

January 16th, 2022

"Faith Expressed Through Worship"

Hebrews 11:4

Read **Hebrews 11:4**... Abel's sacrifice was "better" than Cain's, because Abel was obedient in offering to God that which God required and so he was considered righteous.

The curse of sin caused by the disobedience of Adam and Eve, could only be removed by God's forgiveness, the divine price of that forgiveness is the shed blood of an acceptable sacrifice.

Before Adam and Eve sinned (**Genesis 2:25**, "the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed." But after Adam and Eve had disobeyed God and had eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, their innocence was gone, they felt guilt (**Genesis 3:7**), "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings."

After Adam and Eve sinned, they tried to cover their nakedness (representing their sin) with the vegetation of a fruit tree; but only a blood sacrifice would do.

God's provisional "covering" for sin was the shed blood of a sacrifice (**Genesis 3:21**), "The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them," the very first sacrifice for sin was offered by God. An animal had to die [probably a lamb]- its blood was shed in order to provide a suitable covering for man's nakedness, or should I say man's awareness of being naked, because somehow that was not okay anymore, the consequence of sin (**Genesis 3:22**), "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil."

See **Hebrews 9:22; 10:1-18; 9:27-28**... And so (**Hebrews 9:22**), "without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness"; and yet (**Hebrews 10:4-5**), "Therefore, when He [God's Son] comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, But a body You have prepared for Me," (**Hebrews 10:10**), "By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," (**Hebrews 10:14**), "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified," "He then says, (**Hebrews 10:17**), "And their sins and their lawless deeds, I will remember no more," (**Hebrews 9:27-28**), "Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him."

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Wow! The only acceptable sacrifice for our sins is God’s Son (**John 1:29**), “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Genesis 4:3-5, “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.”

The first blood sacrifice for sin was made by God (**Genesis 3:21**). The first blood sacrifice offered in the Scriptures by a human is Abel’s lamb, one lamb for one person’s sins. In the future, when God rescued the Hebrews from Pharaoh in Egypt, and established them as the nation of Israel, the Feast of Passover was instituted, and one lamb was sacrificed for the sins of one family; later came the Day of Atonement, when one lamb was sacrificed for the sins of one nation; when Jesus Christ died on the cross; His last words were, “It is finished!” At that moment, God’s Lamb, God’s Son, Lord and Savior, the only perfect, acceptable, and divine sacrifice, was offered for the sins of the whole world

Why did God look with favor upon Abel's offering, and not Cain's? Cain was banished from God's blessings because he chose to worship his own way, instead of God's way (**Genesis 4:6-9**), “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 Abel 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. Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.’”

Clearly Cain’s heart was wrong, and God warned him to do the “right” thing or his anger would both master and destroy him. He could turn from his sin, and make things right with God, or he could give in to sin.

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Jude 1-9 speaks of evil men and angels in ages past destined for destruction. **Jude 10** tells us these men "revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals (cf. **Jude 19**, without the Spirit of God), by these things they are destroyed." **Jude 11** says, "Woe to them! **For they have gone the way of Cain.**"

As we read earlier (**Genesis 4:6-7**), God cautions Cain to "do well," i.e., do the right thing; no doubt both Cain and Abel knew what God expected as their sacrifice, in order to worship Him..

Perhaps Adam and Eve had told, even reminded, their boys of what had happened in the garden on the day they disobeyed, leading to enmity between them and God, them and one another; sin's curse affected all living things.

When we do not have a right relationship with God, we can pretty much count on not having right relationships with others. God warned Cain, but Cain gave in to his anger mixed with jealousy leading to a rage that ended in murder.

1John 3:11-12, "For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous." [Cain did what he wanted to do rather than what God required him to do. Cain disobeyed God!]

Abel is the very first man in the Scriptures to have it said about him that he was righteous. He was considered righteous because he believed and obeyed God, demonstrated by offering (**Hebrews 11:4**), "a better sacrifice," i.e., an acceptable form of worship.

We are all sinners (**Romans 3:10-12**), "There is none righteous, not even one; There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one."

There is only one remedy (**Romans 3:23-24**), "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus," (**Romans 6:23**), " For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

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Abel had genuine faith, he believed and obeyed God, and he came to worship God by bringing a blood sacrifice; Cain believed God existed but Cain offered what he thought should be acceptable; like most people today who believe God exists, but they live however they want and expect God to accept it. He won't! They will be banished from God's blessings until they repent and do what is right.

Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way *which seems* right to a man, but its end is the way of death."

Romans 10:17, "Faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

John 14:6, Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

Acts 2:21, "And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Acts 4:12, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Salvation has always been through Jesus Christ, from the time of Adam to the end of the Millennial Kingdom (**Hebrews 10:14**), "For by one offering He (Christ) has perfected for all time [eternity] those who are sanctified [all who trust and obey]," God says (**Hebrews 10:17**), "And their sins and their lawless deeds, I will remember no more [eternal forgiveness, eternal life]."

The author of Hebrews says (**Hebrews 11:4**), God "still speaks" through Abel's faith, to all generations. Here we are 6,000 years later hearing about Abel's faith from God's Word. We must, like Abel, come to God in faith obeying what God has revealed to us in His Word (**Hebrews 11:6**), "And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

No matter what the world or anybody around us is doing, we are to serve the Lord in accordance with His revealed Word, as His witnesses in this generation.

John 10:27-28, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish."

1John 5:13, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

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Let us seek to be people of faith, trusting God, believing and obeying all that He has revealed to us in His Word, now and forever.

Romans 12:1-2, “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

2Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man [woman, and child of age], belonging to God may be [completely] equipped for every good work [i.e., anything that pleases God and is according to His sovereign will].” .

We must be doers of the Word, not just hearers of it (cf. **James 1:22-25**), for only those who obey will be blessed in this life, as well as eternity future.

May we all be able to say, as I’m sure Abel would have said, if he had been a New Testament believer (**Galatians 2:20**), “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

Pastor Mike

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