



The Sermon

Dr. Steven J. Lawson

Genesis 4:1-10

"Cain & Abel: The First Murder"

August 8, 2021

TRANSCRIPT

If you would, please, take your Bible and turn with me to the book of Genesis chapter 4; and today we're going to look at verses 1 through 10. The title of this message is "Cain and Abel: The First Murder." As always, I want to begin by reading the passage and just reintroducing it to you so that we will have it before our eyes as we work our way through it in just a moment.

The word of God reads, beginning in verse 1, "Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, 'I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord.' Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.' Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against his brother and killed him.

Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' And he said, 'I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?' He said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground.'" Let us go to the Lord in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we feel the weight of this passage, the seriousness of this passage as we have just read through it, and we feel a sense even of sorrow as we see the first murder take place, and we see division in a family and in a home. And, Lord, we pray that even as we gather today, that You would administer Your grace to us through Your word, that we would never find ourselves in such a position, that we could truly say there, "But for the grace of God go I." We pray that You would restrain sin in our own hearts and in our own lives, that there would never be such jealousy within us and such sin, and certainly never the acting out of sin like this. So we know this passage is here for our good and for our instruction, though it is filled with tragedy. Use this story of tragedy to produce triumph in us, so we look to You for You to do Your work within our hearts, within our minds, this day, from this passage, from this text, in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

Well, as I've just read these verses, they contain the first murder in the Bible. In fact, in this passage we see the first of many things. We see the first conceptions. We see the first birth deliveries. We see the first vocations. We see the first questions. We see the first murder. And we also see the first casualty of spiritual warfare, that was pronounced in the previous chapter. As you recall, in Genesis 3:15, God said, "I will set enmity between your seed" - referring to the seed of the serpent - "and the seed of the woman." And there was announced already in Genesis 3 that there would be spiritual warfare, and there would be casualties in this warfare. And here we see the first of those.

What makes this spiritual conflict so sad in Genesis 4 is that it is not being played out between two hostile armies that are led by two opposing generals with two clashing armies. What makes this so sad is that this is in-house, that this is sibling rivalry, that this is brother against brother, that this takes place really in the same household. Here is the battle line drawn in the home. Here is the battle line that involves darkness clashing with light, and

error clashing with truth, and an unbeliever clashing with a believer. It's false religion clashing with true religion, and it's all under one household. And so this is the first struggle that we see being played out of Genesis 3:15, the first struggle between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.

So we want to look carefully at this first battle between the children of the devil and the children of God. So as we go through this passage, it really is a series of contrasts; and as I give you this outline, it will be two words, and the first word is always "two." And then we will add a second word at each heading of the outline. And so this passage really has a great separation.

I want you to note first "two sons," that's in verses 1 and 2; and what follows are the first two births of the human race. We see in verse 1, "Now the man had relations with his wife Eve." Of course, the man is Adam. And when it says, "had relations with his wife," I do want you to know that it, "had relations," it's just really one word in the original Hebrew language when Moses wrote this, and it is the word for "know," to know. And the reason I draw that to your attention is that this word will be used throughout the Bible to refer to our personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the difference between knowing about God and actually knowing God. And it also gives insight into the word "foreknowledge" that will be used in the book of Revelation.

It says here that, "The man knew his wife Eve." And in the Bible for a man to know a woman is to enter into the most intimate and personal love relationship that could ever exist on the earth, and it came to refer to the intimacy of a sexual relationship, that Adam knew Eve in a way that was so intimate and so personal that it resulted in, it says, "She conceived and gave birth to Cain." This is the first child to be born as a result of the first pregnancy that would take place in the human race.

And Eve said, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord." That needs a little explanation. And if you have a New American Standard like I

do, the words "the help of" is in italics, which tells us it's not in the original language with which Moses wrote this. It's only been supplied by the translator to try to smooth out this sentence to go from one language to another language. And most literally this reads, "I have begotten a baby boy, the Lord." And in Eve's mind she still has what God told the serpent, that there would be a seed of the woman that would be born, that would be the deliverer of Adam and Eve; and it was a foreshadowing, of course, of the coming of Christ.

But Eve does not know that this will not take place for centuries and centuries. In her mind, this conception is the fulfillment of the promise, that this is the one that was promised in chapter 3. "I have gotten a manchild," literally, it's just a baby boy. It means a boy that is a baby: "I have gotten a baby boy, the Lord." And so in her mind, either this conception and delivery has come about by the help of the Lord, and that is very possible; or, more probably, her expectation is this is the answer to the promise that was made in chapter 3.

But, of course, it was the very opposite. The one born to Eve was Cain who was born with the sin nature of her husband Adam. And the very sin nature that she herself has come to possess, for Adam and Eve are now plagued with a sin nature in their heart and in their soul, which is a disposition to sin, that there's already bound up now in the human nature because of Adam's original sin this desire to sin. And that is in Cain, and that's in you, and that's in me. No one ever had to teach us to sin, we had to be taught not to sin. And so the Bible is very clear on this, and I think it would be important for me to just give you a few cross-references so that we are very clear on this.

I remember when I attended the grave of Ronald Reagan out in California. And there is a plaque next to where he is buried that speaks to the goodness that is in all men and the goodness that is in the human race. And we must understand, it's the actual opposite, that sin has polluted the human nature of every single person who has been born on planet earth. And these cross-references, the first is Psalm 58:3, listen to this: "The wicked are estranged from the womb; these who speak lies go astray from the womb," meaning

that there is already sin in the nature of the child as they come out of the womb. In fact, that's why there is sometimes, sadly, even death in the womb, because sin is already in the womb.

Psalm 51:5, "Behold," - David says - "I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." And that does not mean that the act of conception was sinful, what it means is there was the transmission of the sin nature from Adam to Jesse, David's father, to David himself, and at the moment of conception, that pollution of sin was already in the baby while David was in the womb. And Ephesians 2:3 says, "We are by nature children of wrath."

You see, the reason that we sin is because we are sinners; it's already in us, and it was in Cain the moment he was conceived in the womb. And we continue to read, and we see again, "She gave birth to his brother Abel." And it is possible that that word again could indicate they might have been twins, that there was not a time gap in between or a nine-month pregnancy in between, that they could have been twins, just like Jacob and Esau were born twins. And the name "Abel" means a vapor or a breath, something that's fleeting and passing away, and it would be a foreshadowing of his own life, as he would die, from our perspective, a premature death.

And we see there are two professions here: "And Abel was a keeper of flocks." That means he was a shepherd. And we're not told what the flocks are; it could be lambs, it could be sheep, it could be another animal. "But Cain was a tiller of the ground." That means he was a farmer. And these are both honorable professions. There's not a right and wrong in these professions, they are both honorable. And so there are many similarities already at this point. And Abel himself would have been born with the same sin nature.

And so both sons have the same parents. Both sons grew up under the same influence. Both sons grew up under the same roof with the same instruction. Both sons had honorable possessions. Both sons were hard workers. Both sons were exercising dominion over God's creation, just as Genesis 1:26 and

28 would say. But how strange it is, is it not, that two children with the same parents, living in the same house, having grown up with the same instruction, would go in two opposite directions.

So that leads us to our second heading in verse 3: "Two sacrifices." Verses 3 and 4 show us that the similarities end. And so in verse 3 we see, "So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord." What is implied here, not stated, though it is implied, that there was an appointed time that God had revealed to Adam and Eve, and Cain to and Abel, that they were to come and worship Him, just like there is an appointed time that you and I have been assigned to come and worship the Lord today on the Lord's Day. And they were to come at this appointed time and to worship God.

And all worshipers must bring a sacrifice. All worshipers may not come with empty hands and an empty heart. All worshipers must bring that which they give to God. And for us in New Testament times, Romans 12:1-2, we are to be the living sacrifice placed on the altar. We are to give ourselves and our lives to the Lord, as well as our gifts. Well, here they were to bring a sacrifice. They could not come into the presence of Holy God and be received by Holy God, as they are in their sinful state. No sinner can enter into the presence of Holy God without a blood sacrifice.

You say, "Why a blood sacrifice?" Because the shedding of blood represents one person dying in the place of another. And the wages of sin is death. And so for a sinner to enter into the presence of Holy God, someone else has to die in my place, someone else has to shed their blood; and that person must be a perfect person, who would have no sin of their own, who could offer their life in my place; or God will have no regard for that person. In fact, God will be offended that, "You would come into My presence with your sin."

And so what is implied here, though not directly stated, is that God has indicated to Cain and Abel, "You are to come and worship Me at the appointed time. And you have sin in your life, and there has to be a

covering for that sin. And the sacrifice that you would bring would have no efficacy value to it whatsoever; it would be a foreshadowing of the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world." And as you would believe God and worship the true God the true way, there would be the merit and the benefits of that ultimate sacrifice that would be given for you, the Lord Jesus Christ who would redeem us with precious blood as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Jesus Christ.

Well, Cain thought he could worship the true God his own way, that he could reinvent worship, that he could reinvent church, if you will, that he could concoct his own manner of approaching God because he's very sincere, and God will see his sincerity, and he can come and bring a good sacrifice that will please God. And so Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. That is to say, something that he would harvest from his tilling the soil, whatever that fruit would have been he would have gathered it in a basket, and he would have come at the appointed time and come before the one true God, and in worship offered to God the best that he had to offer. Drawing from his own well, drawing from his own religiosity and his own efforts, Cain - I want you to hear this again - Cain chose to worship the true God the wrong way. Cain chose a more humane way to worship God that did not require a death. It was too offensive to Cain's own sensibilities. He wanted a bloodless religion. He wanted to worship God without the shedding of blood. Cain chose a more sophisticated religion. He chose the more cultured religion. He chose a more civilized religion; he chose one that was less offensive to him and one that was more appealing to his flesh.

Cain's bloodless sacrifice represents the worship of every false religion and the worship of every false believer who thinks they can come just as they are. Jude 11 refers to this as "the way of Cain, the way of Cain." It is the way of defiant disobedience against God. It's referred to in Psalm 1:6 as "the way of the wicked." It is referred to by Jesus in Matthew 7:13 as "the way is broad that leads to destruction." This is the path that Cain chose to travel as he comes to attend this worship service.

And so it is today. There are denominations, there are churches that have removed hymns that talk about the blood. It just doesn't sit well with them to be singing, "There's power in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ." It's just not sophisticated enough. It sounds so barbaric, it sounds so antiquated that we would be singing about the blood. And then they go into their doctrinal statements and they begin to remove mention of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, because it just doesn't quite fit them for what they want in a religion. And every one of those churches are on the way of Cain, which is the way to hell. It is the way to eternal destruction.

No, Cain thought he could reinvent worship. He thought he had a better approach. He thought there's another road that leads up the other side of the mountain that leads up to God. He thought, "Well, there's this way that God has given us, but it's not the only way. There has to be other ways. God is a God of broad mercy and wide mercy, and so therefore we can come up the other side of the mountain, and we'll meet at the top. You have your religion, I have my religion. You worship God the way you want to worship. No, I'll worship God the way I want to worship, and I'll meet you at the top." It's the way of Cain, it's the way of the devil, and it leads to hell, an eternal damnation. You can't come up with your own way to worship God. There is worship that's true, and there is worship for which God has no regard.

So next, verse 4, "Abel, on his part," this is in contrast to Cain. "On the other hand, Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock." He brought not fruit, he brought calves, he brought sheep, he brought lambs, he brought, we're not told what, but the firstlings of the flock, from which blood can be drawn after the shedding of blood. And so Abel humbles himself. Abel puts himself under the authority of God. Abel, in obedience to God, Abel does what is prescribed by him on how to approach God. He is a sinner, God is sinless. He is unholy, God is holy. "There's no way I can come before a holy God just as I am. There must be an intermediary. There must be a mediator. There must be someone to stand in between, and for there to be the shedding of blood that would make a covering for my sin, in order to enter into the presence of God."



So Abel brought a blood sacrifice. Abel chose to worship the true God the right way. How much of all this Abel understood we're not told. He doesn't necessarily have to understand, he's simply to do what God has required of him. And so again, this sacrifice offered by Abel is but a foreshadowing. There's no efficacy in the shedding of blood of a real animal, there's no taking away a sin of that. There is only one sacrifice that takes away sin and that is the perfect sacrifice of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that would be offered up upon the altar of the cross.

But putting faith in God on the basis of the foreshadowing of this coming death results in forgiveness of sin. It results in a covering for your sin. It results in righteousness. Hebrews 9:22, listen to this verse, Hebrews 9:22, "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." This is what God says. And so, beloved, I trust that today as you've come to worship God, that you're worshiping the true God the true way, that you're under the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you are not trusting in the fruit of your own labors, or your own goodness, or your own morality, but that you have come to confess your sin, and put your faith in Jesus Christ, who is the only Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.

Notice the two responses in verse 5, "The two responses." What follows are two responses – one by God, one by Cain – and in the first half of verse 5 we see the first response, it is God's response. What is God's response to this mixed worship service in which there both is a believer and an unbeliever in the same worship service? What is God's response? Verse 5: "But for Cain and his offering" – his bloodless offering – "He" – God – "had no regard."

God had no pleasure in Cain's offering. It didn't matter how sincere Cain was, he was sincerely wrong, he was dead wrong. It was displeasing to God. It was dishonoring of God. It was unacceptable to God. It was offensive to God. It was insulting to God. It was blasphemous of God. It was not a small thing, it was not a trifling thing. The worship of God is the ultimate purpose for which every person is made. The ultimate reason that you are on planet earth, the ultimate reason that you were conceived in your mother's womb, that you were born, it is to live solely *Deo gloria* for the

glory of God alone. This isn't a small matter, this is at the head of the list. And this is what believers do, we will do for the rest of eternity: we will just give glory to God and worship God.

But Cain, he sinned at the highest level. This is not a secondary sin, this is a primary sin, and it was offensive to God; and God had no regard for it, God utterly rejected it. It would have been better if Cain had not even come to church at that time. It would have been better if he had just stayed out in the field, than to come in an offensive manner to God.

So what was Cain's response to this? We saw God's response: "No regard." So what was Cain's response, the second half of verse 3? How did Cain respond to God's response? Did Cain repent? Did Cain confess his sin? Did Cain just fall on his knees and plead for mercy with God? Did Cain humble himself? Did Cain run to one of Abel's herds and grab a lamb and slay it, and come with a blood sacrifice? Is that how Cain responded? It's just hard to even conceive of this.

"So Cain became very angry." His flesh was provoked. He wasn't just angry, it says, "He was very angry." And the word "very" in the Hebrew means exceedingly angry. He was in a rage. He lost all sense of self-control. And the word "angry" here in the original language means literally to become hot, to burn, to be burned up. He became furious at God. I mean, his head was like a smokestack with smoke just peeling, spewing out of it: "How dare God not accept my sacrifice!" shaking his fist in the face of Holy God. "I'm just as good as Abel."

And then we read, "and his countenance fell." It was written all over his face. He couldn't even conceal it or hide it from Adam and Eve, or from Abel. His face fell to the ground. He was so enraged against God. What we learn from this is that our responses need to be in response to God's responses. In other words, what upsets God should upset us, and what causes God to rejoice should cause us to rejoice – right? – that we should be of one heart with God, we should be of one mind with God. Cain should

have grieved over that which caused God's heart to grieve. But we see the very opposite response in Cain.

So notice next, two questions in verse 6, two questions. In response, God asked Cain two questions: "Then the Lord said to Cain, 'What why are you angry?'" To be sure, God knows that Cain is angry. It's not a diagnostic question for God to learn why Cain is angry. Hebrews 4:13 says, "Every creature is laid bare before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

Now the question is really a question of mercy. It is for Cain to examine his own heart. Why would God want Cain to examine his own heart? That it might lead to the confession of that sin, that it might lead to repentance. I mean, this is like the ministry of the Holy Spirit who has come into the world to convict men of sin and righteousness and judgment, John 16:8. That's not a bad thing, that's a good thing. It's like going to the doctor and the doctor beginning to poke on you, "Does this hurt? Does this hurt? Does this hurt?" until finally he puts his finger on the lump or upon the cyst or upon whatever needs to be dealt with; that's not a bad thing, that's a good thing. A right diagnosis is half the cure.

And so that's what God is doing here. He's probing the heart and the soul of Cain, so that Cain will come clean, so that Cain will confess his sin, so that Cain can be restored, so that Cain would actually become a believer and put himself under the authority of the lordship of God and the authority of His word. "Why are you so angry?" helping Cain to pull back the mask and see his own heart that, "You're angry, and you're angry with Me."

And then here's the second question: "And why has your countenance fallen? You know what the answer to that is. Cain's countenance has fallen because of Cain, because of sin, because of pride, because of arrogance, because he does not want to be told by God how to live and how to worship, he does not want to be told by God how to conduct his affairs. "Why is your countenance fallen?" Because Cain is going the way of Cain, which is the way of the wicked, which is the broad path that is headed for destruction.

And I want to underscore that these two questions are questions really of God's mercy. God could have just cut off the conversation at this point. God could have just left Cain in his sin. And these questions are intended to bring Cain to see his sin, and to bring him to the point of repentance. How good of God to do this. How good of God to do this in our lives. We must be examining ourselves. At the end of Psalm 139 it says, "Show me if there's any hurtful way within me."

Well, this leads now to verse 7: "Two paths." There are two paths that are open before Cain at this point. These two paths are open before every human being who's ever lived. These two paths are open before you. And Path Number One is at the beginning of verse 7, and this just drips with mercy and grace: "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? If you do well." In other words, "If you repent, if you do a 180, if you confess your sin and now choose to submit your life to Me and worship Me as I have prescribed, if you will come to Me under the blood of a sacrifice, if you do well, if you do what is right before Me, if you do what is required by Me," - God is saying - "if you do what is pleasing to Me," - What's the result of that? He says - "will not your countenance be lifted up?" The answer to that is an implied, "Yes. Peace like a river will come flooding into your soul, if you will confess your sin, and repent, and submit your life to Me." Repentance always leads to joy, it always leads to happiness.

Listen, when sin moves in, happiness moves out; but when repentance moves in, sin moves out, and happiness moves back in. Happiness is never to be a destination that we intend to aim at. The most miserable people in the world are those trying to be happy. Happiness is a byproduct of going God's way and living on the narrow path that God has set before us. Obedience to God leads to joy, it leads to peace. Why? Because you now are at peace with God.

Think of it this way. There is objective peace and there's subjective peace taught in the Bible. Objective peace is our peace with God, that comes only through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Subjective peace is the peace that floods our heart and our soul when we are right with God. It is always objective peace that produces subjective peace, if you can follow the train

of thought. It is always being at peace with God that leads to the peace of God. But when we are not at peace with God, there is no peace of God in the heart and in the soul.

And that is what God is saying to Cain. This is a God of a second chance. This is a God swinging open the door of forgiveness and mercy: "If you'll just do right, if you just do well, your countenance will be lifted up, and there will be serenity and calmness and stillness returned to your heart. It'll be well with your soul. But you must do well for it to be well with your soul." Sin is like an acid in the heart that just eats away and strips away all vitality.

So that's Path Number One. "And, Cain, you can go through this door, you can go through Door Number One. You can repent, and the blessing of heaven will be upon you. Or, the other path," and the other path is at the end of verse 7: "And if you do not do well, in other words, if you just continue to harden your own heart, if you just continue to bow your back, if you continue to stiffen your neck, if you continue to just have a death grip on your own way and you will not humble yourself, if you continue with deliberate defiant disobedience to Me," - notice what it says at the end of verse 7 - "sin is crouching at the door."

You see, one sin always leads to another sin, which leads to another sin, which leads to another. Sin never travels solo, sin always is accompanied by other sin. You can never commit one sin in one area of your life and for the rest of your life to be unaffected. No, it's like a drop of cyanide in a glass of water; that cyanide, that poison just permeates the whole of the glass. And so, "If you do not repent, Cain, sin that you have not yet committed, sin is crouching at the door," and it's pictured as a lion ready to spring forth and devour its prey.

And for every sin that we commit, we are being weakened to resist the next sin, and then we're being weakened against the next sin, and we're on a slippery slope, as we go descend downward into more sin, and more sin, and more sin. Sin never stops at a high level, sin always continues to push the

fence posts out and take over more of a person's life. And so, "Sin is crouching at the door, and it will eat your lunch, and you will be defenseless, until you repent, until you confess your sin." And then at the end of verse 7, "and its desire" – the desire of sin; it's a metaphorical picture – "it's desire, it's longing, it's craving is for you, and it's ready to absolutely destroy your life."

So at the end, God says, "But" – and this is even – the door of mercy is being opened ever so slightly. There's still opportunity for Cain. God is extending grace to Cain even still: "But you must master it." Of course, Cain cannot master it in his own flesh and in his own strength. None of us can overrule sin in our own lives. We must be mastered by the grace of God in order to master sin, right? We need a force that's stronger than sin. Sin is like this lion ready to devour. We need one who's stronger than this lion. And we are so weak in and of ourselves and in our own flesh, we need the grace of God, we need the mercy of God, to overcome temptation and to overcome sin; we can't do it on our own.

So God says, "You must master it." Either sin will master you, or you must master sin. There's no neutral ground. There's no middle ground. There's no sitting out this war on the inside, this conflict. Either you master sin, or sin will master you; and the only way that you can master sin is for you to be mastered by the grace of God.

So these are the two paths. We either go God's way, or we go the way of sin. We either go God's way, and our countenance is lifted up; or we go sin's way, and our countenance is lifted down. Don't ever think that sin will make you happy; that is the devil's lie. Sin will depress you. Sin will defeat you. Sin will discourage you. Sin will devastate you. Sin offers you nothing but death and destruction. You must go God's way, by His grace.

So this leads to verses 8 and 9: "Two sins, two sins." Sin Number One is in verse 8, Sin Number Two is in verse 9, and these seem to always travel together in pairs. So, verse 8, "Cain told Abel his brother." Moses does not record here what Cain told his brother. It is reasonable to assume, "Meet me

in the field. Meet me over in that corner of the field at noon, I have something for you."

"Cain told Abel his brother." And what follows now is the result of what he told Abel: "And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up." His countenance is down, but his anger is up. He rose up in a jealous rage. He rose up in unmitigated anger. "Cain rose up against Abel his brother" - and this hurts so much just to read the next three words - "and killed him." Cain is on this slippery slope, and he is just descending at mock speed, and there is nothing for which Cain is not capable of doing, because sin is the master over Cain. And Cain has yielded his life to sin, "and he rose up and he killed him."

"Cain, what are you thinking?" This is intentional, premeditated, first-degree murder. And you know what this is? This is the devil's work. This is the enmity between the seed of the serpent against the seed of the woman that was prophesied in Genesis 3:15. This is spiritual warfare that is being carried out: the seed of the serpent with his venom into the veins of everyone born into this world, with this sin nature and this bent to sin. Here is the playing out of the first battle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. "And Cain kills his brother."

And I want you to know that the devil is the one who is behind this. Jesus, when He was addressing the Pharisees in His day in John 8:44, listen to what Jesus said to the Pharisees. Jesus said, "You're of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

The devil was behind this first murder from the beginning, according to Jesus. It was the devil who was pouring gas onto the fire, to increase the rage within Cain. It was the devil who has taken over Cain's mind and his heart and his disposition, and it was the devil who's poking him to go further and to go further and to go further, until he finally acts it out, and

he kills his own brother. Sin will always make you stupid. Sin will always lead you to destruction. Sin is never your friend.

Now here's the second sin in verse 9. Remember Jesus said murder and liar go together in John 8:44. So what do you think we're going to find in verse 9 after we see murder in verse 8? We're going to find exactly what Jesus said the way it was from the very beginning.

"Then the Lord said to Cain," – in verse 9 – "Where is Abel your brother?" Again, God knows where Abel is, God knows everything. The point was for Cain to come to his senses, I mean, this question is like a wakeup call, and it's still God dealing with Cain. God has not turned Cain over to his own ways.

"Cain, where's your brother Abel? Will you not confess that you killed him?" There would be mercy, there would be forgiveness for Cain; but he's too arrogant, he's too prideful, he's so stuffed full of himself, that even when God comes to him like an investigative reporter and says, "Where is your brother Abel" he still, he still will not confess his sin. How stubborn is the human heart.

So here's Cain's big answer. What an answer: "And he said, 'I do not know.'" He is lying through his teeth. The question itself should have implied God knows, but he's so blind now by his sin. "I do not know," and he offers this pathetic, pathetic, pathetic excuse, which only compounds the evil that's taking place here: "Am I my brother's keeper?" as if to put a moat around his life, pull up the drawbridge to keep God at arm's length. "What am I supposed to do? Am I my brother's keeper?" as if to dismiss God. "God, go on Your own way. God, I don't want to continue this conversation. God, be gone."

So this concludes in verse 10 with, "Two voices, two voices." The first is God's, the second is Abel's. First, God's voice: "He said," – God said – "What have you done?" I mean, He's pleading with Cain to, "Come clean,



confess your sin, acknowledge your sin." "Where sin does abound, grace does much more abound." God could wipe the slate clean. God could cancel out the certificate of debt. "Put your faith in Me. Come under a blood sacrifice. What have you done?"

Now notice Abel's voice. That was God's voice. Here's Abel's voice: "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me." It's a metaphorical expression, a figure of speech assigning life to an inanimate object. It's a very vivid descriptive way to say, "This murder, it is screaming out of the grave to the heights of heaven, and it has reached My ears in heaven. The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground, which is where your brother lays dead in a pool of blood. And you didn't want a blood sacrifice. You didn't want to see the blood, you didn't want to smell the blood, you wanted something that was so sophisticated and so cultured, you didn't want to have to deal with a blood sacrifice. You wanted to come to Me your own way. And so, Cain, do you see where it has brought you? It has brought you to blood. It's brought you to the blood of your own brother, as he is laying dead in a pool of blood."

That's how irrational sin makes you. That's how illogical sin makes you. That's how incongruent sin makes our thinking. We think up is down and down is up. We think right is wrong and wrong is right. It just unplugs the brain. Sin brings moral insanity. "You didn't want a blood sacrifice. So now this is the blood you're left with."

Whew, what a passage. What a passage. How real to life is this? And in some ways, this is just a foreshadowing of the rest of human history. Until the very end, Jesus said, "There'll be wars and rumors of wars." Jesus said, "I've come to bring a sword, not peace. I'll set a father against a son, and a mother against a daughter, and a mother-in-law against a daughter-in-law, and the members of one's own family will be their enemies," Matthew 10. And so this is just really a template for everything else that will happen.

This is what's behind all the racial tension, this is what's behind all the political tension, this is what's behind all the international tension: it's the

seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent at war. And the choice that every one of us have to make is, "Will we go God's path or will we go our own path?" Everyone in this building today is either Cain, or you're Abel. You're either standing in the shoes of Cain, refusing the offer of the gospel, refusing the mercy of God, refusing the offer of the cross, and you want to just make up your own life and your own way to come to God. That's Cain. Or, you're Abel today. You recognize your own sin. You confess your sin. You see that there's a blood sacrifice that's been made. You believe in God through His Son Jesus Christ, and your whole life and all of your sin is under the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So this is the offer that God makes to you. He spoke it through the prophet Isaiah when God said, "Come, let us reason together," says the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be white as wool." You need to have your sins forgiven. You cannot come into the presence of Holy God without being under the blood, the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ shed at the cross; and that blood is offered to you today. And for what is to the world a gory story, is for us a glory story.

The eyes of the world say it's child abuse what God the Father did to His Son. But for us who have eyes of faith and we see the truth, it is the greatest thing that has ever happened to our lives. Everything else is a far distant second, this is Number One: "I've come to Christ. And there's a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins, and sinners plunge beneath that flood, they lose all their guilty stains."

Come to the fountain flowing from the veins of the Lord Jesus Christ. And there is blood to wash away all your sins, blood to purge you and to make you clean, and to find acceptance with Holy God in heaven. Abel found that blood, Cain rejected it. In Hebrews 10 it says, "If you reject Christ, you are trampling underfoot the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and insulting the Spirit of grace." You're either under the blood, or you're trampling under the blood of Christ. Come to Christ. Come to Christ and receive His forgiveness. Come to Christ, receive mercy untold. Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father, thank You for mercy, thank You for forgiveness, thank You for grace, because we have all started out as a Cain. We have all started out in resistance to You, defiance of You; and it is only Your mercy and Your grace by the new birth that has transferred us to become like Abel, one who worships by bringing a blood sacrifice. Lord, instill the truth of these verses deep within our heart and soul. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.