

God of Creation | Genesis Ch. 1-11

Session Six: Genesis 4:1-16 | Cain and Abel

Big Picture Questions

- Last week: Q) Why is the world so broken?
 - A) The Fall- Ch. 3
 - But... there is a promise that the seed of Woman will crush the serpent

Differences of Adam and Eve's sin from Cain and Abel's sin

- In Ch. 3, Man sinned against God
- In Ch. 4, Man sinned against man

Man and Women depend on one another

- 1 Corinthians 11:11-12
- In Ch. 2, Woman was taken out of Man
- In Ch. 4, Man was taken out of Woman

Eve's children

- Eve gives birth to a man, and her first thought is, "This is the one who will crush the head of the servant."
- ...But we know it will be long before that happens
- "Abel"= mist, vapor (the fleeting nature of life)
- The cultural mandate is still going forward through these children.

Cain and Abel's sacrifices

- Cain and Abel have some understanding that sacrifices are required and are to be given in a certain way (even though the law hasn't been given yet)
- What is it that makes a sacrifice acceptable to the Lord?
 - God always, only wants an offering that comes from a pure motive.
 - It is about their hearts.
- Why did God reject Cain's offering but accepted Abel's?
 - Abel's was offered out of a pure spirit.
 - Cain is the first legalist; He made an outward show of righteousness with an inward resistance
 - "External righteousness is all that is required from me; I don't have to love this, I just have to do this."

The Nature of sin grows, but God's mercy continues

- In just one generation, sin is getting more sophisticated and bolder.
 - Psalm 51:16-17
- When God rejects his sacrifice, he calls him out.
- Instead of Cain responding with repentance, he responds with anger. He rebels even further.
- When God asks, "why are you angry," it isn't because He doesn't have all knowledge
 - God is giving him a chance to change course and repent.
- Instead of slaying his sin and anger, Cain will slay his brother.

- Sin here is personified as a wild animal, as an alpha predator that completely consumes him.
 - We tell ourselves that our sin isn't that big of a deal.
 - But sin always grows. It is not a pet on a leash, it is a predator.
 - When God invites us in the dialogue of examining our sin, we need to be quick to acknowledge the reality of its destructive nature and repent.
- Again, God engages Cain in dialogue about his sin.
- Cain's response: blame shifting and evasiveness (like his parents) but then also adds anger and sarcasm
- Cain's punishment: doomed to a life of wandering
 - Because his livelihood is growing and keeping the ground, this is difficult
 - Cain's response: complaint instead of repentance
- God still protects him though
 - "Nod"= wandering
- Cain willingly went away from the presence of God
 - Unlike Adam and Eve who had to be driven out of the presence of God

Cain's mark

- Ask "why?" not "what?"
 1. God knows the appropriate punishment for Cain
 2. It shows God's generosity: even towards the sin, even as He is administering justice, He is also administering mercy
 3. So he can serve as a living warning to others, so that others might regard their sin differently.
 - Sermon on the mount- anger can turn into murder (it's probably a matter of time)
 - Luke 10:25-37- love our God and love our neighbor
 - Am I my brother's keeper?
 - YES!

What about Abel?

- NT Scriptures about Abel
 - Hebrews 11:4 "By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks."
 - Hebrews 12:22-24
 - Mt. Sinai vs. Mt. Zion
 - The blood of Christ (mercy) speaks a better word than the blood of Abel (justice)

What are your motives?

- Do you tend to only gravitate towards places of leadership where you are seen? Do you want the Lord's glory, or your own?
- 2 people can serve in the same role, and appear to serve for the same motives, and only God knows the inward motive of their hearts
- Do you offer acts of worship...
 - For gain or higher cultural standing?
 - Out of guilt?

Stewardship

- Abel brought the first fruits, not because he felt the responsibility to take what was his and give it to God, but because he understood everything he had was God's in the first place.
- Abel understood himself as a steward and Cain understood himself as master of his own domain.

What is true about God according to this chapter?

- God is gracious and stands ready to forgive.
- God is wise
- God mourns at the true nature of sin.
- God gives a heads-up way before things are at a breaking point.
- God is just. He always punishes sin.
- For the believer, our sin is punished on Christ. But don't believe that just because you are a believer, God set your sin aside. Christ bore it for you.
- God is gracious in the midst of his justice.
- God is long suffering.

We should identify with Abel as a breath or vapor

- Psalm 39:5
- Psalm 144:4
- Isaiah 2:22

More self-reflection

- Who is it that you are angry with?
- What little sin are you keeping on the back burner?
- The Lord is swift to come to those who repent.