

‘An Abel speaker’

I would like to begin by reading some letters; you’ve seen those books, ‘**Children’s letters to God**’. These are letters written to God from children of 6-9 years old. Here are some of them I enjoyed.

Anita writes, ‘Dear God, is it true my father wont get into heaven if he uses his football words in the house?’

Neil says, ‘Dear God I went to this wedding, they kissed right in church, is that OK?’

Joy says, ‘Dear God thank you for the baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy.’

Tom says, ‘Dear God, why is Sunday school on Sunday, I thought it was supposed to be our day of rest?’

Bruce says, ‘Dear God please send me a pony, I never asked for anything before, you can look it up.’

Sam says, ‘Dear God I want to be just like my daddy when I grow up but not with so much hair all over.’

Dona says, ‘Dear God, we read Thomas Edison made light, but in church they said that you did it, so I bet he stole your idea.’

Then I chose these last 2 for a reason,

Mary says, ‘Dear God, I bet it very hard for you to love all of everybody in the whole world, there are only 4 people in our family and I can’t do it.’

And John said, ‘Dear God maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each other so much if they had their own rooms, it works with my brother.’

In **Genesis 3** we find that sin entered the world and it separated man from God. And what we are going to see today in **Genesis 4** is that sin quickly begins to separate man from his brother. We are going to look at the very first family feud. I think we will find that this story still has got a lot to say today.

Please turn your Bibles to **Genesis 4:1-16** ‘Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, ‘With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man.’ Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favour on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favour. So, Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 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 master it.’ Now Cain said to his brother Abel, ‘Let’s go out to the field.’ And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘Where is your brother Abel?’ ‘I don’t know,’ he replied. ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’ The LORD said, ‘What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.’ Cain said to the LORD, ‘My punishment is more than I can bear. 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.’ But the LORD said to him, ‘Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over.’ Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. So, Cain went out from the Lord’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.’

The reason I chose this story is because it speaks of the 2 ways all men must choose. **Genesis 4** documents the assertion that was made by God back in **Genesis 3**, that there would be enmity between the offspring of the serpent and the offspring of the woman. And it didn’t take long for that enmity to show up, and Cain and Abel are going to be viewed in Scripture as the prototype of the 2 races.

We divide men up into black and white, male and female etc. God only sees 2 kinds of people, lost people and found people, saved people, unsaved people, saints, aints. Children of Abel, children of Cain.

Now no child ever entered this world with a greater measure of hope than Cain. I believe that Adam and Eve saw him, as the head crusher that God had promised would come from her seed. Remember they have never gone through pregnancy before; it’s a totally new experience for them. God has promised that from your seed there is going to be somebody that is going to crush Satan’s head. Her body starts changing, she is going through all kinds of feelings she never had before, then she delivers a baby, something that has never been done before.

And she says on the day that boy is born, ‘**Quannah**’ or ‘**acquired**’. That’s what she named that baby. The idea was, ‘**here he is**’ or ‘**I’ve gotten him**’. In fact, the Hebrew literally says, ‘**I have gotten a man, the Lord**’.

In other words, what she was saying was, **'here is the deliverer, here is the head crusher.'** But as we read on the great irony is, Cain is not going to be a saviour. In fact, he is going to be a killer. And the Bible is later going to describe the popular path that most people take, the path of rebellion, the path of wickedness. The Bible calls it, **'the way of Cain'**.

I believe that Cain was the prototype of all people bound for hell. I think Cain was the first man sentenced to hell. And his way has been popular, his way his broad. But today I want to focus on what the Bible says about Cain's younger brother. Abel managed to say a lot in a short time.

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

In what way, does Abel still speak? A message to the seed of the woman. A message of rebuke to the seed of the serpent. **What does Abel still say to us today?** Well he says **3 things**. **1. Abel still speaks of the necessity of faith.**

In that great chapter in **Hebrews 11** where all the heroes of faith are mentioned, the very first name is Abel's. You remember that chapter says in the beginning, **'without faith it is impossible to please God.'** And the very first person that showed us that principle was Abel. By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice to God than Cain did. One thing that story tells us is not only is man called to work but from the very beginning he's been called to worship. So, in **Genesis 4** we see men coming to God to worship him.

Now we need to ask the question, **why was Cain's offering of labour not pleasing to God?** They both brought to God the best of what they did all day. In the Old Testament **grain offerings** were often given to the Lord and he was pleased with it. **But why wasn't he pleased with the grain offering of Cain?** Now obviously, the story leaves a lot out. But I think the text implies that God had given specific instruction concerning proper sacrifice.

Notice for example, there appears to be a proper time because the text says literally, **'at the ends of days they came to the Lord.'** So, in other words there was a **'prescribed time'**. Apparently, there was also a **'prescribed place'**, it says, **'they brought their offerings to the Lord.'**

Now where was that? My suspicion is, it was at the place where the cherubim were because in the Old Testament often the cherubim guard the presence of God, but that is just a speculation. But there was apparently a prescribed time at the end of days. There was a prescribed place to the Lord. And evidently there was also a **'prescribed way'**. Because notice God said to Cain, **'why are you angry? If you do what's right, won't you be excepted?'** God could only say that if Cain knew what was right to do.

What does the Bible say about faith? **'Faith comes through hearing.'** You can't act in faith until you're given a revelation from God for you to act on. So evidently God had given to them an instruction about a time and a place and a way to bring him offerings. And evidently God had instructed these first worshippers, that the only acceptable offering for sin had to involve death. Now my suspicion is that he gave that revelation remember when he made coats of skin to Adam and Eve. But somehow God had communicated a revelation that an offering of atonement must involve death.

Yes, the Bible does talk about grain offering but never for atonement. Any offering in the Bible for atonement always involved blood. **Leviticus 17:11 'For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.'**

Hebrews 9:22 'In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness'.

Now think about this, **is that why possibly Abel was a keeper of flocks?** Because he wanted to act in faith to the Lord's command. You might say, **well why wouldn't he keep flocks?** Now remember at this point man is still a vegetarian. **Why would he keep flocks, if he's not going to eat meat?** I guess the wool would be useful for clothing. But evidently it was important to Abel to always make sure there was always a lamb ready for sacrifice to God.

You see, when it comes to approaching God, all men have got to choose either the way of Cain or the way of Abel. Abel offered God faith, Cain offered God fruit. **Remember that.**

Because those exact two choices are still the same two choices that men make today. Most men go the way of Cain and they offer God the fruit of their hands. It could be their labour. It could be their morality. It could be their religion. It could be their knowledge. Whatever it is, I'm going to offer God the fruit of my hands. But the Bible says in the very beginning, **'God is not pleased with an offering of fruit for atonement.'** The only thing that can make atonement is blood.

A well know British preacher called, G. Campbell Morgan was preaching one night and his neighbour was talking to a miner, who said, **'I heard what you said about just excepting Jesus offering on the cross but I would love to believe that and become a Christian, but that just sounds too cheap to me'**. Morgan said to him, **'did you work in the mine today?'** The man said, **'yes'**. He said, **'How did you get out?'** He said, **'well they have a big cage, which goes down into the whole, you crawl into the cage and it picks you up.'** He said, **'Did you pay for it?'** He said, **'no I didn't pay for it, I just got on and went up.'** Morgan said, **'well, if you didn't pay for it, weren't you worried it was just too cheap?'** He said, **'oh no, the company spent a lot of money to build that thing.'**

And then he realised, that just because something is free, doesn't mean that it is cheap. Men want to go the way of Cain and come to God and say, **'the way of faith is just too cheap, I'm going to impress God with something with my hands and give it to him and we'll make a trade. God if you forgive me, I give you something I made with my hands.'**

The way of faith is not cheap, it's a free gift but it is not cheap. It cost God the blood of his holy and sinless son to make atonement for sin. The Bible says in **Philippians 3:9**, **'God's way of making us right with him depends on faith, counting on Christ alone.'**

A missionary went to the pacific islands one time and he couldn't find a word for faith. One day, one of the natives had crises in his life and he said, **'Could I please come and lean heavily on you?'** And the missionary realised that is what he could use to communicate faith. And so, if we went back to **Philippians 3:9** we could say, **'For God's way of making us right with him, depends on leaning heavily on Christ for salvation.'**

And that's what Abel still says. He still declares t is impossible to please God without faith. **2. Abel still speaks of the hostility against righteousness.** The Bible says, **'That while they were in the field Abel attacked his brother and killed him.'**

Originally Cain was angry at God, **so why did he turn his anger at God onto his brother?** You see, worldly people cannot stand to be reminded that their lives are not lined up with the will of God. Abel is telling us that devote people should expect hostility from an ungodly world. **1 John 3:11** **'This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brothers were righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.'**

The preacher Billy Graham was playing golf with the president of the United States one time and there was a man who joined in a few holes later. His friend said, **'what was it like to play golf with the president and with Billy Graham?'** And the golfer said, **'I don't need Billy Graham stuffing religion down my throat.'** And so, he went away to the practice range. So, after he finished his friend said, **'I guess Billy was kind of rough on you out there?'** The mankind of embaraced said, **'well, to tell you the truth, he never mentioned religion once.'**

You see, just a simple example of Christ likeness was ignorant to him because it made his own deeds seem as evil as they were. Abel was hated because his life was a public rebuke to the way of Cain. **Luke 11:51** we find that when Jesus was talking to the Pharisees, Jesus says, **'you know, you guys, you kill prophets and then your kids make monuments to them'**, he says, **'you've been doing that ever since the days of Abel.'**

So, Jesus says Abel was a prophet, so perhaps not only did Abel's own righteous life rebuke Cain, perhaps Abel even preached to Cain. Perhaps Abel try to say to his brother, **'Brother Cain, you need to listen to God, you should not go your own way, you should not rebel against God, you need to do what God says and you need to honour God.'**

You see, Jesus knew something; he knew that the murder of Abel was really the work of the serpent. He said in **John 8:44**, **'You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning.'** Jesus knew who was behind the murder of Abel. Jesus knew the offspring of the serpent would always be at enmity with the offspring of the woman.

Paul said in **2 Timothy 3:12**, 'Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.' You can just count on that, there is not going to be any peace talks. There is only one way we can avoid hostility from the world and that's to compromise and look so much like the world that they can't recognise their own actions as evil as they are. That's the only way.

Other words, there is going to be enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman as long as this world turns. It is going to be with us until Jesus comes back. If you accept a standard that is different from the world. There's going to be clashes. If you pursue loyalties that is above earthly loyalties you're going to be opposed.

When God said, 'from this woman's seed there's going to be a head crusher'. Satan made up his mind that he is going to attack every godly seed that comes from this woman. He did to Abel, he did to every prophet who came after Abel and he's still doing it today. Don't deceive yourselves that someday there is going to be great harmony and there is going to be great peace between the people of God and the people of the world. There is never going to be peace. Because Satan doesn't want peace.

What I'm saying to you is that you need to feel good that you are on the serpents enemy list and when he comes after you and he attacks you, when he sends the Cains of this world to attack and oppress and confront and ridicule you, you need to feel good that you are on the serpents enemy list. Because this thing is going to keep going until the world stops.

And that's what Abel is trying to say. He's trying to say, 1. 'you've got to focus on faith', he's saying 2, 'the hostility between me and Cain is going to last until Jesus comes back'. And 3. 'Abel still speaks of the certainty of judgement.'

Evidently Cain thought that nobody would notice his crime. 'I'll take him out into the field, we'll be all by ourselves, I'll kill y brother, who's going to know?' And so, God comes to him and says, 'Cain, where is your brother?' And this arrogant fool thinks he can even fool God. 'I don't know, I don't make it my job to keep up with my brother'.

And God says, 'What have you done? Listen!' Now I'm sure there was a pause and Cain turned his head. He hears the sound of the birds in the trees, the sound of the breeze against the grain. 'What? what?' Then God said, 'your brothers blood cries up to me from the ground'. And for the first-time God curses a man. And Cain he is so hardened in sin at this point, he doesn't respond with remorse, he doesn't fall down on his face and repent. He responds with reproach, he says, 'You can't do that, that's too much, I can't bear what you've done.' Basically, he's saying, 'God, you don't have the right to assign that kind of judgment.'

Let me tell you something about the serpent's seed, they are always blasting God at his right to assign judgment. **Have you ever heard this question? How can a loving God send people to hell?** The serpent has been getting Cainites to ask that question since the beginning of creation. That is not the question the Bible asks. he Bible says up front that a Holy God has the right to assign judgment.

Here is the question of the Bible. **How can a Holy God let people into heaven? How can a Holy God let people into heaven?** And that is the question the Bible answers. Now the amazing thing to me is that God put a mark on Cain to say to the rest of the world, 'even this evil man's blood is my property, so don't touch it.'

But God also sent out another word. He put the world on alert that God hears the cries of the Abels who have been who have been treated unjustly and he will take up their cause. One of the things that burdens us as believers, is that we see a world where is little justice and we get upset with God.

Why do innocent babies get shot when there is a war? Who's going to speak for all the infants that were torn out of wombs by abortionists? What all the women who have been raped and the people who did it were never caught? All the millions and millions of kids who have been abused and violated and nothings ever happened?

You know the list just goes on and on and on and on and on. And sometimes it gets so big that people even start to doubt God. And they see this world that is so full of un-judged evil, they start to think nobody is in control. This story tells us that judgement is certain. God has heard the cry of every innocent drop of blood that's ever been spilt.

Revelation 6:9-11 'When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, 'How long, Sovereign

Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?' Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.'

That's probably not the answer you want to hear to that question. God, how long are you going to wait before you avenge the blood of all the righteous people on earth? And the answer is, 'I'll take care of it, but not yet.' But you need to understand; nobody is going to escape the justice of God's court.

I heard about a man, who was convicted of trying to bribe a witness, his lawyers filed appeals. So, he spent 3 years after he was convicted out of jail through the appeals process. They lost all the appeals and so he was sentenced to 4 years in prison. They never told him where to report or where, so he never went. And for 7 years he just went on about his life doing his thing. Until finally someone caught the mistake and went to get him. I guess he just thought, 'I won't have to pay, I've escaped justice'.

And that happens in the world, sometimes in the world, people fall through the cracks in the justice system. But God's justice system doesn't have any cracks. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, 'For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.' A time is coming when all men will either be born again or wished they had never been born at all. The blood of Abel still cries for justice.

You might be thinking, wait a minute, I've made mistakes, I've gone the way of Cain in my life, what hope is there for me, if all the people I've hurt are crying for justice? Well, Abel still speaks, but loved ones Abel doesn't have to have the last word. Let me close by telling you that Jesus speaks too and Jesus speaks a better word than Abel. In Hebrews 12 we are told 'how awesome God is, how God is a consuming fire, how God is a God that makes men tremble and quack.'

But this is what it says about us. Hebrews 12:22-24, 'But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.'

You see, Abel's blood cries out for judgement, but Jesus' blood cries out for mercy. Abel's blood sends the sinner away from God to wander and Jesus' blood opens the way back to God. And so, the Hebrew writer said back in Hebrews 10:19 'Brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus.'

All men can't hear the blood of Abel but God can but there is something else that God can hear that men can't hear. God hears the blood of Jesus. And God hears every time the blood of Jesus speaks for a sinner. Every time. We need to pray for sinners who are still living the way of hostility, these people will face judgement. And if they do not have the blood of Jesus to speak for them, the blood of Abel will speak against them and they will be lost.

For this week, my challenge to you all and myself is to pray for lost people and pray that God will send people who have walked in the way of Cain to this church to be hear of the blood of Jesus.