

# The Power of the Blood - Sermon 2 of 5 - Cain and Abel

by Roy Hession

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*Roy Hession's sermon on Cain and Abel emphasizes the importance of faith in offerings and the necessity of getting right with God for true reconciliation.*

**Duration:** 55:58

**Scripture:** Genesis 4:3, Hebrews 9:22

**Topics:** "Blood of The Lamb"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of amplifying and restoring the original meaning of scripture. He compares this process to how a pianist amplifies a piece of music by adding more notes to the chords. The speaker emphasizes that simply trying to be better or doing more good deeds is not enough to be right with God. He highlights the need for true repentance and forgiveness, rather than trying to cover up sin with superficial acts of kindness.

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## Transcript

I want you, if you will, to turn to Genesis, chapter four. I said yesterday that the trail of blood begins with the story of the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood of the Lamb upon the doorposts. That isn't really quite correct.

The trail of blood in scripture begins immediately after the fall, the way back to God. It begins with this story of Cain and Abel. It is true there's no mention of blood in that story, but inasmuch as the offering which God accepted was of the firstlings of the sheep, and of the fat thereof, we know they must have been slain.

It was a blood offering. And so we have to go back to this ancient story to see the beginning of the trail of blood. Cut the Bible, where you will, it bleeds, and the trail begins here.

Now, when you heard me announce the fact we were going to look at the story of Cain and Abel, there were some of you who said, oh yes, I knew it was inevitable, it was predictable we'd have a theme on Cain and Abel. And I can understand you saying that. When that early team came back from East Africa in 47 to share with us what they'd been learning of revival, and I on one occasion had invited them to a big conference I was responsible for under the Young Life campaign in Matlock, and I felt if these brothers

have got something to tell us about revival, that's what we want to hear.

And I remember my surprise when their first message was on Cain and Abel. I knew it well. As an evangelist, I'd preached on it evangelistically, and I didn't understand what relevance that story and the truths of which that story is an illustration, how it related to revival.

But it wasn't very long before I saw how it related to the revival of my own decaying spiritual life, because it was. I'd come into a place of decline spiritually, evangelist that I was, taking big meetings, but things had died on me. And this was the first message God had to give me.

And every now and then one of the brethren comes and brings us a message on Cain and Abel. Now I want to say I think this might be a little different. In the years in between, God has given me so many additional insights into this scripture that frankly I would like to take a whole series of five Bible readings only on the story of Cain and Abel, and all of the deep and wonderful and personal truths it illustrates for us.

And so this morning I'm going to try and compress what could well take five studies into one, because there are other themes and aspects we're going to take later on. Now I'm going to read then the old story, and I'm going to read it in the authorised version. And I don't want to get onto that ground at all.

My wife says, don't you start getting onto that. Now for many reasons, not merely because I'm of the generation that was saved through the authorised version, has grown in grace through the authorised version, not merely because of that, for many other deep and important reasons it is to be preferred. Now I want to tell you, having said that, every day I read with my authorised version, the revised standard version and the new international version, to see wherein I can get a little extra light.

And my preference for the old book, the old one, for accuracy, for the beauty and power of expression, is heightened. So it isn't that I neglect those others, I do, and I do gain extra light from them. I'm grateful for here and there, there are other things that I'm not so flattered about, but it doesn't matter.

There are many things in the authorised version that might well defeat you. Isn't it wonderful that the sacred scriptures can be translated again and again and revised again and again and still survive? People are still getting saved and seeing Jesus through the many different versions. But I am going to read from the authorised, and you might prefer, I would almost suggest that if you have another version before you, why not just listen rather than follow it? Because when I am reading one version and somebody else is reading another, I'm engaged in comparing and preferring, or otherwise, and that takes my mind off the truth.

So just for our reading, you might prefer, just to listen to the beautiful language, and if there are any archaic expressions, and I can help by a word here or there, culled from other versions, I'll certainly do it. So we'll have the benefit of the various versions which are going. We've just had this tremendous story of how sin came into the world and man fell from the highest state into which God had put him.

He's just been excluded from that garden of Eden, and the cherubim have been placed there with the sword to guard the way back to the tree of life. And now, the very next incident after that is the story of the first murder of history. And can you believe it? It was over a religious matter.

It's not surprising then that the course of religion, even since, has sometimes been accompanied with war. Well, that's how it is. That's the world in which we live.

And oh, we thank God that in the middle of it all shines this message of God's grace for that lost world and the way back to himself. All right, then, here we have it. And Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain and said, I've gotten a man from the Lord.

And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought to the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

And Abel, he also brought to the firstlings of his flock a difference in offering. The first, of the fruit of the ground. The second, the firstlings of the flock and of the fat thereof.

And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell.

And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother.

And it came to pass when they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him. That's what a jealous man would like to do to the other man. He actually did it.

Terrible thing, jealousy. And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? He said, I know not. Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid. And I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth.

And it shall come to pass that everyone that findeth me shall slay me. And the Lord said unto him, Therefore, whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

And so there was that element of mercy, even to Cain, in the midst of that severe judgment pronounced upon him. It's a very strange story. It provokes attention.

Sunday school children have listened and asked, why was one offering preferred to another with such dire results? Two offerings. One was accepted by God, and as we shall see in a very obvious, tangible and open way. And the other was not accepted by God, equally openly.

And the result was, Cain became jealous of Abel. And it led to the first murder of history. And many people, you included, have often wondered why.

Now this incident must be of first importance, because there are two clear references to it in the New Testament. The first is in Hebrews 11, Hebrews 11, verse 4. And here we have a very special commentary about this early story. By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.

This is important. I don't think the NIV's got it right. By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.

By which? By which sacrifice? He obtained witness, or if you prefer, he had witness born to him that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts. And I understand in the Greek, it's God testifying over his gifts. We shall see that in a moment.

And by it, he being dead, yet liveth. Now there's the one New Testament reference, and the other is in the first epistle of John, chapter 3, verse 11. For this is the message that he heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain.

There's the dreadful possibility of we, in our day and generation, of being Cains. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother, and wherefore slew him, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hates you.

Don't be surprised if the Cains of today hate the Abels of today. They did it way back, and they do it still. This vile world, including its Christendom, is no friend to grace.

Now this, going back to Genesis 4, I want to suggest to you is one of the most compressed writings ever. And you have to understand many things that are implied, and you have right, free and with care, to amplify the story in order to get back to the original. This is seen, I've noticed, in one particular case, in the composition of hymns and choruses.

Years ago I was standing by the piano when a friend of mine was composing a chorus. He had the words, and he was composing the chorus. And he came with great inspiration, and what a glorious result it was, how full, how he ran up the scales, how he amplified the choruses.

Now we say we must have that written down, and he did. And he had to compress that beautiful music into chords of just four notes. But that wasn't how it was composed.

And so it was that when anybody played it, if they knew they had the ability, ready to get back to the original, you had to amplify. I mean to say, David has everything put in front of him with four-note chords. That's a compression, that's shorthand.

He does what we would like most pianists to do, but not all are able, to amplify that. And in that way he's not doing despite to the music, he's restoring it to something near what it was when it came from the composer's brain. And so it is with this scripture.

And I'm going to amplify, I'm going to make assessments in order to try and amplify it to what it was. You see, it's a big book. My Bible's got sixty-six books in it.

And God's got a lot to say. And tremendous things are compressed, it's shorthand. And you need to be able to amplify it, but to do so with judiciousness and caution, seeking the mind of the Lord.

And if in amplifying it you think, I've gone too far, well, you are at liberty to think it, and it could well be you're right. But such as I understand it, I offer it to you, and reject what you think is really not meant to be there. But personally I feel that almost everything I shall add is implied, is implied.

We have then the question of these two offerings, one of which was accepted and the other refused by God, Cain and Abel. The first thing I want to say is that when offerings were offered in the Old Testament,

in the New Testament, it was normally because of sin. They were all intended to restore a man's relationship to God, which had been disturbed and destroyed by sin.

And whenever they're offering offerings, it's because they see themselves to be sinners, and they want to get right with God. And so, I believe we can assume that in this situation here, both men had sinned. Cain had sinned, that's why he's bringing an offering, to seek to restore his relationship to God.

They hadn't been long out of Eden. Mum and Dad had told them the wonderful days, they were still God conscious, and it was a cute thing in those early days when a man knew his relationship with God had been disturbed. Cain had sinned.

And Abel, inasmuch as he's bringing an offering, he's sinned too. And there's nothing to suggest that Abel's sin was any less serious than Cain's. They might differ in many things, but one thing they were the same.

They had both sinned and therefore both needed to bring an offering. And inasmuch as they were bringing their offerings at the same time, it seems to suggest that the sin which they'd committed had in each case happened at the same time. Both bringing offerings, because both had sinned.

They're bringing them at the same time, had the sin or sins been committed at the same time? And I think I'm going to suggest they had. What was it? It was a quarrel. You know, when a quarrel begins, one's right and the other's wrong, so they tell you.

But it hasn't been going on for long before both are wrong and equally wrong. A man may be wrong in his action, but the other man is equally wrong, even more wrong in his strong reaction to the other person's wrong. And so something has happened, and I can only suggest sin.

You say, what sin? A quarrel, and I think over the question of Cain's seniority, which you'll see later on what gives us a clue to that fact. Cain was the eldest, but perhaps there was a matter in which Abel didn't recognise that fact. And Cain was furious, and Abel said, look at that fellow.

How can you get on with a man like that? And he has as much resentment in his heart as Cain had. And then I want to also make this gratuitous assumption. I hope you don't think I'm going too far.

Both those men discovered, although they were well aware that they'd got wrong with one another, they ultimately were made aware of the fact that that fact had put them both wrong with God. Could we imagine Cain going to his little place of worship and sacrifice, to have, as was his wont, a time of prayer, and finds himself unable to get through to God, the heavens are brass. And if God has anything to say to Cain, he's saying, Cain, what about your attitude to Abel? Abel? Oh, he's helpless.

There you are. That's what's wrong with us. And that's what it is that's made the heavens brass between you and me.

And there's Abel. He too is having a hard time in his quiet time that day. For him too, the heavens are brass.

And God has to say, Abel, what about your attitude to Cain? Cain. The way he spoke to me, the heat, the rude way, he's impossible. That's what's wrong between you and me.

And so they discovered that inasmuch as they both got wrong with one another in the first place, they ended up both being wrong with God. And their great need was not to try and come to a reconciliation, one with another, in the first place. They had each to get right with God, get right with God, and do it now.

Get right with God. He tells you how. Oh, come to Christ, who shed his blood, and at the cross get right with God.

And the first person they got to get right with was God, they'd very soon afterwards get right with one another. But in their getting right with God, Cain took one way, and it made no difference. But Abel took the other, and to Abel and his offering, though he was just as wrong as Cain, the Lord had respect.

Well, of course, we hardly need to do a lot of applying it to ourselves, you've been doing it. You and I, we began wrong with God, and our lives were wrong, and it wasn't enough tinkering with our lives, we had to get right with God, because of sin. But not only are we thinking of the lost, who are wrong in their relationship with God, but sometimes even those who have had a lovely and initial reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, can nonetheless get wrong in their relationship with him again.

I'm not suggesting they lose their salvation, I'm not suggesting the saint of God is in and out of justification by faith, but I am suggesting you lose fellowship with the one who saved you, and if you've known the joys of fellowship with him, to lose that is a loss indeed. It's little comfort to you to know, I know I'm still saved, but you ought to be enjoying the fellowship of his presence on the way to heaven, but you haven't been, and you have got wrong in your relationship with God. And the way in which we get wrong in our relationship with God is very often the same way in which Cain and Abel.

It's in the realm of relationships. You may imagine you can be at cross swords with another, you may disapprove of them, you may resent them, you may be critical of them, and think, that's all right, I'm still walking with the Lord, you're doing nothing of the sort. You are doing nothing of the sort.

If a man says he loves God and hates his brother, he is a liar. Oh, I don't hate him. Well, to put it this way, do you love him? I remember hearing how William de Gender went to that great African public school, WERI I think it was called, where there were two English brothers in positions of leadership, the headmaster and some other position, and William apparently sensed there was something wrong in their relationship.

And he sat with them one evening, he said, brother, I want to ask you, do you love, I can't remember the names of the brothers, do you love our brother so-and-so? He didn't even say, do you hate him, he said, do you love him? If you want to know the truth, latterly, not really. So he turned to the other, he said, tell me, do you love this brother? And he had to admit the same. And those brothers had to see if they weren't loving him.

They were hating. The opposite to love is hatred. And if you're criticising and resentful of another, you're not loving him.

And you and I have got to call it what God calls it. The person concerned may be the dearest person you would think in your life, your own spouse, but if you're hard and critical, you're not loving, you are hating. And God calls it sin.

And getting wrong with another means I always get wrong with God. I used to think that my relationship to God could be pictured under the figure of a two-point circuit, God and me, and all I'd got to do was to keep

the circuit unbroken and the divine electricity would flow from God to me and I should be blessed. But I've come to see that was an inadequate picture.

It's not a two-point circuit, it's a three-point circuit. The electricity has to flow round three circuits, God, me, and the other person. I may imagine there's no break between me and God, but is there a break between me and that other brother? Then the electricity is cut off, just as much as if the break was initially between me and God.

And so like Cain and Abel, we are both in the position of needing to get right with God. Not firstly to get right with the other, right with God! The other will follow, very simple. And as in the case of the story before us, some seek to get right with God, but by Cain's way, and God has no respect to that, He's just not impressed, we shall see what it is in a moment, others are willing to come Abel's way, by the way of the blood, I can come.

No other way, nothing but the blood of Jesus. I want to say, those reconciliations are never real, unless it's first settled between us and God. Please turn the cassette over now, do not fast-wind it in either direction.

Those reconciliations are never real, unless it's first settled between us and God. Unless I'm prepared to say, I am the wrong one, before you, O God. The other person might have done the wrong action, but mine has been the wrong reaction, and it's just as much sin in your sight, Lord, I know it is, as the action which I've reacted against.

And so it is, some seek to get right with God, Cain's way, others, Abel's way. Now how were these brothers to know which was the right way? In that passage in Hebrews 11, we read, by faith, Abel offered unto Cain a more excellent sacrifice, Cain, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by faith, which means God must have said something, faith is man's response to God's word. If that was not the case, it should have read by fancy, or by chance, Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice, but it says by faith, and therefore we are right to assume, I believe, that at the very dawn, God had made it clear to Adam that fallen man that he was, excluded from that early paradise as he was, he could nonetheless, in those sad situations, have fellowship with God, it had been told him.

And I believe Adam and Eve had told their children this one blessed comfort to them in their sad condition. What had God said? Hebrews 9 tells us what it is. I'd like you to look at it, Hebrews 9, it's a very important verse, verse 22, halfway through verse 22, without shedding of blood is no remission.

And I think it's clear to my mind that at the very dawn some such revelation must come. You'll have to submit to the trials, to the toil, the easy days of paradise are over, but in the midst of it, oh, you can still have fellowship with me as a sinner, but on one condition, that there is shedding of blood. There is a sacrificial victim whose blood is shed before me and accompanied by confession.

I believe Adam and Eve, Adam might have said to his boys, boys, you know, have you seen your dad sometimes go off with a lamb or a goat to that little altar at the other side of the hill? You've seen me go off sad and disgruntled, having lost the sense of God's presence. You've seen me come back joyful and rejoicing up there on that little altar, a goat or a lamb, and that was the way, and I made my confession to God. God looked upon the sprinkled blood, it was my only plea.

I want you to know that's available to you. So Cain knew that as much as Abel did, but Cain preferred not to take that way for reasons which we shall see in a moment, and Abel, after a big struggle with himself,

was willing to take that way, and to Abel and his offering God had respect. Now I want to ask before we go further, stage by stage, why do you think it was that God laid it down without the shedding of blood is no remission, because it was later codified in the law of Moses, blood, blood, blood, blood, blood, sacrifices, sprinkling of the blood, sacrifices.

The book of Leviticus is full of it, and the book of Chronicles and Kings, it became part of the national life, the shedding of blood, burnt offerings, sin offerings, and so on. I want to say why did God decide it this way, and I want to suggest for two reasons. In Old Testament times, blood had to be shed because in the doing of so, in the slaying of a sacrificial beast, they were pointing forward to Jesus Christ.

They didn't know they were, but God knew. And in those many sacrifices, God saw his beloved eternal Son pictured. They all represented to God, and he was the only one that really mattered, Jesus, and his blood yet to be shed.

And only the blood of Jesus could exhaust the anger of God against sin, and it did. He said so, it's finished. The fire's gone out, the work is complete by the blood.

And only the blood of Jesus, even in Old Testament times, could cleanse sin and cover it. They didn't quite know what it all meant, but God knew. And those sacrifices, those blood sacrifices, represented Jesus, yes, or Abraham.

He found fellowship with God through the blood of Jesus. Before Abraham was, I am, and more than that we are told that he was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and these sacrifices are all pointing that forward, and of course preparing them for the revelation when he really came. And there was a second reason why this was the ordained way, because such sacrifices were designed to provoke the repentance of the offerer.

I was so interested years ago to hear that from a Hebrew rabbi, I presume he was. We were in the carriage together, he had a skullcap on, and his hair done in a distinctive way, and he had his Hebrew scriptures open on his knees. And I felt it was an opportunity to engage him in conversation, and do what Philip did, open my mouth and preach to him Jesus.

And I said, I started with the sacrifices, I said, you know, these sacrifices of old, to me, they are types and foreshadowings of Jesus and his cross and blood, or no, not at all, nothing of the sort. He wouldn't have it for a moment, that they had any relevance to Messiah at all. And so I said, well, what about this incident and that incident? No, he wouldn't have it.

Well, I tell you, what do you make of them? This is what I make of them. And the answer he gave me was right, as far as it went, but of course it didn't go far enough. He said, the reason why God ordained that Israel should approach their God with sacrifices like that, had to slay lambs and much else, was in order to provoke the repentance in the offerer.

And I think they were well-designed to do that, just because the father had lost his temper and there had been a terrible scene and he felt so bad about it, he had to take a sin offering and take it to the priest. And it wasn't the priest who slew it. The offerer had to slay it.

The priest sprinkled the blood, but the offerer had to slay it. And as he put the knife into the breast of that innocent little creature, might have become the pet of the household for all I know, oh, he thought what a cat he'd be. What a cat! Would have acted if he had.

And he was designed to provoke the repentance of the sinner. And that's the reason why this is the way by which we approach. We don't have to bring the lamb, it's already been brought.

We don't have to slay the lamb, God's already had him slain, but we're to recognize it was our sins that caused it. And as I come that way and see the cross and see what it cost him, it provokes me to repentance. There's more it does for me than that, but at least it does that.

This is this way. You cannot come to God, say, by the blood of Christ, say it in repentance. If you started opening a prayer in some meeting and you mention, we come to you by the blood, we're right to assume you've had some sin.

You wouldn't need to mention the blood, but we're not to that. It isn't a talisman. And it shows me what a sinner I am.

Those hymns that speak about the blood are the ones that melt me. Oh Christ, what burdens bowed thy head, a load was laid on me. I don't know a greater hymn than that one.

It extols the Finnish word, but it provokes repentance in the sinner, it's meant to. And that's what I got from that Jew, he was right. And this is the reason why God has said, without the shedding of blood is no remission of sin because that blood is meaningless to you unless you repent, unless you take a sinner's place, in the matter concerned, if not in the inaction, in your reaction.

And this was what was made known to Adam and through Adam to Cain and Abel. Now Cain knew that perfectly well, but he refused to go that way. He preferred rather to bring of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord.

In the previous chapter, God had cursed the earth, cursed is the ground for your sake, this is when sin came in. Toy with toil, you will bring forth fruit. And here's Cain bringing the fruit of ground which God has cursed, an offering to the Lord.

And he's surprised that God doesn't accept it. There's no power in vegetables to take away sin. Not even in whatever system of typology you use.

Marrows does nothing to restore the soul to God. It pictures nothing that can. And in any case, the ground had been.

He brought, it was a tremendous harvest festival he brought. I don't doubt he put tremendous work into it, it was a great show. But he brought that which would display his industry rather than that which would cover his sin.

And that's our natural way to try and get right with God, by doing some more, by being better. By trying to be rather nice and sweet to everybody at home where before you blew up. And God is not the least bit interested or impressed with the apparent niceness you're putting on.

A man may have short words with his wife before he leaves the table and feel bad about it if he's a Christian. He may well be sensitive enough to feel bad about it. And on the way home he may stop at a sweet shop and bring a box of chocolates back.

It takes a lot of chocolates to take away sin. Indeed it doesn't, nothing of the sort. And to cave and disoffering the Lord has not respect.

What is needed is not chocolates but repentance. And even so, put beyond repentance, a new confidence in the blood of Jesus Christ which is anticipated and finished, the sin in question in his body on the tree, and the blood has power to remove it and to restore that relationship. Because, as I say, the blood is always associated with repentance.

So there was the first thing he did, he brought the fruit of the ground. Little wonder it wasn't accepted. And also the reason why he didn't go the appointed way was he knew that if he did, and still a lamb, he couldn't protest he was right and Abel was wrong.

He'd have to repent. And it was because deep down he was unbroken. Unwilling to say, I'm the one who's wrong, he brought an offering that he thought would avail but relieve himself of any such humbling.

It's amazing what we will do to avoid doing that. I've got a book in my shelves. I can't remember the man whose name it was written by, a famous name at the time, he's dead now but being 78 I do forget.

But the title. I haven't read the book. It's there because of its title.

And the title of the book is The Art of Dodging Repentance. And being nice to people when you've been nasty. You talk about dear and darling, where before you had some other words on your lips.

It's dodging repentance. And the blood does not avail and the rest is not really deeply healed. And because Cain was like that and wasn't willing to humble himself before Abel that he went that way.

And of course it evoked no answer from heaven. God was just not impressed. Nothing happened.

And so Cain went on hating his brother. And the New Testament says, who that hates his brother is a murderer. And if you're hating another, and hating is not loving them, you and I are murderers.

You must call it such if you want peace with God. Jesus would never have taken that dreadful beating on the cross if the sins that he was carrying weren't as serious as that. Well, there's old Cain.

Now what about Abel? Well, he brought of the thistle-down of his flock. Now it's not quite clear whether he brought just a lamb, as many preachers, myself included, have suggested he did. If I look at it more closely, he brought of the thistle-down of his flock and of the fat thereof.

And the other versions say he brought some of the firstborn, especially the fat portions. I don't think it matters a lot whether it was one lamb that was slain or several, whether it happened in his home and then the parts brought. It matters not.

Blood was shed. And for sake of simplicity, we'll take it, assume a lamb. And at last he went the God-appointed way.

Now you say, well, of course, that was easier for him. He had a whole flock of them. Cain, he would have had to have borrowed or asked Abel for a lamb.

You can't altogether blame Cain. It was so much easier for Abel. No, it wasn't.

Because Abel knew that if he took a lamb, he'd have to say he was wrong. And I like to think he put off for as long as he possibly could the bringing of that lamb. But he got so miserable, he couldn't bear it any longer.

And although it means the humblest thing I've ever done in my life, I'm going to take one of them and offer that lamb. You see, you might think that the Bible-believing Christian would find getting right with God easier. He knows all about the lamb.

He'd been brought under it under the holy teaching of the scriptures. The fundamental Bible-believing Christian finds repentance no easier than does the liberal theologian who believes none of these things. And it was a work of grace in Abel that he was willing to go that way.

And, assuming for the sake of our picture, it's a lamb, I think probably it might have been more, it doesn't matter, as the blood was shed, he saw that innocent creature dying under the knife, and he saw his blood spreading out over the stone. It did lead him to repentance, I'm sure. I'm assuming this.

I think it did. Oh, what a cad I've been. I see that little creature.

Oh, what a cad I've been. I've talked to Cain after all, he is the eldest, but I wouldn't have it. And he did.

And I want to tell you, when you come, you don't have to bring the lamb, the lamb's been brought, but when you come with no other plea but he took it, you point God back to his own beloved son and that old rugged cross, to the blood that speaks in heaven for you, for his powerful blood did once atone and now it pleads before the throne. When you start going that way, you find yourself repenting, as you never did. John Newton, that's the whole message of that glorious hymn of his, In evil long I took delight, Unawed by shame or fear, Till a new object met my sight And stopped my mad career.

I saw one hanging on a tree In agonisant blood. He fixed his languid eyes on me As near the cross I stood. Sure, never to my latest breath Can I forget that look.

It seemed to charge me with his death. Though not a word he spoke, My conscience felt and owned its guilt And plunged me in despair. I saw my sins.

His blood had spilt and helped to nail him there. A second look he gave, which said, I freely all forgive. This blood is for thy ransom shed.

I die that thou mayst live. Thus, while his death displays My sins in all their blackest hue, Such is the mystery of grace, hallelujah! It seals my pardon too. And this is the way of the blood.

Unless you're prepared to be a man who repents, the blood doesn't avail for you. It has little relevance. It's not something you always pray about when you have a communion service, and someone gives thanks for the blood.

It's something for our desperate need as a sinner. And we admit that fact, and always such a joy. Get into the habit of putting yourself in the wrong, hallelujah! Because the moment you put yourself in the wrong, you're on another ground altogether.

You're on the ground of atoning blood. It once atoned, but now, it pleads before the throne. And as the wrong one, you're in a much better position than the right one.

God's going to do things for you on the ground of the blood. He won't do for you on the grounds you didn't do it, or it wasn't your fault. And the more I see the blood of Jesus and Jesus himself, the more ready I am to take the place of the wrong one.

Do you know, it's much easier to be wrong than right. He that's wrong, he that's down, need fear no fault. And all get into the habit, man.

And remember this, although you may be accused of doing something or saying something along a certain line, and you say, but I never said it, or at least I never meant it that way. Listen, if people get a certain impression of us, you're responsible. I know people have got a certain impression of me, and God said, now look, you can argue you didn't do it, or your way didn't intend it that way.

If they got that impression, take responsibility and get peace. On other ground, altogether. It isn't the way of groveling, it's the way of peace, it's the way of joy.

If there's an argument, everybody's arguing, pointing to the other person, and one man goes silent for a moment, God's speaking to him. When he does break the silence, he says, brothers, I want to tell you I've been wrong. My attitude's been wrong.

And the others may say, yes, glad you see it. But he's the only man who's been at peace. He's the only man who's rejoicing for those that say they're right or wrong.

But those who admit they're wrong, the blood of Jesus comes into view before God and they're half at the ground. And oh, no one can tell the mighty power of that blood. Things happen for such and one out of all proportion to his pathetic little bit of repentance.

Grace is greater than all our sin. And the Lord had respect. The Lord had respect and to Abel at his offering.

He was bowing there, repenting. When he suddenly heard what sound occurred, he thought of scorching heat. He looked up and there was his offering going up in smoke.

Because in Old Testament times, especially at crucial times, offerings were accepted by fire from heaven. When Solomon built his temple and they offered that initial offering, it was consumed from heaven, as was the case with Elijah on the mountain, contesting with the prophets of Baal, his, the God that answers by fire, let him be God. And I can only assume that is what happened and is borne out by the fact in Hebrews 11, it says God testifying of his gifts and in the margin, in my version at least, over his gifts.

And more than that, by means of which he had witnessed born to him that he was righteous, utterly right with God. And that's what gives me peace. Not only he died and I repent, but I see him going up.

The sacrifice is accepted. He was delivered from my offences, Romans 4, but raised again to my justification. The blood is sufficient for God.

I may wonder if it's sufficient for me, I may still be blaming myself, but if the blood of Christ is sufficient for God and the resurrection shows it was, why can't it be enough for you? Why do you go on beating yourself? Look at him beating. And dear old Abel lost every vestige of burden and self-procrimination when he saw the Lord having respect to him and his offering in that way, the power of the blood of Jesus. And because of which you who admit your wrong are now accounted right.

You cannot be more right with God than what the blood of Jesus makes you when you call sin sin, or the other fellow sin. You can't be more right. The archangel Gabriel hasn't got a better righteousness.

You walk into the holiest, you who have been in such a bad state. Now, as if the place belongs to you, you have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus and with what was out. He loved his brother.

Oh, thank you, Lord. And he ran down to his brother and to his arms around him. Oh, forgive me, dear.

I was so wrong, but God put it right. Cain was stiff. He didn't respond.

Only more jealousy grew up with the results that we know. I want to say that every one of us here is either a Cain or an Abel. A Cain, one who refuses to be washed and made clean by the blood of Jesus Christ, and does refuse because he won't repent.

And though he won't repent, he is still hating or criticising his brother. Amen. A prayer.

Lord, we want to thank thee for this amazing scripture. Lord, we trust we haven't done death's bite to it. But we leave it to you.

But we know the truths, we've seen it, our truths. If not in that scripture, then in another. And we want to thank thee, thou dear, beloved Lamb of God.

Now interpret this to us. We pray thee for thy name's sake. Amen.

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