

BY FAITH ABEL OFFERED

HEBREWS 11

Text:

Introduction:

The first example in Hebrews 11 of those who obtained a “good report” by their faith is Abel.

Note one of the things mentioned about Abel is – “by it he being dead yet speaketh.”

Read the story of Abel in Genesis 4:1-19

(Note verse 10)

His speaking after death is something that is not only mentioned here but also in Genesis 4:10.

It is fitting that this first example pictures salvation – for salvation is first and foremost work of faith.

Notice:

1. THE PREMISE OF FAITH

True faith must have a foundation or premise upon which to rest and this foundation is the Word of God.

Romans 10:17

¹⁷ So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The premise of Abel's faith was the Word of God.

Abel's faith led him to worship, and his worship led to three progressive things in his life and relationship with God.

A. True Worship Always Involves Sacrifice

One of the obvious questions regarding the story of Cain and Abel is—"Why did God accept Abel and his sacrifice, but reject Cain and his?" Some would say that it was because Abel brought a "blood" sacrifice and Cain did not. The problem with that is that God would later say that offerings and sacrifices from the first fruits of the land were acceptable to Him. So if it wasn't the content of the sacrifice what was it? I believe it was the heart of the worshipper.

It would certainly appear that God saw it that way or why would he have challenged Cain by saying—"If you do right, won't you be accepted?" Some have speculated that Abel took time, and selected the best

that he had, whereas, Cain simply plucked some wheat and put on a plate without much thought. It is interesting to me, that even if Cain didn't put a lot of thought into his sacrifice, he still knew that he should bring something to the Lord.

The problem is when the heart is not right with God, there is no sacrifice that is going to be acceptable. Remember Jesus said that the kind of worshippers the Father is seeking is those who worship in spirit and in truth.

Someone once said, "Cain believed in God, else he would not have brought Him a sacrifice. He acknowledged a supreme being and even that he owed Him some sort of worship. He recognized God, but he did not obey God. He believed in God, but he did not believe God. He thought he could approach God in whatever way he wanted, and expected Him to be impressed and satisfied."

David understood that true worship was more than doing something religious.

At one of the darkest moments in his life, after having failed the Lord miserably, David looked to God for forgiveness and said:

Psalms 51:16-17

¹⁶For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give *it*: thou delightest not in burnt offering. ¹⁷The sacrifices of God *are* a

broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Paul gave an illustration of that kind of true worship and sacrifice in Romans 12:

Romans 12:1

¹I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

B. True Worship Always Leads to Righteousness

1 John 3:11-12

¹¹For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. ¹²Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Abel's understanding of True Worship requiring a sacrifice from the heart led him to an understanding that True Worship must also be a reflection of how he lived. Put another way—if how you talk and act at church is drastically different than how you talk and act during the week—then there's a problem somewhere!

C. True Worship Is Always a Witness to Others

When we are willing to truly pour our heart out to Him in worship, we become a witness to others. True worship should bring about a change inside of us, and

God can use that change in us to bring about change in the lives of others.

2. THE PRICE OF FAITH – A SACRIFICE

Hebrews 11:4

⁴By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

A. He Offered to God

B. His Offering Was a Sacrifice

3. THE PREMIUM OF FAITH – A MORE EXCELLENT SACRIFICE

Hebrews 11:4

⁴By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

Faith does things with excellence.

When we buy gasoline at the gas station the pumps say, “Regular” or “Premium.”

The word premium means the best or the highest octane.

A. The Faith in the Offering

B. The Finest in the Offering

Genesis 4:4

⁴ And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

Abel brought of the firstling of his flock. This speaks of the finest, the best.

It wasn't his leftovers or his seconds.

Malachi touched on that during his day.

Malachi 1:13

¹³ Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness *is it!* and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought *that which was torn*, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.

C. The Foreshadow in the Offering

Genesis 4:4

⁴ And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

This was a foreshadow of the greatest offering that would one day be offered – the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ was the best offering

Christ was the last offering

3. THE PERSECUTION FOR FAITH

A. The Source of the Persecution

1. Persecution often comes from those you least expect it.
2. Persecution often comes from those who are closest to us.
3. Persecution often comes from the religious crowd.

B. The Severity of the Persecution

Genesis 4:8

⁸ 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.

4. THE PROCLAMATION OF FAITH

Hebrews 11:4

⁴ By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

He being dead yet speaketh.

One doesn't stop speaking when they die.

Our lives send messages long after we have died, and it's not just what we may have on our tombstone.

A. The Message of His Proclamation

There are at least three messages that Abel proclaims even after his death:

1. The message of redemption
2. The message of reproach
3. The message of retribution

Close:

By Faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice.