

THE FIRST MURDER

GENESIS 4:1-15

(Prepared by Gene Thompson using LifeWay's ETB materials.)

NOTE: There are so many questions left unanswered in today's Scripture passage. We must be careful not to get bogged down with these issues for which there is no answer. We can speculate but everyone will have their own opinion and there is no way to resolve the issues.

We must remember **WHERE SCRIPTURE IS SILENT, GO THOU AND DO LIKEWISE!**

(On the board, create two columns: The most dangerous city in the United States [2022] and The safest city in the United States [2022])

1. What is the most dangerous city in the USA? (List on board.)
2. What is the safest city in the USA? (List on board.)

The most dangerous cities include: Monroe, LA; Memphis, TN; Saginaw and Detroit, MI; St. Louis, MO; Alexandria, LA; Pine Bluff and Little Rock, AR.

The safest cities include: Frisco and McKinney, TX; Santa Clarita, Sunnyvale and Glendale, CA; McAllen, TX; Cary, NC; and Plano, TX.

3. What makes a city safe or dangerous?
4. Would you consider your city safe or dangerous? Why?
5. What are some ways people show disrespect for others? (Being late, ignore, belittle, use of bad language, gossip, abuse, murder, racism, treat life as dispensable, etc.)
6. Why should we show respect for all people? (We were created in God's image. He loves people and died for them. We are responsible as our brother's keeper.)

Dishonoring God leads to contempt for His creation. We saw last time that after the creation of man and woman, that Adam and Eve fell into sin and were cast out of the Garden of Eden. Now chapter four picks up the story. Today we will examine the first murder.

RIVALRY! Read Genesis 4:1-7

1. What career paths did each of these men take? (One was a shepherd and the other a farmer.)
2. Is there anything intrinsically "better" about either of these two professions, farmer or shepherd? (No, both are respectable occupations. They are just different.)
3. What does the Bible say was the difference between the two offerings the two brothers brought? (Cain's was fruit and vegetables "the fruit of the ground," and Abel's was "of his flock.")

Read Gen. 4:4-5.

4. How does the Bible say here that God showed His "regard" or "no regard" for their offerings? (It doesn't! We can only speculate. This is one of those areas where the Bible is silent and we need to be silent as well. We will speculate some here.)
5. Read these verses carefully. What was it that God had "regard" or "no regard" for? (It was the individual as well as their offering.)

Notice that Abel brought "some of the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions." Cain on the other hand brought some of his produce from the land. The indication is that it wasn't the best. His rejection showed Cain was not in a right relationship with the Lord. (**See Heb. 11:4**)

6. What was Cain's reaction to the Lord's rejection of his offering? (He became furious and down cast.) A wrong relationship with the Lord leads to other problems.
7. Do we ever find ourselves just going through the motions of worship?
8. What do you think was the root of Cain's problem? (Jealousy, self-centeredness, heart not right with God.)
9. What are the dangers of letting jealousy and anger go unchecked? (Satan gets a "foothold" and we go into a downward spiral.)

10. What image comes to your mind when you read the phrase “sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you...”? (A tiger hiding, ready to pounce on its prey.)

11. How can we “rule over sin”? (Stay in the Word. Associate with Christians, have an accountability partner, be involved in a ministry, etc.)

The act of worship itself does nothing unless it is an outward sign of an inward reality!

Cain’s sin started in carelessness and lack of faith, grew into jealousy and anger, and ended in murder—all because he did not master sin in the beginning!

SENTENCED! Read Genesis 4:8-12

Cain let his unresolved anger fester and what was a relatively minor offense ended in murder.

1. Why did God ask Cain where his brother was? (God didn’t need to know, but Cain needed to admit what he had done.)
2. What did Cain do when confronted with his sin? (God holds us accountable for the way we treat other people. God’s question was very personal when He asked about “your brother” rather than Abel. Rather than admit to what he had done. **Cain lied to God.**)

Adam and Eve set off a chain reaction that extends to Joseph’s brothers’ jealousy, David’s attempted cover up of his immoral act with Bathsheba that led to murder, into the choices you and I make today.

3. Instead of cover up, what should we do instead? (Read 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”)

It is important to note that there is a vast difference between **remorse and repentance**. **Remorse** is feeling sorry you got caught. **Repentance** is sorrow for committing the sin. It is a deep sorrow for choosing our own route instead of God’s.

Read Prov. 28:13—“Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

4. What was Cain’s punishment? (“The ground will never again give its yield to Cain. He will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”)
5. How does this punishment show God’s mercy? (God spared his life.)
6. To what extent are we responsible for others? (Love them, pray for them and care for them. Minister to them when the opportunity presents itself.)
7. How does that affect our personal responsibility toward God? (We ARE our brother’s keeper. Showing love and ministering to others is one way we fulfill our responsibility to God.)

“I suppose we could say the law agrees with Cain: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” You and I have our legal right to mind our own business—to turn a deaf ear to anyone in need, to continue sunbathing while someone is drowning. We are not obligated to respond. Indifference may not be illegal, but it certainly is immoral! **The opposite of love is apathy, not hatred.**

Cain was punished for his actions, and he cried out to God because he believed the punishment was more than he could bear.

PLEAS! Read Genesis 4:13-15

1. If you had been in God’s position, how would you have treated Cain?
2. How is that different from God’s actual response?

Showing even more mercy and grace, God put a mark of protection on Cain so that no one would kill him. Speculation on what the mark was is futile. The point here is the great mercy and grace of God toward the sinner.

3. In what ways does God’s grace work in conjunction with His justice and righteousness?

In Habakkuk 3:2 the prophet cries: “in wrath remember mercy.” He was speaking of the judgment that was rightfully falling upon Judah for their sins, but he asked God, in this righteous wrath, remembers to be merciful to us. And thankfully, God IS. As A. W. Tozer reminds us in his great little book, “The

Knowledge of the Holy,” God is always ALL of His qualities. In His love He is still just; and in His wrath He is still merciful. So even in His righteous punishment of Cain, He showed mercy, as we see here. We have all failed like Cain. We have all had sin crouching at the door, trying to get us—and it DID get us! Perhaps not murder but some sin.

CHALLENGE!

1. How does God show grace even in His just punishment? (His discipline is to bring us back to Him—always!)
2. Why are people so reluctant to take responsibility for sin?
3. How can we foster personal accountability?
4. What are some hot buttons in your life that give rise to anger?
5. Why is unresolved anger so dangerous?
6. Is there anger in your life that needs to be dealt with?
7. How can you deal rightly with your anger?