

# Cain and Abel (The First Murder) - Part 1

by Art Katz

---

*The sermon explores the theme of the wicked and the righteous, and how the war between flesh and spirit is a dichotomy that must be resolved in order to be the one thing or the other.*

**Duration:** 58:28

**Scripture:** Genesis 4:3, Genesis 4:8, Psalm 1:1, Psalm 1:6, Matthew 6:33, Acts 9:4-5, 2 Corinthians 4:18

**Topics:** "Cain and Abel"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on a 10-day period of fasting and prayer where they were seeking a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. They acknowledge that God did not act in the way they expected because He is not required to perform miracles in our time. The speaker emphasizes that the church should not limit itself to this life only, but should have a comprehension of eternity and what lies beyond. They suggest that the church has a responsibility to be a prophetic voice, warning nations about the consequences of their ruthless ambitions, in order to avert violence and bloodshed.

---

## Transcript

I'd like to talk about, uh, all of the varieties and pluralisms and ways... It seems that God sees things in stark alternatives and polarities. And in the Psalms we see a consistent theme, the wicked and the righteous. I went through the Psalms, not all the Psalms, but I was fingering back through my notes that I've written right into the Psalms, because the reading of the Psalms is part of my daily devotional.

I somehow stirred up by this thought somewhere in the early morning hours when my brother's wife called from, uh, Burundi, thinking that her husband would be right at the phone. Well, we've not yet come to sharing the same bed. But once I'm waking, that's it, I'm up.

And so it was an opportunity to look at this morning's material and to look back into the Psalms. And I invite you to do that. You'll see the persistent theme of the cry of the righteous, who are the object of oppression and persecution by the wicked.

What characterizes the wicked is their ruthless violence, particularly vented upon the righteous. There's something about the righteous that provokes the wicked and reveals what they are in their innermost being. In fact, I think I found a place in the Psalms where it says they are born that way.

Let me see if I can find it. And that they are liars and murderers, which is, of course, the nature of their father. You'll see that as the persistent theme, the cry of the righteous.

And for God's intervention, because it's more than their safety or bodily hurt that they're expressing, but that the honor of God is involved in his defense of the righteous. It's God's name and honor standing for righteousness that is more the wellspring of the cry of the psalmist than it is their own personal safety. It's warning God to show himself, because their detractors are saying, where is your God? It's an object of scorn and derision that somehow God seems to be absent from the defense of his own saints and that they are the merciless and defenseless victims of the wicked.

So get into the texture of the Psalms and see how that resonates virtually through every Psalm and the cries that are registered there. The cry of how long would and be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him. Do not fret over those who prosper in their way, over those who carry out evil devices.

You deliver the weak from those too strong for them, the weak and needy from those who despoil them. The wicked are invariably the defenseless and the weak. Who have made God their defense.

The Lord is my refuge, my power, my strength. That very conviction and very announcement to the principalities and powers is a clear invitation to be the object of oppression. So if you want to avoid any of this in your experience, just be a rank and file commonplace Christian who has no intention of making God his refuge and you'll be spared.

But in this radical utterness of casting yourself upon God and not seeing to your own strength as your safety, the powers of darkness hate such a one and will test him. And the Lord allows it, evidently, as we can read in the cry of the Psalmists who are experiencing this oppression without the immediate relief of God. Where is he? How long, O Lord? Why are you silent? Why don't you come and answer the cries of the righteous? So that's why I call the Book of Psalms an end-time book.

It speaks more of the realities that we're going to face than we can know. And the Psalmists have a knowledge of God. And so often the Psalm does not end with a happy note.

Where God comes through. But rather what's expressed is that there's such a hopeful confidence in the future that he will show himself strong, that he will vindicate his name, that that confidence and that trust is what sustains the suffering Psalmist now. It's the assurance that God will act that is what sustains the Psalmist, not the act of God himself.

And where does that confidence come from? God's faithfulness in the past. Because he has come through before, because he has honored his covenant, because he has shown himself faithful, the Psalmist is assured that though right now there's no present evidence of God, he's allowing me to suffer this, yet I am confident that he will because that's what he's done in the past. It's the history with God that saves men in all of the perils and the uncertainties of the future.

That's why they that overcome will overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. What does that mean? That they have a residue of a history of God's faithfulness that though in this moment for reasons of his own that he is not obliged to reveal, he is not coming through, yet we have the confidence that he will ultimately vindicate his name because he has come through in the past and we have a solid residue of God's past faithfulness that will sustain us. So I'm always encouraging young saints to accumulate a history in God.

Where you put yourself in the place of jeopardy that if God be not God, you will perish. And that's when he will give answer. We can spend the whole morning just going through the Psalms would be a precious time.

The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh, my adversaries and foes, they shall stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.

So this is a precious tenor of all of the psalmists. Why the reference to fear about being assailed? Because they're the object of the most malicious violent activity of those who hate God and somehow have a unique way to find out those who stand in that identification with God that they can ventilate on that visible piece of flesh and blood a hatred and a violence that cannot be perpetrated against the God who is invisible. See what I mean? God is wanting this fellowship but when you obtain it, know that you're mocked and that you'll be the object of the ventilation of a hatred against God.

The whole world is at enmity against God. God-hatred is the distinction of the unbelieving world. And where do they ventilate that? God who is invisible? No.

That expression of God that is visible and before them in every locality and community, the people of God, the remnant, church. But their confidence is in God. It doesn't say if evildoers will assail me but when they assail me.

It's not a question of whether it will come. It's only a question of when it will come. But when it will come, they shall stumble and fall because God is my strength, my stronghold, my fortress and my tower.

He will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble but there will be a day of trouble. He will set me high upon a rock. Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me.

What has made them your enemies? Your love of God and your standing for Him and for His righteousness in a world that despises both. That's why they're your enemies. And I will offer in His tabernacle sacrifices with shouts of joy.

I will sing and make melodies to the Lord. Not because His answer has come but before His answer has come in the sublime confidence that it will come. And if it doesn't come in this life, it will come in eternity.

That in fact eternity needs to be factored in to this life where this life is without meaning. It's without righteousness if we have only to understand it within the parameters of this life. But when eternity is factored in and God's judgments that are eternal then those who have gotten away with murder in this life will have their comeuppance.

And those who have suffered for righteousness sake in this life without recompense will receive it eternally as a crown. And then the name of God and the honor of God is vindicated because eternity has rightly been factored in to time. Get the idea? So already that is the divine perspective.

That's the normative way of perceiving reality. And for those Christians who have not rightly considered eternity and are only waiting to die to come into it they're losing the great benefit and the solace of what can be rightly anticipated where God will be fully vindicated and that those who have gotten away with murder and where is God? Didn't he see it? Why didn't he act? Well because he's not required in our time

to perform that. But that eternity what lies beyond this life is where the full reckoning takes place.

And one of the distinctives of the church is that it does not limit itself to this life only. In fact it's more to be said that it's comprehension of eternity and what lies beyond this life is the greater reality than this life itself and gives meaning to this life. And I'll tell you I talk about sanity and that's either uttermost insanity or it is uttermost sanity.

And the world will hate you all the more because you take eternity into your consideration and do not invest in this life the kind of uttermost value that they give it. You see what I mean? And that's why you can walk through this life not at all intimidated as if everything depends upon now because you're seeing beyond and you're taking that into your present consideration. Like Paul who seeing the things that are invisible and eternal made his present suffering momentary and light.

That future consideration was so vivid in his apostolic heart and mind that it actually affected the way in which he bore his apostolic suffering. In fact it's not an exaggeration to say that his apostolic suffering was in no little measure the consequence of his eternal view. That that's what provoked the world and its religion to spitefully abuse him.

And it will be so for us also. Thank you Lord. Well let's look at our text for this morning.

Genesis chapter 4. Cain and Abel. Cain is the first fruit the first child of Adam and Eve outside the garden and in the earth that now bears the curse and with the pronouncements of the Lord in judgment upon them for their sin. So now the man knew his wife Eve and she conceived and bore Cain saying I have produced the man with the help of the Lord.

Next she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep and Cain a tiller of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock their fat portions and the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.

So Cain was very angry and his countenance fell. The Lord said to Cain why are you angry and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well sin is lurking at the door its desire is for you but you must master it. Cain said to his brother Abel let us go out to the field and when they were in the field Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

Then the Lord said to Cain where is your brother Abel? And he answered I don't know am I my brother's keeper? And the Lord said what have you done? Listen your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground and now you are cursed from the ground which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground it will no longer yield to you in strength you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth. Cain said to the Lord my punishment is greater than I can bear.

Listen to this self pity. Today you have driven me away from the soil and I shall be hidden from your face I shall be a fugitive and wanderer on the earth and anyone who meets me may kill me. Then the Lord said to him not so whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance and the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who came upon him would kill him.

Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod east of Eden. Cain knew his wife she conceived him for Enoch not the Enoch who was later transported and he built a city and from that city and the progeny that issue from Cain is the beginning of the entire revolt against God by

the nations and the beginning of the advent of technology and everything adverse to God. How shall I say that? But it has its origin out of the line that issues from Cain.

So isn't it remarkable in the biblical narratives how the polarities are from birth Esau and Jacob Isaac and Ishmael probably there are other Joseph and his brothers there's like a holy line a holy seed and then right alongside and parallel with it the complete antithesis it's the flesh and the spirit and the one lusts against the other and that seems to be a theme right till the end of the age What shall we say about the end of the age? How about the church?

Will there be a remnant church that is in the continuum of the holy line of Abel and Seth and another bearing the same word and name using the same vocabulary but not only being opposite in character and kind and spirit but ventilating an anger against the other even unto murder and death who will kill us and claim they are doing God a service because it's interesting that the first act of murder is over the issue of sacrifice and altars so there's a lot here that needs to be dug out and explored and you need to participate in this because I don't have definitive understandings and you notice again how sparse the scriptures are isn't that remarkable? this is so unique a form of literature that you can probably say it's only half written there's an intention in God in keeping it this lean

that in order to complete it and to give us the fullness of meaning something is required from the reader something is required from the student of the word in which God completes what is only hinted at that there's required an active interaction with the word by the spirit to bring about the completion of its understanding and those who are not willing for that painful interaction being called upon and summoned up out of their own deeps to wrestle with this and to be dealt with in this to see our correspondence not only with Abel but with Cain and maybe there's an Abel-Cain dichotomy going on in our own hearts there's a war between flesh and spirit that is needing to be resolved that we might be the one thing or the other so it's not an abstract reading it's not an academic reading it's

a costly reading we're finding ourselves writ large here we're being identified it's not some kind of thing salted away as a chronicle finished and passed and we're reading it with kind of a curiosity of a mild historical interest this is living this is the issue of Burundi and the two what are the two tribal groups Hutu and the this is fratricide this is brother against brother this is tribe against tribe this is not black against white this is black against black there's something here that will give us an illumination there and maybe illumination of such a kind not only to understand that fratricidal genocide but even to be in a place to stand against it for the future to speak to nations and to men to before their short fuse is ignited to identify for them what the root of their anger

is which if it's not met will culminate in murder and in fact in the very text do we not have that? does not God speak to Cain before the murder? that if he had been heeded in the admonition that were given it need not have taken place see how fraught with instruction this is and how the elements are so classic that are contained here but it waits for us to bring them out not just for our edification or our enjoyment but actually to stand in the place of keeping this fratricidal murder from taking place in our own generation, this going to Africa is more than bringing bible studies it's to avert a flood of blood that will invariably come by people who are frustrated, despairing angry and give ventilation to that which will result in death we have to stand for life and even if we fail in

it we still have to stand for it why God would take those pains to spare him is a remarkable thing why he doesn't allow the full consequence of it of his sin to fall upon him but spares him is a remarkable statement

of the mercy of God both before and after the mercy of God before in saying to him why has your countenance fallen why are you angry sin is at the door don't give in to that and then having given to that having turned a deaf ear to the admonition and the pleading of God in his love still when the judgment comes it's touched by this mercy that he would be spared by being mocked even the name Cain means acquired I have obtained or acquired and the word acquired runs into the word acquisition to acquire property to acquire wealth is a certain kind of mentality that is covetous

and envious of the possessions of others that are not your own which is the root of the murder because he was angry that his brother had some kind of favor with God whose sacrifice was accepted whereas his was rejected so a man who is acquisitive and wants to obtain resting by his own efforts is already giving us the seeds of the tragedy that is to come he's rightly named because in biblical names the character is revealed in the name able means vanity or like a puff like an air like a light thing that would dissipate with a breath like a foolishness or a weakness so it's a real contrast with the brothers and their names isn't it interesting how often the Lord rejects the firstborn and celebrates and chooses Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated try to understand that even while they

were in the womb one was already identified as the enemy and the other as the beloved and chosen think of this in terms of the present state of Israel and that which will come later which will be the enduring prophetic fulfillment as against this one whose character is more resonant of Cain than it is of Abel and of necessity one had to precede the other just if you want to think this through there's something thematic in the beginning every element that's to be found in its continuum through time and history right through to the conclusion of the age and has its origins here even her statement I have begotten leaves sounds a kind of a tone or a note that begins to give you a chill that maybe this son is already doomed from his birth in the very mentality of the mother who takes almost a

credit for it and has an ambition for him that bodes ill for the future I have begotten is the very spirit of acquisition itself with the Lord's help not the way Christians talk with the Lord's help a secondary tribute in passing I don't know what she said about the birth of Abel but the way that God puts this in the record how selective is the word of God that in all of the things that could be said, could be recorded this is recorded because it's significant in already something that comes right from the advent of birth so the root of anger between brothers where is brotherly love? they're both born of the same parents to what degree are the sins of the fathers fallen on the sons to what degree are we seeing the outworking of the death that God said would take place if you eat from this

tree death not only in terms of the abbreviation of longevity of life but death in the form that it's going to take in anger and murder something was sown that is now beginning to have its repercussions and expression that we need to know about because what is God's judgment if you read the holocaust book I'm answering at the end of the book the questions raised by a well known Jewish philosopher that the holocaust could not have been God's judgment for two reasons, one that the victims were not secular atheistic Jews of the kind that populate the west, but the principal victim were Polish Jews who were the depository of orthodoxy and Judaism, why would they be the victim and the second question is how could it have been God's judgment if a million and a half infants and children were

killed in the six million is God going to allow innocent children to be victimized you'll have to read my answer, but I think it's a great question and my answer is that that's what judgment is judgment is not judgment if it only falls exclusively upon the perpetrators of evil but they need to know that in their perpetration of evil others will be victim with them and because of them and that that should be one of the

greatest restraints against allowing our anger to be expressed as murder see what I mean, or eating making a decision that gratifies our eyes and our voluptuous desire because others will be affected by our conduct I can say for myself, I would be something much less than what I am in God and in his purposes today I don't know if I would even be in the faith if it were not

for the fact that I have obligation toward others see what I mean, if it was only myself alone I would have taken chances, I would have indulged the kinds of things that might well have brought me out of the faith but because I have an obligation to others, it's a restraint that keeps me in the faith, and that knowledge that there's consequence for our acts ought to restrain us in ways that we would not otherwise be restrained, so we learn this from the word our acts are consequential even for generations ahead because you know that where it says that his blood has cried out to me from the ground the word actually in Hebrew is plural his bloods have cried out to me from the ground and the rabbinical commentators give a very interesting explanation why the word is made plural because in

the taking of the life of Abel, you're taking every generation that would have issued from him had he lived so it's the bloods, it's many who are perishing with that one man see what I mean?

How consequential are our acts?

Will that restrain a murderer when he knows he's not just devastating what is before him, but generations that might have had life had that man been spared you think of the tragedy of World War I, of which World War II is only a continuation and World War III might be a final expression that men who made decisions in smoke filled back rooms playing with tin soldiers the Kaisers and Tsars and British naval commanders and all those men who have ambition for military conquest, if they could see what was the result of their ambition, their sinful imperial ambitions that has devastated the world taking 20 million in World War I 40 million in World War II and God knows what the conflagration will be at the end but if you ever go to France, you'll want to visit Verdun the no man's land where the

Germans and the French went back and forth for a kilometer of ground day after day, week after month after month, spilling out the blood of an entire generation that the bones of the victims are contained in the ossuary that's the word for bones that is as big as a football field of a generation of the cream of French and German civilization who exhausted their lives over a battlefield with gas and bayonets and barbed wire and mud and muck for that which obtained nothing and set in motion the tragedy of the whole of modern times the world's innocence so to speak, was lost by stumbling into the sin of that violence that could have been avoided perhaps if there were a church in the earth who would have acted against the imperial ambition of nations and not be content with their Sunday

services only what would have been the prophetic voice of God warning nations of what the consequence of their ruthless ambitions will be, not only for that generation but all the generations thereafter who else should know that but the church, see what I mean that its silence makes it complicit in the sin of the nations so we need to borrow into this, if we're going to be that church in the last days and in Africa it says in the course of time in verse 3, Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground doesn't that sound like something acceptable after all that's what his vocation was he was a tiller of the ground and he gave what he produced, it sounds right and likewise Abel gave what he produced, he was a shepherd and he gave the first things of his flock and their fat

portions and the Lord had regard for Abel look at the language here the Lord had regard for Abel and his sacrifice as if to say God will not consider the religious act independent from the man who makes it and

that the act itself is the expression of the man and if the man is wanting in the authenticity of the truth and devotion of his relationship to God that no matter what he heaps up on the altar will be found unacceptable, however overtly and superficially it could be impressive, remember what I said about that 10 day period of fasting and prayer 24 hours around the clock was without any strings attached, we were making no requirement on God, we desperately needed fire to fall from heaven we needed a fresh baptism of spirit if I could tell you we needed it desperately, we never made

that a condition for the sacrifice of sleeplessness and 24 hours around the clock in prayer and 10 days of abstaining from food it was a devotional thing unto the Lord because he's God with no strings attached and that's an offering that is well pleasing and acceptable in his sight, the moment that we come with ulterior motives to placate God or to obtain as a condition we have already demeaned God as God as if we're in some kind of commercial transactional relationship with the God who's the creator who doesn't need our bulls and doesn't need our offerings and our sacrifices am I going to eat your sacrifice or drink your I've made all this I don't need that don't project upon me your commercial mentality as if I'm calling you only to religion and if you give me this I'll give you that in

exchange and we'll get along nicely you've missed it and if you embark on that there'll be a greater loss than just vain religious offering in the end what begins in that is going to end in sin murder, violence and death you're setting up something from the very first that is in error and so the question is why was one brother's offering found acceptable and there's a no of God to the other the language is so careful it's so lean that we would be inclined to miss it because we're not used to language like this we're not used to being spoken to like this and what we read in newspapers and magazines over triviality is so verbose is so inundated in words they go on and on almost that the more shallow the content the greater the quantity of words here in the greatness of the content is the

sparing of words but it makes a requirement of us to dwell on every word that has proceeded from the mouth of God and when God says no which is the word here for Cain in his offering he had no regard not that he didn't he had little regard he had no regard is a statement of absolute totality that the whole thing was totally unacceptable probably for what we have already identified its motive stank it's not what was given but the spirit in which it was given the mentality in which it was given was found altogether unacceptable and if that was true for Cain to what degree is it true for us how much are we doing with this unspoken premise underlying our conduct for God of placating him or what it will get us or what we'll obtain if we do it I have my daily devotional I've read three chapters

what do you want a medal? what do we have this mechanical and arithmetical formula of what we have to do in order to satisfy God's requirement and it's always a minimal requirement and I often quote from my high school teaching days how the students would come to my desk the first day of class Mr.

Katz what is the minimal amount that I need to do in order to get by that's the mentality of the world what's the minimal amount needed in order to get by but God says my house is the house of sacrifice and what he gave was not minimal now that raises a good question so what is signified in offering something from the cursed ground that he thinks God will accept and has no compunction or even the thought to offer blood which would have been a more expensive costly thing to obtain in fact it would have required the humiliation of obtaining the lamb from his brother who is the shepherd and he could not bring himself as the older brother to condescend to come to a younger and ask him for that which was needful so there's a tremendous issue of pride here and an issue of disrespect that thinks that God will be accommodated to our understanding and that he will find acceptable what we're putting before him raises the question first of

a lack of having the curse of God on the ground fixed on the tiller of the ground that is not to say that God would not have the ground to be tilled but to be tilled with a reverential awareness that there's a labor here that requires sweat because of a foundational sin performed by my father in which I am also implicated and therefore even as I labor it's with a respectful reverence of a God who has pronounced that judgment and anything that comes out of such a ground is a pure grace but that I'm not offered as a sacrifice.

There's one thing that Cain lacked. He lacked a reverential understanding of God and why is it that on the other hand Abel gave the sacrifice that was acceptable in the firstlings from his flock is it because they were accessible to him being a shepherd or did he know that he knew that he knew that only blood that there has to be a sacrifice there has to be an expression of death that would eventuate in life that something was instinctive there's no law that required that.

A man had to know this only by relationship only by intuiting the holiness of God could he understand the magnitude of the kind of sacrifice that would be acceptable and that would have to be blood how is it that Abel would have this kind of understanding of God and his brother older than he is totally bereft and to what degree are those choices before us now in Cain or Abel decisions and how easy is it is this a once and for all thing that you make a determination after that you're on the Abel line or is it a day by day moment by moment consideration of doing the cheap and the convenient thing or the willingness because of the reverence for God of always giving him the thing that's costly and ultimate and sacrificial we're faced with these decisions daily and moment by moment and a lot

of us are skating and getting by with the minimal thing and no one is faulting us but are we abounding in the relationship and the blessedness that would be ours if ours was an Abel rather than a Cain walk this is not a once and for all it's a tension that's before us continually to act out of convenience so that for example in two years at a Lutheran seminary every day was a chapel service and every day one professor or another of theology was giving the chapel message and I don't remember one of the hundreds that I heard why is that not one of them was memorable not one of them confronted me not one of them required not one of them pierced me is it because men were speaking out of their convenience out of their knowledge because their motive was not to seek God to find his relevant word

no matter what the cost because you can believe if you're going to speak a relevant word it's going to cost you it's going to bring you up before questions who do you think you are addressing the faculty and the student body like that what do you think that they are you're talking to sinners remember you're not you're not tenured yet you better watch for your career there's a retirement involved here where you'll have 98% of your salary for the rest of your natural life so better play it safe wise guy do you think you're spiritual or something I don't say that these men are conscious of that but you can believe it's under the substratum of their lives and what they spoke was biblically correct being scholars and because they know that there are men out there who are critically listening

to find one fault that they could address but not one speaking was memorable let alone significant because it did not issue from the life of God but from the mind of man serving the convenience of the moment who knew months in advance on which day he would be speaking and was preparing in such a way not to serve God but to avoid embarrassment and loss of prestige and status and reputation and that is what characterizes the church essentially today men concerned for their career their reputation rather than what God will say are acting in the cane way and bringing the result of that into the entire congregation who are not getting life they're getting death Sunday after Sunday however correct and biblical and doctrinally sound those messages are so whether we're ministers or not we're

faced with issues of this kind and that's why we have to invest ourselves in this text it's just an interesting little note in the firstlings of the flock that Abel gives a sacrifice and their fat portions what do we have to hear that I mean what's the big deal about that why is that mentioned what does that represent what is in the sacrifices of Israel what was the sweet fragrance and incense to God it was not what we would think the value the meat was not the sacrifice and the hides were cast away with the dung the sweet sacrifice were the entrails the guts were the real issues of life in the deep it's where we really live and the fat what was the significance of fat that it's mentioned here fat is obtained in rest absolutely there's the statement of rest which is the statement of faith

whereas Cain is a striver and a choicer and a covetous man I looked up the word obtain or require or acquisition means to gain by any means usually by one's own exertions so he was giving God what was obtained by his sweaty exertions and Abel was given what was born out of faith which is rest that was acceptable and is acceptable still and what day of the week is it where the exertions of ministers of the greatest is Sunday and their sweaty performances rather than issuing from the rest of God like what are we going to have for this Sunday's message last Sunday was a doozy what was it it was love your enemies what's this Sunday who knows if it doesn't come out of the same rest by which last Sunday's message came it'll be a gritty nervous exertion that will not bring life it has got to

issue from the rest have you the faith to believe for it if you're the speaker on Sunday laughter laughter or you can believe for me I suspect that if he had been able to humble himself to obtain a lamb he would have found one inexpensive that had some deformity laughter he would still want to get by in a minimal way God is not wanting two altars and two sacrifices but one and so brotherhood real amity and fellowship and unity and the offering of one sacrifice acceptable to God because the relationship with with men with one another as brothers even being both Africans is relative to the relationship with God if we have not that authentic thing in truth what can we expect then between each other so the answer to Africa is not some social system or governmental requirement but a

renaissance or the birthing of that authentic relationship with God that would recognize themselves to be with each other brothers not in rivalry and competition and even blotting out the tragedy of the past but coming before the Lord together as one and offering one sacrifice all the more acceptable in his sight because it's offered as one the fact that there were even two independent sacrifices being offered is already the seeds of the tragedy and maybe we have to ask why the more spiritual one who is able did not seek his brother to ask that they might make the one sacrifice together was there some kind of super spirituality that enjoyed being distinct from his brother and having this I don't know that's too dangerous a speculation look at the language here in the course of time verse

3 Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of ground what does it say in the course of time what does that suggest more than that in the course of time it's as if he didn't do it from the beginning but over a course of time it finally dawned on him that maybe something needs to be brought if he was going to receive blessing in the field because he's seeing something continually coming from his brother that was not coming from him that finally registered upon him as a necessity but was not his understanding from the first in the course of time see how the Lord doesn't spell out these details but the phrases the language is so pregnant but it requires our investment in the wrestling with the expression knowing that there's not a syllable a word, a piece of punctuation out of place

that this is in the wisdom of God to give us this record in this way in the course of time, slow to realize what his brother had all along been performing and maybe that's why Cain was not brought in to Abel's sacrifice

because it had been so long spurned it may well be, I would suspect that in that course of time not only was Cain not offering his own sacrifice, but he was rebuking, reproaching and condemning what's the word, spitefully persecuting or mocking his brother for that exercise to finally have gone, maybe I ought to be doing something none of this is told us but we're looking at the anatomy of murder the anatomy of violence the anatomy of failure of brothers to be related and the seeds of this pertain still so we're we're not just taking antiquarian interest in a past episode,

we're looking at probably the most vital issue of our generation not only between the Hutus and the other tribe but what would you say about the Serbians and the Croats and the Bosnians and the final group there from Kosovo but what are they what's their nationality? they're Muslim they're from Albanians they're Albanians and Muslims but ethnically and racially they are Swabs they became Muslims out of the Turk-Ottoman dominance in the 15th 16th centuries and retained that as a religion of convenience whereas the Orthodox and the Catholic remain quote Christian and then there's been conflict and war and fighting over the generations over these religious differences so that when one has an opportunity to ventilate the anger of the historic past when they were on the receiving end, they

do it with a vengeance.

But yet ethnically, like the Africans, they are racially the one, but in terms of a tribal difference or a tradition or a religious distinction or some episode out of the past they are enemies and they ventilate that with such unbelievable spite. Two days ago on my computer and my internet, a Yugoslavian brother who had been reporting the war, also defending Serbia, sends me yet another message.

He says the UN inspectors have not found 100,000 graves that have been reported of those men who were shot in cold blood and buried in surface graves. They've only found 3,000 and maybe at best they'll find 9,000. So he says the whole report of Serbian atrocity is greatly exaggerated and the war and the bombings of Yugoslavia therefore were unjustified.

So I answered him and said since when is atrocity the issue of number? Does it matter whether it's 300,000, 100,000 or 3,000 or 3? But cold-blooded murder in anger and violence and defenselessness is a crime and God's judgment using the United States was not excessive at all. You need to bring that message of repentance to your nation and stop justifying them. Here's the great question just before I'll break.

How is it that Cain in seeing that his brother's offering was accepted and his refused was not contrite and broken at the failure of his offering to find equally an acceptance? Why instead of being contrite and broken, Lord how did I miss it? My brother's offering is acceptable and show me my fault but instead it incurs an anger which is going to eventuate in murder. That is to say there was a pregnant moment of choice as there always is in every issue that ever comes before us on how to interpret and rightly understand the meaning of a given situation before God rather than ignoring it and compounding our error and sin the worse until it will manifest itself in the form of death. He missed a crucial moment when he could have been contrite he reacted wrongly in anger rather than in contrition and how many times is that true of us? So anytime you experience anger stop and ask yourself is this a right response to this provocation or to this event? My reaction is wrong.

There's only one who's justified in righteous indignation, it's God. My anger at being hurt over the failure of this husband, this man this church, this minister my anger is suspect and I'm not going to go further until I have put that before you and you'll show me that there's something wanting in me that explains this

reaction before I go any further. That would have saved the church a lot of unhappy failings, flights, discord and collapse.

Look how gracious and loving God is to even take the initiative to lead Abel Cain into the kind of consideration that would have been redemptive by saying why is your countenance fallen and why are you angry? Not allowing the man himself to speculate but even giving him drawing out his heart to consider is the marvelous grace and mercy of God that was completely ignored. So we're beginning to get something of the anatomy of sin where even the sin is so hardened that it's impervious to the wooing of the tender graces of God that could have saved Abel Cain from murder. The record is so sparse we're not told but we can see from his actions and his attitude there's already a history of sin that has hardened to the point that now makes him even deaf to the wooing of God and sets in motion the rest of that tragedy.

But how did Cain know that Abel's sacrifice was accepted and his own was refused? How would they know? And for that I'm indebted to Matthew Henry who says likely the accepted sacrifice was consumed by a fire that fell from heaven. And the other was left standing there to rot and to reek. Is God still acting like that today? And can we tell the difference where his fire has fallen and the other thing that has offered is only reeking? Or are our own self-assessments so dull that we can't even tell the difference and we're going on blithely in our ignorance? Remember David said that he would not offer to the Lord what cost him nothing.

That's why God loved David. He was beloved because he knew that if it's cost free it's unacceptable to God. How about this school? How about Ben Israel? How about what has the potential now to touch Africa? Was that cost free? Is this school a snap? Are we pulling this out of our briefcase session by session? What is the sacrifice that makes this acceptable to God because his fire is falling upon it? You know how I know? Because someone is breaking, someone is weeping, someone is being challenged, someone is examining their life in the light of what God is saying.

He's approving. It's a sacrifice. Thank you Lord.

And Lord, it's a small sacrifice. Very thank you for receiving it and honoring it with your fire. God forbid we should have gone through these days and only received some mechanical instruction.

It was a good time. I really enjoyed that blah blah blah. We thank you Lord that when your fire falls it becomes an event of enormous significance for our own lives and the consequence for the nations.

May it continue to fall Lord. May it be sacrificial for us all. May more of us be finding ourselves up at 3 or 4 in the morning praying for that day's class and whatever else is required that this will be found in your sight acceptable.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/3/SID3131.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/art-katz/cain-and-abel-the-first-murder-part-1/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**