

PC SERMON OUTLINE

Title: What Has Your Awe?

Text: Genesis 4:1–16

Big Idea:

Whatever has your awe... has you.

I. When Your Heart Is Hot

- Back-deck story: feeling left out of the worship album and watching others get the moment you wanted.
- “If you had put a spiritual thermometer in my chest that night, it would not have said ‘calm, peaceful, fully surrendered.’ It would’ve read: ‘Jealous. Insecure. Offended. Hot.’ My heart was hot.”
- Key question:
- What do you do when your heart is hot with jealousy, hurt, rejection, and you feel overlooked?

II. Two Brothers, Two Offerings, Two Hearts (Genesis 4:1–5)

- Cain: firstborn, “acquired.” Eve thinks he might be the chosen one.
- Abel: “vapor / mist.” The overlooked one no one expects, but the one God delights in.
- Both bring offerings:
 - Cain brings **some** of the fruits of the soil.
 - Abel brings **fat portions from the firstborn**—the first and the best.
- “The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering He did not look with favor.” Person first, offering second.
- God looks at the worshiper before He looks at the worship.
- Hebrews 11:4, 6: the issue is **faith**, not just form.

III. A Hot Heart and a Patient God (Genesis 4:5–7)

- Cain is “very angry” and his face is downcast.
- God moves toward him with questions: “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?”
- God isn’t gathering information; He’s giving Cain a chance to confess and repent.
- Back deck tie-in: “If you had taken a snapshot of my heart on that deck, it would’ve looked a lot like Cain’s. I am Cain in this moment.”
- “What you fix your eyes on in moments like that matters more than you think, because whatever you can’t stop staring at will eventually start steering you.”

IV. Sin as a Crouching Lion (Genesis 4:7–8)

- “Sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.” That’s predator language.
- God describes sin as a predator at the door—a lion just off the porch.
- 1 Peter 5:8: “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”
- We treat sin like a pet:
 - Pride → “I just have high standards.”
 - Bitterness → “I just have a good memory.”
 - Lust → “I’m just visual.”
 - Gossip → “I just need to vent.”
- “We put a little collar on it. We feed it. We let it sleep at the foot of the bed. ‘He’s not dangerous. He’s my lion.’”
- In Cain’s story: anger → “Let’s go out to the field” → murder. The lion that was crouching is now running the scene.
- “We are all one moment away from totally wrecking our lives.” One text, one lunch, one outburst, one sentence.
- Question:
 - What is crouching at your door right now? Deal with it early, before it rules you.

V. Wandering from the Presence (Genesis 4:9–16)

- God keeps pursuing Cain: “Where is your brother Abel?” Another chance to step into the light.
- Cain responds with attitude, not repentance: “My punishment is more than I can bear.”
- God disciplines Cain, then protects him with a mark—judgment and mercy together.
- “So Cain went out from the LORD’s presence and lived in the land of Nod (Wandering).”
- Not just moving zip codes; he spiritually disconnects—chooses **wandering over presence**.
- Many live in the land of Nod: in church physically, but wandering spiritually.

VI. Back Deck Resolution and Awe Uncovered

- Return to the back deck: God puts His finger on pride, self-importance, “my song, my album, my moment.”
- “Right there, God exposed something in me: my heart had quietly made it about me. My attention, affection, and the weight in my heart had shifted.”
- Rehearsing God’s goodness: wife, kids, church, calling, God’s faithfulness and gifts.

- “The more I replayed His faithfulness, the smaller that stage started to look. The more I remembered His goodness, the less impressive my little hurt started to feel. God got bigger. The stage got smaller. My heart started lining back up with what’s true again—not wrapped around my role or my moment, but wrapped around Him.”

VII. Awe Replacement: What Has Your Awe?

- God was teaching: the same thing that destroyed Cain is in every one of us—**Awe Replacement**.
- Awe: deep, gut-level awareness of who God is that makes you feel small, safe, and surrendered; “You’re God. I’m not.”
- Something has your awe:
 - Cain: himself—status, hurt, sense of being wronged.
 - Me: platform, recognition, moment.
 - You: success, approval, kids, comfort, money, image.
- Misdirected awe is when the weight that belongs to God rests on something else.
 - Whatever has your awe... has you.
- Awe and fear are connected: you tend to fear whatever has your awe.
 - Fear of going broke → awe drifting toward money.
 - Fear of insignificance → awe drifting toward popularity/influence.
 - Fear of being alone → awe drifting toward relationships/attention.
- “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.” When God has your awe, clear thinking and wise living begin.
- Fear of the Lord is right-directed awe: “You’re God, I’m not. You’re good. I can trust You.”
- Questions: Where is your awe today? Where does your mind drift? What can wreck your mood? What are you terrified to lose?

VIII. Awe Restored at the Cross

- Abel’s blood: “Look what was done. Someone has to pay.” Justice.
- Jesus’ blood: “Look what I did so you can be forgiven.” Mercy. A better word than Abel’s blood (Hebrews 12).
- Jesus didn’t just go to the cross to get you out of hell and leave you wandering in Nod; He went to forgive misdirected awe and restore it to God.
- Cain walked out from the presence of the LORD; Jesus walked into death so you could walk back into God’s presence.

IX. Invitation: Your Back Deck Moment

- Some are in their own back-deck moment: heart hot, countenance fallen, feeling passed over.
- You are one moment away from opening a door that could wreck your life—or one surrender away from letting Jesus rule where sin has been crouching.
- Don't walk out from the presence of the LORD into the land of wandering.
- Bring Him your hot heart, jealousy, hurt, secret sin, pride.
- Lay it down. Let Him forgive it, rule there, and restore your awe.
- Because whatever has your awe... has you. Make sure, when you walk out of here today, it's Jesus.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Recognizing a "Hot Heart"

Scripture: *"Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast."* — Genesis 4:3–5 (NIV)

- **Discussion Question:** The sermon mentions that when we experience rejection, jealousy, or feel overlooked, our hearts can quickly become "hot." When you find yourself in a "back-deck moment" where life feels unfair or someone else gets the recognition you wanted, how do you typically respond? What are the physical or emotional warning signs that your heart is becoming "hot" like Cain's?

2. Guarding What We Stare At

Scripture: *"Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.'"* — Genesis 4:6–7 (NIV)

- **Discussion Question:** God warns Cain that sin behaves like a predator waiting for the right moment to strike. The outline notes, *"Whatever you can't stop staring at will eventually start steering you."* When you are hurt or offended, how difficult is it to stop fixating on the situation? What is one practical way we can intentionally redirect our eyes toward God's truth when we are tempted to obsess over our hurts?

3. Exposing Our "Pet" Sins

Scripture: *"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."* — 1 Peter 5:8 (NIV)

- Discussion Question: We often try to domesticate our sins by renaming them—turning bitterness into "just a good memory" or gossip into "just needing to vent." Why do you think it is so easy for us to treat destructive behaviors like harmless pets rather than crouching lions? Which of the "pet sins" mentioned (pride, bitterness, lust, gossip) do you find people in our culture struggle with or excuse the most?

4. The Danger of "The Land of Nod"

Scripture: *"So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden."* — Genesis 4:16 (NIV)

- Discussion Question: The land of Nod means "Wandering." The sermon notes that it is entirely possible to sit physically in a church building while spiritually wandering in the "land of Nod." What does spiritual wandering look like in everyday life? If you feel comfortable sharing, when is a time you felt yourself drifting into isolation or disconnecting from God's presence instead of choosing repentance?

5. Identifying Awe Replacements

Scripture: *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise."* — Psalm 111:10 (NIV) (Note: Supports the outline's quote of Proverbs 9:10 / Psalm 111:10 regarding the fear of the Lord).

- Discussion Question: "Awe" is defined as a deep, gut-level awareness of who God is that makes us feel small, safe, and surrendered. When we experience "Awe Replacement," the weight that belongs to God shifts to things like career, approval, comfort, or money. What is something in your life right now that easily hijacks your awe and wrecks your mood or peace when it goes wrong? How can we help each other keep God at the center?

6. Embracing a Better Word

Scripture: *"...to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel."* — Hebrews 12:24 (NIV)

- **Discussion Question:** While Abel's blood cries out for justice, Jesus' blood speaks a better word of total forgiveness and mercy. How does knowing that Jesus walked into death so that you could walk back into God's presence change the way you view your current failures or hurts? What is one specific area of your life today where you need to stop wandering, lay down your "hot heart," and let Jesus restore your awe?

NORTH PORT SERMON OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Today we are going to study Cain, the first son of Adam and Eve, and the progression of sin in his life.

Cain ignored God's warning, and little by little, his heart hardened until he had completely walked away from God.

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 4:1-5 Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man." 2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. 4 And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

Cain and Abel both brought offerings to God. Cain was a farmer, so he brought fruit from the ground, Abel was a shepherd and brought the firstborns of his flock, but God did not accept these offerings as equal.

Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings.

Out of faith Abel brought the best of what he had, the firstborn of his flock, the fat portions, but it says Cain only brought some of his crop. It's like he brought leftovers.

It was his casual attitude toward worship that revealed his lack of faith.

Genesis 4:6-7 6 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it."

God is encouraging Cain to stop and reflect on his attitude. He is giving him a chance to own his mistakes and repent and then warns him of the danger if he refuses. He describes sin as a predator hunting its prey.

Tragically, Cain does not take God's warning, instead he allows his anger to open the door for sin to consume him.

Genesis 4:8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. 9 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "Am I my brother's keeper?" 10 The Lord said "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. 11 Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

God knew Cain killed Abel but still gave him another chance to confess and repent.

Cain's heart has hardened so much that he doesn't even feel responsibility for his own brother. But notice, even in Cain's punishment God showed mercy. Cain deserved capital punishment, but God delivered mercy.

Genesis 4:13-16 13 Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear. 14 Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. 16 So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

One of the clearest indicators of Cain's unrepentant heart is that he's more grieved by the consequences than his sin against God.

We are told Cain left God's presence and settled in the land of Nod which literally means "Land of Wandering".

I think a lot of people in our culture today feel spiritually distant, just wandering.

If we don't want our hearts to end up like Cain's, there are three responses each of us need to make.

- 1. Give God your first and best.**

At the center of Cain's failure was misguided Worship. Abel brought the first and best as an offering, Cain brought what was convenient.

Many of us treat God the same way.

We give him some, the leftovers out of obligation and then wonder why we feel far from him.

God doesn't want empty religious actions. He wants surrendered hearts.

- 2. Deal with sin early before it rules you.**

God warned Cain and we would be smart to take that warning.

Nobody wakes up one day and says I want to ruin my marriage, become addicted or drift from God. Sin always starts smaller than we expect.

James 1:14-15 14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Don't ignore what God is trying to expose in you. What is crouching at your Door?

Deal with it, before it rules you.

3. Run toward God's presence not away from it.

God gave Cain so many opportunities to repent and move back toward him, but Cain refused.

How different could Cain's story have been if he had humbled himself and moved toward God?

God has given you an opportunity to turn to him to receive his grace, but you must be willing to soften your heart and take a step.

God's grace is bigger than your failures. The Blood of Abel Cried out for justice, but the blood of Jesus says something Different.

Hebrews 12:24 NLT 24 You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.

On the cross Jesus took the punishment of sin, so that broken, wandering sinners like us could be forgiven.

You don't have to keep wandering, but you do need to respond to Gods call for you.

What have you been holding back from God? What sin needs to be confessed? What needs to change in your life so you can take a step toward God today?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Offering Our Firstfruits vs. Leftovers

Scripture: "In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast." — Genesis 4:3–5 (NIV)

- **Discussion Question: The sermon highlights how Abel brought his best, while Cain brought what felt like "leftovers" out of a casual attitude toward worship. In our busy lives today, what does it look like to practically give God our "first and best" rather than just giving Him**

whatever leftover time, energy, or money we have left? What makes shifting from a casual attitude to a completely surrendered heart so challenging?

2. Pausing to Reflect on Our Attitude

Scripture: *"Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.'" — Genesis 4:6–7 (NIV)*

- Discussion Question: When Cain became angry and downcast, God immediately stepped in to encourage him to pause and reflect on his heart. When you notice your own attitude souring—whether through anger, jealousy, or bitterness—how do you typically handle it? What are some healthy ways we can invite God to expose what is going on beneath the surface before our emotions get the best of us?

3. Catching Sin While It Is Small

Scripture: *"...but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." — James 1:14–15 (NIV)*

- Discussion Question: The sermon notes that "nobody wakes up one day and says I want to ruin my marriage, become addicted or drift from God," because sin always starts out much smaller than we expect. Looking at the progression described in James, how can we become better at recognizing and dealing with "small" compromises or evil desires early on, before they grow into full-scale strongholds that rule over us?

4. Grieved by Sin vs. Grieved by Consequences

Scripture: *"Cain said to the Lord, 'My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.'" — Genesis 4:13–14 (NIV)*

- Discussion Question: One of the clearest indicators of Cain's hardened heart was that he was far more grieved by the harsh consequences of his actions than he was by the actual sin he committed against God and his brother. Why is it so easy for us to focus on the fallout of our mistakes rather than the broken relationship with God? How can we cultivate a heart that is genuinely broken over the sin itself?

5. Stepping Out of the "Land of Wandering"

Scripture: *"So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden." — Genesis 4:16 (NIV)*

- Discussion Question: The name "Nod" literally translates to the "Land of Wandering," and the sermon notes that many people in our culture today feel spiritually distant and isolated. When you feel yourself beginning to mentally or spiritually drift away from God's presence, what does that look like in your daily routine? What practical steps can we take as a small group to help pull each other out of isolation and back into community?

6. Running Toward Grace

Scripture: *"...to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel."* — Hebrews 12:24 (NIV) (Note: The outline quotes the NLT version, but this is the matching NIV rendering requested for your questions).

- **Discussion Question:** While Abel's blood cried out from the ground demanding justice, the blood of Jesus speaks a much better word: total forgiveness and mercy. How does knowing that Jesus already took the full punishment for your sins on the cross change the way you respond when you mess up? Does it make you more likely to run away from God in shame like Cain, or run toward His presence for grace?

SARASOTA SERMON OUTLINE

The First Murderer

Just like we still do to this day, it didn't take long for the first humans to develop sibling rivalries. Last week, we ended with Adam and Eve getting kicked out of the garden of Eden. They're going to encounter the consequences of their sin pretty fast. They're about to see firsthand how sin will be passed down to their offspring, and they're going to see just how evil it can be. One of their children is going to choose to make everything all about himself, the other child is going to choose to make everything all about God.

Genesis 4:1 Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. Right away she feels the impact of that curse. Imagine dealing with labor knowing you could have gone through it without the pain. She said, "With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man."

Imagine giving birth knowing that you could have avoided the pain. Yeah I bet she did need the help of the Lord for that. But there was a little more at play here: I'm sure one thing that helped her get through this was remembering the promise from God that one day her offspring would defeat the serpent. So now she has this child, and all of her hope in this promise is now placed on him. The NIV translates Cain's name to "brought forth." A better way to translate his name would be, "I've got him." Eve gives him the name Cain with the hope that she has this savior. Most commentators agree that Eve really did believe that Cain was the savior

Genesis 4:2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.

No special mention about Abel's name. Abel's name isn't rooted in Eve's hope it's rooted in her hopelessness. It's been a few years now. If Cain is the savior, it's going to take a long time. And the longer she waits the more she realizes her chances of returning to Eden are slim. She can feel death coming for her. Abel's name translates to "breath" or "vapor" or "mist." Ecclesiastes 1:2 says "Life is Abel." NIV translates it to "meaningless." What a name for Abel to live up to.

Abel was the little brother, so he was stuck with the boring job.
Cain was the older brother, so he was stuck with the job that took a lot of strength.

Cain thought that being a farmer meant that he ruled the roost.

He was the strongest.
He was the favored one.
He was the richest.
He was the best.
He was going to be king of the world.
He decided, "I'm going to be the biggest I can be."

Abel believed that he could glorify God even as a lowly shepherd.

Even though he was the weakest.
Even though he was poor.
Even though he was the black sheep of the family.
He decided, "I'm going to serve God the best I can with that I have."

God Accepted Abel's Sacrifice,

But Not Cain's.

Why were they making sacrifices?

God continued to interact with Adam & Eve and their children for a while directly after the fall. When God kicked Adam and Eve out of the garden, he had a big long talk with them about the consequences of their actions. ***"Adam and Eve, here's the problem. The Garden of Eden is perfect. I am perfect. If you mix perfection with imperfection, it is no longer perfect. Because you are now imperfect, you can't be in the perfect Garden of Eden, which means that you, and everything else outside of the Garden, will die. Now that there is sin, things will die. Let me demonstrate this for you. Now that you know that you are naked, you must be clothed."*** Then he grabbed some of his precious creatures that Adam and Eve had grown to love. ***"Let me show you what you must do now for clothing and for food."*** And then he showed Adam and Eve how to kill those animals. ***"The consequence of sin is death."*** This is where he must have told them, ***"From now on, you must make sacrifices like this for me because that is the debt you owe. You owe me death. This is how our relationship continues."***

Perhaps here he may have added: ***"Remember how I promised that your offspring will defeat the crafty serpent who lied to you in the Garden? These sacrifices are how it must be until that serpent, Satan, is defeated."*** We know God later commanded the Israelites to sacrifice animals for their sins until our ultimate sacrificial lamb was killed, Jesus Christ.

Why Was Abel's Sacrifice Accepted But Not Cain's?

Somehow from this point regular sacrifices were made to God by Adam and Eve and their family. Now don't jump ahead and assume that Cain's sacrifice wasn't accepted because he didn't kill an animal. No, that's not really how sacrifices work. Sacrifices are not about checking the box. Sacrifices are not about legalism.

Somewhere along the way they were taught that it didn't necessarily have to be an animal, as long as they were giving up something of value. Otherwise it's not really a sacrifice. It was the value of what was given that mattered to God.

What Was Cain's Offering?

Cain and Abel took this to heart differently. Cain saw this as an excuse. "Oh good, I don't have to give up an animal." He let the letter of the law become an excuse to not give generously.

"Oh good, I only have to give 10%. That's after taxes right?"

I don't have to give him my time.

I don't have to do any extra work.

I don't have to talk to him.

I don't have to show compassion to anyone after I check this box.

I don't have to give up my sin as long as I'm giving my tithe."

That's like saying, "My wife only needs to feel my lips against hers, there doesn't need to be any emotion behind it, it's just a box to be checked."

Genesis 4:3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord.

So Cain brought "SOME of his fruits." "Here God, you can have these mangos I don't like." Cain must have really believed HE was the one who would be the savior. Why does he need to be generous if the world is all about him? Instead, he followed the letter of the law. Cain must have really believed HE was the one who would be the savior. Why does he need to be generous if the world is all about him? Instead, he followed the letter of the law. While it may have been technically OK to bring God crops, that technicality doesn't excuse his heart.

What does it look like to give like Cain?

What Was Abel's Offering

Genesis 4:4 And Abel also brought an offering: fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.

Let's be honest y'all, the fat is the part of the meat that tastes the best. This is not just bringing God a blood sacrifice. This is like bringing God a filet mignon. But notice that he also gave the first born of the flock. Farmer's have a better understanding of how much more of a sacrifice it is to give the first of your flock. You don't know for sure that your cow will give birth to another calf. That kind of sacrifice takes faith. You have to trust that God really will provide what you need.

Abel understood the assignment. He followed the spirit of the law, even though Abel had every reason to be the bitter little brother. He wasn't the favored one. He was stuck in the consequences of his parent's dumb actions. He was a symbol of hopelessness and despair to his family. He didn't even have a good job.

Instead, he decided to strive to be the only one in his family who obeyed and trusted the Lord.

*"If I'm going to die, I'm going to die walking with God.
I'm going to give more than what's required.
I'm going to do the right thing even when it's hard.
I'm going to show compassion even to the people I don't like.
And I'm going to worship God with passion.
When I sing to God, I'm going to move more than just my lips.
When I pray to God, the voice is going to come from my chest.
When I obey God, I'm going to do it with a smile.
I'm following God with all my heart soul mind and strength."*

What does it look like to give like Abel?

Verse 4 continues, *"The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast."*

Cain was jealous. His little brother had challenged his identity as the savior. God tries to make it plain to him:

Genesis 4:6-7 *Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it."*

Clear words of wisdom. Cain ignores God.

Have you ever ignored God?

Cain Murders Abel

Genesis 4:8 *Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him*

Cain said, *"I'll show you a sacrifice. Hey little bro, want to help me out with harvesting some of these crops?"* Cain's only connection to death was the animals Abel had sacrificed. He had seen the way Abel had killed his animals, some commentators do theorize that they had already developed sharp stones for cutting, and just like Abel would have done to a lamb, Cain snuck up behind him and slit his throat.

We're not as barbaric today, we use more sophisticated weapons now to kill followers of Christ like Charlie Kirk.

Innocent little Abel must have turned back to his older brother, who he had trusted, who his family had lifted up as the promised one, and looked into his brother's angry eyes in horror and shock as he bled out.

Could you imagine how painful this was for Adam and Eve? Eve had put all her hope in Cain. Instead Cain was their ultimate punishment, the full weight of the consequences of sin. Is there anything more tragic that could have happened to them?

Genesis 4:9 *Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" *Sort of like when he asked Adam and Eve where they were hiding. "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"*

A closer translation would actually be, *"Should I shepherd the shepherd?"*

This wasn't as much a lie as it was a cold and heartless sarcastic reply. He probably could guess that God knew the truth. But he wanted God to know he didn't care that Abel was dead.

"I'm not my family's keeper. I don't care what happens to my spouse, I don't care what affect my addiction has on my kids, It's not my job to care for the poor."

Cain may have been sarcastic to God but he probably thought he could lie to his parents and say, "He was attacked by a wild animal." He thought draining Abel of his blood would be the end of him. But nothing is hidden from God.

Genesis 4:10 The Lord said, "what have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground."

Abel probably would have cried out to God if he could.

But God heard his cry nonetheless.

Genesis 4:11-12 Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

That sounds pretty merciful considering the circumstances.

Genesis 4:13 Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear."

"You took away my livelihood!" You took away Abel's life Cain.

This is mercy. Cain deserves to be killed.

Genesis 4:14 Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

That's what Cain deserves. Even still God shows him mercy:

Genesis 4:15-16 But the Lord said to him, "Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

We don't know what Cain's physical mark was that was placed by God. His children didn't inherit it. Maybe it was a tattoo that said, "Don't kill this man." You don't need a tattoo to see if someone is following the path of sin and walking away from God.

1 John 3:12 Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.

Which Brother Do You Want To Be?

Cain believed he didn't need a savior. His relationship with God was based on what was in it for him. He believed he could do whatever he wanted to do. He didn't care about anyone else. He had no faith in God. He ignored God. He did not even fear him.

Can you relate to Cain at all?

All of us should be more like Abel.

1. Abel gave God his best

Abel didn't give the leftovers, he gave his first paycheck. Abel didn't serve God halfway, he put his whole heart into serving him. He didn't say, "I'll find time for God with whatever I have leftover in my schedule." He put that on his calendar first thing.

2. Abel obeyed God when it was hard

Abel didn't cave to pressure, he served God when others didn't like it. When his friends made fun of him, when his family was upset, he obeyed God anyway. Abel didn't only give what was easy, he didn't only give when he knew he had enough money in the bank, he said "God, all this is yours anyway." Abel followed God even when it cost him his life. Why?

3. Abel trusted God's promise

He did all these things because he knew that God was worth everything. Abel knew it is worth trading everything in this world to be in the Garden of Eden.

What do you need to give up for the Garden of Eden?

If you had Abel's faith, you'd be who you really want to be.

- *You would do the right thing with all your heart,*
- *You would love people like Christ did,*
- *You would be generous,*
- *You would have a good relationship with your family,*
- *You would have a good marriage*
- *You would pass good things down to your kids*
- *You would hav a good relationship with God*
- *You would be a hero who courageously stands for truth.*

Hebrews 11:4 *By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.*

If you have a brother, you know that sometimes it feels like Johnny and I are on opposite sides of the civil war. Could you imagine if I let petty differences cut Johnny off as if he were dead to me? Think about the person I would be missing. He would never have visited me in the hospital. I would never have had the chance to do ministry alongside him. I would never have seen him be the fun uncle to my kids.

My grandpa waited until Johnny was born to reveal to us a Russell family tradition. Back in the Civil War, there was a Robert and Johnathan Russell that fought on opposite sides. One of them was killed. The other vowed from then on that to honor his memory there would be a Robert and a Johnathan in every

Russell generation. That's one of the reasons why now that Faith is pregnant with our first son we've decided to name him John Luke.

That's one of the reasons why now that Faith is pregnant with our first son we've decided to name him John Luke.

There's a reason to hope Jesus Christ returns soon. Let's Jump to v. 51:

Have you been fighting a silent civil war?

Don't be the man in Jesus' parable who owed the king a large debt, but after the king forgave him, he squeezed somebody over a much smaller debt. That person who wronged you has sinned, but you are a sinner too, and we all need forgiveness. Treat that person the way you hope God treats you.

Maybe you're the victim like Abel. Maybe you were the one who was cut off. And some days you feel like you'd do anything to get them back. And some days you wish they could see your private tears. I hope it comforts you that your blood cries out to God from the ground

Hebrews 12:23-24 *To the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*

If Abel could speak to us today, if Charlie Kirk could speak to us today, they would tell us, ***"God may have heard the cries of our blood from the ground. But it's not my blood that saves you. Only the blood of Jesus can wash away your sin."***

We can't save ourselves. We've all gone down the path of Cain at some point of our lives, we all have sinned, none of us are perfect. Our only hope of returning to Eden is in the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross. Without accepting Jesus' sacrifice, we would be doomed to wander without a home and without rest for eternity.

What can you do to be more like Abel?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Guarding Against the "Me-Centered" Mindset

Scripture: *"In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with*

favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.” — Genesis 4:3–5 (NIV)

- **Discussion Question:** The sermon contrasts Cain, who made everything all about himself, with Abel, who made everything about God. Cain used the letter of the law as an excuse to hold back his best. In what practical areas of life (like our time, finances, or relationships) are we most tempted to give God "some leftovers" rather than our firstfruits? How can we recognize when our relationship with God has shifted to being about "what is in it for us"?

2. Trusting God When the Future is Uncertain

Scripture: *“And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering...” — Genesis 4:4 (NIV)*

- **Discussion Question:** Giving the firstborn of a flock requires immense faith because a farmer doesn't know for sure if the livestock will produce any more offspring. It requires trusting that God will provide. When has God asked you to take a step of obedience or generosity when you couldn't see the safety net ahead? What helped you trust Him in that moment?

3. Overcoming Circumstances and Bitterness

Scripture: *“The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.” — Genesis 4:4–5 (NIV)*

- **Discussion Question:** Abel had plenty of reasons to be the "bitter little brother"—his name meant a passing vapor, he had a lowly job, and he was living in the fallout of his parents' mistakes. Yet, he chose to serve God with his whole heart anyway. When you find yourself dealing with unfair circumstances or the consequences of someone else's poor choices, how do you keep bitterness from corrupting your worship and obedience to God?

4. Responding to God's Warnings

Scripture: *“Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.’” — Genesis 4:6–7 (NIV)*

- **Discussion Question:** God directly confronts Cain's heavy heart and gives him a clear warning about sin lurking like a predator. Instead of listening, Cain completely ignores God. Why do you think it is so easy to ignore the Holy Spirit's warning signs when we are angry or jealous? What does it practically look like to "rule over" a sinful desire before it breaks out into harmful actions?

5. Breaking Free from "Silent Civil Wars"

Scripture: *“Now Cain said to his brother Abel, ‘Let's go out to the field.’ While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.” — Genesis 4:8 (NIV)*

- **Discussion Question:** The sermon compares Cain's broken relationship with Abel to a "silent civil war" that we can easily wage against people in our own lives. When we hold grudges or cut people off, we end up acting out of a cold heart. How can we actively combat the temptation to

let petty differences or past hurts cause us to emotionally "kill off" relationships with family members or brothers and sisters in Christ?

6. Comfort for the Wounded and Hurt

Scripture: *"The Lord said, 'What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.'" — Genesis 4:10 (NIV)*

- **Discussion Question:** For anyone who has ever been the victim, been deeply mistreated, or been cut off by someone they trusted, it is a comfort to know that nothing is hidden from God and He hears those cries. How does knowing that Jesus understands your private tears—and that His blood speaks a better word of final saving mercy than even the cry for justice—give you the strength to forgive and find rest?