



## First Fruits Derrick Shields "The Better Offering" January 7, 2024

**Key Verses:** Genesis 4:1-7

**Key Thought:** God loves His people deeply and blesses them abundantly. It was seemingly inherent in Cain and Abel (v.3-4), knowing whose they were and where they came from, to offer a portion of those blessings back to the Giver. Verse 4 tells us that Abel gave the first of his flock, whereas Cain simply gave some of his harvest. The LORD looked with favor on Abel, but not Cain.

Our goal in studying the example of these brothers is to learn to be good stewards of the resources with which our loving Father has blessed us.

### Points to Consider:

- The concept of "first fruits" is mentioned 13 times in the Old Testament (ex: Deut 26:1-11, Exodus 22:29, Exodus 34:19). When given as gifts to God, the first fruits are the first to come in the course of time, a pledge or hope of a greater harvest to follow, and are specially dedicated to God.
- We don't own anything, nor is our security found in our "stuff". By faithfully and selflessly offering the first and best of his flock, Abel was commended as righteous (Heb 11:4). In contrast, Cain offered God his leftovers rather than the first of his harvest and was rendered selfish and evil (1 John 8:12, Jude 1:11). He did not give from the heart whereas his brother, Abel, did.
- JoAnn Hill reminded us through her testimony that God demonstrated this sacrificial giving of first fruits through His Son, Jesus (1 Cor 15:20-22). Giving of first fruits has everything to do with obedience, out of which God's abundant blessings flow.
- Mason Stewart reminds us that our sacrificial giving is not about getting something in return. Instead, it "is a means of opening up a channel that connects us with a God of abundance and generosity. Through giving, we open ourselves up to Him...He gets more of us and we get more of Him"

### Discussion Prompts:

- Reflect on the conditions of the heart reflected in the offerings of Cain and Abel. How does the condition of your heart compare?
- Is there anything preventing you from giving selflessly in obedience to God? Are you willing to trust Him for your protection and provision?
- Consider your best offering. Is God calling you to reconsider how you give of your time, talents and/or treasures in support of His Kingdom?