



Connect Discussion Guide

2.28.21 Message | Chuck Sackett | Genesis 4

Sin may be unforgiving, but sin cannot thwart God's purposes.

Key Scriptures:

In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, 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, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 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."

- Genesis 4:3-7

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground."

- Genesis 4:9-10

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

- Jeremiah 17:9

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

- Romans 3:23

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him." To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.

- Genesis 4:25-26

Message Highlights:

- Sin is unforgiving...it always bears consequences.
- 3 things that sin does to us:
 - Sin controls us (Gen. 4:1-8)
 - Sin costs us (Gen. 4:8-16)
 - Sin consumes us (Gen. 4:17-24)
- Sin may be unforgiving, but sin cannot thwart God's purposes.

Conversation Starter:

- Look up and meditate on the lyrics of the song "Bigger than I Thought" by Sean Curran; pick a couple words or phrases that resonate with you in light of the creation narrative we have studied over the past few weeks. Share them with your group.

Discuss the Message:

1. Read Genesis 4:1-7. Why do you think God preferred Abel's offering over Cain's? What does this teach you about the relationship between motivation and sin? Can you think of a time when your offering to God more closely resembled Cain's than Abel's?
2. Read Jeremiah 17:9 and Romans 3:23 above. How do those verse relate to Genesis 4:7? What is the danger in ignoring the reality of sin?
3. Consider this passage from the Targum; "If you will amend your ways, your sins will be remitted; but if you will not amend your ways, your sin awaits you for the day of judgment, for you will be punished if you do not repent; but if you repent, it shall be forgiven." How does viewing repentance as an invitation rather than a rebuke change the way you look at repentance?
4. To *repent* means to "turn away from." How often do you consider repentance from your sin, and how often do you actually engage in repentance? What patterns of thought or distractions have kept you from repenting in the past?
5. The seriousness of sin demands our attention, yet the sanctification of God's grace declares freedom from sin's bondage. How do you personally live in the tension between the reality of sin and the promise of God's grace, acknowledging and accepting both?
6. Read Genesis 4:25-26; in this passage, we see clearly the tension between the seriousness of sin and the truth that sin cannot thwart God's purposes. Share a story of a time when God allowed you a second chance after you made a serious mistake. How does that memory remind you of God's power over sin?

Pray:

Father in heaven, we are humbled when we come face to face with the reality of our sin. Your word is true; sin is crouching at the door of our lives and it wants to rule over us. Father, help us to be ruled only by you and your grace. We confess our sinful tendencies and we ask you, by your Spirit, to strengthen us to choose life. We praise you for your power over sin! We lift high the name of your Son Jesus, who gave his life that we might repent and turn to him and receive forgiveness. Amen.