

3. Discovering Salvation

What's the difference between Cain and Abel on the surface?

It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did.

Hebrews 11:4

...without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Hebrews 11:6

There are only two ways to offer sacrifices to God:

In gratitude of God's goodness, (God's grace to you as a *means* to salvation). Or by thinking God owes me something, based upon my religious duty.

Abel offered his in faith; he believes God is good and he trusts God. *Cain on the other hand, is obeying to get something from God.*

Appropriating the faith of Abel:

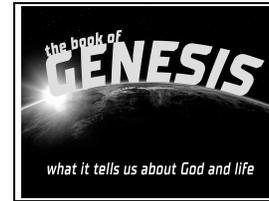
You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.

Hebrews 12:24

The author of Hebrews 12 tells us we have a different Able, a better Abel, and his blood cries out for justice too.

1 John 1:9 where it says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"?

If you confess your sins, God is faithful and *just* to forgive us our sins.



East of Eden Sin and Grace Genesis 4:1-16

Now Adam had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When she gave birth to Cain, she said, "With the Lord's help, I have produced a man!"² Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel. When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground.³ When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the Lord.⁴ Abel also brought a gift—the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The Lord accepted Abel and his gift,⁵ but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.⁶ "Why are you so angry?" the Lord asked Cain. "Why do you look so dejected?"⁷ You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master."⁸ One day Cain suggested to his brother, "Let's go out into the fields." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him.⁹ Afterward the Lord asked Cain, "Where is your brother? Where is Abel?" "I don't know," Cain responded. "Am I my brother's guardian?"¹⁰ But the Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground!"¹¹ Now you are cursed and banished from the ground, which has swallowed your brother's blood.¹² No longer will the ground yield good crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth."¹³ Cain replied to the Lord, "My punishment is too great for me to bear!"¹⁴ You have banished me from the land and from your presence; you have made me a homeless wanderer. Anyone who finds me will kill me!"¹⁵ The Lord replied, "No, for I will give a sevenfold punishment to anyone who kills you." Then the Lord put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him.¹⁶ So Cain left the Lord's presence and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

I. How sin hides. What do we learn about the nature of sin?

Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master." Genesis 4:7

God's saying, sin attempts to hide from you.
It's crouching down as not to be seen or noticed.

"There's no one more under the power of sin than someone who doesn't know they're under the power of sin."

Author Tim Keller

II. God graciousness on display.

1st- God is the one who initiates contact with Cain.

⁵ but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.⁶ "Why are you so angry?" the Lord asked Cain. "Why do you look so dejected?" Genesis 4:5,6

2nd-God comes as a counselor.

⁶ "Why are you so angry?" the Lord asked Cain. "Why do you look so dejected?" verse 6

"...you must subdue it and be its master." verse 7

God's saying, "You can do it, you have the potential."

3rd-- God gets to the motive of our sin

⁶ "Why are you angry?" verse 6

The answer is: When Cain sees his brother getting something from God, he doesn't say, "Great job, Abel"?

II. God graciousness on display. (cont.)

Why is Cain attitude seemingly against his brother?

The answer may well lie within their names. *Cain's name can mean productive, fruitful, our word would be successful.*

The name of *Abel* means to be *empty and vain. worthless and a nobody.*

Why in the world did these two kids have these names?

Commentator Miroslav Volf suggests there's only one answer.

Cain was the winner in this family. *He was the apple of his parents' eyes. Abel was behind, maybe, slower.*

So when God shows his favor for the less successful one?

Volf says, "Cain was angry because Abel, who was literally a nobody, would be regarded, and Cain, who was clearly a somebody, should be disregarded. Cain's identity was constructed from the start in relationship to Abel. He was great because he was better than Abel. Cain either had to readjust his identity or eliminate Abel."

The heart of sin is to build your identity apart from God.

...the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7

In every problem in our lives, grace is saying, "You have an opportunity to grow here by turning away from your ways and turning to God's."