

Life Lesson 4
Cain and Abel
Text: Genesis 4

Introduction

Do you know the saddest thing about sin? Sin doesn't just harm the sinner. It hurts lots of other people, too. Last week we learned of the first sin and the dreadful consequences it brought. Adam and Eve were cast out of the beautiful garden, they had to work hard for their living, and they began to die. Worst of all, they lost that precious face-to-face fellowship with God that only a sinless creature could have.

The results of sin didn't stop with Adam and Eve, though. Because they were now imperfect they had children who were also imperfect. The Bible says that everyone born on the earth since Adam and Eve were "born in sin." That means no one had ever been sinless, except Jesus, of course. Every person in the world needs to be saved. Many children think they are "okay" until they are older, but the Bible says that we are sinners who need salvation from the time we are born.

The Story

God gave Eve a little son. She named him "Cain." Then she had another little boy named Abel. When they were small they probably liked to do the same kinds of things you do. Maybe they liked to swim and fish and climb trees. They probably wrestled with each other like most boys do.

They grew up to be men with different interests. Cain became a farmer. He liked to grow fruits and vegetables. Abel liked animals. He became a shepherd.

Do you remember how God shed the blood of some innocent animals to provide clothes for Adam and Eve? That was a picture of how He would one day send His Son as a sacrifice to pay for the sins of Adam and Eve and for those of all His people.

Now God commanded that Adam and Eve and their family should offer an animal on the altar as a sign that they trusted in a coming Savior to take away their sin.

We learn from Genesis chapter four that Abel brought to the Lord an acceptable offering. He brought the best sheep in his flock and offered it to the Lord. He must have understood that this sacrifice didn't save him, but simply showed his faith in God to save him. God accepted Abel's sacrifice.

We don't know how He showed His acceptance. Maybe He sent a bolt of lightning, or maybe He spoke from Heaven. We know that Abel's sacrifice was acceptable to God, because he did it God's way. He came to God the only acceptable way, not relying on himself, but trusting God to save him.

His brother was a different story. Cain was a farmer. He didn't want to offer a lamb. Instead he brought some of the fruits and vegetables he had raised. Did God command them to bring fruits and vegetables? No, He commanded that the blood of a lamb be shed. Cain did not want to trust in God to save him. He wanted instead to please God by bringing the fruit of his hands to God.

Cain became angry when he saw that God accepted Abel's sacrifice, but not his. The Lord spoke to him and said, "Why are you so mad? If you do right, I'll accept your sacrifice, too."

But Cain wouldn't repent and do things God's way. Instead he kept his anger inside him. Then one day when Cain met Abel out in a field, he was so angry that he hit

Abel. He hit him so hard that Abel died. He killed his own brother! Can you imagine how sad and horrified Adam and Eve were? They were probably beginning to understand how much sorrow and misery their sin had brought into the world. If they hadn't sinned, this terrible thing wouldn't have happened.

Of course, God saw what happened. He punished Cain by sending him away to be a fugitive. He would always be traveling, always running away. He could never come back to his home.

God gave Adam and Eve another son to take the place of those they had lost. They named him Seth. I'm sure Seth and Adam and Eve's other children were a comfort to them, but those children were sinners, too. The curse Adam and Eve had brought on themselves was carried on in their children.

The Life Lesson

Many people are like Cain. They think they can come to God in their own way. They say, "I'll live a good life, and God will accept me," or "I'll give lots of money to the church, and that will do well enough for God."

But God made one provision for sin. He planned to send Jesus to shed His innocent blood for sinners. Nothing else will do.

Cain thought he could come to God in his own way. He was wrong! All of us can only come to God in God's way – by trusting in Jesus.

Review Questions

1. Who was Adam and Eve's first son?

Cain

2. What job did Cain have?

He grew fruits and vegetables.

3. What was the name of Adam and Eve's second son?

Abel

4. What job did Abel have?

He was a shepherd.

5. What sacrifice did God tell them to bring?

He said to bring a lamb.

6. Which brother obeyed God?

Abel

7. What did Cain bring for a sacrifice?

Fruit and vegetables.

8. Whose sacrifice did God accept?

God accepted Abel's sacrifice.

9. What did Cain do because he was angry with God?

He killed his brother, Abel.

10. What was the name of Adam and Eve's next son?

Seth