

Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 4: October 4-11

Genesis 4

Genesis chapter 4 illustrates the growing consequences of the first sin described in the previous chapter. However, this chapter also gives us practical instructions from the LORD to help us master sinful temptations. In his introduction to this chapter, Derek Kidner writes,

Sin is shown with its growth-cycle as in James 1:15, and in 7b it is personified in almost Pauline fashion (cf. Rom. 7:8ff.). Many details emphasize the depth of Cain's crime, and therefore of the fall: the context is worship, the victim a brother, and while Eve had been talked into her sin, Cain will not have even God talk him out of it; nor will he confess to it, nor yet accept his punishment.¹

Read Genesis 4:1-8

1. What did Eve say when Cain was born? (4:1)
2. How did the author describe Cain and Abel? (4:2)
3. What did Cain and Abel offer to the LORD? (4:3-4)
4. How did the LORD react to Cain's and Abel's offerings? (4:4-5)

There are several reasons why God rejected Cain's offering. First, if this offering was a sin-offering, it should have been a blood sacrifice (Heb. 9:22). Second, even if this was just an offering of thanksgiving, it should have been the first and best of Cain's harvest (Ex. 23:19a). Third, Cain's heart was not right with God. Hebrews 11:4 indicates that, unlike Abel, Cain did not have faith in the promises of God. Fourth, Cain's actions were not right. 1 John 3:12 says that Cain's deeds were evil. This may refer to the specific deeds of his offering or his general way of living (Jude 11). In either case, we should remember that God does not separate our worship from the way we live (Prov. 15:8).

¹ Derek Kidner, *Genesis* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 79.

² Paul Kissling, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Genesis Volume 1* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2004) 221-222.

5. How did Cain feel about the LORD's response to his offering? (4:5)

Paul Kissling observes,

Cain's reaction shows a wrong attitude toward God. It is the creator's prerogative to decide what is acceptable in sacrifice and what is not acceptable. For Cain to be angry and to express that anger in violence shows a completely distorted view of a human being's relationship with God. Human beings are not in competition with each other for a relationship with God. God's love for one does not diminish his love for someone else. Our only competition should be with the person we used to be.²

6. What questions did the LORD ask Cain in verses 6 and 7?
7. What did the Lord tell Cain he needed to do? (4:7)
8. What did Cain do? (4:8)

Read Genesis 4:9-16

9. What did the LORD ask Cain in verse 9? How did Cain answer the LORD?

Seven times in this chapter Abel is identified as Cain's "brother." The Hebrew word for "keeper" comes from the same root as the verb "keep" in Genesis 2:15. It means to watch over, guard, and protect. Just as Adam failed to protect the garden and his wife from the serpent, Cain failed to protect his younger brother from his own sin.

10. What did the LORD say about the blood of Abel in verse 10?

James Smith notes,

The Lord cut off all further evasion when he said, "The blood of your brother cries out to me from the ground." While the blood of the innocent man cried out to God for vengeance, the blood of Jesus "speaks better things than that of Abel" (Heb 12:24). Jesus' blood speaks of forgiveness rather than vengeance.³

³ James Smith, *The Pentateuch* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996), 78.

11. How did the Lord punish Cain for his sin? (4:11-12)
12. What did Cain say about his punishment in verse 13?
13. What did Cain say about his punishment in verse 14?

The Hebrew word for “punishment” in verse 13 can be translated “sin.” However, that would not fit with the context that follows. Cain is far more concerned about his punishment than he is about his sin.

14. How did the LORD protect Cain in verse 15?
15. Where did Cain go in verse 16?

Read Genesis 4:17-26

16. Where did Cain get his wife? (see Gen. 5:4)
17. What did Cain build in verse 17?
18. Who was Lamech? Who did Lamech marry? (4:18-19)
19. What do we know about Lamech’s children? (4:20-22)
20. What do we learn about Lamech from the song he sang? (4:23-24)
21. With whom did God replace Abel? (4:25-26)

Kissling comments,

The scene shifts from the line of Cain to the line of Seth. Instead of murder, polygamy, and presuming on the Lord's mercy, these descendants of Adam and Eve begin to call on the name of the Lord in worship. This is a partial rehabilitation of the divine-human relationship which was broken in Eden.⁴

22. Why are family relationships more intense than other relationships?
23. What lessons can we learn from Cain’s actions and attitudes?
24. What can we do to make sure our worship is pleasing to the LORD?

⁴ Kissling, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Genesis Volume 1*, 235-236.

Sermon Notes 10/4/20

**“Am I my brother’s keeper?”
How should we respond to Genesis chapter 4?**

1. We must give God _____.
Genesis 4:3-5
Hebrews 11:4
2. Accept God’s help to _____.
Genesis 4:6-7
1 Corinthians 10:12-13
3. _____ one another and seek _____.
Genesis 4:8-12
1 John 3:11-12
Matthew 5:21-24
4. Come to Jesus with _____.
Genesis 4:13-16
Matthew 11:28-30
Hebrews 12:22-24

After Eden

