



May 2, 2010

You Could If You Wanted To

Genesis chapter four tells the story of the first murder in the family of man and the underlying reasons for it. We know that Abel, Cain's brother, offered a sacrifice that was acceptable to God. We know that Cain offered a sacrifice that was not acceptable. God has always given instructions on what we are to do and how we are to accomplish them so we can conclude that although there is no record of a directive, God must have instructed the family of Adam on the type of sacrifice. As we read we find that the acceptance of God of Abel's sacrifice to cause his "countenance" to fall and his anger to rise. God spoke to him and reminded him of a very important point. **"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" (Gen 4.7).** Cain had the ability to do well. How do we define what "well" is? In this case, in regard to the relationship that we have with the Lord, "well" refers to doing that which the Lord has commanded. That was a problem for Cain, and it's a problem for people today. God has given us instructions and we read them only to find that we don't want to do them. So what happens. Folks do the same thing that Cain did. We do things that seem to be right to us and expect the Lord to be happy with that. That made Cain angry. God asked, **"Why art thou wroth?" (Gen 4.6).** Cain was obviously upset about the fact that God accepted the sacrifice that Abel offered. Cain was angry with God, not his brother, because of this lack of acceptance. He channeled his anger in the direction of his brother but the real object of his dismay was the Lord. Why should God accept what we do and be pleased with it when it is not what he commanded. God has a right to tell us what to do. It was man that sinned bringing death into the world. That wasn't evidence enough to show that our way of thinking is flawed. When God begins to give commands for sacrifices, it is in preparation for Christ who would eventually come into the world. For that reason the sacrifices had to be of a specific nature. Cain chose to disregard this and then was upset that his lack of respect and anger were not acknowledged. God knew that there was a problem that went beyond anger. God states, **"...and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." (Gen 4.7).** The fallen countenance and anger were just symptoms of a deeper problem. A problem that led to the death of his brother at his hand. Perhaps some today would argue that Cain was having esteem issues due to the environment he grew up in. we can only imagine the stories the first family shared when mom and dad talked about living in paradise until they messed up. Perhaps Adam felt like a failure and, not having any parenting classes to help, took his frustrations out on Cain while he favored Abel. Maybe Eve did the same thing and poor Cain just didn't fit in. His one chance at expressing his individuality was in offering the produce that he grew to the Lord to show he was just as good. And God didn't like it. So Cain, overwhelmed with frustration, feeling slighted in life and cheated by circumstance, struck out at the representative of his frustration. Abel paid the price for his brother's unwillingness to change his way of thinking. Today there are many people, and it seems, more every day, who fail to achieve and hate those who do. There are many who express this by taking their anger out on the innocent causing tragedy and chaos. But Cain could have done differently. God's statement was very powerful. **"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" (Gen 4.7).** When people hear the truth today and realize that it doesn't match what they believe and practice there is a tendency to become angry and sometimes hateful toward those who have tried to teach them. Other times there is a tendency to smooth things over and separate themselves from the one who has presented the truth to them. Others argue that we all have the right to believe what we want. Cain exercised his right and ended his brothers life to preserve it. Cain had the option of doing what was right and failed to do so. People today argue that they cannot see the validity of what we teach about what the scriptures say. Cain paid the price for his actions as will those to day who turn away from the Gospel without obeying it. Cain could have done better but did not. Folks today could accept the truth if they wanted to. God has not made it impossible but we have to want to please him and not ourselves.

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