

What was the purpose of the Mark placed upon Cain? What does that reveal about God's character?

The Oldies- Week 1 Cain and Abel

*13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.
- Joel 2:13 NIV*

Even though Cain was being sent away, God provided divine protection and a chance to start over. Ultimately sin separates us all from God. But to restore us to His presence Jesus entered the world to live a sinless life and pay the price of our redemption.

WRAP-UP

As we revisit the story of Cain and Abel, we're reminded that the struggles they faced are still very real today. Abel trusted God and brought his first and best offering, while Cain's lack of faith and obedience revealed deeper issues in his heart. When jealousy and anger took hold, Cain chose sin over God's warning and tragically killed his brother. Yet even in the midst of judgment, God showed mercy and offered protection. Their story challenges us to examine our own hearts, trust God with what we have, resist the sin that seeks to control us, and remember that God's desire is always to have our hearts devoted to Him and to restore our relationship with Him.

MEMORY VERSE

7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it." - Genesis 4:7 NIV

Challenge –

Ask God to open your eyes to the truth as you ask yourself these questions.

What story am I telling myself about my inadequacies and God's opinion of me? What lie am I believing about someone else based on the half-truths of social media? What are the gifts from God that I need to acknowledge?

INTRODUCTION

This summer we will be revisiting some of the most remarkable and perhaps familiar characters and stories from the Old Testament. We pray the Holy Spirit would illuminate the truths from these accounts in new and fresh ways as you press into Him! We will begin with the story of the first family; Adam, Eve, Cain and Abel. What started off as “good” quickly fell away when sin entered the picture. And the sins of that family are still with us. So, let's review the story of Cain and Abel and allow God to use it to shape us today.

Ice Breaker

Do you have siblings? Older, younger? How did you get along as kids?

Key Passage

6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it." 8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. 9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" - Genesis 4:6-9 NIV

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Not Right

In Genesis chapters 1 to 3 God created all thing, including the Garden of Eden and Adam and Eve. It was all good until sin entered the picture. Temptation came in the form of a choice to trust and obey or mistrust and disobey God. They chose disobedience over trust. In the generation that followed, Cain and Abel made their own choices about trusting God.

*3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4 And Abel also brought an offering--fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.
- Genesis 4:3-5 NIV*

What is the difference in the way the two offerings were described?
What was the difference in God's response to each?

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4 By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead. - Hebrews 11:4 NIV

The book of Hebrews helps us understand the difference between Cain and Abel's offerings. God told Cain his problem was that he hadn't done what was "right". The term for right (Hebrew *yāṭaḥ*) means good, pleasing and acceptable. Hebrews describes *how* Abel offered his sacrifice more than it describes *what* Abel offered.

What does Hebrews 11:4 reveal about the condition of Abel's heart or his intent in making his offering? How is offering your first and your best a demonstration of trusting God? If God really doesn't need our "bulls and goats" what is He seeking from us when we bring Him an offering?

It may not be a question of meat versus veggie that made the difference in the offerings, but the fact that Abel offered the firstborn and fat portions. We have no indication that Cain offered his first fruits. Abel had faith in God and was willing to offer his best.

How does Cain's reaction reveal his heart's attitude? What remedy did God offer Cain and what did God warn him of?

Does God need our money? Not really. What He desires is our trust and obedience. When we give back to Him the first and the best we have, we are saying we trust His faithfulness and His character to provide for our needs. We are saying that God Himself is what we need, even more than anything we have in this world.

2. Sin is strong, God is stronger

8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. - Genesis 4:8 NIV

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. - John 10:10 NIV

Sin is described like a cunning beast poised to devour its prey. We don't want to underestimate it; sin is a very real and powerful threat. God's concern with the attitude of our heart is directly related to our battle over sin.

When Cain saw his brother had received God's favor and he did not, Cain "burned with anger". He was consumed with jealousy. The result was he murdered his brother.

If our jealousy flares up when someone has what we want, it's an indicator of a problem with our heart. When that happens, we can choose to feed the problem or fix the problem.

What are some things we might be doing that would feed our jealousy?
What steps can we take to rule over the sin that threatens us?

3. Sin takes place, God shows up

9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" 10 The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. 11 Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth." - Genesis 4:9-12 NIV

When Cain killed Abel, God showed up. He asked Cain, "Where is your brother?", not because He was unaware, but to give Cain an opportunity to confess and seek forgiveness. It was just like when Adam and Eve hid and God said, "Adam, where are you?" Then He asked Eve "What is this you've done?" We would like to think that God doesn't see our sin or that we can hide from Him. But God comes to us so we can seek restoration of the relationship sin has broken. Even as Cain lied and said, "I don't know." God asked the question each of us should consider when we sin. "What have you done?"

When we sin, there are consequences we must live with. What were the consequences of Cain's sin? What did he fear that God had not mentioned (v.15)?

14 Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." 15 But the LORD said to him, "Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. - Genesis 4:14-15 NIV