

Genesis 4:1-26
Life After the Fall

I am not sure how many of you heard the latest news about Andrea Yates

- On Wednesday, she was found “not guilty” of her crime

You may remember that she is the woman who killed all five of her children by drowning them in her own bathtub

- The children were 7, 5, 3, 2, and 6 months

The reason why she was acquitted of her crime was due to a plea of insanity¹

Of course, I am not sure who is more insane

- Andrea Yates
- Or the jury

Imagine a person committing outright murder against one’s own family members

- Then getting off scot-free
- Without any sense of responsibility for her actions
- I would say that is a far cry from justice, isn’t it?

Well this morning, we are going to witness a murder

- Genesis 4 records the first murder ever committed

No, it will not be a mother killing her children

- Rather, it will be a brother killing his brother

For Adam and Eve, life continued after the Fall

- Their lives did not suddenly end when they were driven from the Garden of Eden
- God provides a snapshot of the effects of sin in the lives of the first family

We would think and hope that Adam and Eve would have learned the consequences of their sin

- But we actually see the opposite

Adam and Eve’s family have been infected with the virus of sin

- Their children display the effects of sin, just like they had done in the Garden

Before, the sin had impacted the husband-wife relationship

- This morning, we will see how sin impacts the brother-brother relationship²

Let’s read Genesis 4:1-12

Basically, this fourth chapter is about Cain

- There are other people mentioned
- But God narrows the focus on this one individual, Cain

¹ http://www.courttv.com/trials/yates/072606_verdict2_ctv.html

² Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, 152.

Chapters two and three have focused on the life of Adam and Eve inside the Garden

- Chapters four and following focus on their life outside the Garden³

Specifically in chapter four, we are going to see five elements of life after the Fall:

- Birth after the Fall (4:1-2)
- Worship after the Fall (4:3-7)
- Brotherly love after the Fall (4:8-16)
- Civilization after the Fall (4:17-24)
- Remnant after the Fall (4:25-26)

I. Birth after the Fall (4:1-2)

Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain.

Chapter three left us with a little bit of uncertainty

- Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden
- They were forbidden from coming back in

What would happen to them?

- Did they learn their lessons from their previous sin?

Throughout the Bible, the name “Adam” is used 20 times

- This is contrasted to the 4 times that the word “Eve” is used

Usually, Adam’s name will be mentioned but the Text will mention “the woman” – obviously a reference to the first name Adam gave to his bride

- But notice verse one of chapter four is different

Moses writes, “Now the man had relations with his wife Eve”

- It is intriguing that Adam’s name is substituted for “the man” and “the woman” is now “Eve”

The author points out that Adam “had relations” with his wife Eve

- Some of your versions may have the phrase “the man knew his wife”

This is a common way of describing the special relationship that is shared between a husband and a wife

- There was no shame or guilt in this intimate setting
- Within the boundaries of marriage, a man and a woman are encouraged to enjoy their sexual relationship
- Problems begin when sex is taken outside of the marriage relationship

Back in chapter one, Adam and Eve were blessed by God with the ability to have children (1:28)

- And that is exactly what we see taking place here in verse one
- Eve gives birth to her firstborn, Cain

Remember from chapter three that Adam named the woman “Eve”

- In response to the Divine promise of Genesis 3:15, Adam realized that she would be the fountain of human life on the Earth
- She would be the human source through which the rest of humanity would come
- That included the seed of woman who would crush the serpent

³ Kenneth A. Mathews, *NAC, Genesis 1-11:26*, 258.

and she said, “I have gotten a manchild with *the help of the LORD.*”

This part of verse one has been the subject of much controversy over how to translate this sentence properly

The Hebrew text can be understood in two ways

- “I have gotten a manchild with *the help of the LORD*”
- “I have gotten a manchild, the LORD”

The first option is what most of our English versions have adopted

- Eve is declaring that the LORD has assisted her in giving birth to a man

But the second option is something altogether different

- This alternative suggests that her son would actually be the promised Deliverer spoken of in 3:15

The problem with this is that Eve did not know that the promised Deliverer in 3:15 would be the LORD

- In her limited understanding, she would not have put together the need for the Deliverer to be both God and Man

So we opt for the first option which is an acknowledgement of God’s help and assistance in giving birth to a man

Eve’s response to having a child was, “**I have gotten a manchild with *the help of the LORD***”

- Remember, italics in our English versions do not indicate emphasis
- They indicate that these words were not part of the original Text

The name “**Cain**” literally means “gotten” or “received”

- Part of Eve’s expression was the basis for the boy’s name

Things look great for this kid, don’t they?⁴

- His mother acknowledges God’s help with his birth and conception
- But things aren’t always what they seem

² And again, she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Sometime after Cain was born, Eve gave birth to another son, Abel

- In contrast to the situation with Cain, there is no expression given by Eve

Abel’s very name implies “vanity” or “breath”⁵

- It would be a very accurate description for the shortness of his lifespan

Some have suggested that by the time Abel was born, Eve was beginning to feel the sorrow of sin and the vanity of life

⁴ Ross, 156.

⁵ Kidner, 74.

And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

These two brothers are shown to have two different occupations

- Abel is a shepherd
- Cain is a farmer

As we think about this in-depth, something fascinating does emerge⁶

- Cain's occupation – a farmer – emerged after the Fall (3:23)
- Abel's occupation – a shepherd – was an original part of man's responsibility (1:28)

You might say that Cain's occupation aligned himself more with the curse than Abel

So in their work, these men had different approaches

- That's not the only area where they differed

II. Worship after the Fall (4:3-7)

³ So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. ⁴ And Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions.

Cain and Abel were different in their approach to work

- But they were also different in their approach to worship

We notice that both Cain and Abel brought forth an “**offering**” to the LORD

- This was a voluntary act of paying homage and allegiance to God

Cain brought an offering “**of the fruit of the ground**”

- Abel brought an offering “**of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions**”

This makes sense, doesn't it?

- As a farmer, Cain would have brought an offering from the ground
- As a shepherd, Abel would have brought an offering from the animals

Something so basic is the fact that Cain and Abel are bringing offerings to God

- But how did they do this?
- How did God manifest His presence outside the Garden?

We can only guess at some of the answers to these questions

- It could be that God would meet with humanity at the entrance to the Garden of Eden
- It could be that God would come out of the Garden and meet with humanity in the field
- We are not sure

But Cain and Abel brought a literal, physical offering to God

⁶ Ross, 156.

And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering;⁵ but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard.

What happens next in this story is totally unexpected

- God accepts Abel's offering
- But He rejects Cain's offering

So the question that everyone is asking is, "Why?"

- Why did God accept one and reject the other?

I have to admit that my own thinking has changed on this verse

- When I first read it, I thought that Cain's offering was rejected because it was not a blood sacrifice

I was taking this from the fact that God had clothed Adam and Eve with an animal, signifying that the principle of sacrifice had been implemented

- However, I was reading too much of the Bible back into a time when there was no written revelation to be read or studied

The word "offering" was used in the Torah of bloodless, acceptable sacrifices⁷

- Thus we must be careful of suggesting that Cain and Abel, without the written or spoken Law, was actually subject to that Law
- That would be getting ahead of ourselves a little bit

This word can also refer to offerings that include the killing of animals

- So it can be either a bloodless or a bloody sacrifice⁸

So we can't look merely at one word and claim to have the answer

- We have to look closely, even comparing parallel passages throughout the rest of the Scriptures

The New Testament helps to shed some light on the reason why God accepted Abel's offering but rejected Cain's

- "By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks." (11:4)

Do you know that God is as concerned with the giver as He is with the gift?

- God is not pleased with a sacrifice that comes from an apostate, unbelieving heart

Listen to what God said in Isaiah 1, "What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" says the LORD. 'I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed cattle. And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats. ¹² When you come to appear before Me, who requires of you this trampling of My courts? ¹³ Bring your worthless offerings no longer, incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies – I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly.'" (1:11-13)

Worship that pleases God must come from a pure heart⁹

⁷ John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison*, 99.

⁸ Victor P. Hamilton, *NICOT, Genesis 1-17*, 223.

⁹ John H. Sailhamer, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Genesis*, 61.

In Genesis 4, God does not reveal the answer as to why He rejected Cain's offering¹⁰

- From an outside perspective, we are unable to detect any difference between the two brothers and their offerings
- If it was up to us, we would accept both of them

I think that this should drive us back to the reality that God sees the heart of man

- What we can't see – He does
- What He sees – we can't

This rejection/acceptance occurs in the context of worship

- Both make the effort to bring an offering to the Lord
- An act of gratitude for God's provision and grace

But the difference is not discernable to the naked eye

- It takes the eye of One who is perfect, Who is able to look into the heart

This principle is certainly very applicable to us today

- Here we are in a church service

From an external perspective, we all look pretty good, don't we?

- We put on some good, clean clothes
- We serve in various capacities on Sunday mornings
- We put money in the box in the back
- We come to listen to the Word of God

But the big difference is that God is examining our hearts this morning

- I can't do that with you
- You can't do that with me

Friend, don't think for a second that just because you go through the motions of coming to church, serving, giving money, etc. that you have obtained favor with God

- God looks at your heart and your motives

You might be able to fool me and I might be able to fool you

- But we can't fool God
- That was the mistake of Cain

So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

In response to God's decision about the offerings, Cain "became very angry and his countenance fell"

Cain was hot!

- He was very angry at God for rejecting his offering
- He was very angry at Abel for his accepted offering

This word for "angry" implies a burning heat¹¹

¹⁰ Hamilton, 224.

- It is a very passionate, intense anger that seethes and churns
- It is like a volcano erupting

Cain's attitude after the offering reveals his heart before the offering¹²

6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"

God confronts Cain immediately with two simple questions, "**Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen**"

God could look at Cain's heart and see that something was wrong

- But anyone could look at his face and see that he was angry

This was not just an internal anger issue

- You could literally see it on his face

7 If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

No response is given by Cain in response to God's questions

- So God probes further

God gives Cain a choice in verse 7

- Cain could do well
- Or Cain could not do well

Sin was controlling the heart of Cain

- And God was warning him of the consequences

God describes sin like a wild animal, ready to spring upon its victim¹³

- If Cain did not "**do well**," sin would overtake him and take advantage of him

This same idea of mastering a sinful desire was discussed back in chapter three in relation to Eve

- God had told her the consequences of her sin, "**I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children; yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you**" (3:16)

Eve's sin was having an independent, self-willed attitude toward her husband

- But her husband would "**rule over**" her

In God's providence, He uses the same word in two chapters

- The meaning is crystal clear

Eve's desire for her husband was a selfish, sinful one

- Sin's desire for Cain a selfish, sinful one

¹¹ TWOT, meaning of הָרָוַץ .

¹² Mathews, 268.

¹³ W.H. Griffith-Thomas, *Genesis: A Devotional Commentary*, 57.

Adam's function over Eve was one of an authoritative ruling

- Cain must exercise control over himself; otherwise, sin would master him!

Cain is warned that if he takes the right action, he will be rewarded

- However, if he chooses the wrong action, he will be giving sin an opportunity to master him¹⁴

As we will see this morning and next week, Cain does not display the character and attitude of a believer

- On the contrary, he acts like a child of Satan

The apostle John states very clearly that Cain was “of the evil one” (1 John 3:12)

- He belonged to Satan
- He was not a believer

Cain had crossed over from being a seed of the woman to being the first seed of the serpent

- The enmity that God promised to the serpent had already started!

This idea of sin “crouching at the door” sounds very similar to a NT passage of Scripture found in 1 Peter 5, “Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” (5:8)

Satan had been instrumental in tempting Eve to sin

- Here I believe Satan is instrumental in tempting Cain to sin

Isn't it interesting that Eve was talked *into* her sin by Satan

- But Cain cannot be talked *out of* his sin by the Lord¹⁵

It is also noteworthy that nothing is said about Cain responding to God¹⁶

- He fails to heed the warning¹⁷

But Cain does talk to someone

- That is where we turn next...

III. Brotherly love after the Fall (4:8-16)

⁸ And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

From what we know in the Genesis account, there were only a few people on the face of the Earth at this time

- Adam and Eve
- Cain and Abel
- Perhaps a few more brothers and sisters that are mentioned later

We are allowed to see this sibling relationship lived out between Cain and Abel

¹⁴ Mathews, 270.

¹⁵ Derek Kidner, *Tyndale OT Commentaries, Genesis*, 74.

¹⁶ Davis, 100.

¹⁷ C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 70.

Remember, Cain had a choice before him

- He could master sin
- Or sin would master him

Unfortunately, he chose not to master sin

- And the effects were disastrous

We don't know what conversation took place between Cain and Abel

- The Text simply says, “**And Cain told Abel his brother**”

Some time after this conversation, “**they were in the field**”

- This would have made sense because a farmer and a shepherd would have been working their respective occupations

But this day was different

- Cain had something on his mind

“**when they were in the field...Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him**”

- This is the first murder ever recorded in Scripture

This is the first child of Adam and Eve

- It doesn't take long for sin to manifest itself, does it?
- Sin is already distorting mankind further and further

But why?

- Why does Cain kill his brother?

It certainly stems back to the time of worship when Cain's offering was rejected and Abel's offering was accepted

- Cain was unable to resist the vengeance and hatred that he had toward his brother
- So he takes out his wrath on the only scapegoat, Abel¹⁸

Once again, the NT helps us to understand the reason why Cain killed his brother Abel

- In a passage that addresses the need for brotherly love, the apostle John writes, “**For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; ¹² not as Cain, who was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.**” (1 John 3:11-12)

The contrast could not be clearer

- Believers are called to love our spiritual family in 1 John 3
- Cain did not love his physical family in Genesis 4 – he displayed hatred toward Abel

John also lets us know that Cain's deeds were “**evil**” while Abel's deeds were “**righteous**”

- That shows the character of these two men

¹⁸ Hamilton, 230.

⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?”

Notice that once again, God is the One taking the initiative in pursuing mankind¹⁹

- He pursued Adam and Eve in the Garden after their sin
- Here He pursues Cain after his sin in the field

God is graciously coming to mankind

- Mankind is not taking the initiative to settle things with God

As we mentioned with Adam and Eve, God could have executed direct, Divine judgment and condemnation upon Cain

- And He would have been just in doing so

God begins to question Cain about Abel’s location, “Where is Abel your brother?”

- Back in chapter three, God had asked Adam, “Where are you?” (3:9)

God never asks a question in order to gain information

- He asks questions in order to probe the human heart

Just as He did with Adam, so God probes the heart of Cain

- God was giving Cain an opportunity to confess his sin

If you notice with me, this passage mentions the word “brother” seven times²⁰

- I believe that God reinforces this thought for the sake of Cain

Remember, Cain has just killed a human

- But not just any human
- Cain has murdered his own blood-relative, his brother

Every time Cain hears the word “brother,” I believe God is confronting him with his sin

And he said, “I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?”

In response to God’s question, Cain is given a choice

- He can come clean and face the consequences of his actions
- Or he can choose not to come clean
- *Cain opts for the second choice*

As a matter of fact, Cain’s response is twofold

- He gives an outright lie about his actions
- He also responds with a sarcastic question back to God!²¹

Cain was much more hardened in his sin than Adam

- Adam attempted to shift the blame to others
- But at least he confessed to his sin

¹⁹ Davis, 99.

²⁰ 4:2, 8(twice), 9(twice), 10, 11.

²¹ Davis, 100.

But Cain is totally unrepentant

- He lies to God
- He attempts to evade any responsibility for the murder of Abel

This sounds so much like his father, Adam

- Adam was evasive in answering the Lord
- Like father, like son

The word here for “keeper” has been used two other times in Genesis thus far

- 2:15 – “Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.”
- 3:24, “So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life.”

The idea, then, of “keep” is to guard, to protect, to care for

The psalmist records that “He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.” (121:4)

Cain was saying, in essence, “Am I supposed to keep track of my brother all the time? Am I supposed to keep an eye on him all the time? Am I the shepherd’s shepherd?”²²

- Abel was a shepherd – one responsible for the oversight and protection of animals

¹⁰ And He said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground.

God’s response to Cain is very similar to the question that He asked Eve in the garden, “What is this you have done?” (3:13)

This is another gracious opportunity from God for Cain to come clean about his sin

- Cain has just smarted off at the LORD
- God is displaying His longsuffering

Cain is trying to hide information from God

- But he fails to understand that God sees directly into the hearts of men

How foolish for Cain to think that he can outwit the Almighty

- How foolish to think that a lie and a sarcastic response would avert holy judgment

But Cain didn’t realize that a star witness was accusing him

- The LORD tells Cain, “The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to Me from the ground”

Abel’s murder did not go unnoticed to the all-knowing God

- He knows every action
- He knows every thought
- He knows every motive

Abel’s blood was crying out to God

²² Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary, Genesis 1-15*, 106.

This word for “cry” is always used of the oppressed and the afflicted

- It is the innocent’s petition to God in regard to the guilty²³

The author of Hebrews states that the blood of Christ “speaks better than *the blood of Abel.*” (12:24)

- This is because Abel’s blood cries out for judgment – for vengeance
- Christ’s blood, however, can bring about forgiveness and reconciliation

11 And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

Until now, only the serpent (3:14) and the ground (3:17) were cursed

- But now Cain himself is cursed
- The first instance of one made in the image of God being cursed by God

What does the “curse” imply?

- Well the simplest way to explain it is to say that to be cursed is the opposite of being blessed

Specifically, it is a punishment for sin committed

- It is the Divine consequence of sin

Cain’s curse came in the manner in which he obtained his living – as a farmer

- We see that in the next verse

12 When you cultivate the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you; you shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.

Cain’s father, Adam, had begun to feel the sting of the curse on the ground

- Adam had once worked the ground in the Garden of Eden
- But now he had been ousted from the Garden

In similar fashion, Cain’s punishment is greater than Adam’s

- “*When you cultivate the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you*”

Cain’s return for his labor would be diminished further

- Long hours
- Little to show for his efforts

Adam was banished from the Garden of Eden because of his sin

- Cain was banished even further

He would be a “*vagrant and a wanderer on the earth*”

- For a farmer, this would insinuated a life of constant finding of good land that could produce crops
- No longer would he stay in one location as Adam and Eve could have enjoyed in the Garden of Eden

Cain’s indictment was far worse than physical death

- Death would have been instant
- This way of living, however, was long-term

²³ Hamilton, 230.

God had promised that there would be perpetual enmity and friction between the seed of Satan and the seed of woman

- Just a very short time after this promise was made, we begin to see its truth lived out

Cain represents the seed of Satan and Abel represents the seed of woman

- Remember what 1 John 3:12 says about Cain? – “Cain...was of the evil one, and slew his brother”
- We also know from John 8:44 that Satan “was a murderer from the beginning”

Isn't it amazing that in the very first two children born to Adam and Eve, they were already fulfilling God's promise of enmity?

- Satan was doing everything he could to destroy the human race
- He wanted to destroy the seed of woman in hopes that he would destroy the coming Deliverer

Cain's murder of Abel was no doubt a result of anger

- But I am sure that Satan was tempting him just as he had tempted his mother back in the garden

With Abel, the righteous seed of woman, killed, who would fulfill the promise?

- But Satan's plan backfired

If you compare chapters three and four, you will see many comparisons²⁴

- Cain hid himself after his sin
 - o Adam and Eve hid themselves after their sin
- Cain brought an offering from the fruit of the ground
 - o Eve ate from the fruit of the tree
- God questioned Cain after his sin
 - o God questioned Adam and Eve after their sin
- Cain is cursed
 - o Satan and the ground are cursed

From the very first two children of Adam and Eve, we already see two clear contrasts

- Cain – representative of the unbeliever, “of the evil one” (1 John 3:12)
- Abel – representative of the believer, called “righteous” by Christ Himself (Mt 23:35)

Cain rejects God's Word and follows his own path

- Abel receives God's Word and follows the way of the righteous

Next week we will finish our study of chapter four

- At the end of the service, we will celebrate our monthly time of fellowship around the Lord's Table
- It will be a wonderful time for us to examine our hearts as we consider the example of Cain

²⁴ Ross, 154.