

What Cain Should Have Done

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Genesis 4:1-8

Genesis 4 tells us about Cain and Abel – two brothers, the sons of Adam and Eve, and one killed the other. Abel is an example of one who faithfully obeyed God (Hebrews 11:4). Cain is an example of one who chose to do what was evil instead (1 John 3:12). But what should Cain have done? He could have chosen to do right, or make correction after his initial sin. There were several steps that led Cain away “from the presence of the Lord” (Genesis 4:16). How could this departure have been stopped? And what lessons can we learn from this today?

What Cain Should Have Done...

Made His Offering by Faith

- Cain and Abel both made an offering, but only Abel’s was accepted (Genesis 4:1-5) – Cain may have had reasons for making the offering he did (more convenient, more personal, he did not give much thought to it, etc.)
- What was different about Abel’s offering? – it was offered “by faith” (Hebrews 11:4); this means it was according to God’s instructions (cf. Romans 10:17); the implication is that God gave them instructions about what they were to offer; Abel obeyed, Cain did not; Cain’s trouble could have been avoided if we followed God’s instructions
- Lesson for us – by faith, we need to follow the instructions that God has given (James 1:22; Matthew 7:21-23)

Found Out Why God Didn’t Regard His Offering

- After God rejected Cain’s offering, he became angry (Genesis 4:5) – God told him the solution was to “do well” (Genesis 4:7), but what does that mean?
- Cain had to be willing to admit that he was wrong and needed to do something different – instead, he got defensive and refused to listen; God told him to “do well,” so either he knew what to do and didn’t care OR he didn’t know and wasn’t interested in finding out
- Lesson for us – we need to be willing to listen and be corrected (Acts 18:24-26); we must not get defensive when we receive correction (James 1:19-21)

Learned from the Example of His Brother

- After God spoke to Cain, Cain went to talk to his brother (Genesis 4:8) – this could have helped Cain; Abel was a man of faith (Hebrews 11:4) and a prophet (Luke 11:50-51); if Cain needed help understanding what to do or what he should have done, Abel could help

- But it takes humility to ask for help – he had to be willing to admit his shortcomings (cf. Proverbs 9:8-9); instead, Cain directed his anger toward Abel and killed him
- Lesson for us – if we fail to do what is right, we must not resent those who do (cf. 1 Samuel 18:7-9); learn from them instead

Mastered the Sin That Threatened to Ensnare Him

- Cain failed to offer his sacrifice by faith – yet God told him that he was in danger of something even worse; sin was crouching at the door (Genesis 4:7); he needed to recognize this and “master it,” not be ruled by it
- Rather than learning from his sin and doing better, Cain continued in sin – he was “of the evil one,” and his “deeds were evil” (1 John 3:12); he allowed himself to be enslaved to sin (cf. Romans 6:12-13, 16); so he resented his righteous brother
- Lesson for us – we need to take sin seriously and work to overcome it (cf. Matthew 5:27-30)

Conclusion

- We are to follow the example of Abel – obey God by faith; follow His instructions
- When we fall short of this, we need to learn from Cain’s example – instead of doing what he did and keep moving further away from God, we need to stop our departure, turn back to the Lord, and serve Him faithfully again