

Sermon Notes

Do I Have a Relationship with God or Am I Just Religious?

Genesis 4:1-14

“Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, “I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD.” Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.” (Genesis 4:1-5) NAS

“By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, God testifying about his gifts.” (Hebrews 11:4) NAS

What Can We Learn from the Story of Cain and Abel about True and False Religion?

God is not pleased by all religious efforts

“For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.” (Romans 1:21-23) NAS

Abel illustrates true religion

“By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, God testifying about his gifts.” (Hebrews 11:4) NAS

“And without faith, it is impossible to please Him for he who comes to God must believe that God is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6) NAS

Cain illustrates false religion

“God said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground. Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.” Cain said to the LORD, “My

punishment is too great to bear! Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." (Gen 4:10-14) NAS

False religion rejoices in its own accomplishments instead of in God.

False religion limits God.

False religion fears the consequences of sin more than sin itself.

For Further Thought and Discussion

Getting Started

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?
2. The different religions of the world are different paths to the same destination. Agree or disagree? Why?

Going Deeper

3. Please read Genesis 4:1-5. Why did God accept Abel's sacrifice but not Cain's? (See Hebrews 11:4) What does this imply about the religions of the world?
4. Please read Hebrews 11:6. Why is it impossible to please God without faith? Why is the word "must" important in understanding this verse? What must I believe in order to please God? How can I know if I believe?
5. Please read Genesis 4:10-14. What is Cain's penalty for murdering Abel? What do you learn about Cain from the way he reacts to his sentence? What is he sad about? What isn't he sad about? What does Cain reveal about false religion?
6. How can I know if my faith is real or false according to this passage?

Application

What is one thing you can do this week to apply this passage?