

Cain and Abel (The First Murder) - Part 3

by Art Katz

Art Katz explores the profound contrasts between Cain and Abel, highlighting the essence of true righteousness as selfless devotion to God even in the face of suffering and death.

Duration: 1:16:16

Scripture: Genesis 4:6, Genesis 4:9, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Cain and Abel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by discussing the story of Cain and Abel from Genesis chapter 4. He highlights Abel's despicable actions of offering a sacrifice that did not cost him much, showing his selfishness and lack of devotion to God. The speaker then shifts to discussing a conference on Israel and the Jews, criticizing the insincere prayers and self-serving attitudes of the attendees. He shares his own experience of being convicted about true repentance towards the Jews and delivers a message on the importance of genuine repentance. The sermon concludes with a reflection on the depravity of man and the significance of being accepted by God.

Transcript

Okay, back to Genesis chapter 4. Before we take a better look at Cain, I had some thoughts about Abel this morning that I want to try out on you. Maybe it's just a summary of what we've been considering. Beginning with a question, was Abel so naive as not to suspect that this invitation to take a walk in the field was an invitation to death? Did he not suspect or intuit, knowing his brother, that this invitation was not some innocent chat, but a prelude to his own death? And was his willingness to take that walk something of the righteousness of God in Abel, sensing that his death has something to do with the possible redemption of his brother, and not, therefore, unwilling to give it? And that that is itself the very definition of righteousness.

A picture of Jesus himself that Abel prefigures, who gave his life in just that way for just that purpose. And that why his offering was acceptable, the firstlings of the flock with their fat, was because it was a symbol and a statement of himself as offering. That the animal sacrifice is a statement of our own willingness to be laid upon the altar, and the Lord accepts it as that statement.

Understand? It's a statement of uttermost sacrifice, the best of the flock, where a man himself would be that sacrifice, should God want it. And in fact, by making that sacrifice, it's reiterating that statement to God. Yes, this is a substitute, but what it represents is my own willingness to be on the altar of God for

your purpose at any moment that it's required.

And that's what validates that offering, and that's what makes that offering acceptable in God's sight. The man himself is the offering, and as the episode itself unfolds, he becomes that willingly and not by artifice. It wasn't that he was tricked to go out in the field.

I think a man who has this kind of relationship with God can only too readily intuit and sense what that walk into the field would mean, but he did not withhold himself from making it, because he had already made it in giving the best of the flock, which is to say the giving of himself. What made it valid was that it symbolized or represented the sacrifice of himself, which is now being called for. When you make that offering, you're saying to the Lord, whenever it's called for, it's made, it's done, it's settled in my heart.

My life is not my own. I'm only breathing and walking because now it pleases you and it's serving purposes. But the whole end of my life and its purpose in being is your glorification, whether by my life or by my death, the issue is settled.

And when I put my sacrifice up before you, my offering, it's the reiteration of that statement, which is exactly the opposite of what Cain's offering meant. Cain was buying something, seeking to transact. He was in a commercial venture, wanting to receive some kind of blessing in exchange for something that did not cost him greatly.

It was despicable because the man's life is lived unto himself and for himself, as is seen in his willingness to ventilate his hatred in the murder of his own brother. And yet when God penalizes him for that murder, his cry is like a stung animal. This is too much.

Isn't this too severe for me? How is it that God doesn't require your life but just makes you to be a wanderer? And you think that that's too severe? And you're afraid that someone's going to take your life? And God will assure that it will not be taken by giving you a mark? And you're complaining? Where was your sensitivity for Abel's life, seeing that you're such a stuck pig now for your own? How is it that you're bemoaning your fate now and sucking your lower lip at the severity of this penalty, and you didn't hesitate for a moment to take your brother's life? Where was your sensitivity then? And this is what we'll be able to say to those bleeding hearts who are concerned for the endangered species and are just wringing their fingers and crying great tears for the extinct whales or the Minnesota wolves. But when it comes to doing us in, they'll not blink an eye. God had given Saul an absolute commandment about the Amalekites, their king, their people, and all that they have.

And when Samuel heard the bleeding of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen, what is this that my ear hears? Oh, well, I couldn't quite bring myself to a total obedience to what God required, but I saved the best of the sheep of the oxen for sacrifice. Remember that? 1 Chronicles 15. This is that same bleeding heart quote, sympathy and compassion that we heard in these articles and Anne Lennon is, oh, yes, you poor, suffering dear.

No, you're not different. No, you're okay, and we applaud what you're doing. It's heroic, and you're changing your sex.

Pity on those who can't be sympathetic like your father, who think that you're offending against God, who does all things well from the beginning. I think Adam mentioned this yesterday, this false compassion, this syrupy saccharine tear and concern for treating homosexuals in a right way. Why discriminate against

them? They have every right to be Boy Scout leaders as anyone else.

What difference does their sexual preference make except that what they'll have opportunity to do in dark and tense at night with helpless kids? Let me finish this morning's little thing that I wrote down. If our offerings are given as an exchange for reward, that's what Cain's offering was, an unspoken transaction, I'll do this if God will give me this, or even and especially to obtain a protection from harm or loss of life. I'm not talking now about commercial transaction that God is going to help me in the field because I've made this cheap sacrifice, but God is going to preserve me from suffering.

God is going to protect me because I'm righteous and have made an offering that's acceptable in His sight. So even there, though it has moved from a commercial motivation to a spiritual one, is still transactional. It is still not the celebration of God as God in and for Himself.

Now there's a spiritual end, my protection. We say, isn't that the theme that is throughout all the psalms, that the psalmists are crying out, Lord, where are you and how long must I suffer this oppression and this persecution because I stand for you and I'm righteous? Isn't that the psalmist wanting exactly God to act in this way? In a sense, yes, but in the greater sense, not because the psalmist who is suffering for righteousness' sake wants to be alleviated from that suffering, but he wants God vindicated through that suffering. He wants God to show Himself faithful to His own covenant promises and His identification with His own people.

That is the greater motive, not the alleviation of the pain or the distress, but the vindication of God's name. And that's the heart of the cry of the psalms. So who is putting up an offering before the Lord? Free from any subtle, unspoken, transactional thing that puts God at obligation to give an answer to our benefit.

And the only answer is the one who has put His life on the altar is free from the necessity of any kind of transaction. There's nothing that redounds to Him for benefit because His whole life is an offering and what He's putting on as a spotless animal with the fat is the statement of His life. Reiterating again to God, it's not my own.

So much as I give up this animal, so much is my life given up and it's yours to be required at any moment of your choosing, even now when my brother wants to take me out into the field for a walk. Though I'm younger than he and have every right to live my life and I'm not yet married and I've not yet enjoyed the blessing of conjugal relationship and children and have not had an opportunity to develop my own relationship with you, my own ministry, I don't offer, I don't in any way allow self-pity to impede what I have already made clear. My life is not my own and it's yours to take now and not later.

And there won't be a whimper from me as if there's a mistake. So that when Stephen is made the first New Testament martyr who is so brilliant that the doctors of the law cannot gainsay the brilliance of his testimony as he gives them a whole encapsulated history of Israel and the failure of Israel before God and the Holy Spirit. And that invites his death.

It brings such a retaliation. So isn't it tragic that a man as gifted as that full of the Holy Ghost who sees the heaven opens and the glory of God and that of the Father not just in the moment of his death but in all his moments that that life should be removed? Isn't that a tragic waste? Is it a sacrifice that should not have been made? Rightly does a watchman say that the principle of waste is the principle of power. It's the principle of glory.

What purpose is this waste? Well, the purpose is that the whole house is filled with the fragrance. That's the purpose. That for all of your correctness it was an antiseptic house but what this woman has done shall be spoken of wherever this gospel shall be proclaimed for she was lavish in recklessly pouring out that which could not be taken back again.

She didn't just screw off the cap and toss out a few drops. She dashed the whole content a year's wages and broke the box itself where it could not be emitted without that brokenness. And God honored that as a good work which is a comment he never made for anything else that men did in his generation.

So, Stephen is a fragrance for the house of God and so is Abel. And pitying them is a revelation that we're still alive to self-pity because we're really not thinking so much of Stephen or of Abel but of ourselves. We want to be preserved.

Yes, we're all for the Lord but Yes, our life is an offering but wait until I'm married. Wait until I've had children. Wait until my ministry has been developed.

Unless it's totally given over without any buts it's not a sweet-smelling offering that can be consumed by fire. It's still a transaction and that is why God will not intervene to spare a saint and why the righteous necessarily suffer. Why didn't God intervene? I can bring you my Jewish commentary on this text and you can't help but read the comment that has been traditional in Jewish rabbinical literature that implicates God in not protecting Abel from Cain that God is at fault for allowing this righteous son to die and that he should have preserved him if he's any kind of God and that somehow it has raised an unanswerable enigma about God.

How do you answer that? And I'm saying that there's a reason why God cannot spare Abel. Why he's got to allow the righteous both to suffer and to die? Because to spare them is to indicate that their righteousness has somehow put him under obligation and that they were righteous in order to be spared but what is righteousness in the last analysis is the life given all the way unto suffering and unto death and that alone is righteous. Understand what I'm saying? I'm over my head.

I don't even know how to say what I'm saying but I've looked at two bible dictionaries while you were asleep this morning over the word righteousness and I was not satisfied with the explanation of either except that the only righteousness that is righteousness is the righteousness that God himself is and that righteousness has been imputed to us and that's a righteousness that does not hold back but gives itself over unto death. For God to spare and to protect the righteous is to not allow righteousness itself to be demonstrated and it's only righteousness when it's unto death and to save them from the death is to prevent the statement of what righteousness is in its ultimate expression which is unto death and that's why none of us are going to be saved by a righteousness but rather it's going to put us in the place of jeopardy and invite suffering and death and the thing that really makes us righteous is that we don't bite our lips and become sullen over that and say how come me but actually rejoice for the privilege to demonstrate God in a righteousness unto death for that's what God is and that's what he demonstrated at the cross in the giving up of his only begotten son. When we replicate that sacrifice unto death we are expressing as nothing else can the righteousness of God and it's a privilege to have share in his sufferings and his reproach for Christ's sake.

So that's why God will not intervene to spare a saint and why the righteous necessarily suffer and rejoice in the privilege of filling up the sufferings that remain for Christ's sake. The cry of the psalmist for deliverance from the oppressor is not so much that as for personal alleviation as the vindication of God in

his covenant faithfulness and righteousness and in the last analysis it is the primacy of God in every consideration that is the issue of God's glory his honor and his name that is put above anyone's consideration for one's self that is the definition of what righteousness is. All listen to this thing.

What is righteousness in the last analysis? Why is Abel willing to go out in the field and suffer that death? Because the core of Abel in righteousness is the regard for God, his glory his name and his honor in every way above and beyond any consideration for himself. It is the complete antithesis of the world its values and how it lives for itself. This is the repudiation of self and the celebration of God as being the uttermost motive for being and that is righteousness.

That's what Jesus demonstrated. No regard for himself as every consideration was what would glorify the father. This sickness is not unto death speaking of Lazarus but to glorify the father and glorify the son.

Therefore though it brings reproach though you'll not understand my delaying though I'm setting in motion my own death those motives that have to do with my consideration are nothing what is the wellspring of my life is one thing only that which glorifies God and honors his name. That's righteousness. And that is so above the righteousness of giving gay boy scout leaders the privilege of equal rights that that's the righteousness of man that's the righteousness of the world it's a filthy corrupt shallow sentimental shot through with self-righteousness of identification of people who also want that kind of consideration of themselves because they're perverse in one way or another but the righteousness of God is so ultimate and so holy that no man can have it by virtue of his own exercise but only as gift.

Amen. It's the righteousness of God this is what God is in himself he doesn't think it too much to give of himself and that's the righteousness that needs to be displayed and to which men need to be invited. So if so facto without my knowing the details and able to wrestle through all of the issues that have made this a controversy the last century and a half I know that I know that I know that the church must be in the earth at this time and identify itself with a persecuted people and open themselves up to a suffering in their behalf even perhaps at their hands that our first persecutors will not be so much the world but our Jewish kinsmen who in their misapprehension just as they misinterpreted Stephen and could not abide his presence they may so react against us and we will bear it with the same grace as he and the same magnanimity and say Lord lay this not lay this sin not to their charge So God will not intervene to spare a saint and why the righteousness necessarily suffer and rejoice because of the privilege of filling in the suffering that remains for Christ's sake.

The cry of the psalmist for deliverance from the oppressor is not so much that of personal alleviation as it is the vindication of God in his covenant faithfulness and for righteousness and in the last analysis it is the primacy of God in every consideration as it in view of his glory his name and his honor over every consideration of oneself that is the definition of righteousness righteousness is the celebration of God righteousness is the primacy of God the purpose for our being is his honor his name his glory over any consideration of that which redounds to ourselves amen that is righteousness and that is so uncommon that is so contrary to every corpuscle of our natural being that wants to be flattered, pampered, powdered fed, cared for, nurtured preserved that only God can impart

this righteousness contrary to that which is so natural to the flesh and what we see in Cain and Abel are the prototypes of the two sons the righteous and the wicked the God celebrating and the self seeking God rejecting the striver and the one who appropriates and what's the word? acquires as against the foolish vapor, the puff the defenseless, the weak whose life is for God I think it's Matthew Henry that says how do

you think it is that one became a tender of sheep and the other became a tiller of the field did God assign them their vocations or did they freely choose them isn't that an interesting thought and why would a man choose the field which in our modern agriculture today is a form of gambling and profit, hope of profit making though the small farms are now fading out had other

considerations why would a man choose to be a shepherd of the sheep and Matthew Henry says because that vocation is the issue of the tent and the altar that vocation gives a man time that gives a man time to be with God, to consider God, to worship God to brood upon God, to make him his foremost consideration and that Abel chose the vocation that was in keeping with his disposition of his heart toward God that would give him opportunity for God how about our vocations what was the basis for the choice of your vocation I have the privilege of early morning risings to have communion with God but how come I have that privilege because I've made it evident in choices that have preceded it that have given me now this enablement where I don't have to spin wheels and strive to make a living and

punch clocks and time cards and things like that, the Lord has saved me out of redundant and unnecessary labors because my heart has chosen to make him foremost and primary and he's made time for it he's given me the privilege of it so even in the choice of vocation from the beginning the two polar suns who are prototypes of righteousness or wickedness are already revealing their heart in what they have chosen for themselves, you know when I meet somebody what my first question is what do you do for a living Adam is with me but first question what do you do for a living, because what a man will choose to do is the statement of himself but you make that choice, you're willing to do that with your time is that the best thing that serves the purposes of God that's what I'm thinking to myself

you need to know there's room for choice you don't have to be boxed in and formed into certain conventional categories because the world condones and gives promise that certain vocations will be more rewarding what's the vocation that permits you to be for God what he desires and can you be it in that vocation you know what I'm praying in the early morning hours that not the least of the result of the way that the Lord is leading us is that he's going to inculcate such a love for righteousness to love righteousness Lord we can hardly define it but let the saliva run let the juices form in our mouth at just the very sound of the word so much so that when we pick up articles like this and hear this kind of stuff we hate, we hate iniquity we hate what is vile what was that black athlete who

murdered his wife and got away with it because of Jewish lawyers OJ Simpson becomes a culture hero, a national hero and the Jewish executive of a television network was reprimanded for interviewing him he said well he's still news and the public wants to hear and we have an obligation, what he's thinking of our ratings and the rate that we charge the advertisers by having a celebrity who in fact I believe with all my heart is clearly a murderer and that he has won his freedom through the wit of Jews employed where is their stand for righteousness and that the man is now culture hero and that the jury that absolved him was largely black and making their decision on their affinity with a kinsman rather than on the issues of righteousness is a statement that is more than race so lord give us

a hatred for what is vile and we ask that though this man is on the golf course having a ball and raking it in as a celebrity that your spirit my god will convict him we want to see him spared eternal torment because though he's getting away with it in this life there is an eternity that eclipses in timelessness the few days of wafting moments that he's enjoying for which he will have to pay inexpressibly dearly and we're asking lord that it's a mercy that this man would be convicted and acknowledge his sin and be willing to pay the debt of it in society and before you and plead your blood that he not have to face you on the day of

judgment who cannot be buffaloed and intimidated and won over by charm or any other manipulative thing because you're a god of righteousness who has winged in

times past but commands all men everywhere now to repent lord I repent for a nation that has let this man off the hook clear cold blooded murder and I pray my god that you'll yet give us opportunity to repent of our condescension and the way we have allowed him to be a celebrity if there was ever an occasion for letters to the editor and letters to the TV studio and companies it's having allowed this man his status as a celebrity and not having been revolted too much my god has been gotten away with and with every such act our sensibilities are being progressively deadened that when we will have to make a searing choice one day soon for righteousness or the other we will find ourselves incapable of choosing rightly so give us that love of righteousness lord that alone saves us from

deception sharpen us in this lord that we love righteousness lord and we hate iniquity thank you that we might enjoy the identification of the sons of god going back to the son that Abel was and to which we ourselves are called in this last day and we thank you give you praise for the privilege of that call that we can freely choose and affirm by the offering that we make of a totality toward god for his name and glory and honor whatever the cost is alone righteous in Jesus name we pray amen came a little bit because it gives us an anatomy of sin nexus of repeating the sin of his father Adam in rejecting or repudiating the word of god but even brought yet to a more sinful pitch because it's right on the heels of god's pleading that he murders his brother so just to read in verse 6 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 remarkable statement that deserves the balance of our time and more to just examine what god is saying in his great wisdom what a man cannot know about himself it's the grace of god to be told and as we said yesterday sin by its very nature deceives itself it conceals itself as sin so here's god in his wonderful mercy knowing that explaining to the man how precarious his condition is and there's yet time to repent of it and turn from what will be its inevitable conclusion and right on the hearing of those words the act of murder is perpetrated.

I don't have a word for this talk about the depravity of man I don't know of another occasion in scripture where it's more set forth as vividly but just to play with this a little bit will you not be accepted it's not just the issue of your offering being accepted it's you being accepted because as we have indicated by Abel's offering the offering is the man and there's a desperate necessity to have acceptance and most of mankind is driven by that need and it's amazing what men are willing to do in order to obtain acceptance which they can if they have not that acceptance from god will never come to a place of peace in anything that can be derived from them probably there's more to be said for broken marriages where one spouse could not find what they had hoped for or desired in the other because god had been neglected and there's nothing that man can give one to another that can anyway substitute for the profound and elementary acceptance that must come from god to know that you're accepted in the beloved is the most marvelous freedom that god could give to any man and then you're free to be to men what you ought you don't need from them what only god himself can give and here is god saying I know you need that and you can obtain it as Abel himself has but fight this battle make this choice but another choice is made and the choice is for murder and for acting out of this anger.

Cain was very angry and his countenance fell why are you angry and why has your countenance fallen? Anybody have an insight in that how the face is the trademark, the emblem, the statement of the truth of a

man and his condition and situation and that we're responsible for our faces and that god identifies the condition by pointing to the face he may not even have been aware.

Ingo often says to me you're so angry so what are you talking about? If you can only see yourself she said I'm not aware of it but I need to see as I'm being seen and undoubtedly Cain was not aware of it but why has your countenance fallen? Why are you pouting? Why are you allowing yourself the luxury of this kind of self pity that is turning up the heat and allowing you to think the most sinful thoughts of murder because you're envious of a relationship that your brother has with me that could equally as be yours if you're willing to be as surrendered to me as he is there's no necessity for this anger or the consequence or the outcome of it if you recognize it and not act it out you know what we don't know God is speaking to a man personally when's the last time you've heard from God like that?

What a condescension for God the creator to come down to a man and speak to him explicitly and clearly about his condition and his need and that there's an alternative I don't have a word for this if God had come down and recited the alphabet or said abracadabra that's enough to get down on your face that God the most holy the unutterable God whom no man has seen is actually addressing me I don't even care what the content but that God is condescending to speak to me that's enough reason for me to go down on my face that God the great God is willing to humble himself to address me so the condition of Cain evidently is so coarse so dense so unable to recognize the tribute of God the willingness of God to condescend to come down let alone what God said that he continues in his anger so

evidently there's a whole history that precedes this that has already unfitted him to receive the grace of God speaking and maybe that's what we need to recognize that though there's a moment of consequence and comeuppance it's preceded by a whole host of moments that had gone before where we had opportunity to be corrected to be brought to a place of repentance to change but a consistent failure to receive those graces brings us to a point where incapacitated to receive this final grace nevertheless God himself makes it and the fact that he does make it shows that there's even hope in that final moment and that it required the condescension and the humility of God to come down and to speak and God was not unwilling to do it he did not withhold himself the very God came and addressed the

man to save him from his act of sin and right after that we read Cain said to his brother let us go out to the field and when they were in the field Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him clear cold blooded premeditated murder then the Lord said to Cain here's a second speaking where is your brother Abel instead of an accusation instead of lowering the boom didn't I tell you now you're going to really catch it rather it's raised us a question talk about grace where is your brother that in having to answer that question a man could in a moment recognize what have I done my God where is my brother what have I done and to fall before the God who gently is raising the question and ask forgiveness and find repentance instead we hear this wise alachy retort that is absolutely

insolent and disrespectful am I my brother's keeper how dare any man answer God in that way if this is not the anatomy of wickedness I don't know what is it's a good question to raise I don't know that we could answer it in one statement but I'll bet that there are Cain like responses coming forth all the time and of which we ourselves are capable if we are unguarded in any moment and are not loving righteousness and walking in it this insolence toward God and I'll answer your question how about our insolence toward men in authority by God in the church who says you're an elder and why am I under obligation to heed you or of a child to a parent what do you mean I have to be home by midnight why Johnny doesn't have to be home and Mary's allowed to stay out till 2 o'clock how come me

because I said so I'm your parent I'm in responsibility before God for your well-being I'm not under obligation to explain insolence is probably one of the chief characteristics of this age and I've seen little snot-nosed kids so openly contradict their parents and contend against them that it's horrific to observe it's the spirit of the age Cain is prevailing even in children and in the church in the insolence of members of the church toward authority and maybe what we need to recognize is if it's not a snot-nosed answer like this insolence can yet be expressed in a more Godded way and yet the spirit of it is as defiant as this may God give us the eyes to see it and to hear it particularly if we are the actor look at the contrast of Abel his every act, thought impulse, deed is in

deference to God he's a man whose life is lived for God even if it means giving his life his brother is full of outward disrespect for God it's the exact antithesis, not only not a regard that's polite but an insolent disrespect and a devaluation of God as God who has humbled himself to come down and speak, to completely ignore his counsel perform the murder and when he's questioned in the most gentle way, where's your brother to answer God in this snot-nosed and insolent way am I my brother's keeper? it's a great question and probably he's not his brother's keeper he has no regard for his brother though he is an older brother and should by every reckoning even nature itself tells us that the older should be protective and condescending and careful for the well-being of the younger not

only does he not have that but he's even insulting God by implying I'm not under obligation to have this relationship with a brother it's your baby, not my baby I didn't make him can you understand all that's not said that rings in this impertinent and insolent statement how can we be in right relationship with brothers if we're not in right relationship with the father so what we're really seeing here is the same thing that gave rise to a rotten, stinking offering and sacrifice that did not rightfully regard the stature of God and thought that it would be acceptable by him is the same basis for his inability to be a brother if you don't have it with the father how can you have it with a brother so if you have disdain for the father what will you have about anything that issues from him

and so probably anti-semitism and the expressions in the 20th century and recent centuries that are fratricidal of Germans killing Jews that are in the bosom of the German civilization for 2,000 years is a statement not so much of the attitude toward the Jew as it is the attitude toward the father that their behavior toward the Jew that has not regarded the bodily well-being of the brother put in their midst, though different from themselves as Abel was from Cain is really the statement of a disdain for the father despite their evangelical reformed faith and the land of Luther and what they have as externality as outward and conventional religion is really false because the thing that would reveal its truth and its authenticity is the relationship with the brother which is the statement

of the relationship with the father.

I praise God for that that we're not left to abstract realms but that there's a reality right here on the earth in the grip of authentic relationship where the thing that is heavenly is testified to or contradicted it's our attitude toward our brother. Don't think murder or death is only to be understood in those graphic terms.

Murder is an attitude. Anger when you're angry you're murdering your brother already death is more than determination of physical life so what that elder brother was exhibiting in his heart in his unwillingness to come in and humble himself and rejoice for the younger brother's return was an attitude of murder and of death and the father spoke to him as graciously as God spoke to Cain isn't everything that I have yours? Why are you begrudging him? The murder of saints and the torture of saints is probably nothing less than

what an unregenerate mankind moved by the spirits of darkness ventilating on men what they would prefer to ventilate on God. If only they could get their hands on him and when they got their hands on him what they did left that man so wasted, so devastated that he had no beauty that any should desire him.

He was marred more than any man because the powers of darkness had full sway to ventilate the depth of the hatred of the world against God. So in the absence of a God upon whom to lay one's hands, what's the next best that the world can find is ourselves. Here's Cain not only committing a murder but lying.

I don't know am I my brother's keeper? I don't know where he is. So the father of lies is also a murderer and a liar from the beginning and Cain who is filled with that spirit now through condescension to the wrong God is now speaking out of that wisdom and revealing that character as Abel in his act of righteousness is revealing the character of the father. Cain is revealing his father in lies and in murder.

I want to burrow into the anatomy of sin by saying did Adam think did Cain think that God did not observe his act of murder? Did he think that he went into a secret part of the field that was concealed by the shadow of some trees that God would not see that act? You know what I'm getting at? Talk about disrespect for God as if God is not God. As if God is not a God who sees. As if he's not a God before whom all things are naked transparent and known.

This is an utter contempt for God as if God does not see which is to say God is not God and that is projected further by am I my brother's keeper? I don't know what happened to him. As if God does not know where Cain is and that he can lie and deceive God and contradict and confound him. Can man be so reduced in his attitude toward God to be that contemptuous that disdainful and that negating of God as God.

What is sin in the last analysis but this way of perceiving God that makes him non-God and what is a lie? Not only do I read a chapter from the book of Psalms every day, I read a corresponding chapter from the book of Proverbs. So today is the 25th I read the 25th chapter of Proverbs you can go the month that way and I'll tell you this when you are daily in the Proverbs. You know the one sin that is more heinous and referred to with greater consternation than any other it's not murder.

It's lying. God no liar, no effeminate, no murder, no impure can enter the kingdom of heaven. There's something about lying that is so offensive to God because it deprecates, it depreciates God as if he's not witness to the truth of the thing that you're contradicting in your life.

The liar thinks he can get away with it as if God is not seeing and that he can give an alternative statement about what is evidently true. Lying is the most profound disrespect for God as if he's not there to hear and not there to know and with your face sticking out. Adam and I have been involved with another party where that party had to be contradicted because Adam was told one thing and I'm saying okay here's what he's saying, here's what you're saying.

What's the truth now? And finally that person had to blurt out, I lied but I had to. I was so distressed in my emotion. That person was also a flatterer and in the book of Proverbs God shows the symmetry between flattering and lying because after all what is flattering but a lie? So we're going to love righteousness saints, we're going to love truth, we're going to hate the lie because the lie is a way to extricate ourselves from an embarrassment or predicament by fudging because we don't want to suffer the embarrassment or the humiliation of being found out.

So my answer is don't allow yourself to be in a situation where you need that desperate expediency. Walk in such a way that you don't need a lie to cover you because your rotten, depraved heart will quickly find the lie to get you off the hook and in God's sight it's a betrayal of himself as if he's not there to know and you're lying right in his teeth and if you can lie in the face of brothers and sisters in the faith what are we doing before the Lord? Lying is not a white lie. Lying is not a little secondary sin that we're required from time to time to employ because it's an expedient way to get out of an otherwise embarrassing situation.

Lying is detestable. There's no such thing as white. Truth which means to cross because truth is painful before it's glorious.

Truth will always make a requirement. Truth will always be hurtful. Truth may be misunderstood or misconstrued.

It's easier to flatter. It's easier to fudge. It's easier to be accommodating in language and save yourself from the moment.

Truth is hard and he came full of grace and truth so we can do a lot of damage in the name of truth if our truth is not accompanied by grace. So it puts a double requirement upon us. Fidelity to what is true and the grace to express it.

That we need not bring any added or unnecessary difficulty to the one to whom it's being spoken. That means that it's a requirement beyond any ability in ourselves. And that's why Ann Landers and playwrights and Hollywood stars cannot be righteous because righteousness keeping the truth, speaking the truth, living the truth and being the truth requires God.

Judaism is nothing more than an ethical what I tell a rabbi, it's an ethical philosophy gilded over lightly with biblical and other religious overtures. In its essence, its emphasis is on man's ability to be ethical and to be moral, unaided and by himself. Just as David said, against you and against you only have I sinned.

And if there's not a God to be offended by what we have done, what then is it to man? David recognized that the depth of his sin was against God. And until we understand our act in face of God, sin does not have its import and does not bring us to the place of altar to bring blood. And that's why he gave the chintzy offering that he did.

He did not regard himself as a sinner. In fact, I would suspect that the root of his envy and anger was he saw himself not only equal to Abel but superior. Abel was only after all a shepherd which is the most disrespectful and the least estimable vocations of men.

The Egyptians despised the Hebrews because they were shepherds. Because any dum-dum can stand out all day with sheep. But a man who is engineering and tilling his fields and investing for the future and going to make a killing on the market and doing this and experimenting, why he's so evidently superior to the inferior brother that he does not need and cannot see himself therefore as a total deception.

And that's why God had to speak to him. But if you'll not accept God's word about your condition what then can God do? And our Jewish tragedy is we will not receive God's word about our condition. So that when the Holocaust book is published that brings before Jewish consideration what it does not know about its own history and our own failures and our own idolatries the condition of which prevails still.

They are indignant that any suggestion that the Holocaust could be in measure of sins there's no sin consciousness because they have not regarded God's word. That not only does God give us the grace of his word to describe our condition that we might know it, but he gives us a brother that can give us a clear index of our condition by our very attitude and relationship with him. If we miss the word how can we miss our daily relationship with our brother? And if we're in a grudging, envious, and covetous attitude toward him, if we're looking disdainfully upon him as being superior, shouldn't that indicate to us that something is wrong in our own heart and attitude that needs a repentant acknowledgement before God? It's the attitude toward the brother that is the powerfully revealing thing so that if Germany failed to understand the truth of its spiritual condition, flattering itself by being the land of the Reformation it should have been revealed to them in their failure toward their brother, the Jew, and their ability not only to care for his body, but in the end to destroy and to annihilate it.

The issue of the brother is the issue of God and Gerhard von Rad the German theologian says responsibility before God is responsibility for one's brother and those that are unconcerned for their brothers and take no care when they have opportunity to prevent hurt to their bodies do in effect speak Cain's language and if we're going to be in disregard for their bodies with what ability are we going to uphold them in their souls? With what concern, if we're going to allow Jewish bodies to be cremated what concern for their souls? The thing the external and bodily thing that's before us is a much deeper statement of what our responsibility is toward our brothers and why were Jews 2,000 years in the bosom of the German nation and the land of the Reformation? Was it not that God would give that nation opportunity to convey to a people in judgment the reason for being outside the land? Was the first responsibility of that nation to make known to the Jews within it the condition of their souls? And if the German church failed to communicate that because they did not give a rap sufficiently for the souls of their brothers how long will it be before they would allow their bodies to go up in the ovens as smoke? This issue of am I my brother's keeper is more profound than we know. God's going to give us one further and last opportunity to regard our brother and when that moment will be passed the judge that will have come will say and what did you do for the least of these my brethren? Lord when did we see you? Or Lord we didn't recognize them as your brethren because we did not recognize them as our brethren because we had a faulty apprehension of you we could not recognize what you recognize that this Jewish people even in their apostate Cain condition are still the object of your love and your mercy and you were waiting for us to recognize that and extend mercy that they could obtain mercy. We had disregard for their bodies because we had disregard for their souls because we had disregard for you who is the creator of the bodies and souls of men.

That's how history ends over the issue of his brethren and our recognition of them as our brethren even in their apostate and unbelieving and hostile condition.

I think that the Jewish people who have been resident in Germany for 2000 years can say to the German nation and the so called church and Christians of that nation you did not care for my soul you didn't love me enough to confront me in my own condition you allowed me to be deceived about the truth of my condition and placated me in my Judaism because your Christianity was only the Gentile equivalent of the same cross evasion and God evasion that my Judaism is and because you condescended to that for your German people to give them a syrupy benign Sunday service and state church system then you allowed us to languish in our condition you did not love us our souls enough to confront us and run the risk of offending us by speaking the truth of our condition because you probably were not

even able to discern it because of the lie of your condition that was nicely insulated in your Protestantism and state church Christianity the tragedy of the Holocaust, the failure of the German church to care for the souls of those who were entrusted to them is the statement of the failure of their Christianity which has been historically and to this present day even in its Pentecostal and charismatic forms, a religion of convenience a cheap and inadequate offering that somehow they think fulfills the requirement of God so what I'm saying by all that is this there's only one alternative if we're going to serve our brother it must issue out of a knowledge of God as God that is reflected in the kind of offering that we put before him that requires the primacy of God as the foremost issue

of our life and being for Germany the foremost issue of its life and being was its imperial ambition the rise of its industrial and commercial development the elevation of its culture and its civilization for which Christianity was only a Sunday addendum in a word they were not in the righteousness of God that requires the primacy of God his glory, his honor and his name as a foremost consideration even for the nation and in that absence in the Cain like religion of an inferior stinking human substitute for offering which their Sunday Christianity was the necessary victim of that would be the brother in their midst as the necessary victim of Cain was the brother in his midst and the tragedy is that having all that taken place it continues on still as a religion of convenience only now

with some charismatic embellishment if you want to read the statement that God gave me on the last day at Nuremberg, Germany on true and false German repentance to the Jew it's this statement and when it came on a final night because I had typed up something in Berlin attending for four days the agonizing conference on Israel and the Jew that was so sentimental, so self-serving so cathartic their final night prayer for Israel almost made me puke it was so self-serving that these Germans only wanted to be alleviated in their disturbed conscience they were placating their own consciences by a play acting at repentant prayer that was without repentance that would have to be repeated again and again because you could never serve either the Jew or themselves I went home in the room I stayed in

Berlin, an apartment formerly occupied by Jews who perished in the Holocaust in the Jewish neighborhood and I typed up, trying to get this frustration out of my soul why I'm so afraid by this play acting what is true repentance to the Jew by a German put it in my briefcase, came to Nuremberg on the last night, take it out and make that your message and I spoke that word the wife of the pastor who was the head of the worship team we had never ever jailed and that worship was as you can imagine she said from the moment you opened your mouth it was like a sword and they went down on their faces I mean just a proliferation of bodies all over the altar, over the steps up the aisle ways, wherever you could look and such groanings as would break your heart to hear for the Lord had convicted them

of the historic sin of the German church and as it was expressed in their failure toward the Jew and that the failure continues still and out of those groanings and deep brokenness of their own sin of a religion of convenience and Sunday supplement and inadequate totality toward God that birthed a totalitarian system, if you'll not give it to God you're going to give it to the devil and he'll require it all the groans were unbelievable and after I don't know how long, out of the groans began to come a song of worship and when I heard this pure Holy Ghost worship coming up out of the depths of repentance I can't tell you what my heart was feeling and I took the mic and I said now this is terrifying the powers of darkness over Germany nothing else you have done with your loud speakers, your

taking cities for Christ, your praise militant words this song this Holy Ghost thing issuing out of the brokenness of repentance for a failed faith is terrifying the powers of darkness overhead and liberating

men.

The issue of the brother is the issue of God and we will miss the whole tragedy of the Holocaust we don't read it and understand it or write because it makes way for the next.

The statement of our relationship with our brother is the statement of our understanding of relationship with God. Yes we are our brother's keeper. Just to sum up what that calf represents is religion contrived to meet the needs and bring satisfaction to men and worship, the true sacrifice is that which is unto God.

One is a total requirement and a sacrifice the other is a convenience The Lord tells Cain that his brother's blood is crying out to him from the ground and you are cursed from the ground which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood. When you chill the ground it will no longer yield to you its strength. You'll be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.

And Cain said to the Lord My punishment is greater than I can bear Today you have driven me away from the soil because he was a farmer and I shall be hidden from your face. I shall be a fugitive and wander in 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 The Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who came upon him would kill him And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod east of Eden What is the final capstone and punctuation of this sinner as this episode ends? What is his own act that shows himself yet without contrition still defiant against the word of God because the Lord said you will be a wanderer in the land of over the face of the earth. There's not a place where you're going to settle you cannot the soil will always be hospitable to you and it says and Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.

Why didn't he complain about that? Lord I can suffer everything but I can't suffer this being out from your presence. That's death. Not a whimper about that but only the concern for his flesh and life.

Men will kill me This is self And then he went out from the presence and settled in the land of Nod east of Eden God said you'll be a wanderer and he settled and in the settling establishes the first cities and the descendants out from his line Tubal and Lamech and all these men who are at the heart of technology cities and rebellion against God. We have the configuration of what will be the revolt of nations against God in chapter 11 having its seed here when a man disobeyed God's final requirement that his penalty would be as a wanderer he disregarded the word again and chose to settle and here's the icing on the cake he calls the place where he settled Nod because Nod means a wanderer so instead of experiencing the requirement of God's judgment he takes the word of it and makes it to stand for the reality of it. He makes the word a lie as if to give the name to the city Nod fulfills the requirement of God to be the Nod, to be the wanderer to be the restless one so right to the very last act we see what sin and rebellion and defiance disrespect, dishonoring to God is to the end and that sets in motion the next segment of sin that leads to the final revolt of nations having their origin in the cities that began with Nod this is how it was in the beginning and finally God is going to have to bring the whole thing under judgment in flood you can almost intuit an imaginary conversation between that same tempter and this cane have God said that you should be a wanderer? why don't you settle in a city of your choosing and your convenience and just call it wandering that will satisfy the requirement of God because he doesn't insist that you actually have to do this have God said? what is a man saying when he's saying my judgment my penalty is too great what is he saying about God? God is unjust he's wrong he's too severe.

If I were God I would have come with a much more equitable and just requirement so therefore I'm better higher and more exalted than you you're in error even in your judgment it's too rough you know why this is so valuable saints? because to one degree or another we are all of us flirting with and touching the periphery of these grounds in our own self justifications in our own evasion of the ultimate determinate requirements of God we find a way to be conditional relativistic to take the sting out of it to modify it have God really said? well yes but in my time what we're really saying was he right in that? this is so deep and there's going to be a righteous church in the earth to confront the Ann Landers mentality of the world.

It has got to be the impeccable righteousness of God we've got to allow God to search our hearts and to show us our own deviance and compromising condescensions because righteousness is utter, ultimate and total or it's not if the requirement of righteousness is this exact that we dare not miss it and make small concessions until little by little we find we've come to a place where we either cannot hear God or we'll be rebuting God how can we keep such a daily vigilance over our souls independent of each other I need my brother's love for my soul I need his jealous regard because I know that I know however well meaning my intention there are areas that I cannot see in which I've taken a liberty that only he can observe will he love me enough to bring that to my attention?

Will I love him enough to receive it for my good? You see the church is not a little Sunday convenience it's God's most profound provision for righteousness of the saints. If we will avail ourselves of what God intended and not be a congregation looking at the back of one another's heads being mesmerized by what's going up on the platform by professionals there is a place for speaking the truth in love and rebuking and correcting and admonishing that makes the church the church and makes righteousness righteousness we have nothing to say to the world and if we say it we're not saying it with a conviction and an authority that would impress them so bless the Lord for the church How is history going to conclude?

A time of Jacob's trouble we spoke of it at the beginning of this morning and we're going to end with it that God is going to sift this nation through all nations there will not be a nation absolved or not implicated by the movement of Jews where they need to recognize this dispirited and broken people as being not only the brethren of the Lord but our brethren and so I wrote here the time of Jacob's trouble gives final opportunity to save their souls by saving their bodies they will be in flight from persecution and death our first obligation is to preserve their bodies and in preserving their bodies to preserve their souls they perished in the holocaust because their bodies were destroyed because their souls were ignored now God gives us their bodies that we might save their souls so precious God save us from the way of Cain and bring us impeccably and consistently to the kind of brother that Abel was who knew that he was his brother's keeper and that he was responsible for his brother and was so willing for his redemption that he put his own life on the line for his brother what a contrast Lord between these two polar prototypes and help us to recognize my God everyday in the things that come before us the way of Cain and the way of Abel keep us my God from the religion of convenience keep us from inadequate offering keep us from self concern that keeps us from being able to put everything on the altar the best the firstlings of the flock which is the statement of ourselves thank you my God for all that was implicit in this first murder continue still till the end of the age yes we are our brother's keepers Lord and we ask that we have a new regard for each other within the holy fellowship of the saints the body of Christ the church that we will be willing my God for the sacrifice and the suffering of being misunderstood or whatever the consequence of speaking the truth because we are jealous for our brother's soul we love his soul and we are jealous for his soul because you have shown us if we will not be jealous for his soul it will not be long before we will not regard his body either so we bless you Lord write these things my God in our hearts thank you for this

examination keep us my God from the way of wickedness grant us that great love of righteousness which is the love of God that will not condescend to flattery or to lie however expedient and serving thank you Lord we bless you for your way

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