



Morningside Church

Sermon Discussion Guide

Title: The Way of Cain

Date: October 18, 2026

Scripture Text: Genesis 4:1-26

Notes:

In Genesis 3, sin enters creation. The perfect harmony God established is stained by sin. But before we turn the page on Genesis 3, God promised there would be One that would bruise (crush) the head of Satan ([Gen 3:15](#)). That One is Christ. But until that day all the subsequent generations will struggle with sin. Part of that struggle is accepting who God is and learn how to worship Him. There are those who follow the way of the cross (Christianity) accepting that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Him ([John 14:6](#)). It's all about what God has done for man. Others follow the way of Cain. It's about religion instead of relationship. Its focus is what can man do for God (works). The former is of God. The latter is drummed up by man. Let's see this played out in Genesis 4...

I. Contrasts of Religions ([Gen 4:3-4a](#))

In the course of time, Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain, the eldest, and Abel, his little brother. Each grew up and adopted respectable occupations; Cain a farmer and Abel a shepherd. As they grew in their work, each was compelled to give an offering to God; Cain gave fruit from his produce and Abel some of the firstborn of his flock.

- How would you describe the differences in the brothers' offerings and how they offered them?
- Do you think both were sincere in their offerings?
- Sincerity does not make an action or attitude right. What are examples of sincere motives today that are not right?

II. Consequences of Religions ([Genesis 4:4b-5](#))

God accepted Abel's offering and rejected Cain's. Cain responded with anger (lit. "it burned to Cain exceedingly"). At first glance these offerings may appear acceptable, but it is God in His sovereignty that determines what is acceptable, not us. Cain's response reflects a lack of submission to God and His authority; the very reason he was giving an offering. There may be times when we feel God was not fair in our circumstances. It is in those times we can respond like Cain (it's all about me) or submission to God's authority and trust that He knows best (it's all about God).



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- Why do you think Cain responded as he did?
- How can pride hinder our worship of God?
- Describe the person or experience where the focus is what they get out of worship, not a what they give to God in worship?
- How can we guard ourselves from offering God unacceptable offerings ([Hos. 6:6](#))?

Abel brought the best of his flock as an offering to God. The Bible says that Cain brought of his produce, but no mention it was the best.

- What does it look like for us to 'bring our best' to God when we worship?
- How did God 'bring His best' to show His love for us?
- How do we show God, we love Him as we go through each day?

Abel's approach to worshiping God represents "the way of the Cross". Cain's approach represents "the way of Cain", religion based on man's definition, not God's. In the ancient world, this was represented by idol worship. Creating substitutes for God and the worship He deserves.

- What are examples of idols, creating substitutes for God, today?
- Often, what are the motives for people 'creating' their own gods?
- How would you approach someone with the truth of God who accepts these cultural false gods?

III. Conflict of Worship ([Genesis 4:8-12](#))

God warns Cain in [v. 7](#) that "sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." Cain ignores God's warning and kills his brother. Cain took his anger for God and His rejection of his offering out on his little brother. As a result, God punished Cain by making the ground by which he received his livelihood to cease to produce. The thing that brought Cain such pride was what God took away. It was what came between him and God.

- God warned Cain of sin's desire for him. How should Cain have responded to God's warning?
- How does God warn us today?
- What does it look like to "master" sin?
- What are examples of people taking out their anger on Christian's today?
- Why does the gospel message make some respond with anger?
- What are we told to do in response to these ([Luke 6:27-28](#))?