

DEVELOPING A LIFE OF PRAYER

EDGEMONT BIBLE CHURCH

2021-2022 (September 29, 2021)

“LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON”

GENESIS 4:1-24

I. RAISING CAIN

- A. *From the time Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden until the time at least two of their children were adults, no prayer from anyone is recorded. This argument from silence does not prove that no prayer was done; it merely demonstrates that none was recorded.*
- B. *We are not told how these two boys, Cain and Abel, came to their occupations.*
 - 1. *But we are told that the younger, Abel, kept flocks meaning he may be the first shepherd. This caring for flocks reflects the command/blessing given to his parents to have dominion over things on the earth. He was to care for them as God cares for them. Our leadership on this earth is to reflect God’s providential care for all. We are not told why he chose this line of work but we can know it was not the primary assignment given to Adam when he was expelled from the garden. Adam was told to till the ground Gen 3:23 as he had been assigned that same duty first when he came into the Garden Gen 2:15.*
 - 2. *The older son, Cain, was a tiller of the ground. His occupation was in line with what his father had been told to do. We do not know if this was the same type of work that we call farming today. That seems to have been a much later development in the evolution of society. But we can say he was a gardener and probably a master gardener at that.*
- C. *We also are not told in the text how or why these two young men came to the idea of bringing an offering to the Lord. Was there some unrecorded instruction given to the families of earth? Was this a spontaneous action on their part? Did God speak with them personally to make those offerings? If so, it also went unrecorded.*

1. We are also not told in the text if any other human beings were making offerings of a similar type. It is not recorded that Adam and Eve ever made such an offering. Were these brothers the first to offer things to God? We cannot see from the text that it was or was not the customary practice of the original parents or their offspring. Once again, these are arguments from silence and are not to be used as proof of anything except God did not have it recorded. Moses is writing this account to a people who were already familiar with making sacrificial offerings. It may have been so common and so understood that no explanation for their action was needed. We are not so informed as they were!
2. The usual explanation for their action is from the example of God taking the skin of an animal to cover Adam and Eve after they had sinned against God. Since most animals do not give up their skins willingly, it is assumed that God killed some beast/beasts of adequate skin size to cover them. It is also assumed that the animals were “clean” and that this sacrificial death is a “sin-offering”, though we should see from the text it is not said to be a sin offering.
3. We are not told in the text how often such offerings were to be made or how they are made. Altars are not mentioned. We are not told if these offerings were intended as sin offerings.
4. If an animal sacrifice is the expected offering to be given to God, then Cain had to know that the offering he was making was already unacceptable to God. Later, the same author of this book, Moses, is going to record that some parts of the plant could be offered in some types of offering. But the offerings mentioned with their use are not sin offerings. Sin offerings always required a blood offering through the substitutionary death of an innocent animal.
5. In our text, it is Cain who makes the offering first and he is choosing to use the vegetation God had given to all earth creatures to eat. He was offering his food to God. The text does not tell us that his offering was of the first-fruits of the vegetation. But this is the beginnings of

understanding offerings. By the time of Moses, the author of this text, a rather elaborate system of required offerings had been outlined by God in the covenant He was making with the children of Israel many hundreds of years later. We should not read back into the text of the early years of societal life and relationships with God after the fall, the details created over a couple of thousand years later. We have no reason to believe the Antediluvian people had a complicated scheme of offerings since it is not recorded for us.

6. *Abel is said to also make an offering. Whether it was at the same time as Cain, or in the same vicinity as Cain we are not told in the text. We are going to assume that Abel killed the animals since he is not only offering the animal but also the animal's fat. Now the fat could be encased in the body of a living animal but Abel is not as likely to know how to distinguish the fat from the rest of the living animal if he has not killed and removed the fat from him. We are not told why he distinguished the fat from the rest of the critter or how he came to the conclusion that the fat was some sort of special offering with which God would be pleased. We can speculate much but it is only speculation and is not to be taken as biblical truth.*

- D. *We are not told how the boys came to know that God had accepted one offering and not the other. But somehow they both knew that God had chosen one over the other. Cain is very upset when God has made it clear that his offering was not acceptable. He became very angry! This could have been a good occasion for prayer! He had no written text to go to for instruction so far as we know. So he could not go back and reread the directions! But he could have approached God and asked him what he had done wrong. Or did he already know and felt that God had been unfair to him. Did he believe that God should accept anything he offered to Him? An offering is an offering, right??? Why should God be so picky? How did his brother know to do this thing so that God would choose his offering? Abel is not better than Cain, right? God was showing favoritism! Everyone should be treated equally!*

II. LIKE HIS FATHER BEFORE HIM, CAIN WAITS FOR GOD TO COME TO HIM

- A. Cain simply pouts over his disappointment with God! He is mad at God because things did not work out the way he had planned them! He was being good by offering God some of his food! He was giving God what he thought God should have. God should just accept our sincerity and our generosity no matter what we give! Why is the gift so important? He can come up with all kinds of reasons why his offering was just as good as Abel's.
- B. Like his dad, he did not go to God in what should have been a rather natural conversation of letting God know he had blown it. He could have been humble and sought God's presence and mercy. Instead, like his father, Adam, God has to come looking for him.
 1. When God comes to him, He does not explain why one offering is better than another. Instead he appeals to the inner motivations of Cain. His Word is like a search light looking for the source of Cain's anger. God lets him know that he DID know what was right but he had not done it. He still had time to make it right! But if he chose to keep his moral compass set on his own sovereignty, sin was crouching at the door ready to take him captive. Death had to follow, for the wages of sin is death. He could win this huge battle with humility and confession of sin. Let us note that Cain says absolutely nothing according to the text! No repentance, no humility, no confession - just the inward boiling of bitterness that is eating his soul. Nothing God could say to him now matters at all! Like his father, he walks away having heard from God but being left unchanged to accept life as it is!
 2. The stewing older brother chooses to talk to his brother rather than to talk to God. Instead of prayer he is letting his anger concoct for him a murderous plan. He cannot kill God but he can kill the image of God in his brother! We know from Scripture that this plan is coming from the wicked one (1 John 3:8-12). By letting this bitterness seethe in his inner man, he opened a huge door for the

adversary to set up camp, build a fortress of wicked thought and create a deadly plan. Cain kills his brother!

- C. *Again, like his father before him, rather than run to God anywhere along this process and gain the help from God, he chose to stay within his own self-pleasing integrity. He would just steer clear of God; he would openly hide from God. Just keep busy in the field and go on with life. Ignore God and perhaps He will ignore you!*
- D. *As He had done with his father before him, God seeks out Cain. As He had done with his father, He holds him accountable for his actions. But with even more pride than his father, he answers with impudence that he is not responsible for anyone else. This non-answer is met with the curse of God. God gave him a chance to confess and perhaps find the mercy of God. God demonstrates that He already knows what Cain has done to his brother. Now Cain is cursed.*
- E. *Instead of humility, this proud seed of the devil decries God's unfairness. Rather than repent and plead with God, he accepts separation from God and the life of a fugitive as acceptable. He cannot accept that all men will see him as a target for revenge. He is willing to walk away from the Lord. He does not desire a relationship with him. In God's mercy, He gives Cain a mark that will cause all men to avoid him and take no vengeance on him for killing his brother.*
- F. *Cain goes out from the presence of God to live and die a vagabond. All for the lack of humble prayer!*