

Understanding Faith through Cain and Abel

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Hebrews 11:4

In the last couple of lessons, we've looked at some things we learn from the beginning of the Bible – certain things about God through the creation and about Satan through the Garden of Eden. In this lesson, we're going to move to the next chapter and look at the account of Cain and Abel. This teaches us about faith – the world defines this by its own terms, but we need the Bible's definition. So we're going to consider some things we can understand about faith through Cain and Abel.

Faith Leads to Action

- Many have a concept of faith as being nothing more than mental assent – this is not Biblical (James 2:17, 19)
- Abel's faith led him to offer a sacrifice to God (Hebrews 11:4) – similar to others in Hebrews 11; faith leads to action
- We are justified by faith (Romans 5:1) – but this is an obedient faith (Romans 1:5)

Faith Is Based on God's Word

- Faith leads to action, but it must be a certain kind of action – Cain also offered a sacrifice (Hebrews 11:4; Genesis 4:3)
- The source of faith is God's word (Romans 10:17) – actions by faith follow this (Matthew 7:21-23)
- It is significant that Abel was a prophet (Luke 11:50-51) – God always tells man what He wants (He did this for Cain and Abel); we are not left to guess, follow our emotions, do what everyone else is doing, etc.

Faith Is Available to Everyone

- Another misunderstanding people have is that faith is miraculously given by God – not all receive it
- Abel's sacrifice was better (Hebrews 11:4) – but Cain could have made a proper sacrifice if he chose to do so (Genesis 4:3-7)
- God's word is for all (Mark 16:15) – it is doable for all (Romans 1:5; 1 John 5:3)

Faith Is Resented by the Unrighteous

- After God rejected Cain's sacrifice, Cain killed Abel (Genesis 4:8) – John explained why (1 John 3:12)
- If we live by faith, we can expect persecution (1 Peter 4:12) – our lives condemn the world (Hebrews 11:7)

- Yet we can trust God that His justice will be carried out (Luke 11:51; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-8)

What Does This Mean for Us?

- If faith leads to action, then we need to prepare for action (1 Peter 1:13); be zealous for good deeds (Titus 2:14)
- If faith is based on God's word, then we need to take time to study and learn the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2:15)
- If faith is available to everyone, then we need to be willing to share the gospel with anyone (Mark 16:15; Acts 8:4)
- If faith is resented by the unrighteous, then we need to prepare for persecution while trusting in God (1 Peter 4:19) who will ultimately reward our faith (1 Peter 1:3-7)

Conclusion

- "Though he is dead, he still speaks" (Hebrews 11:4) – Abel's example is there to teach us; as is Cain's
- We need to believe in the Lord – this must lead to action, faithfully following God's word
- No matter what may happen, let us entrust our souls to Him so we can look forward to eternal life