

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 2

By Faith Abel...

Abel

The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The “Main passage” is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the “reward box” found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God’s Word

Objective To teach the students that by faith we too can trust in the Word of God, and be obedient to it.

Key Verses

Hebrews 11:4—Starting passage

Genesis 4:1-15

Genesis 3

Memory Verse - James 1:22

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. “

Hook

Review last week’s memory verse, Hebrews 11:1.

Ask one of the students to the tell the story of creation. As a class, work through the 6 days of creation and also the fall of Adam and Eve, and the introduction of sin into the world.

Remind the students of the curse in Genesis 3, and that Adam and Eve as a result of their sin, were exiled from Garden and from the presence of God.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Hebrews 11:4 begins the hall of faith by going back to the beginning. The first example of faith is not seen in Adam and Eve. They had walked with God, seen Him and known His voice. As faith is defined as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Heb 11:1) it makes sense that it would be Abel, born outside of the garden, who would be the first to hope for the unseen, and trust in what he had not experienced first hand. Cain and his brother both bring the first fruits of their labor before the LORD. Cain comes on his own terms, bringing fruits and vegetables. Abel, comes trusting the things that had been passed down to him by his father. Abel brings a lamb. This hearing, and believing is accredited to Abel as the first example of pure faith.

Of course, Cain's sacrifice is found wanting by God. He did not come the prescribed way. He tried to approach God in the way that he wanted, and his sacrifice was rejected. This stirs up uncontrollable jealousy in Cain, who lashes out against his brother and kills him. Cain shows pride, anger, jealousy and violence, all proofs that sin had truly entered the world.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

Like we said last week, the story of our faith is actually a quite incredible one. It is the story of a long line of believers hearing the gospel, believing the gospel, and then telling others about that same blessed gospel.

Hebrews 11:4 tells us where that line begins. It begins with a man named Abel. Cain and Abel grew up outside of the garden of Eden. Unlike their parents, they did not know what it was like to be perfect communion with God. They did not get to see Him face to face, they did not get to walk with him in the cool shade of the garden's trees. Cain and Abel grew up under the curse. They brought food home to eat, only by the sweat of their brow. They had to work hard to grow crops and to keep animals. Their father Adam was different. Adam walked with God, spoke with Him face to face. He had experienced the full and true reality of God in a way that no other human has ever been able to this side of heaven.

Adam and his wife Eve must have spoken to their children about the goodness and mercy of God, because Abel and Cain both go off to collect gifts for Him. Adam speaks to his sons and tells them about the first animal slain to cover their sinfulness. Adam hears this, believes it and goes out to honor God by doing likewise.

Cain on the other hand ignores the word of his father. Cain hears about what sacrifice should look like, but decided that he wants to bring fruits and vegetables to off the Lord instead.

LOOK (Continued)

Here are the two possible responses to hearing the word of God: faith and obedience, or disbelief and disobedience. Abel is presented to us a great man of faith because he heard about who God was and the right way to live for Him from somebody else, his father. He believed the truths about God that he heard and lived a life of obedience before God without ever having known God the way that his father had.

Cain heard, but wanted to come to God in his own way. This, of course, is not possible. God had made a proper and correct way to approach Him. One brother heard and believed, putting the things he heard into practice. The other brother ignored the word of God and continued to live life his own way.

As we look through the lives of these heroes of the faith, we always need to ask ourselves, how does this persons faith help me to trust in God. Abel shows us that, like him, we need to hear the word of God, trust it and then in turn put it into practice, even though we may not know God the same way that those telling us about Him do.

We must be like Abel, hearing the word of God and doing it also. We must not act like Cain. Hearing, ignoring and continuing to live life our own way.

Abel is a hero of faith, not because we read chapters and chapters about him, but because the only thing that we do read about him is his walk of obedience before God.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life.

TOOK

Like Abel we must hear and believe. This means putting into practice the things that we read in the Bible.

As a class make a list of things that the Bible asks to do for the people around us (parents, siblings, classmates, teammates etc.) Brainstorm as a class ways to actually do those things.

Pray: Thank God that He has sent His word to us, and that He has sent people into our lives to share with us about who He is. Ask Him for the ability to walk before Him in truth, being obedient to the things that He asks of us.

Parent Question: How do we show God that we have faith?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Hebrews 11:4 and Genes 4:1-15 by David Guzik

Hebrews 11:4

1. (4) Abel's faith.

By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

a. **By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice:** The difference between the sacrifice of Cain and the sacrifice of Abel (Genesis 4:3-5) was not between animal and vegetable. The difference was that Abel's sacrifice was made **by faith**.

i. "Abel's sacrifice was preferred to his brother's for no other reason than that it was sanctified by faith; for surely the fat of brute animals did not smell so sweetly, that it could, by its odour, pacify God." (Calvin)

b. **God testifying of his gifts:** It is likely that God testified of His pleasure with Abel's sacrifice by consuming it with fire from heaven, as happened at the dedication of the tabernacle (Leviticus 9:24), the temple (2 Chronicles 7:1) and upon offerings made by David (1 Chronicles 21:26) and Elijah (1 Kings 18:38).

c. **Through it he being dead still speaks:** Right off with his example of Abel, the writer reminds us that faith is not necessarily rewarded on earth. But God Himself testifies to the righteousness of the faithful. Abel's blood still speaks to us, reminding us of the value of eternity.

Genesis 4:1-15

A. Cain's murder of Abel.

1. (1) The birth of Cain.

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD."

a. **Now Adam knew Eve his wife:** This is the first specific mention of sex in the Bible. The term "**knew**" or "to know" is a polite way of saying they had sexual relations and the term is used often in the Bible in this sense (Genesis 4:17, 4:25, 38:26, Judges 11:39, 1 Samuel 1:19).

i. There is power in this way of referring to sex. It shows the high, interpersonal terms in which the Bible sees the sexual relationship. Most terms and phrases people use for sex today are either coarse or violent, but the Bible sees sex as a means of *knowing* one another in a committed relationship. **Knew** indicates an act that contributes to the bond of unity and the building up of a one-flesh relationship.

ii. We have no reason to believe Adam and Eve did not have sex before this. Adam and Eve were certainly capable of sexual relations before the fall, because there is nothing inherently impure or unclean in sex itself,

only in its misuse.

b. **And bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD"**: The name **Cain** basically meant, *I've got him* or *Here he is*. It is likely Eve thought that Cain was the seed that God promised, the deliverer who would come from Eve (Genesis 3:15). There is a sense in which Eve said, "I have *the* man from the LORD."

i. Under normal circumstances, parents want good things for their children. They wonder if their children are destined for greatness. Adam, and especially Eve, had these expectations for Cain, but it went farther than normal parental hopes and expectations. Adam and Eve expected Cain to be the Messiah God promised.

ii. Eve thought she held in her arms the Messiah, the Savior of the whole world, but she really held in her arms a murderer.

c. **A man from the LORD**: Eve had faith to believe that the little baby she held would become a man. No baby had ever been born before. It is possible Adam and Eve wondered if their descendants would come forth fully mature, as they did.

2. (2-5) The birth of Abel and the offerings of Cain and Abel.

Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

a. **Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground**:

Agriculture and the domestication of animals were practiced among the earliest humans. Adam and his descendants did not spend tens of thousands of years living as hunter-gatherer cave dwellers.

b. **Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD**: We can surmise that Cain brought his offering to the tree of life because cherubim guarded the way to the tree of life (Genesis 3:24), and cherubim are always associated with the dwelling place or meeting place with God (Exodus 25:10-22). Cain and everyone else on the earth at that time probably met with God at the tree of life, where the cherubim were.

c. **The LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering**: Abel brought an offering of blood (**the firstborn of his flock**) and Cain brought an offering of vegetation (**the fruit of the ground**). Many assume that *this* was the difference between their offerings, but grain offerings were acceptable before God (as seen in Leviticus 2), though not as an atonement for sin.

i. "The word for offering, *minchah*, is used in its broadest sense, covering any type of gift man may bring... Neither of the two sacrifices is made specifically for sin. Nothing in the account points in this direction." (Leupold)

ii. The writer to the Hebrews clearly explained why the offering of Abel was accepted and the offering of Cain was rejected: *By faith Abel offered up a more excellent sacrifice than Cain* (Hebrews 11:4). Cain's offering was the effort of dead religion, while Abel's offering was made in faith, in a desire to worship God in spirit and in truth.

d. **Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat**: This shows Abel's offering was extra special. The **fat** of the animal was prized as its luxury, and was to be given to God when the animal was sacrificed (Leviticus 3:16-17; 7:23-25). The burning of fat in sacrifice before God is called *a sweet aroma to the LORD* (Leviticus 17:6).

i. The offering of Cain was no doubt more aesthetically pleasing; Abel's would have been a bloody mess. But God was more concerned with faith in the heart than with artistic beauty.

ii. Here, it was one lamb for a man. Later, at the Passover, it will be one lamb for a family. Then, at the Day of Atonement, it was one lamb for the nation. Finally, with Jesus, there was one Lamb who took away the sin of the whole world (John 1:29).

e. **Respected...did not respect:** We don't precisely know how Can and Abel knew their sacrifices were accepted or not accepted. Seemingly, there was some outward evidence making it obvious.

i. There are Biblical examples of having an acceptable sacrifice consumed by fire from God (Judges 6:21; 1 Kings 18:38; 1 Chronicles 21:26; 2 Chronicles 7:1). Perhaps an acceptable sacrifice, brought to the cherubim at the tree of life, was consumed by fire from heaven or from the flaming swords of the cherubim (Genesis 3:24).

f. **Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell:** Cain's anger was undoubtedly rooted in pride. He couldn't bear that his brother was accepted before God and he was not. It is even possible that this was public knowledge, if God consuming the sacrifice with fire indicated acceptance.

i. The epidemic of sin quickly became worse. Cain now committed the relatively sophisticated sins of spiritual pride and hypocrisy.

3. (6-7) God's warning to Cain.

So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

a. **Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?** God dealt with Cain in terms of loving confrontation instead of automatic affirmation. God made it clear that Cain would be accepted *if* he did well.

i. Of course, God knew the answers to the questions He asked, but He wanted Cain to know and to resist the pull toward violence and anger within.

b. **If you do not do well, sin lies at the door:** God warned Cain about the destructive power of sin. Cain could resist sin and find blessing, or he could give in to sin and be devoured.

c. **And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it:** We prevent sin from ruling over us by allowing God to master us first. Without God as our master, we will be slaves to sin.

4. (8) Cain murders Abel.

Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

a. **Now Cain talked with Abel his brother:** The sense is that Cain planned to catch Abel by surprise, lulling him with pleasant conversation. This shows Cain committed *premeditated* murder, and therefore clearly ignored God's way of escape.

b. **Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him:** No human had ever died or been killed before, but Cain saw how animals were be killed for sacrifice. He extinguished Abel's life in the same way.

i. The downward course of sin among the young human race progressed quickly. Now the hoped-for redeemer was found to be a murderer, and the second son was the victim of murder. Sin wasn't stopped at the root or man's moral condition quickly improved. Sin could not be contained.

B. God confronts Cain.

1. (9) God questions Cain.

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

a. **Where is Abel your brother:** God knew the answer to this question. He asked Cain because He wanted to give him the opportunity to confess his sin and start to do right after having done wrong.

i. How futile it was for Cain to lie to God! It was madness for him to think God didn't know where Abel was, or that he could actually hide his sin from God.

b. **Am I my brother's keeper?** This reply of Cain is famous. The fact of the matter is that he *was* supposed to be his **brother's keeper**, but was instead his brother's murderer, and he murdered him for the lowest of reasons. Able had not injured Cain in any way. Cain's murderous rage was inspired purely by a spiritual jealousy.

i. Jude 11 warns of the *way of Cain*, which is unbelief, empty religion leading to jealousy, persecution of those truly godly, and murderous anger.

ii. There is no greater curse on the earth than empty, vain religion, those who *have a form of godliness, but deny the power of God* (2 Timothy 3:5). Many are afraid of secular humanism or atheism, but dead religion sends more people to hell than anything else.

2. (10-12) God's curse upon Cain.

And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth."

a. **The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground:** The idea of blood crying out to God from the ground is later repeated in the Bible. Numbers 35:29-34 describes how the blood of unpunished murderers defiles the land.

i. The blood of Abel spoke, and it spoke of judgment. The blood of Jesus also speaks, but of better things, of grace and of sin having been judged (Hebrews 12:24).

b. **So now you are cursed from the earth:** The curse upon Cain was that Adam's curse would be amplified in regard to him. If bringing forth food from the earth would be hard for Adam (Genesis 3:17-18), it would be impossible for Cain (who was a farmer). If Adam were driven from Eden (Genesis 3:24), Cain would find no resting-place on all the earth (**a fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth**).

3. (13-15) Cain complains of the severity of God's judgment.

And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me." And the LORD said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him

should kill him.

a. **My punishment is greater than I can bear!** Cain didn't feel bad about his sin, but only about his punishment. This attitude did not end with Can; like him, many people feel only bad about their punishment, not their sin.

i. "One of the clearest marks of sin is our almost innate desire to excuse ourselves and complain if we are judged in any way." (Boice)

ii. "One of the consequences of sin is that it makes the sinner pity himself instead of causing him to turn to God. One of the first signs of new life is that the individual takes sides with God against himself." (Barnhouse)

b. **Whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold:** As significant as God's judgment against Cain was, God did not want Cain killed by others. This is possibly because the population of the earth was precariously low anyway.

c. **The LORD set a mark on Cain:** Therefore, God set an identifying and protective mark upon Cain. Despite the speculation of some, nobody really knows what this mark upon Cain was.