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Sermon Notes

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The First Murder: Sin Advances in the World Genesis 4:1-24

I. Relentless Advance

- The Spread of a cancer

II. Cain's Sin (vs. 1-8)

A. Eve's Hopeful Ministry

1. Marital union produced a son... "Adam knew his wife, Eve..."
2. Eve declares her word of faith... perhaps this is the serpent-slayer God had promised
 - Woman came from man; now a man has come from a woman
3. God alone opens the womb... "With the help of the Lord..."
 - God had put enmity between Eve & the devil... she is back with the Lord!

Note: Adam and Eve almost certainly spoke Hebrew... "Cainiti" = "I have gotten"

4. Even continued in her fruitfulness... Abel was born (name = "vanity")

B. The Offerings of Cain and Abel

- 1, Cain a tiller of the soil, offers firstfruits from the soil
2. Abel offers the fat portions fm the firstborn of his flock
3. In later covenant, both offerings commanded... nothing intrinsically wrong w. Cain's...
4. The problem is one of **Cain's heart & Cain's obedience**

C. God's Acceptance and God's Rejection

1. God looks first at Abel w. favor... then at his offering with favor

2. God did not look on Cain w. favor, nor his offerings
3. Person first then the offering

1 Samuel 16:7 “Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.”

1 Samuel 15:22 “Does God delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.”

4. OBEDIENCE: vs. 7 “If you do right, will you not be accepted?”... God had made it clear what he expected from them
5. Abel’s offering: made by faith, in obedience... natural outflow of a generally obedient life

Hebrews 11:4 “By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.”

5. God has the right to declare what is good acceptable as an offering from us

Hebrews 12:28-29 “...let us be thankful and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.”

6. Much of Law of Moses: careful Laws about how worship, sacrifices is to be done

Self-styled worship is an abomination to God... the idea that God is obligated to accept whatever we throw His way

D. Cain’s Reactions: The Seeds of Murder

1. Cain’s first reaction: jealousy

1 John 3:11-12 “This is the message you heard from the beginning: we should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous.”

2. Cain’s second reaction: anger
 - a. Hebrew: lit. “Cain glowed” or “Cain grew hot”
 - b. the first appearance of the scourge of human anger

James 1:20 “Man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.”

3. Cain’s third reaction: “his face fell”... he became discouraged, depressed
 - a. rebuke a wise man, he repents and does right
 - b. rebuke a child of the devil, he gets jealous, angry and discouraged

Proverbs 9:8 “Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you.”

God has the right to accept or reject our offerings... we must accept instruction or we will sin greatly

The seeds of murder are in place... God acts to encourage and warn Cain

E. God’s Complete Ministry to Cain: Diagnosis, Encouragement, Warning, Exhortation

1. Diagnosis: “Why are you angry? Why has your face fallen?”
 - a. opens the topic... probes and pries, and incisively brings out the hurt
 - b. just like the word of God

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joint and marrow. It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

2. Encouragement: “If you do right, will you not be exalted?”
 - a. incredible promise!! Submission to God means exaltation in God’s presence

1 Peter 5:6 “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.”

- b. sacrificial system points to Christ final sacrifice... all who submit to God will be exalted in His presence... perfect, holy, blameless... free to eat from the tree of life
- c. the Word of God gives us incredible encouragement to overcome sin
3. Warning: “Sin is crouching at the door. It desires to have you...”
 - a. image: a lion, crouching and waiting to devour... it has taken up residence outside your door and won’t simply go away

- b. when you are simply going about your business, sin will leap out at you & devour
- c. sin desires total domination over your heart, Cain

4. Exhortation: “You must master it...”

- a. only chance: you must master it!! Rule over it... have dominion; don't let it lead you... ultimately, you must KILL it
- b. a power struggle for your very soul is going on

John Owen: On the Mortification of Sin: “The vigour, power, and comfort of our spiritual life depends on” putting sin to death

He likened this death struggle to a fight with a viper... one of the two of you will emerge dead; sin will destroy you, or you will destroy sin

Romans 8:13 “For if you live by the sinful nature you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body you will live.”

Cain's struggle is life or death

God has thoroughly equipped Cain for victory through these words: a word which diagnosed his heart, which promised future exaltation, which warned him of impending destruction, and which exhorted him to win

What more could God have said to Cain? BUT this is the same way people treat God's word today

F. Sin Gives Birth to Death

1. Despite all that, sin still has the victory

O, the incredible power of sin!!

2. Cain like Satan... deceptive

vs. 8 “Let's go out to the field.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

3. Why Cain killed Abel

- a. like a cancerous tumor, jealousy & anger conquered his heart
- b. how long the development? Who knows? But the process clear

James 1:14-15 “Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived it gives birth to sin, and sin when it is full grown gives birth to death.”

Abel’s death came first, then Cain’s later

Abel the first martyr for the faith... “From the blood of righteous Abel, to the blood of Zechariah...” The seed of the woman, the godly race murdered by the seed of the devil

1 John 3 says Cain belonged to the evil one... that was clearly revealed when he murdered his righteous brother

III. Cain’s Judgment (vs. 9-16)

A. Judgment Day Again

1. God initiated
2. Again, with questions from the Judge

[to Adam] “Where are you?”

[to Cain] “Where is your brother Abel?”

- Judgment Day a time of giving an account
- The Judge knows everything, but still He asks us to answer for what we have done

B. Cain’s Cold Answer

vs. 9 “I don’t know... am I my brother’s keeper?”

1. Uses pastoral term... am I the shepherd here? Abel’s the shepherd
2. Perhaps jabbing at God over accepting the offerings from Abel’s flock

3. Cold-heartedness, the opposite of the Good Shepherd, who lays down His life for the sheep and calls us to do the same

FBC church covenant: "We will watch over each other in Christian love."

Direct opposite of modern "Live and let live" attitude... if my brother is hurting, I am hurting... If he is tempted, I inwardly burn... If he falls into sin, the whole body is hurt... If he is sick, I should minister to him

Cain's attitude the exact opposite of Christian love we promised to uphold

C. The Sovereign Judge

1. Supernatural & complete knowledge
 - a. again the question, the same as to Eve

vs. 10 *"What have you done?"*

- b. God already knows everything

Matthew 10:26 "So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed or hidden that will not be made known."

2. Blood crying for revenge

vs. 10 *"Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground."*

Edgar Allen Poe: The telltale heart... "Listen to your conscience... it's screaming an accusation against you

Revelation 6:9-11 "I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, 'How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?' The each of them was given a white robe and told to wait a little longer until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed was completed."

Romans 12:19 "It is mine to avenge, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

D. Cain's Judgment

1. Under a curse... the open rejection of God

2. Banishment from the ground... it will not produce food for him
3. Restless wandering... how demonic!

Job 1:7-8 “The Lord said to Satan, ‘Where have you come from?’ Satan answered the Lord, ‘From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.’”

Matthew 12:43 “When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest, and does not find it.”

Restless roaming on the earth... without a home, far from the presence of the Lord

4. Ultimately driven from God Himself

vs. 13-14 “My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence.”

- a. Cain sees very clearly... God is driving him away from His presence
- b. the essence of hell is this: “Away from me, you evildoers!”

E. The Mark of Cain

1. Cain’s complaint

vs. 14 “Whoever finds me will kill me.”

2. Cain’s fear
 - a. Cain introduces murder
 - b. now he fears the very thing he has brought on the earth
 - c. “Those who live by the sword will die by the sword.”
3. God’s response: The “mark of Cain”
 - a. “Not so” = God’s promise that he will control rampant murder

“Whoever finds me will kill me...”

- b. vengeance from God for killing Cain
- c. God’s oath... provision against escalation
4. Cain’s life away from God

vs. 16 So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden."

- a. Nod = wandering... roaming as God had sentenced him
- b. Cain's problem: how to eat... gathering food from bushes or begging

IV. Cain's City (vs. 17-24)

A. Cain's wife

1. Where did she come from?

Note: Cain's fear in vs. 14 "Whoever finds me will kill me." Implies a whole population

2. Changes in God's ways and laws

Leviticus 18:7, 20:17... Marrying a sister is a disgrace and is forbidden

- But if Eve is the mother of all living, and if from one man (Adam) God made every nation of men, then brothers must have married sisters at the beginning
- Under the Mosaic covenant, God instituted this law to protect Israel
- Genetic disorders accelerated after the Flood

B. Cain's intention: to build a city in his own honor (vs. 17)

1. Refuses any longer to be a wanderer in the earth
2. Builds a city... a stable location: first city built by a murderer
3. Worships himself... "Enoch" = "dedication"... City is named after his son
4. City itself not evil, but rather the seedbed of evil

C. The Seed of the Devil Multiplies (vs. 18-19)

1. Simple genealogy at first... but this is clearly the line of Cain
 - a. Cain built the city
 - b. each name here probably the equivalent of the King of the city

2. Lamech marries two wives, thus breaking God's pattern for marriage... one man, one woman, one flesh for life

D. Common-grace Blessings (vs. 20-22)

Matthew 5:45 "God causes the sun to rise on the good and evil, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

1. Jabal: Animal husbandry... skill in raising livestock
2. Jubal: Harp & flute... skill in music and entertainment
3. Tubal-Cain: metallurgy... skill in working with iron and bronze, and in developing tools

E. Murder Multiplies: The Tyrant Ruler Lamech (vs. 23-24)

1. Lamech: the prototype murdering tyrant
2. Boastful taunt of God's laws:

vs. 23 "I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me."

- a. principle of escalation already in force... not eye for eye; you injure me, I'll kill you!
- b. Lamech boasts that his life is worth exponentially more than Cain's

vs. 24 "If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times."

V. Application

- A. God's standards for worship
- B. God's warnings against sin
- C. The way sin grows
- D. God's patience to the wicked