted!

We too are exactly like Cain. It's always 'the other guy's fault'. The bible calls this the grand delusion.

The Bible also gives us the problem solver: 'You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye'.

This is what God wanted Cain to learn. That there was a plank in his own eye that was blinding him from seeing the truth.

What point of truth was Cain missing? God even answers it for Cain.

Verse 7 - 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.”

Cain did not “do well” or “do right”.

The bible talks of 2 principles with regard to Sacrifice that are important. The first is the ‘giving’ part. We are to give to God. The second principle is the **manner of giving**.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. (Or rational act of Worship).

We saw couple of weeks ago how God designates us as Holy (remember the Dress Shoes illustration). It is now my responsibility to make sure that my sacrifice is Holy and acceptable to God. Not JUST my gift, but my MANNER of giving must be Holy and acceptable to God.

Another illustration: Tax season just happened. I fill out my tax forms and submit them to the IRS. My neighbor also fills out his tax forms and submits it to the IRS. My form gets rejected or sent back. But my neighbor’s gets accepted. Would it be correct for me to hate my neighbor because somehow, they influenced IRS to reject MY tax forms? That ridiculous. I am responsible for presenting my tax forms in an acceptable manner such that the IRS will accept it! And the rules for what an acceptable manner are already laid out! It would be a grand delusion if I were to be angry with my neighbor regarding MY rejected tax forms. I am responsible for only MY forms.

I am responsible for the manner in which I sacrifice and approach God. So how are we to approach God?

Psalm 51:17 The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God. (NLT)

That is why Abel was accepted and Cain was rejected. The posture of the heart was the key.

2. God will always accept us when we approach Him with a humble heart in brokenness.

Cain had a wrong attitude of heart when approaching God. What is the big deal about our heart? Why is the posture of the heart that brings the sacrifice so important to God?

Why is God far more interested on our inward being that He is on our outward appearance? Jesus addresses this head on.

Matthew 12:34-35 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

Here Jesus is pointing out why a clean heart or a righteous heart matters. It is because our actions are a reflection of our heart. And remember, God has designated us as Holy. He has set us apart. In order that we might practice righteousness to get ready to live in His presence for all eternity.

Genesis 4:7 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 is so merciful to Cain. He is literally warning Cain of the trajectory of his path. God is warning Cain to draw back from the brink of the cliff that will lead to a terrible fall. Sin has a strong desire to overrun / devour / overwhelm Cain. And God wants Cain to be an overcomer.

The Hebrew word used here for desire is ‘teshuqah’ and is only used 3 times in the bible.

Interestingly the sentence construction in Genesis 4:7 is identical to Genesis 3:16 where the same Hebrew word ‘teshuqah’ is used.

Genesis 3:16 Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.

You will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you. (NLT)

Notice that God is pointing out the effects of Sin in marriage here. Where he is warning Adam and Eve that they will have conflict in their marriage as Eve tries to control her husband in leadership and Adam will harshly rule over her.

So, what went wrong with the first Adam and first Eve is set right with the second Adam who is Jesus and by extension the second Eve which is the Church.

Paul talks about this in Ephesians 5.

Jesus loved the church gave His life for the church and the church in turn respects the headship of Jesus and willingly follows His leadership.

Paul turns this around and exhorts Christian households to have the same pattern in a husband-wife relationship. If we want a reversal of sin in our marriages and family life, here is the solution.

What a beautiful picture of restoration and reversal of the ravaging effects of Sin.

Back to Cain, God is warning Cain that Sin has consequences, and that Cain must overcome sin.

3. God heals our brokenness through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ

And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.

Sin has a desire to control you, but you, Cain, must ruthlessly rule over it!

God is warning Cain to get a grip on life. And it is a hopeful challenge. God is NOT suggesting that the battle against sin is a lost cause. On the contrary, Cain is being fully warned of impending danger of the devouring power of sin.

We have all heard of stories or know someone who is bitter and angry. And how the anger and bitterness just consume the very fabric of their existence like a raging fire that destroys everything in its path.

In the bible Peter warns us that the devil is a roaring lion looking to consume or devour us and that we are to be sober minded and vigilant. In other words, be aware of who is 'crouching outside the door of our heart'.

In Colossians Paul gives us the solution to being overcomers.

Colossians 3:2,5-10

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Therefore, put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the children of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

Why does Paul say, 'put to death'?

Because when we become a new Christian or a believer in Jesus, that is when the real battle starts. Our sin nature does NOT disappear. We have to put these to death. The devil and his demons are now on full spiritual assault to get us to stay in our sinful lifestyles.

Recall, that the devil's mission is to steal, kill and destroy. Because the demons missed stealing the seed of the Word as it fell on our ears, and we accepted Jesus as our Savior. Now the demons of off to plan B, which is to kill the new life sprouted in this earthly body of ours.

So, we get relentlessly tempted in every angle possible. Our job is to put on that armor of God where the only offensive weapon is the Sword of the Holy Spirit which is the Word of God by which we are to put to death old lifestyle we used to live. All of these listed sins begin with the heart. These are all issues within our heart. We are to put to death these things on a daily basis.

4. Jesus gives us new life that we are to cultivate

Then Paul continues in **Colossians 3:8-10,12-16.**

8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and

**have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.**

Here Paul lists several character traits that need to be put off. Paul is using the analogy of taking of an old coat and putting on a new coat. Deeds are how people see us. Paul is saying our deeds need to change.

Paul lists the qualities of the Old man and contrasts this with the qualities of the New man.

The important part of how this occurs is that the NEW MAN is renewed in knowledge of the Creator!

The old man had knowledge of good and evil, with the propensity to only do evil. The New Man comes renewed with the propensity to do good because the New Man is renewed in the knowledge of the Creator who is nothing but Good!

But there is more! The Creator DWELLS in us through the Holy Spirit. The relationship that was lost in Eden is now restored. And because Jesus warns us that we have to work at being continuously connected in relationship with Him. Remember John 15. I am the vine you are the branches. We are to abide in Him. And because of this restored relationship, the Word emanates from out of our hearts and lives. (John 7:38...Whoever believes in me out of his belly/heart will flow rivers of living water!)

That is why plan C becomes so important for the demons.

Plan A was to Steal the Word, plan B was to kill the new life that was birthed in us by tempting us relentlessly and now it's on to plan C. Plan C is to destroy the relationship with the vine so that we are worthless to the Father gardener.... fruitless lives.

That's what Paul is talking about here in verse 16, if we let the Word of God dwell in us richly, only then can we bear fruit that for our Master.

Cain could have had all this. Cain's life never changed. His brother Seth is portrayed much differently, people began calling on the name of the Lord during Seth's time. Seth's changed life gave us Enoch who walked with God and then Noah who is recorded as being a righteous man.

5. The New Life that we now live has to be lived by faith in Jesus