

Hebrews 11:4, “Faith That Cries Out”

6.2.19



Here's a picture of him on the far left, beside of my grandmother, Ruth, who gave me my first Bible. On the far right is CM Sr and Lenora, my great grandmother. Grandpa has been dead for 34 years; and yet, there isn't a week that goes by that I don't hear his voice...his words...his wisdom...speaking into my life. How is that possible?

It's been said, “Death is never the last word in the life of a person...any person.” You see, when a person leaves this world, by way of death, be that person a “righteous/saved person” or an “unrighteous/unsaved” person, he or she never really leaves...at least not in the minds of those who knew them. He or she may leave something behind that will be negative and grow like cancer or spread like poison, or he or she may leave something behind that is beautiful, like a rose, permeating an aroma and fragrance of blessing. Indeed, humankind dies...and when we do, we're either remembered like a Paul or a Nero, a Billy Graham or an Osama Bin Laden. **Oh yes...dead men do tell tales.** They are not silent; they speak. They cry out throughout time.

This morning we're going to see a “Faith That Cries Out.” A faith that literally continue to cry out, some 6,000 years from the event that we'll read about. This morning we'll see a faith in God that was genuine, sincere, obedient and an act of worship. Let's see the faith of Abel.

Hebrews 11:4

⁴By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

Indeed, the account of Abel's faith still cries out to us today... It still speaks and it will continue to speak from generation to generation for all time...because the Word of God will NEVER pass away. Abel, was a man who was the son of Adam and Eve, our first parents. Abel, part of the first family on the face of the earth. The first family from the dawn of existence. A family that should have been the best of all families.

But something happened didn't it? Sin! Disobedience. Adam and Eve chose to disobey God and eat from the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and because of that, their sons, Cain and Abel, the first children, were born into sin. Just like you and just like me...because we are all ancestors

of the first parents, Adam and Eve. And isn't it amazing to consider, Cain and Abel, grew up in the same home...and yet, one obeyed God, while the other became a killer.

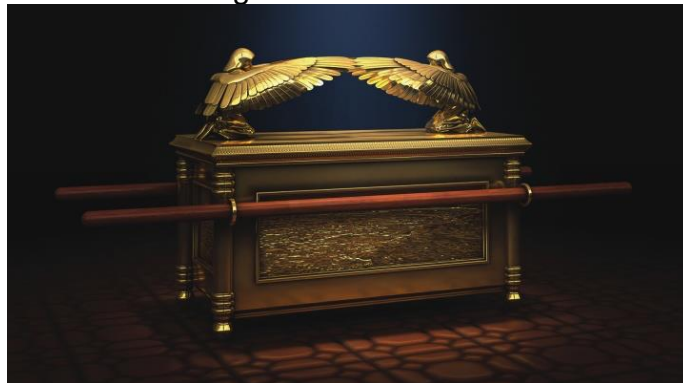
Now church family, in order to understand Hebrews 11:4, we must go back to Genesis 4...the account of Cain and Abel.

I want to try to set the scene. Adam and Eve had been living in a perfect environment, the Garden of Eden. They literally knew God. You will remember, Genesis 3 records that God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day in the Garden. So, think about that...Adam and Eve knew God in a way that was unlike any other human being, EVER. And to that degree, Adam and Eve can't really be called a people of faith...in that in the purest sense, they had walked with God...side by side. They knew God. But, after they sinned, what happened?

God could no longer walk in their presence. Why? Because of sin! So, the Lord placed Adam and Eve outside of the Garden. He evicted them. That's what sin does folks...it places humankind on the outside, looking in. Therefore, God drove them out of Eden, (Genesis 3 tells us)...and He placed cherubim, (Angels)...



with flaming swords that guarded the entrance. A place, Eden, where now they could never return. Interesting isn't it...Cherubim would later guard the Ark of the Covenant



their wings extending out to touch each other. But, the point is that Cain and Abel were born outside of the Garden of Eden, and they would have to exhibit FAITH...in a God they've never seen...just like you and me. And here's the interesting thing...God had already promised that He would send His Son to make things right. That was Genesis 3:15. Genesis 3:15 is the first Messianic promise and prophesies the fact that Jesus would come by way of woman and He would crush Satan's head. That's grace church family...on their way out of the Garden, Adam and Eve had ringing in their ears the promise of God, that He would not forget them. Even in our sin,

God promised humanity, that we would have the opportunity to come back into His presence by way of His Son!

Genesis 4:1-2a

¹ Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord." ² And again, she bore his brother Abel.

Church, do you know what I believe Eve thought when she gave birth to Cain? I believe she thought Cain was the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15. The fulfillment of the promise of a Deliverer...she said, "I have gotten a man." That phrase in the Hebrew intimates that thought. But, Eve was wrong. The Deliverer wouldn't come for another 4,000 years...when Jesus would be born of Mary.

Well, Eve had another son, Abel...and Moses, the author of Genesis... tells us the occupation of these two men.

Genesis 4:2b-5

Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. ³ In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, ⁴ and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵ but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.

Now, Cain's mad and Abel is good to go. Why? Is it because of their occupations? Is being a sheep herder better than being a farmer? No, of course not. That had nothing to do with it. The reason God accepted Abel's offering (and not Cain's) was because of the fact that Abel brought the sacrifice God **required**.

Think back with me. As Adam and Eve were leaving Eden, what did they have on?



Animal skins, right? Where did they come from? God. That's Genesis 3:21. God killed an animal and covered Adam and Eve's nakedness (which is the response for sin). That's why we wear clothes. We wear clothes because our innocence was lost when Adam and Eve sinned. But, here's the point...it took the shedding of blood to cover the sin. That was the first animal sacrifice. Remember, "Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin." That's Hebrews 9:22. But, Hebrews 10:4 says

Hebrews 10:4

⁴For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Here's Cain and Abel bringing sacrifices to God. Abel's is accepted, Cain's isn't. Why? Because it's obvious these young men had been instructed by their parents, Adam and Eve, that animal sacrifice was the acceptable sacrifice. God had already established that way...that pattern. Adam and Eve had tried to use leaves



They hid from God...they were afraid because they realized they had disobeyed and they tried to use their own methods to cover their sin...and that's exactly what Cain did. He tried to do it his way. That's Hebrews 11:4 again...

Hebrews 11:4

⁴By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts.

Listen, Cain brought an inferior and unacceptable sacrifice to the Lord, not because he was farmer...it was because he chose not to bring the right sacrifice. Jude, the half-brother of Jesus and the writer of the little New Testament book by that name (Jude) calls this: "the way of Cain" in Jude 11. What is that way? Cain was the first idolater. He was choosing how HE would come to God. HE would set the standard. He would determine how HE came.

Church, be reminded...Cain had the same information about God as Abel had. They had both been taught the same thing. Remember what we learned last week... "Faith comes by hearing..." They had been taught that the "PRESCRIBED WAY OF GOD...is animal sacrifice... Adam and Eve came out of the East side of the Garden wearing animal skins...Adam and Eve's way (leaves) wouldn't work...because it wasn't God's way. True worship was to bring an animal, and Abel did. Think of that act with me...

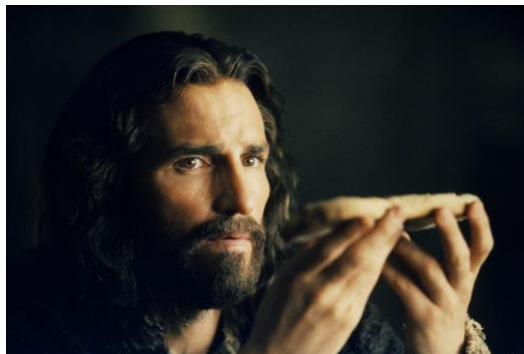
Abel brought the firstborn of all his flock...the firstborn lamb. And so, right is the first time we're told of a firstborn lamb, Abel's lamb. Think of it...that was one lamb for **one man**. That lamb would be followed one day by a lamb that a man would bring at Passover...



and that lamb would cover his entire family... And then, one a day a year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would go into the Holy of Holies...



and he would offer the blood of one Lamb for an entire nation. But wait, are you listening...but one day, in the fullness of God's timing...God would provide a Lamb...His own Son, and that Lamb...the Lord Jesus Christ...



would offer up His own body and His own blood for the for the sins of the entire world.

Abel brought the EXACT sacrifice that God required and God accepted it.

Genesis 4:4

4 and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering,

Do you know how I believe God regarded (or accepted) Abel's sacrifice? The fact that God "had regard for Abel and his offering?" Here's how. Based on the way God received sacrifices throughout the Old Testament...How did He do that?



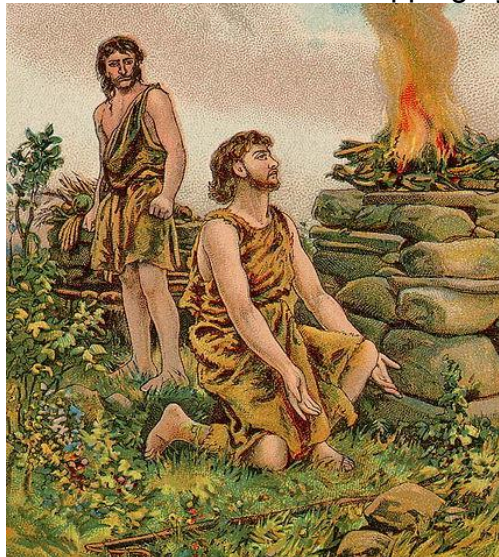
God always consumed the acceptable offering with fire...just as He did Elijah's sacrifice on Mt. Carmel when God proved to the prophets of Baal, that He was God. You see, throughout the O.T. God would send down fire when He was pleased...an all-consuming fire. And God would send down fire from heaven...tongues of flames (Acts 2) that would fall upon the first believers at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon them with tongues of fire from heaven!

Indeed, Abel brought the acceptable sacrifice...a lamb...but not Cain! Cain sought to make his own way. He literally tried to invent a new way to God... He tried to establish his own way! This reminds me of Romans chapter 10. The Apostle Paul was describing the Jews and their way of trying to get to God. He said...

Romans 10:3

³For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

And nor did Cain. He refused to come to God on God's terms. Cain chose to worship in the way he wanted to worship. Cain was a hypocrite... He made it look good by showing up for worship...but, he refused to bring the right sacrifice. He came as a worshipping hypocrite...



Think of it the first child ever born...Cain...tried to make-up his own way of worship... And get this... He looked like he was worshipping, right? He was being religious...but, he was being totally disobedient. Not much has changed today, if you ask me.

Today there are millions and millions of people who are trying to worship God in ways that He's never prescribed. Yes even today, there are many so-called "worshippers of God," who have created their own way to God...and you know what that is? False religion. And what is more, many worshippers today have created a false God to go along with their false religion. So many fake worshipers, like Cain, make a God that suits their lifestyle and suits their way of living... They decide how they worship God and they impose upon God, their standard of worship, instead of accepting His. It's like they say, as Cain did:

"Hey God, you want a lamb...tough...I'm bringing tomatoes." Today, God says, "Worship my Son," and yet people say, "Tough...I'm going to worship Allah, Buddha, Confucius, myself." Listen church, everybody worships something. Never forget that. Why? Because we were made to worship. Because we are made in God's image. God created us to worship. So, we're going to worship something. Some people worship money, some people worship their bodies, some people worship a boyfriend, some people worship their kids. We all worship something. Never forget: **WHATEVER YOU CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF IS YOUR god.**

And so here's the thing...when God "**calls**" these folks on their false worship...what happens? They get mad don't they. Just like Cain! God may bring conviction by way of a true believer, perhaps a preacher, a co-worker, a coach or friend...AND, they get mad, don't they? Cain got mad...and God asked him why...

Genesis 4:6-7

⁶ The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it."

Do you see what God was offering to Cain here? A second chance! That's verse 7. "If you do well..." That "if" means there's another chance. God offered Cain a second chance. God was saying:

"Come on Cain...you've got another shot at doing this right...but, if you don't...sin is crouching at the door and is ready to pounce...and if you don't do what I'm telling you to do...sin is going to have dominion over your life...you better get hold of this deal right now and YOU RULE OVER IT...and don't let it rule over you."

What did Cain do? Did he do right? No! In his anger and in his rebellion, he refused to listen to God...and he chose the unthinkable, to murder his innocent brother, his own brother!

Genesis 4:8

⁸ Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

How might that have looked? It would have been gruesome for sure!



We're not told how Cain killed Abel. The Bible simply says, "He rose up against" him. In the original Hebrew language, that means to "stand over in power." It means to "impose one's rule or dominion" (Hebrew lexicon, Blueletterbible.org) Cain said, "I'll take the power...and I'll have dominion over my brother's life." And thus, the first murder was carried out on the earth.

. As you are turning there, I want to point back to Cain killing his brother Abel. Some scholars say he did it with a rock...



Base on the Hebrew, that's really most likely NOT accurate. Most Bible scholars believe Cain killed Abel the only way they had seen death...which was the slitting of the throat of a lamb. The way their mom and dad had brought sacrifices to God. It's most likely that Cain slit his brother's throat. Gruesome! That's pride, jealousy, anger, malice, hatred, disobedience to God does to the human heart. The first human ever born on the earth did that. Cain should have loved his brother...his younger brother...but instead, he hated him. The Apostle John describes this in chapter 3 of his first epistle.

1 John 3:11-15

¹¹For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. ¹²We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. ¹³Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. ¹⁵Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Do you see the contrast? Murder versus Love. Murder that comes by way of the Evil One, Satan versus LOVE that comes from God, by way of Jesus.

How is it with you today? Are you angry? Do you have hatred in your heart? Are you perhaps angry with God? Admit... Because sin is crouching at the door and wants have dominion over you. Do you see where all of this can lead? Choose love. Choose to do what God says; otherwise, you're going to suffer in your anger, hatred, unforgiveness.

Colossians 3:12-15

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

Be thankful! Oh, Cain let sin rule his heart and after he killed his brother... Jump down to verse 16...this is so sad...

Genesis 4:16

¹⁶ Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

How do you want to be known? A person of love, forgiveness or a person of anger and hate? One day you and I will be gone, and yet, for those who knew us, we won't be...not totally...in that all voices still cry out from the past. How will we be known? As true, genuine worshippers of God, or those who brought discord, pain, or worse. I don't want to be like Cain. I want to be like Abel. I want to have faith that pleases the Lord. I want to be like the words of the old Worship Song: "Heart of Worship."

**When the music fades
All is stripped away
And I simply come
Longing just to bring
Something that's of worth
That will bless Your heart**

**I'll bring You more than a song
For a song in itself
Is not what You have required
You search much deeper within
Through the way things appear
You're looking into my heart**

**I'm coming back to the heart of worship
And it's all about You
It's all about You, Jesus
I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made
When it's all about You
It's all about You, Jesus**

May our faith be a faith that cries out: "It's all about you Jesus!" Stand with me