

I Honor My Father

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon explores the contrast between the dishonoring spirit of Cain and the honoring spirit of Abel, urging believers to trust and honor God in their lives.

Scripture: Genesis 4:1, Psalm 34:1, Proverbs 3:5, John 8:48, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Philippians 2:8, Philippians 4:6, Hebrews 11:6, Hebrews 13:15, James 1:17

Topics: "Heart Obedience", "Trusting God"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the contrasting spirits of Cain and Abel, highlighting how our offerings and actions reveal the true nature of our hearts. Those who honor God, like Abel, shine brightly even in persecution, while those who dishonor God, like Cain, struggle with complaining, ingratitude, and mistrust. The call is to trust God completely, following Jesus' example of perfect obedience and thankfulness, and to conquer any areas of unbelief in our hearts to fully honor God in every aspect of our lives.

Transcript

Read: John 8:48-49

Genesis 4:1-8

In Cain and Abel we see two spirits which have been at work in the human race since the beginning.

Cain, is the spirit which dishonors God.

Abel, foreshadowing Calvary through the shed blood of an animal then of his own life, is the spirit which honors God.

No one observing these two brothers at work could have discerned the spirits that ruled their hearts. But when they came with their offerings, it was all revealed.

Abel's offering was accepted because Abel was honoring God in his heart.

Cain's offering was rejected because it was a sham.

And when Cain's offering was rejected, he took off his mask and showed what kind of spirit was really there. His countenance fell, he was angry with God and relieved his anger by killing his brother.

Sooner or later, the spirit that rules us will show itself. If we've allowed ourselves to be ruled by the spirit of Cain, that spirit will come out in the open.

In the book of Revelation, as the judgment falls, we see this God-dishonoring spirit coming to the surface.

People ruled by this spirit do not repent, they rise up and curse God. They gnaw their tongues in anguish and keep cursing His name. They can't do otherwise because they have given themselves over to the spirit of Cain.

Those who are ruled by the spirit of Abel shine more brightly as the darkness deepens. It becomes apparent in all the persecution that their hearts are fixed on God.

These are they who have come through great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

In our Lord, who finished what Abel began, we see a man who first and foremost, above all things, honored God.

"I honor my Father."

With every breath He drew, every word He spoke, every step He took in His lifelong journey to the Cross, He honored His Father. When on that Cross He offered Himself without spot to God as the atonement for our sins, Jesus was honoring His Father by perfect obedience.

If we belong to Jesus, we are to be like Jesus in this respect above all others. We honor God!

When we honor God, every aspect of our lives will be right.

- We will treat our fellow-man with respect.
- We will love our neighbor,
- We will bring something of heaven into every situation.

But, what many of us fail to understand, is that the God-dishonoring spirit of Cain does not automatically run away and leave us in peace after we are reborn. There is a struggle. Cain, though he was condemned on that cross is going to do his best to kill Abel all over again in you.

In the name of the Lord,

- we have to conquer the territory in our heart that was held by Cain for so long,
- we have to cleanse the atmosphere of our lives which has for so long been polluted by the smoke of Cain's unworthy sacrifice.

Jesus won the battle for us on the Cross. He has given us His Spirit to live God-honoring lives. And we have the promise -

that if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away.

Behold all things have become new.

But this is only true in our experience as we walk in the Spirit - as we keep winning those battles against the flesh.

Now the God-dishonoring spirit of Cain doesn't walk around inside us like a murderer ready to kill. It doesn't fume and blaspheme God day and night. Most of the time it looks quite "Christian."

It goes through the motions of religion.

It brings its offering to the lord just as Abel does.

But there are several root characteristics the spirit of Cain cannot disguise:

1. It is forever complaining.

Wherever you see complaining in scripture, you're looking at the spirit of Cain.

The people of Israel complaining about the food God has given them in the wilderness.

The laborers who got hired in the morning complaining against those who got hired in the afternoon getting the same pay.

The man who buried his talent instead of doing something with it complaining that the master is hard and unjust.

The older brother of the prodigal complaining to the father that he never threw a party for him.

We see this in ourselves - complaining.

"Why shouldn't I complain after all I've been through?"

"God gives everybody a break but me!"

Sometimes we're too clever to come right out and blame God.

"It's those hypocrites!"

"It's those thoughtless people around me."

"It's those phony Christians who shed tears of sympathy for everyone but me!"

- We complain about the weather.

- We whine about our health.

- Endlessly go on about this group or that group.

- Moan about our rotten luck.

But if you trace it back, it's always a complaint against God. And what are we doing when we complain against God? We are dishonoring Him.

Do we hear our Lord complaining about having to go to the Cross?

"If there's some way that this cup may passnevertheless not my will but thine be done."

And He rises up without one complaint and goes to that Cross.

He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

Do we hear Paul complaining about his thorn in the flesh?

"Three times I besought the Lord about this that it should leave me, but He said to me,

'My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, will I glory in my weakness that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Men and women who honor God with their lives are not complainers. They take their troubles to the Lord. They cry out in their need, but they accept whatever answer God gives and go on living to His praise.

I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

My soul shall make her boast in the Lord. The humble shall hear thereof and be glad.

O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.

If the waitress brings you soup with roaches in it, exchange it for a salad, or ask for your money back, or tell the manager to clean his kitchen, but don't spend the rest of the day moaning about your rotten luck with restaurants. Don't let this give Cain a new foothold.

I will bless the Lord at all times (even the unsettling times.)

His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

2. The spirit of Cain is notoriously ungrateful.

When other people are ungrateful toward us, that's their problem not ours. But when we find ingratitude in our own hearts, we're looking at Cain - ungrateful Cain.

"I think I can get by with this offering. It doesn't look too cheap."

- No sense of how good God has been to him.

If the servant who had been forgiven ten thousand talents by the King had had any gratitude in his heart at all, he would never have taken his fellow servant by the throat for a hundred pence.

If the guest who came to the wedding feast without a wedding garment had had any gratitude for the privilege of being there, he would have had enough respect for the host to put on the garment that was supplied.

And if we had any gratitude at all for what Jesus Christ has done in our lives, for the healing and the peace we've already experienced through the blood of His Cross, we would never get tired of praising and thanking our God.

- We wouldn't sing hymns with our minds a million miles away.
- We wouldn't sit in our pews half-asleep.
- And we wouldn't walk out of our fellowships like turtles with their heads pulled in.
- We'd be thanking God that He brought us into His light.
- We'd be thanking God that He gave us brothers and sisters.
- We'd be thanking God for the privilege of proclaiming the name of Jesus to the world.
- We'd be thanking God for the privilege of suffering for that name.

Notice our Master thanking His Father all the time.

"Thank you for this bread, Father."

"I thank thee Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes."

Before He raises Lazarus from the dead -

"I thank thee Father, that thou hast heard me."

He honors the Father by continuously thanking Him - God help us to do the same.

3. The spirit of Cain is secretly mistrustful of God.

Beneath an outward show of devotion, it refuses to entrust itself to God's hands. It's favorite protest is,

"What if?"

- What if God doesn't keep His promise?
- What if God lets me down?
- What if the going gets too hard?

So Cain keeps back the choice part of his crops and offers God the mediocre stuff. "If I give God the good crops, what will become of me?"

There is no way you can honor God if you don't trust Him.

- If you don't trust the girl - don't marry her.
- If you don't trust the bank - don't deal there.
- If you don't trust God - why bother with Him at all?

Yet, many of us are doing exactly what Cain did.

We're pretending to love a God we don't trust.

We're trying to hide a mistrustful spirit behind a religious facade.

We're saying, "Lord, Lord" to Jesus but we're afraid to give Him control of our lives.

"Lord, I'll go this far, but I'm afraid to go all the way with you."

I'll do so much Lord, but not everything." That's the mistrusting spirit of Cain and it dishonors God.

Look at Jesus:

Who being in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied Himself taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

He held back nothing. He trusted Himself to the Father all the way.

And, if we are His disciples, we entrust ourselves to Him in the same way.

Lord, here is my life, the whole thing, my hang-ups,

my fears,

my reservations, everything Lord.

And we walk by faith, daily, in every situation, doing everything He shows us to do, trusting Him for everything that's still unclear.

The call to every believer reading these words is to purer, deeper, trust in God. If we tolerate in the smallest area of our lives a spirit of mistrust, it will soon take over our whole life.

May God help us, at every point where we've been holding back, to yield to the call of Jesus to leave our unbelief behind and get up and follow all the way.

And to anyone who stands at the doorway of the Kingdom - if you have read this far, you hear Jesus calling you right now and you know it, I'm inviting you in His name to get up and answer His call - now!

You've been thinking about it and stewing about it long enough. Now it's time to do it.

Come, lay your life at His feet. Why hesitate? Do it now!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-e-bieber/i-honor-my-father/>

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