

The Fall Part 3

The Burden Of Sin

Genesis 4:1-24, Romans 8:8-11

Memory Verses: Genesis 4:7

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Adam and Eve's rebellion towards God set in motion a chain reaction of events that we all carry with us today. The loss of paradise, the broken relationship with the Father, the prospect of eternal death and destruction in Hell, the shame of our transgressions... all of it ours to carry. The wages of sin is more than we can bear, but because of the free gift and possibility of salvation through Christ, it is still more than we deserve.

Do you understand the burden of sin? Yes the wages are enormous and catastrophic. But **the weight of daily warring against our sin is exhausting and ultimately futile in our own strength**. If we can't learn how to overcome it... bad things may happen. Let's read our passage today in **Genesis 4:1-16**.

Look again at **verse 7** which is our key verse for the day. Listen, it is hard to do well isn't it? It is hard to rule over our sin isn't it. No, it is impossible. But, here's the thing... you don't have to carry this burden alone. Yes, this burden is yours to bear, but with Christ our burden can be managed in the here and now, and ultimately defeated in the hereafter. As **Psalm 55:22** says, "cast your burden on the Lord and he will sustain you."

You may hear this morning and you think... but, Pastor, you don't know my struggle. You don't know the weight of my sin. I've done awful things. I've slept around seeking the acceptance of men. I've abused alcohol and drugs. I've lashed out in anger towards my wife and kids. I've stolen from my work. I've slandered people behind their back and sought to destroy them? I've committed adultery, homosexuality... I've had an abortion. You may even be like Cain in the story we just read and you've murdered someone. You're like.. pastor, I am not a good person! I get it. But you know what? That doesn't matter. **Romans 3:23** says, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Do you get it? It doesn't matter if you've done something as innocent as Eve and took something you weren't supposed to. Of if you've done something as evil as Cain and killed your brother. All sin is equal in the eyes of God. All sin causes us to be in the same boat headed for the same hell. All sin wars with us daily. It crouches at the door, seeking to defeat us. And we must rule over it! We must rule over it! No matter how great or how small you think your sin is... we must

learn to rule over it... and ultimately we can't! We can't! Not on our own! But we can with Christ carrying the burden for us.

Regardless of how sinful you've been... hand that burden over to Christ. Today is the day you don't have to carry the weight of the burden of your sin anymore. Today is the day you can lay it at the feet of Christ and ask him to carry it for you! Because on your own you are toast, but **Only with Christ, and in him alone, can you rule over the sin crouching at your door**.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see is that... **The weight of sin keeps us from true worship**. Look again at **vs.2-5**. Both brothers brought God an offering. Cain brought fruit and vegetables from the ground, because he was a farmer. Abel brought sheep from his flock, because he was a shepherd. God was pleased with Abel's offering but wasn't pleased with Cain's and this made Cain very angry and defeated in his soul.

Unfortunately, I think we relate to Cain in this story more than Abel. I think the biggest question here is always, why did God accept Abel's offering but reject Cain's? They both had good intentions. They both brought what they could from their prospective income. I think many of us look upon Cain and feel pity. It's not fair. What if I bring my offering before God and he rejects it as well.

But, God is fair, just, and loving, and doesn't dismiss our worship without reason. We don't know exactly why God rejected Cain's sacrifice of worship, but there must be a reason. So, let us seek the scriptures to discover worship that is truly acceptable to God. There are some qualifiers for a sacrifice of worship which God accepts. **John 4:24** says we must worship in spirit and in truth. **Hebrews 12:28** says we must be truly grateful and mindful of our salvation in God alone if God is to accept our worship. **Ephesians 5:2** says we must walk in love as Christ loved us if God is to accept our worship. Look at **Psalm 51:17** which tells us that the sacrifices of worship which God accepts are a broken spirit and contrite heart.

Perhaps Cain didn't have the right attitude. Perhaps he was filled with pride instead of humility. Maybe it was just a ritual; a religious observance without any heart or love behind it. Or perhaps he wasn't really giving a worthy offering. I think the best passage to figure out this issue is probably **Luke 21:1-4** which tells the story of a woman who only had two small coins to give to the offering while everyone else was giving much more. But she actually gave more because she gave all she had. She gave out of her poverty where the others gave out of their abundance. Most likely, Abel gave an offering that actually cut deep into his flock. Abel could literally feel that sacrifice in his wallet... but it was okay because God was worthy of such an offering. Cain, on the other hand probably gave an offering that didn't cut all that deep. He may have just given a small amount

of what he could have afforded to give up, but he didn't think God was worthy of more. Listen, **The offering that God accepts as true spiritual worship, is the one that costs us something.** Abel's cost a lot and therefore honored God as worthy of much. Cain's cost little and therefore dishonored God as unworthy of more.

And why did Cain give a worthless offering? Because the weight of sin consistently whispers into our ears that God is not worthy of it. We know we should be committed to the faith family called the church but sin whispers, "you went last week, God's not really worthy of this week." We know we should sponsor that missionary or give more to the offering but sin whispers, "you have already given some, you need to take care of yourself." We know we should volunteer our time for others but sin whispers, "your doing too much, you need a mental break." The point is simple. Sin consistently whispers that God is not worthy of more worship. Whether it's more time, more money, or more attention... he's not worthy. And so we fail to give him the worship he is due, in spirit and in truth, out of our poverty instead of our abundance. And we wonder, why aren't we feeling God's presence. We wonder why aren't we seeing a move of God in this place. And like Cain we hang our heads with fallen hearts.

The solution isn't found in trying to do more or work harder. The solution is found in Christ. Look at your savior. Look at the one who literally gave all that he had in worship to God as the sacrifice of mankind. See his love, grace, mercy, and kindness... and fall in love with Him! Then the spirit of Christ in you will move you towards a worship worthy of your God! **Only with Christ, and in him alone, can you rule over the sin crouching at your door.**

The next thing we need to see is that... **The weight of sin steers us toward evil works.** Look again at vs.6-8. When Cain's sacrifice is dismissed by God he becomes angry and sullen. God comes to comfort him and have a discussion with him. The discussion is twofold. First, God wants to deal with the reason he dismissed Cain's worship. Again, we don't know exactly why God rejected it, and he doesn't tell us here either. But he does ask Cain, why he was angry. Of course God knows why he's angry. It's because he had no regard for his offering. You see, God isn't really asking a question here. God is making a statement; Cain, you should understand why I dismissed your offering... so what are you going to do about it? Either you can learn from this and become a better worshipper, or you can let this circumstance cause you to further walk away from me. "Do well and you will be accepted."

How many times does God not do what we want Him to do and it causes us to get angry with him and instead of correcting the relationship we push further away from him. Some of us may even blame God. "The reason I do evil is because God has failed me." Or, "why should I live a

righteous life when God doesn't do anything good for me."

God knows we think like this and so we come to the second reason for this conversation. God wants to warn Cain of where things might go if he doesn't course correct right now. He tells him, if you don't move towards righteousness, then sin will ultimately win out and you will fall. And this warning stands the test of time. Sin is crouching at all of our doors. **Sin is constantly pulling us towards destruction. Temptation is everywhere. If you don't find a way to rule over it, you will be destroyed by it.**

Cain, can't rule over it. The story doesn't tell us, but I wonder if he even tried. Was there a time here where Cain was white knuckling it, trying his best to overcome the temptation to retaliate against Abel, or did he instantly ignore God's words and fall? Regardless, sin won out. Cain found Abel in a field, probably tending to the sheep and killed him. His anger towards God was made manifest in his hatred towards his own brother. And he killed him with his bear hands. It reminds me of the scene in the Two Towers when Smeagol and Deagol discover the One Ring and in the end Smeagol kills his own brother to have it. The lure of sin is great and can only be defeated when one rules over it. As Cain found out, we can't do this in our own strength. The only way we can overcome sin is by putting out faith in Christ and the power of his spirit. **Only with Christ, and in him alone, can you rule over the sin crouching at your door.**

The last thing we need to see is that... **The weight of sin weakens our conscience.** Look again at vs. 9-10. When God questions Cain about his brother, notice how Cain responds. "Am I my brother's keeper?" This is an interesting response. Basically, he is saying, "its not my job to keep up with my brother." But it is his responsibility. Remember, God said that it was not good for man to be alone. We need companionship. We need relationships. We need family. God gave us family to take care of one another, but Cain simply doesn't care for his brother at all. It's this response that shows us where Cain's heart is after he killed his brother. He has no remorse, he has no sorrow or repentance. His conscience is calloused and his soul is deadened.

Even after God tells him the consequences of his act, Cain still is only thinking about himself. Look again at vs.11-13. Cain says, this punishment is more than I can bear. Is it? I mean, God spares his life and actually protects his life. All he says is that it will be harder to get your work done and you will have to wander the earth. Seems to me like Cain got off easy. But also notice, that he never repents. He never says he's sorry. He never feels bad for Abel or his parents or those his sin has hurt. This is what sin does. **Sin weakens your conscience, it callouses your soul, and it causes you to only think about one person.. yourself.** Cain becomes a loner because he was really only concerned about himself in the first place. But there is a way for a dead heart to be rekindled. There is a way for a

seared conscience to once again be renewed. The only thing is we can't do it by ourselves. It is done through the spirit of Christ who lives in us.

Only with Christ, and in him alone, can you rule over the sin crouching at your door.

Application

The legacy of Cain is the crippling weight of sin that not only destroyed him, but his lineage as well. Look at vs.17-24. Look again at verses 23-24. Lamech, continued to sin in the same way that his ancestor Cain did. He became a murderer too. If we can't learn to rule over our sin, it will be passed down to our children and our children's children. No matter how much Cain told his children, or his children's children, Sin is evil, sin is cruel... you must rule over it... they never could! **And this is why we need Jesus. No matter how many times you try to white knuckle a good life and quit your bad habits. No matter how hard you work at being a good person and leaving your wicked ways behind... you will never be able to do it! This is why many people just give up. You can't do it on your own. But, with Christ. We can!** Look at this passage...

Romans 8:8-11. The Spirit of Jesus living in you gives life to your mortal body so that you can choose to yield to righteousness instead of temptation. **When Jesus rules your life, he will help you to rule over the sin you can't control.**

Conclusion

My mom had a cousin, Glenda, who had a husband, Matt, who struggled with alcohol abuse and anger. When those two come together it's not a good combination. He would beat her, yell at her, and in a drunken rage destroy the house. He didn't want to be this way, but he would tell her that he just couldn't control himself. No matter what he tried, he could not escape the pull of sin on his life.

Then one day he gave his life to Christ. And through the spirit of God living in his heart he became a completely different person. No more alcohol, no more anger. From that moment on he was a different husband and father. I never knew the former Matt, I only knew the Matt who was saved. He always called me some southern phrase like honey, or sugar, or darling. He was the kindest and sweetest person I ever met. His face glowed with his love for Christ. How did Matt conquer the burden of sin on his life? He didn't... he ruled over it by the power of Christ. He lived **Philippians 3:14**. He could do all things through Christ who gave him strength. Get this church. We can't rule over sin in our own strength. That is the burden of sin. But with Christ we can! So give your life over to the spirit of Christ in you! **Only with Christ, and in him alone, can you rule over the sin crouching at your door.**