

The Faith of Abel

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- [0 : 01] Where we left off last week with kind of just an introduction to faith and made some comments about faith, reminding you that this is not known for its use of the word faith.
- And so it's definitely not a theme of the Old Testament, but this chapter, Hebrews 11, looking back at some of the individuals, it reveals that faith was alive and it was being acted upon, though it wasn't spelled out as so.
- Three things I told you last week about faith, just introducing it, is kind of, you might call it the properties of faith. Faith, I said, was fuel or it was energy for the believer to act upon, meaning that faith is not some abstract thing or something conceptual, but it's real substance.
- As verse number one says, faith is the substance of things hoped for. And so faith is something that God puts inside anyone, actually, and more so the believer that exercises faith, which brings us to the second thought that faith must be exercised.
- It cannot sit idle. It's like a muscle. If it sits idle, it's of no use, and it gets weak, and it's weak, and it's, it can do nothing. And so it must be grown.
- [1 : 35] It must be used to grow. We saw that with the church at Thessalonica, that their faith grew greater because of the persecutions and afflictions that they endured. They didn't give up. They didn't quit.
- They exercised faith. They believed God. They believed his word. And their faith, Paul said, grew exceedingly. And the last thought from last week was that faith is measurable. That is, it's quantifiable.
- We saw that it can be, O ye of little faith, or woman, great is thy faith. And there was different cases where, well, the main verse there was from Romans chapter 12, where the apostle Paul described a measure of faith that God gives.
- And in that place, he described a proportion of faith as well. And so it's my contention or belief that the, that God gives a measure of faith proportional to what he's asking or what he's calling someone to do.
- And they often say that where the Lord guides, the Lord provides. And I think the same thing's true, not just with food and raiment and support, but the same thing's true with faith. As if that God is calling you to do something, he'll give you the faith to do it.
- [2 : 44] And the first thing, and we're going to see this today, that God calls all men to is to believe on his son, to exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, plus nothing else. And he gives all men the measure of faith to believe on it.
- There'll be no one that can stand before God in the judgment day and say that I could not believe on him, that it was not possible. Because God gave that measure of faith for all to believe on his son.
- By grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. Now, putting all together what we studied last week, where there's no faith, then there's going to be no obedience to God.

Where there's little faith, there'll be little action or little obedience. And then where there's great faith, there'll be great action or great obedience. And all of that was just introduction just to get us to understand maybe the properties of faith, if that makes sense to you.

But this week now, I want to take a little closer look, more specifically, at what the faith of these elders looked like. What they did that earned them this good report.

[3 : 49] Let me remind you of those words I'm using. Let's go to verse number one. Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, for by it the elders obtained a good report.

And now we're going to look at some of these individuals. Now, I think the object tonight is for you to, through all of this really, but tonight specifically as we begin, is for us to understand that the examples that are given in this chapter that we call the Hall of Faith, all these great names, great men and women of faith, the examples that were recorded and being used here in this chapter are not just to encourage us to act in faith, but I want to understand what kind of act faith will produce.

Let me give you an illustration. I can illustrate faith easily by saying when you walked into this church this evening, you walked right into a pew and you sat down on it.

And nobody got a flashlight out to look underneath the pew. Nobody asked, were these built, when were these built, what kind of wood is this, are they screws or nails? Nobody cared about any of that.

You just came in and you believed that it would hold your body weight. And so far, so good. It's doing the job. Now, obviously, you've seen people sitting in these pews before.

[5 : 13] You yourself have sat probably in that very same spot. So it wasn't that you had to exercise faith all over again. It was just repeating a former habit. But that shows, just kind of illustrates faith in the sense of trusting something and not really doing the diligent research to see if this is okay.

It's not just this church pew. But think about everywhere you go and you see a seat and you want it. You just sit down. You don't inspect it. Now, if this church sat idle for 200 years and it was cobwebs and critters everywhere, you might push on the pew a little bit then.

You might think, I'm not so sure about this. But that's not the case. You just came in. You sat down. You trusted that it would hold you up. That illustrates exercising faith.

But God didn't give such simple concepts in this chapter to explain what walking by faith is, did he? He doesn't give that kind of stuff.

He used far different examples, more extreme examples, much more costly examples, I would say. And there's a purpose to that, that it's going to be helpful to all of us to study these things.

[6 : 19] And it's worthy of our learning and study because what we're going to see is what Bible faith looks like. It's not observable just by coming in and sitting in a pew and saying, see, that's faith.

It sounds simple, but there's more. It's something more. God uses different examples than that. He uses something, some detailed ones purposefully that as we study these individually, I don't intend on covering every verse.

I don't know how it's going to go, but I know that when I thought I'd look at the first one, it turned into the whole thing tonight. So maybe we will take our time and go through each example and try to extract what is God showing us that a life of faith looks like, that exercising faith looks like.

And so this chapter, to look at it again briefly, it starts with individuals. Verse 4 says Abel, verse 5 says Enoch, verse 7 says Noah.

And in each case, with each individual, Abraham and Sarah, it gives details about what they did that illustrated or proved that they exercised faith.

[7 : 29] And then when we get past verse 31 and verse 32, it just throws in a short list of individuals. You can see it just compiles Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, prophets.

And it follows that with a longer list of things that these did. Some of them named and some not named. And it goes from 33, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 to describe real life examples of what it looks like to exercise faith in a way that pleases God.

Because as we saw, or maybe we didn't even see that, verse number 6 says, without faith, it is impossible to please him. So tonight we're going to take a look at the first example that God gives.

And tonight, analyze why it's the first one. You might say, well, because he's all the way back to the beginning. Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel.

And how much more can you, how far back can you go behind that? He doesn't mention Adam or Eve or Cain. But he starts with Abel. But there's something specific about this that for everybody who's been around and been saved for a long time, I hope it's a blessing to you just to hear some of these things over again.

[8 : 49] For anybody who's unsure of some of this stuff, it'll be a help to you to come to understand exactly what God is asking us to exercise our faith in. So before we go any further, let's pray together and let's dive into this.

Lord, I ask your help now to just work through the Word of God and through the truth of your text. And show us and may it, may this passage and this example not just refresh our memories, but may it be something that we grab a hold of and just have solidified for eternity of what you've accomplished for us, of why you ask us to follow the faith of Abel.

Lord, speak to our hearts tonight and make this beneficial for everybody. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. So I want to look at the situation of Abel in verse number four, and then I'll follow that by the significance of this and then a summary at the end.

That's kind of my three points or way I'm looking at this. Verse number four, let's read it together. It says, Well, he's dead because his brother slew him.

And now we're going to get into not necessarily that aspect of that, but there's a reason why Cain slew him. There's a reason why Cain got wroth and got fired up about his brother Abel.

[10 : 26] So what we understand is that Abel offered a sacrifice unto God. It wasn't just a sacrifice. The Bible calls it a more excellent sacrifice in comparison to his brother's sacrifice, Cain.

And God testified to this by accepting it that Abel was a righteous man. His righteousness came on the behalf of his sacrifice.

But the Bible doesn't tell us in this passage anything about the sacrifice. It doesn't describe the offering. So let's go to the back to where it is in Genesis chapter four.

And let's take a look at what this exactly was to understand a little bit better before we can move forward. Find Genesis chapter four. First book of the Bible.

Fourth chapter. And here comes the first human born on the earth. In verse number one, Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

[11 : 36] And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. You might say Abel was a shepherd, Cain was a farmer.

And in process of time, it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. 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, but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.

And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And now something's going on. I don't understand, Professor, I don't understand fully the details of what he said and the implications. It may, I feel like it's more than I know.

[12 : 39] But God rejected Cain's offering, and he confronted him about it. After he's ticked off, and he's wroth, what are you mad about, Cain?

And there's something to, maybe we can read between the lines a little bit, because there's not a lot of info from Genesis 1, 2, 3, into this 4. These are grown men, working in their own occupations, providing for themselves, it appears.

So some time has passed, from Adam and Eve, and from them having these sons. They're grown, they have an understanding of God. God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the garden, but God's speaking to Cain here, so they understand the Lord.

They understand communication with the Lord. It's not like some, what I'm going to get to here is that, when they're bringing an offering, it's not like they just had an idea, like, hey, I want to offer God something, tell him thank you.

No, this is something, they need to present themselves before the Lord, and not come empty-handed. And they made a choice, of what they brought before the Lord, to offer him. So there's some, there is interaction going on in this time, with these men and God.

[13 : 48] There is an expectation from God, in them coming to him, with an offering. So the passage now describes, what that offering was, that Abel offered a blood sacrifice.

This sacrifice was called a more excellent sacrifice, than what Cain brought. Abel brought an innocent animal, and offered it to God.

The blood, and the fat thereof, it was killed, and offered presumably, upon an altar. This is the first time, the Bible mentions any such offering, though, it's not the first time, that an innocent animal died.

Take a look back at chapter 3, and verse 21, after Adam and Eve sinned, verse 21 says, unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothe them.

So some animals died. Something died there, and likely it was a couple of lambs, that God killed, to clothe Adam and his wife, after they had lost their innocence, and now they were guilty, before God.

[14 : 59] So, when it comes to offering something, before the Lord, I would read between the lines, and say, they both should have known, what God accepts. Now, when it comes to the two offerings, we're going to see something, very different about them.

So, I'm going to get to the faith part, pretty soon, but first, we need to get a little bit info, on what Cain did here. Again, looking at verse number, verse 2, at the end says, Cain was a tiller of the ground, in chapter 4, and in the process of time, it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit, of the ground, an offering unto the Lord.

So, Cain tilled the ground. Now, what about the ground? Let's understand something, about the ground. Look back at chapter 3, and verse number 17, after Adam and Eve had sinned, and they partook of the tree, of knowledge of good and evil, they were commanded not to eat of.

Verse 17, Unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened, unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it. Cursed is the ground, for thy sake.

In sorrow, shalt thou eat of it, all the days of thy life. Thorns also, and thistles, shall it bring forth to thee. And thou shalt eat the herb of the field.

[16 : 19] In the sweat of thy face, shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground. For out of it was thou taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

So, we learn something quickly, that in chapter 4, Cain's a tiller of the ground. But we already know something about that ground. That ground has been cursed by God.

That's an important fact to understand. So what Cain presented before the Lord, though it required much sweat, much labor, thorns, thistles to get out of the way, though it obviously was much work on his part, what he presented before the Lord, was just what we would call the result of his hard work, of his dedication, of his labor, of his sweat and toil.

And I bet, that it was spectacular, what Cain brought before the Lord. I don't think he put just the red strawberries on top, and underneath were the ones that were a little whiter.

I think what he put before the Lord, would have made anybody in here say, oh my goodness. You could buy a gift basket, and give to somebody for 100 to 150 bucks, and think, man, that's gorgeous.

[17 : 32] The pineapples, and the things, and all of it's just, I'll bet you what Cain put before the Lord God, because again, he had a relationship with God. He knew him as the Lord God Almighty.

And if he had to come with an offering before God, he wasn't just taking two for me, and one for you. I'm not trying to oversell this. I truly believe Cain would have put his best foot forward, would have put a display on, that would have made Abel say, oh, wow.

And look what I'm doing. Like, Cain went through all that trouble, to show the Lord. He did that for God's offering. And maybe I'm overselling it, I don't know, but one thing I do know, is what Cain put together, God rejected it.

He showed no interest in how hard he worked, day in, and day out. He cared not that Cain cleared the thorns and thistles out of that ground, and that he turned it over, and that he went and got all the rocks out of it.

Cain went, got up early in Monday morning and went to work, and early Tuesday morning, and early, and every day in, day out, he's out there working in that field, and growing this, and growing that, and tilling the ground.

[18 : 48] And this is what this man did. This is what he knew. He sowed his seeds, he watered his plants, he pulled the weeds, he protected these precious crops from anything that would get in there, and destroy it, or eat it.

And Cain presumed, that all of that effort would be recognized by God. All of his diligence would be rewarded by God, looking upon him, and acknowledging, and accepting his offering.

He expected God to be pleased. I bet you he had it just perfect. If it was an altar, like Abel, I'm assuming, Cain had an altar, and decorated that thing to where you couldn't see any bit of the altar.

It was colorful, it was fresh, it was lively, it was the best of the best. And the Lord didn't have any respect for it. He rejected it.

Now I want to note here again, that what Cain offered, was an offering that came from the ground, that God had already cursed. The ground, was incapable of bringing forth anything, that could render Cain righteous.

[19 : 59] God testified that Abel was righteous. But Cain, you're giving me nothing to work with here. I can't declare you righteous, looking at what you've brought before me.

This all came from something I cursed. You might say, why can't it? Why not? Because you can't bring forth something clean, out of something unclean.

We'll look at that later. A bitter fountain can't bring forth sweet water. A corrupt tree can't bring forth good fruit. An Ethiopian can't change his skin, and a leopard can't change his spots.

And the cursed ground cannot produce righteousness. But Abel took a different approach. In Hebrews chapter 11, we read that by it, his approach, his offering, he obtained witness that he was righteous.

How did Abel get that righteous designation? Well, because he offered an innocent lamb to God. And the Bible says in verse 4, at the end, the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.

[21 : 07] Abel's offering did not indicate hard work. It did not indicate any personal accomplishment. You could say that Abel's guilt was hiding behind the innocence of that lamb.

And he exercised faith that God would accept an innocent lamb in his stead, in the place of his guilt. So Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.

So that's the situation. Now for the significance of this. This is the first example, back in Hebrews 11, of faith.

It's the first one. It is faith that rests upon a blood sacrifice of an innocent lamb.

Get this, in contrast to offering one's diligent effort, personal best, or you might say good works.

[22 : 12] And the lesson, by looking at it like this, is unmistakable. God only accepts one of the two. You can offer him your very best and work and be as devoted and sweat and toil and mean to show how much you care.

You can put everything, all your heart into it. Or you can offer an innocent lamb. You can offer blood. God only accepts one.

And we don't have to get very far into the Bible to find out which one it is. Now the significance of this is what an incredible picture of New Testament salvation this is.

All the way back in Genesis 4. How is that? Trusting in the blood sacrifice rather than in your own labors. Own labors that could never earn righteousness.

And there's another picture there. The picture is of one, of the New Testament salvation. There's another picture. And that is every religion on our planet is just an offshoot of Cain's offering.

[23 : 17] That's all it is. The Pope just died. The whole world is mourning or talking about it. It's on every news channel and every cycle. He's just an offshoot.

That whole system is just an offshoot of what God rejects. Works. Deeds of man. A system. That if you do your best, you can be accepted of God.

No, you can't. God had a confrontation with Cain. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? Like, if you did the right thing, I would have accepted you, Cain.

But you didn't. You offered me your labor. And I don't want it. Your brother offered me blood. Something innocent died in his place.

And I have respect under that. You say, well, I don't like that. Who cares what you like? Who cares what you like? Who are you? Cain didn't like it and he was wrong.

[24 : 21] When it comes to coming before God with an offering, are you going to tell God what he should do? You better figure out what God wants to be offered. The world better figure out what God accepts.

Not make sense of it and not discuss it and decide, you know, I think this is the right way. If you've been wrong one time in your life, just once, I wouldn't trust you or your opinion on what you think God would accept.

I'd go to the Bible and find out what God accepts. Now, we're looking at a picture of New Testament salvation in Abel and we're looking at the religions of the world in Cain.

Now, let me run a few references with you on some things here. Find Matthew chapter 7 and John chapter 8. You can lose your places.

We will go back to Hebrews in a moment, but Matthew 7. And I want to just put two passages side by side and let them contrast and show us kind of what we're already looking at, a contrast between Cain and Abel.

[25 : 32] These are both times Christ, the Lord speaking to men and he's speaking about the will of the Father.

What is the will of God? And he brings this up here in a few spots. Matthew 7. If you're there, we're going to start in verse 21 where he says, Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name and in thy name have cast out devils and in thy name done many wonderful works? What is all that?

That's good deeds, good works. We've done all these things in your name. In the name of God, we have done this and we've done this and we've done this. And here's the response in verse 23.

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

[26 : 48] But they said, We've done many wonderful works. And Christ says, Your work is iniquity. But we did it in your name.

I never knew you. So he said to them in verse 21, He that doeth the will of my Father. These ones doing good works in the name of the Lord, God says that that work is iniquity to me.

I don't have respect to that work. You should have did the will of the Father. What would that be? We better find out from the Bible. Now in John chapter 8.

You can't gain God's acceptance by doing good deeds. While you're going to John 8, I want to read 1 John 3 and listen to this.

Considering what I just showed you about that they work iniquity. Speaking of Cain, 1 John 3 and verse number 12 says, Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother.

[27 : 54] And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Cain's works were evil.

It wasn't the will of the Father. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Now find John chapter 8, and I'll start reading in verse 35. Christ speaking, he says, The servant abideth not in the house forever, but the Son abideth ever.

I don't know if I wrote the right verse down. And I wrote this from a different Bible, so it's not on the page where I'm looking.

Where is this at? Where is this at? The will of the Father. Or is it earlier? If you need to believe I'm here.

You know what? It might be John 6. Yes, John 6. That's why.

[29 : 05] John 6.35. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

But I said unto you that ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. Pay attention to verse 40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.

And I will raise him up at the last day. God's will is not to see you do wonderful works in his name. God's will is for you to believe on his Son, to not prove to him what you're worth, to not show your devotion and dedication, but rather to take his Son by faith.

The alternative to Cain's religion, and to the good works, is the faith of Abel. It's trusting not just the innocent Lamb, but trusting the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

[30 : 40] The Lamb of God that was offered for your sins. So flip back to Hebrews again, and look at Hebrews chapter 10. This we read, actually this was last Wednesday with the communion, we read this passage in Hebrews chapter 10.

And look at verses 11 and 12. And every priest standeth daily, ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God. Why? Because it is finished. The sacrifices are done.

The priests are standing daily, offering and working and working. But Jesus Christ offered himself one time, and then sat down because it was over. So the alternative to Cain's religion is to exercise the faith of Abel, and trust the Lamb of God that was offered for your sins.

And by the way, it was accepted by God. That's a big part. Now, in addition to, I want to finish up a thought about the ground being cursed. Would you take your Bibles and go back to the book of Job?

[31 : 57] I want to read a couple verses in Job. Just to the left of the middle. If you see the Psalms, then just go back to one more to the left.

Job 14. Remember that Cain brought forth the best of the best out of a cursed ground, and it could not earn righteousness with God.

He had no respect to that. It was spectacular, but looks are deceiving. God wasn't interested in how it looked, and he still isn't. He was interested in the substance.

He was looking for blood. Job chapter 14 and verse 4. Question. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?

Answer. Not one. Not you. Not me. Not the Pope. Not the preacher. Not your mother.

[33 : 02] Or your grandmother. Not one. There is none righteous. No. Not one. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?

Can't be done. Look at chapter 15. In verse 14 and 15. What is man that he should be clean?

And he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous. Behold, he, God, putteth no trust in his saints. Yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

So what chance do we have? Verse 16 says, How much more abominable and filthy is man which drinketh iniquity like water? Hmm. This is the Bible showing you and I what we really are.

And if you could picture how much water we drink in a day or are supposed to drink and drink in a week and just consider this is what our sin is like. It's just, we're just filled with it. And how can we be clean if we were born of a woman who is not clean?

[34 : 13] Whose mother wasn't clean? And on and on it goes. Now look, flip over to chapter number 25. Job 25. In verse number 4.

How then can man be justified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold, even to the moon and it shineth not.

Yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man that is a worm than a son of man which is a worm. Comparing us to God, we don't have a chance.

Can't be clean. We can't bring forth our righteousness out of something that's unclean. It just doesn't have, it can't equate it. He can't put it together. Flip over to, skip the Psalms and find Proverbs 20.

We're going to come back through the Psalm in a minute. Proverbs 20. Couple more verses here. 20 in verse number 9.

[35 : 28] Question again. Who can say, I have made my heart clean. I am pure from my sin. Who can say that?

The implied answer is no one on the face of this planet can say that I have made myself pure. I'm clean. I'm pure from my sin. If you've got sin and you drink it like water and it's in your entire system, I think that's a great comment to consider being that if they say that like two-thirds or more of your body's made of water, maybe more, maybe 80%.

Like in the very, down to the very cellular level, you are, water are based on water. And that's how the Bible likens sin and this flesh is just, it's made of sin.

So who can say that I have made my heart clean? You can't. I am pure from my sin. You can't make something pure. Something unclean can't make itself clean.

All right, now come back to the Psalms and find 51. This is David's repentant Psalm before God after he had sinned.

[36 : 41] And when he was guilty and he acknowledged his guilt and he cried out for mercy, I want to show you some of the wording that he used here, showing you that cleansing something that is unclean is the work of God alone.

Man cannot cleanse his own soul. In Psalm 51, verse number 2, I'll start in verse 1, Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness, according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before thee.

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

[37 : 54] In verse 10, create in me a clean heart. Only God can do that. So David prays for God to do that. To give him a clean heart because he can't do it himself.

He prays for God to wash him in verse 2. To cleanse him in verse 2. To purge him and I shall be clean. Wash me.

But man can't do that on his own. Cain's religion can't do that. There needs to be blood. And in 1 John chapter 1 and verse 7, if you don't know that verse, write it down.

1 John 1, 7, the Bible says, the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us from all sin. So there's the significance.

There was the situation of Cain, Abel, offering one the shepherd, one the farmer, the two offerings. The Lord had respect to one. The Lord rejected the other. And he told the man to his face, if you'd have did the right thing, I would have accepted you.

[39 : 00] But you didn't do the right thing. You offered to be something from a ground that I cursed. And you can't bring something clean out of unclean. You're not righteous. Your works are evil. That's what the Bible says.

Then the significance of this is it's picturing New Testament salvation through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. How you and I can be clean. And it's also picturing all the religions of this world and all of their attempts to make themselves clean and to make it pretty and to do the best that they can do.

And it all falls short. Every single one because you can't bring something clean out of something unclean. Man needs to figure that out. And now finally, to finish this off, the summary.

When I introduced faith last week, I said that it was given by God. It was fuel. It was something energy-like to be acted upon. When God wants to teach us what faith should be used for in the New Testament, He starts with Abel.

He starts showing us that a blood sacrifice is necessary and that we're to exercise faith in the blood of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we're to understand that when Christ died for our sins, He was offering Himself to God on our behalf.

[40 : 27] And it's a verse I love. I'm just going to read it to you from Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 2 that says, Christ also hath loved us and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.

He gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God. What was that God accepted? His Son. He accepted the Lamb of God. He didn't turn that one down.

And if you'll get behind that sacrifice, you can have salvation. You can be clean. But if you try to offer God your best, you'll never make it. So, a life of faith begins by exercising faith in Christ for salvation.

Following that, following Abel, the faith of Abel, will learn and see that there are other things that faith will then produce in your life. Other ways that you can act on faith and exercise it.

And you can grow and you can learn to trust God and you can be a pleasure to God and do something for Him that you otherwise could never do or accomplish. You'll be able to believe His Word.

[41 : 41] You'll be able to obey it in faith. There's a song in this hymnal that we sing. It says, Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? And one of the verses says, Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour?

Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Another verse from that song says, Do you rest each moment in the crucified? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

I love the line. I love the thought. Are you resting in the Lord Jesus Christ alone like Abel was resting in that Lamb that He offered to God and backed up and said, There it is.

If He's not happy with that, I got nothing else. Or are you like Cain trying to put something up there that you think will work?

Surely He'll recognize how hard I'm working. Surely He'll recognize how bad I mean it and how much I want to do this. Resting in Jesus Christ is easy.

[42 : 43] You just stop trying to please God. You just stop trying to prove to Him that you're serious and that you mean business and you just give up. That's what salvation is today.

It's give up and take Jesus Christ. What else do you do? It's the simplest thing in the world. Believe on Jesus Christ. Take Him alone.

Let go of everything else. Exercise the faith of Abel because He obtained a good report. His brother? Evil.

Your works are evil. And He falls into that never knew you category. So this evening, I hope it's a blessing to you to hear that thought and hear it expounded upon again from that one verse in Hebrews 11.

The great point of this all overall is that when God wants to show you what your faith in the New Testament is supposed to be, it starts with that one. It starts with, if you'll exercise faith in a blood sacrifice of a lamb, the other stuff is going to come in verses 5 and 6 and 7 and 8 and 9.

[43 : 53] But you can't get around that one. It starts with Abel, the faith of Abel. And so I wonder tonight, is everybody here, has everybody here fallen under that category?

Have you approached God with that offering, a blood sacrifice, his son? If you haven't, you can have it tonight. If you have, it should thrill your heart just to hear and to realize and again, hear about how deceived the world is and yet how the blessedness of knowing salvation and assurance by faith in the blood of Christ.

So let's bow our heads tonight. We're going to dismiss, but I want to ask you before you go, would you bow your head and since this wasn't really pointed toward one thing, can we all say that we have exercised the faith of Abel here tonight?

Can you individually say that from your own heart before God? Say that I come to God not with my works and not with the fruit of my labor, but I'm coming to God hiding behind the blood of Jesus Christ.

Christ alone. None other but Christ. If he can't accept his son, he's definitely not going to accept me. I wonder if everybody here knows they're saved and knows what it feels like to have exercised faith in the Lord Jesus Christ because that's what God's calling you to do tonight.

[45 : 34] Lord, as we dismiss, thank you for this picture here and for this testimony of Abel. Thank you that we can apply it to us today and understand how vital it is for us today to exercise the faith of Abel.

I trust, Lord, that you'll use this to reveal to anybody here their condition if they're not saved, if they need to be saved, if they need to get saved. I pray you'll show them that they need it soon and to do it now.

For the rest of us that have believed on your Son, thank you for that liberty and thank you for that sacrifice and thank you for accepting it. We love you tonight and we don't want to add anything to your salvation so we just rejoice in it one more time and it's in the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen. Amen. Alright, we'll dismiss with that. God willing, I'll see you Sunday morning.