

**STORIES FROM THE PAST: Tale of Two Brothers**  
**Genesis 4**

When I was a kid, I used to watch a TV show called "The Incredible Hulk?"  
 How many of you remember that show?  
 Good that means you are as old as I am!  
 The main character was a scientist named Dr. David Banner.  
 He was basically a very friendly man.  
 However, when he got angry, his eyes would turn green and he would be transformed into this big green hulk of a monster.  
 If you were a person in need, he would help save you.  
 If you were the one he was mad at - then you had better watch out.  
 He would pick you up and throw you to the other side of the room like you were a rag doll.  
 Dr. Banner didn't like what anger did to him.  
 In fact, the whole show is built around Dr. Banner's desire to find a cure so that this won't happen to him anymore.

The show helped to point out this message:  
     If you don't learn to deal with your temper, it could turn you into a monster of a person.  
     It could change you into someone you don't want to be.

Perhaps some of you have dealt with someone like that before.  
 Perhaps some of you have felt like that before.

This is what happens to Cain in Genesis chapter 4.  
 Cain had a bad temper to begin with and he didn't deal with it.  
 His anger turned him into this other person, this evil person.

**Look with me at Genesis 4**

In Genesis chapter 3 – in the story of Adam and Eve, we see the "root" of sin – which was disobedience.  
 And we see its consequences; Adam and Eve have to leave the Garden, work the soil, and have children in pain.

In Genesis chapter 4 – the story of Cain and Abel, we will see the "fruit" of sin – jealousy, anger, murder.  
 We also see how quickly sin has escalated and grown.

**Look at VS 1-2.**

So far we see that although Adam and Eve have had to leave the Garden of Eden due to their sin of disobedience, God is still with them. Life is good.  
 They are making a living from the soil - God has blessed them with 2 sons.  
 The two sons have grown and they are working.

If you look on down the chapter to verse 17, you will notice that Cain has a wife.  
 So he has a job, he has a wife, he has his health,

And he has a God in heaven who loves him and is watching out for him.

I don't know about you but I often find that when I get angry, I forget about all the good things that I have been blessed with.

I become more focused on thinking about how I have been wronged, or how my rights have been violated, or how that person was not very nice to me, or how I didn't get what I deserved.

Does any of that sound familiar to you?

I'm betting it does and that I am not alone in my feelings.

Life isn't fair and sometimes it isn't so easy either.

There are difficulties and hardships, disappointments and trials.

Here is what I am learning in the midst of these:

If I will take the time to thank God for all he does give to me.

And thank him that he loves me enough to **not** give me what I really don't need.

I am able to put things in their proper perspective.

There is a song that says it this way.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things will be added unto you.”

### **Proper perspective**

I think that Abel understood this. Perhaps Cain did, also.

I think that deep down, they knew that every good thing, every blessing that they had in their life came from God.

Adam and Eve had most probably taught them this truth.

So they decided to give back to God a small portion of what God had given to them.

Verse three tells us that Cain offered up some of the fruits of the soil.

Abel gave God the fat portions of the firstborn of the flock.

*Vs 4 and 5 says, “The Lord accepted Abel and his offering but he did not accept Cain and his offering. This made Cain very angry and dejected.”*

We are not told WHY God did not accept Cain's offering.

But I believe that God saw something in Cain's life or heart or maybe Cain's attitude that made the offering not acceptable.

God rejected Cain's character as well as his sacrifice.

Abel's offering was the overflow of a believing life.

*Hebrews 11:4 tells us that, “It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. God accepted Abel's offering to show that he was a righteous man. And although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us because of his faith.”*

Cain went through the motions. His heart wasn't in it.

His life didn't back up his actions.

God knows the difference even when others might not see it.

*1 John 3:12 warns, “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.”*

**God is not only concerned with what we give to him but he is also concerned with how much we are giving of OURSELVES to him!**

So let me ask you: How much of yourself are you giving to God today?  
Do you love him with all your heart and mind and soul and strength like Abel?  
Or are you just going through the motions like Cain?

*Look at how God convicts Cain of his bad attitude in verses 6 and 7.*

*“Why are you so angry?” the Lord asked him. “Why do you look so dejected? You will be accepted if you respond in the right way. But if you refuse to respond correctly, then watch out! Sin is waiting to attack and destroy you, and you must subdue it.”*

In light of Cain’s anger and dejection, God lovingly lays out for Cain what the options and consequences of his actions can be.

There are two ways people usually incorrectly deal with anger.

**They repress it.**

That is they hold it inside of them and don’t let others see that they are angry.

Maybe they just don’t know how to express it properly.

But what happens is that sooner or later, if we repress our anger, we can’t hold it in any longer and we explode, usually when others are least expecting it.

And just like the HULK that Dr. Banner turned into, we turn into someone we don’t like or recognize.

And God help all those in our path.

OR People **express their anger** at every possible opportunity.

These are the kinds of people you usually walk on eggshells around because you never know when or what they will go off at.

They never seem happy.

God offers us another option for anger. A better option.

We can **CONFESS** our anger and express our gratitude to God for his forgiveness.

Give your anger to God, tell him how you feel, unload your burdens at God’s feet.

God offered Cain this opportunity.

God asked Cain a fair question – Why are you so angry?

Cain could have taken this opportunity to confess to God.

To tell him why he was angry, why he felt like he did.

To ask for forgiveness for his anger and attitude.

And to express his gratitude for God’s forgiveness.

Some of you may have come into this room today feeling angry.

Something may have happened this morning to make you angry.

Maybe you are mad at your Mom and Dad because they won't let you go to a friend's house after church or you're mad at your kids because they made you late.

Or maybe something happened years ago.

Perhaps someone cheated you out of some money or took advantage of you in some way, you divorced, lost a job, and you still have a bitter attitude.

Whatever type the anger is, you need to get control of it, and get rid of it. *Ephesians 4:27 says if we don't control our anger, we give the devil a foothold in our lives.*

That is exactly what happened to Cain.

*It is what God warned him about, "...if you refuse to respond correctly, then watch out! Sin is waiting to attack and destroy you, and you must subdue it."*

Cain's uncontrolled anger and jealousy resulted in Abel's death and destroyed Cain's life too.

He let the devil get a foothold in his life when he opened the door of anger.

Don't let this happen in your life.

Acknowledge that your attitude is wrong, confess it to the Lord, and ask His help in overcoming this destructive attitude and express your gratitude for his forgiveness.

Maybe you are thinking that is easier said than done.

It is too hard to control your anger when someone has made you mad.

But let me ask you – have you ever been angry with someone, yelling at them and saying hurtful things.

And all of a sudden the phone rings and you pick it up and sweetly say, "Hello, how are you."

Friends I'm not proud but I've done it myself.

With God's help - We can control what we want to control.

Cain's uncontrolled anger which led to the murder of his brother caused serious consequences.

If you look through chapter 4 you will see those consequences:

Abel lost his life.

Cain was to be a wanderer on the earth. The ground would no longer yield a bountiful crop for him no matter how hard he worked.

And he had to give up the relationship of his family.

**SIN HAS CONSEQUENCES.**

**However – GOD OFFERS FORGIVENESS.**

The most amazing part of this story is that God offers Cain a second chance! Instead of giving him the death penalty, he allows him to live and raise a family.

You may think that that is not justice.

And you would be right.

It is not justice - it is grace.

The fact of the matter is that we all deserve the death penalty just like Cain because the bible tells us that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

But every single day we wake up and get out of bed, we are being given another chance to get things right –  
 another chance to let Jesus Christ take over the throne of our lives.

You see both statements are true: Sin does have consequences  
 But God offers forgiveness and gives us all another chance.  
 And because God forgives us, he commands us to forgive others.

You all have probably heard the Lord's Prayer prayed at some time.  
 In fact many of you I am sure know it by heart.  
 If you happen to know it well, you probably repeat it by habit, almost without thinking about what you are saying.  
 The prayer says – forgive me my trespasses (or sins)  
 As I forgive those who trespass (or sin) against me.  
 Now I don't want a show of hands – but how many of you really want to be forgiven as you forgive others?  
 I know there are times that I think Lord if you forgave me like I forgive others, I don't stand a chance.  
 But that also gets me to thinking about how I forgive others.  
 It helps me to know that I have some work I need to do in my life to make things right between me and God but also between me and whoever I have not quit forgiven.

You see there is a direct connection between how we relate to God and how we relate to others.  
 Because Cain did not have a right relationship with God,  
 He didn't have a right relationship with his brother.

Whenever there is something wrong in my relationship with God,  
 When I am not spending time in prayer, reading the bible, confessing my sins to God and asking for forgiveness, then I notice that I seem to not treat those around me quite as good as I should either.

[How we relate to God affects how we relate to others.](#)

I hope if Cain didn't learn anything else from his actions, I hope he learned that lesson.  
 In fact I hope if you don't remember anything else from today's message, you will remember that lesson as well.  
 I didn't write it in your sermon notes because I want you to write it down.  
 I find if I write something I tend to remember it better.

[How we relate to God affects how we relate to others.](#)

If you are having a problem in one of your relationships this day, you might want to ask yourself, "Is my relationship with God what it should be?"

I want you to watch this video about how one man did exactly that. He had a lot to be angry about – His sister had been savagely murdered. But as his relationship with God improved, he realized that he had to do something about his anger toward the woman who had killed his sister -Deborah.

Perhaps you are here today and you are struggling with anger. Or frustration. Or bitterness.

I want you to know that God understands. And with his help, you can master those feelings and experience God's forgiveness. But in order for this to happen, you need Jesus in your life.

Jesus was the perfect acceptable sacrifice for all of us - for all time. He offered his life so that we might be able to come before the Father and confess. He offered his life so that we might be able to experience forgiveness of our sins. He offered his life so that we might be able to have our slate wiped clean. He offered his life so that we might be able to experience a right relationship with our heavenly Father. He offered his life so that we can experience the power that only comes from God Almighty. He offered his life so that we might be able to experience life abundant. If you have never accepted Jesus Christ's offer – I invite you to today. If you need to confess some area of your life to God today that you are struggling with so you can experience God's forgiveness – I invite you to today.