

# Crime Scene Investigation

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, as we look to the Lord to lead us and to guide us in our thoughts again this evening, turn back with me to our first reading in Genesis chapter 4.

Genesis chapter 4, and I would like us to take for a text this evening words which we find in verse 9. Genesis 4, verse 9. Then the Lord said to Cain, Where is Abel, your brother?

Where is Abel, your brother? I would like us this evening to come to a crime scene investigation.

I would like us to come in to this narrative and to stand where the greatest investigator of all time, the Lord God himself, reveals to us through his chosen author of the crime that takes place in this chapter, where the son of Adam and Eve kills his own brother, the first ever murder in the world.

[ 1 : 31 ] And I would like us, by way of introduction, to see at this crime scene that the crime really takes place or finds its seed in what occurs in the chapter that comes before this chapter.

I want us to see that everything that we understand of this crime and of the events that take place in Genesis chapter 4 really spring from what takes place in Genesis chapter 3.

What do I mean by that? Well, in Genesis chapter 3, we have the account of sin entering into the world. God told Adam and Eve that they could eat of anything in the garden, apart from the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden.

And Adam and Eve sinned against God, and they took the one thing that they were not supposed to take, and by sinning against God, then man would go on to sin not only against God, but against fellow man, which leads us to the events of Genesis 4.

But we don't really need that this evening to tell us that, because we know that from our own experience, do we not? that when we sin against God, we so often go on to sin against fellow men.

[ 3 : 06 ] If you are a Christian this evening, and I was to ask you, when is it that you're closest to your Christian brother and sister? I would imagine that you would tell me that it's the point when you are closest with your Lord.

You see, when we are close to the Lord, then we are close with our brothers and sisters in the Lord. And that was true for Adam.

When Adam was close to the Lord, you see, his relationship with his wife was a good one. But the moment that Adam sins against God, his relationship with his wife breaks down, and he turns on his wife and he says, you know, Lord, the reason I sinned is because you gave me this woman.

That woman who was before the perfect helper now becomes the reason for Adam's sin. And that happens with you and me on an individual basis when we are close with the Lord.

We are close with our brothers. But the moment that our sin against the Lord, for whatever reason it may be, begins to distance us from the Lord, then we are distant from our brothers and sisters.

[ 4 : 25 ] And they come to us and they want to ask us things, but we don't want to talk to them. Because we are far from the Lord, we don't want to get into these discussions. You know what it's like.

The point when you're furthest from the Lord, and someone comes to you and wants to ask you, why is it that you're far from the Lord? And you don't want to have that conversation. You want to remain far from your brother and your sister.

And it's true on an individual basis, and it's true on a congregational level too. And if we are to seek unity, true unity as a congregation this evening, surely it is by seeking true unity with the Lord.

It is by seeking on a personal and an individual basis that we are close with the Lord, that there isn't sin that prevents us from having a close relationship with the Lord.

If we are close with Him, then we will be close with one another. But you know what's so interesting is that the Lord who sees and knows all things is shown to us in that chapter too.

[ 5 : 39 ] Because He tells Adam that the day you eat of the fruit, you shall surely die. And you know, I wonder when there wasn't a dead body found in the Garden of Eden, did Adam wonder if God had gone back on His promise?

But you know, the only reason there isn't is because of God's grace. God spares man from that moment. But in the very next chapter, we find at our crime scene, a dead body. Because man has risen up against fellow man and killed him. And as God said, the day that you eat of the fruit, not only you, but mankind will surely die. And so the day that sin came into the world, death came into the world, and man would die because man sinned.

And this evening, I want us to come and to stand at this crime scene and to see as God, as the great investigator who knows the heart of Cain, just as He knows the heart of you and me this evening, as He comes to Cain and He questions Cain and He unravels for us how this crime scene came to be a crime scene.

[ 7 : 07 ] And I want us to see that this evening. I want us to see four things. I want us to see that the reason that this crime took place was perhaps because Cain ignored a model that was given to him.

I then want us to see the motive behind Cain's actions in rising up against his brother. I then want us to look at the murder itself as God, through His chosen author, tells us about it.

And then finally, I want us to see that this dead body in this crime scene is a memorial to us. These four things then, the model, the motive, the murder, and finally, the memorial.

Firstly then, I want us to see that the reason that we have this narrative in Genesis 4 is because Cain ignored a model that I believe was given to him.

The reason I think that is because of an interesting note at the very beginning of this chapter in verse 3. Where we are told that in the course of time, Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock.

[ 8 : 24 ] Now, the question that immediately springs to mind is, why did the boys bring a sacrifice? Why did the boys bring anything to the Lord?

We don't read in these chapters leading up to this that God had taught them to bring sacrifices like this. This isn't what we have in the book of Leviticus and teaching us all about the way that sacrifices are to be done.

But yet, these boys, they bring sacrifices to the Lord and they offer them before him. And the first thing I want to bring out of that is that I believe that that's in the heart of all men.

You see, there was something in them that wanted to give a sacrifice to the Lord. There was something in their soul that needed the Lord. Their soul needed the Lord.

And that's in each and every one of us. We don't need to be told that. I'm sure there are people in this world and they do not have the Bible perhaps even in their own language and they've never been blessed by being told the things that we've been told in growing up here.

[ 9 : 37 ] And yet, even in them, there is the desire to reach out to a God to whom even they don't even know. Is that not what Paul said when he came to Athens as he finds a sacrifice to the unknown God?

There is within the heart of man a desire for God, a desire for that greater being. And I ask you this evening, if you're not a Christian here tonight, why is it that you're here?

Oh, don't get me wrong, I wouldn't have you been anywhere else. It's a great place to be, but why are you here? If you are not following the Lord, then why do you find yourself here unless it's that there's something within you that wants to reach out to this God?

You might not be at the stage of wanting to follow him. You might not be at the stage of being able to give up everything for him, but there's something in you that wants God.

And I believe that's where we find Cain and Abel in this chapter, but I think there's more than that. I think they have more. And the reason I think that is because of what we learn in Genesis 3.

[ 10 : 53 ] You see, in Genesis 3 and verse 7, when the eyes of both Adam and Eve were opened, after they sinned, they both realized they were naked. They realized that they were guilty.

And so, they clothed themselves with fig leaves. Now, that is so natural to mankind. Adam and Eve realized that they had sinned.

They realized in their nakedness that they were guilty. If they were not guilty, they would not have realized that they were naked. And in their shame, and in their guilt, they wanted to cover it.

They wanted to cover their guilt. Don't tell me that that's not a natural instinct for mankind, to cover our guilt. And so, Adam and Eve take of these fig leaves and they cover themselves.

And that's interesting in and of itself. But what's more interesting is that God in the same chapter, in verse 21, comes to them. And he makes for Adam and for his wife, garments of skins and clothes.

[12:00] Now, why did he do that? They were already clothed. They didn't need clothes in that respect. They already had them. Unless the reason that God was doing this was to cover their guilt.

You see, I believe that this is the very first sermon ever preached in that God gave to Adam and Eve skins to cover them.

what was he teaching them? He was teaching them by his gift of a covering that their covering for sin would never be enough. You see, they tried to cover themselves with what they could get themselves, their own means and their own methods.

But what God is teaching them and what God is showing them by giving them these skins is that what they could do for themselves would never be enough.

And so in order to find a covering for guilt it would have to be on God's terms. But the second thing I think it highlights is that an animal was killed.

[13:13] Now, you might believe that in the gift of skins for them to wear that nothing is impossible for the Lord, so perhaps the Lord just gave them skins.

but it seems to suggest anyway, on a normal reading of it, that there must have been an animal sacrificed in order for Adam and Eve to receive these skins, these skins of flesh.

And so the second thing that God is showing to them in that is that in the covering for guilt that they have to have, it has to be first of all on God's terms.

But secondly, there has to be a substitute. You see, Adam and Eve took off the ground of creation to cover themselves. And God comes to them and he says, first of all, you're wrong because you try to cover yourself and you must realize that in order to cover your guilt and your sin, it must be on my terms.

But secondly, there must be a substitute for sin. And you know, that same sermon is as true today as it ever was.

[14:27] You see, I said it's human nature to cover our guilt. And I'm sure that there's not one of us this night who would confess that we're not a sinner.

We all acknowledge that we are sinners and that we sin daily. And so I'm asking you tonight, how is it that you're covering yourself? How is it that you're trying to cover over your guilt, to do away with your guilt?

You see, either you're trying to do away with it by your own man-made attempt, by grabbing whatever you can get and doing your own effort, or you cover over your guilt by going to the Lord and seeing what he has done, coming to him by faith, and trusting in what he has done, and in the substitute that he has provided.

You see, my friend, if sins are to be covered, it is not by man-made effort. It is by a donation from the Lord.

If sins are to be covered, it is not by what man can do for man. It is by what God has done for man, in giving over his son as the only substitute for sin.

[15:57] And you come and you rest your all upon him. I tell you, that's faith, and that's the way in which our sin and our guilt is dealt with.

And you know, I don't even believe it's speculation to suggest that this would have been passed on to Cain and to Abel. You see, if they were in the way of sacrifices, if they were in the way of coming before the Lord, then is it not a natural parental instinct to teach your children how to do something? And so Adam and Eve, in showing Cain and Abel how to come before the Lord, they would have taught them these two things. You have to come to the Lord by what the Lord has prescribed in faith.

And you also have to come to the Lord with a substitute. That is the model that they were given. But secondly, I want us to see, as we return to this crime scene, I want us to see the motive for Cain's actions.

And we read in chapter 4, and at the second part of verse 4, we read that the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.

[17:19] So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. You see, Cain came before the Lord with the fruit of the ground with his own means, and Abel came before the Lord with the firstborn of the flock.

Abel's sacrifice was accepted, but Cain's was rejected, and the question is always the same. Why was Abel accepted, and why was Cain rejected?

And the answer is always given because Abel came in faith. That's true, but I think that that's only part of it. And I believe that Genesis and Hebrews both tells us that there's two parts to the fact that Abel's sacrifice was accepted.

You see, we read in verse 4 that the Lord had regard for Abel, so Abel came in faith. That is true.

He came acknowledging that the Lord was the one who had to provide, and he came acknowledging that it was by his faith that he was trusting in the Lord.

But it goes on, and he says he had regard for Abel and his offering. And in Hebrews, in verse 4, we read that, by faith, Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.

[ 18 : 40 ] You see, there's these two things. There's the fact that Abel came in faith, and the fact that he brought an acceptable sacrifice. He acknowledged that in order to be right with God, he had to come on God's terms, trusting and relying and resting upon God by faith, but also coming by means of a substitute.

That's why he didn't just bring the fat portions. He brought the firstborn of his flock. He brought the substitute that would stand in his place, and the Lord had regard for Abel because he came in faith, and he had regard for Abel because he came by way of a substitute.

Cain, on the other hand, he clearly didn't come in faith. He clearly didn't come with this acceptable sacrifice. He came by way of his merits.

May I ask you again this night, how is it that you're coming before the Lord with your own merits, boasting of what you can bring, or are you coming and trusting your all by faith upon God, and on the means that he has provided.

And we see that Cain's face falls and he becomes angry, and you know people come in here and they say, it's not fair. Cain was dealt with harshly.

[ 20 : 18 ] But what's interesting is that the Lord answers that, and he says in verse 7 to Cain, if you do well, will you not be accepted.

Cain, if you come in the right way, you would be accepted too. If you had followed the model that was given to you, perhaps by your parents, you would be accepted too.

If you come by the means that I have given you, you will be accepted too. And you know this evening, there is no one who can come with the excuse that God isn't fair.

You see tonight, there is not one of us who does not know the way that they should come. There is not one of us who could say, I did not know how to get to God.

And so on the day of judgment, you cannot stand before the Lord and say, I did not know. Because God will say to you, if you did well, would you not have been accepted?

[ 21 : 22 ] accepted. If you came by the way that I have shown you, the way that you had known, the way that you were taught, would you not have been accepted to?

And he says to Cain, you see Cain, if you would only just come, you would be accepted to. Oh, my friend, if you would only just come to the means that God has provided in his only son, you would be accepted to.

There is no other way. It is only in him. But you know, he gives to Cain a warning. And the warning is what leads us to the third point.

We've seen the model, the motive. Thirdly, I want us to see the murder. Because the warning that God gives to Cain in verse 7 is if you do not do well, sin is crouching at your door.

Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it. You see what God teaches Cain is that if you do not come the way that I have prescribed for you, if you do not come by this way and you turn in your anger and your face falls and you give yourself to sin, then sin will overtake you.

[ 22 : 56 ] He gives the metaphor of sin being like an animal, crouching at the door like a lion, ready to pounce. And what a difference we see here in the attacks of the devil from Genesis 3 and Genesis 4.

In Genesis 3, the devil is like the serpent. he's crafty, he's cunning, and sometimes he can come to us like that and he can say to you, you don't really have to listen to God's word.

You can go to this place, you can go to that place, you can do these things, God doesn't really mind and he can come in and he can seek to trick you with his crafty tactics and me with you.

Or he can come like the lion, as Peter says in 1 Peter 5 verse 8, be sober minded, be watchful, Peter guards, because he says, your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking

whom he may devour.

You see, the devil can be like the serpent at one point, and like a lion at another point, waiting for his chance, and here in Cain he finds his chance, because Cain does not come in the way that the Lord had provided, and he gets angry, and he gets jealous at his brother, and God warns him, and he says, you see the devil, he's prowling at your door, he's crouching at your door, and be warned, Cain, because the devil, he could get you, and he could overcome you, and then Cain goes out into the field, and with his anger, with his face fallen, and his jealousy for his brother, and it all becomes too much, and he rises up over his brother, and he kills him, all because sin got the better of him, and you know, my friend, this evening, it can be just the same for you and for me, because sin is waiting at our door too, and I don't know how many times you've come to this church on a [ 25 : 13 ] Sunday evening, and you've heard God's word, and if you're not a Christian still, then you've turned away, and God says to you, you know if you do well, you would be accepted, but sin is at your door, and there's nothing more true than the fact that every time you ignore this message, your heart becomes all the more hard to it, every time you turn away, it becomes easier to turn away, until the day when, and I hope that day never comes, that sin devours you, and you say, I don't want it, oh my friend, I plead with you to see the warning, because in Cain, it overcame him, and he rose up over his brother, and he killed him, because the devil found his way in, is the devil trying to find his way in with you tonight, is he saying to you, don't listen, you don't need that, you can carry on with life, how many times have you heard that, how many times have you heard that the way to

God is coming through the substitute that he has given, and yet your face has fallen, and you're angry, and you're jealous, then my friend, I beg with you, I plead with you tonight, come by faith, and trust in the sacrifice that God has provided, and if you do that, you will be accepted.

Cain rose up and killed his brother, his brother, and committed murder. We've seen the model that he ignored, the motive behind it, the action of murder itself, finally, I want us to see the memorial. Genesis 4, verse 10, the Lord said, this great investigator at this crime scene, the Lord said, what have you done?

The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. You see, Abel is a memorial to God, first and foremost. God says, your brother's blood on the ground is crying to me, and it reminds me, what does it remind him?

[ 27 : 53 ] That sin has to be punished. You know, this evening I feel so sad for those who think that God has vacated his throne.

For those who look at this world and they say, God is no longer in control. He allows evil to reign, and he will never again bring vengeance to bear.

Oh, my friend, may we never think like that, because this is the God who hears the crying of innocent blood, and this is the God who must bring vengeance to bear.

Vengeance is mine, says the Lord. I will repay, and the day will come when he will deal with evil and the evil one for what they have done.

May we never think otherwise. God hears the crying of the blood. He tells Cain, your brother's blood is like a memorial to me, and I will not ignore it.

[ 29 : 02 ] The wages of sin is death, and God is never late in paying his wages. God will one day deliver to evil exactly what evil deserves, because Abel is a memorial to him.

But Mabel is also a memorial to Cain. Maybe you've never thought of this, but for the rest of Cain's life, I don't believe he would ever be able to get away from the image of his brother dead on the ground before him.

Wherever he went, and whatever he did, it would stick with him. Sin has that effect. You know what that's like, just like I do.

We do something that we know is wrong, and we can't get away from it. We try to run, we might try to hide, but it always sticks to us.

And you know, if death finds us that way, without a substitute standing in our breach, then sin and its payment and its punishment will stick with us for an endless eternity.

[ 30 : 24 ] If you don't believe me, you turn to the account of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke's gospel. Rich man ends up in hell, and for an endless eternity longs for the touch and for a drip of water from the touch of a finger.

That's where being lost in sin ends you. And this evening I take no pleasure in talking about it.

It fills me with fear, because it's not a place of endless joy and endless parting as some would have us believe. hell is the loneliest place, and it's full of those who are stuck with the consequences of sin forever.

Oh, my friend, again I plead with you, would you not avoid that? Would you not come and lean your all upon the one who takes upon himself your sin and the punishment of it, and allows you to go free, because otherwise otherwise the day could come when your sin and the punishment of it will stick with you for an endless eternity.

Abel is a memorial to God, he's a memorial to Cain, but he's also a memorial to you and to me. Hebrews 12 verse 24 says this, to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

[ 32 : 16 ] There are many similarities between Abel and Jesus. Abel was a son of Adam. Jesus was the son of Adam.

Abel was a shepherd. Jesus is the good shepherd. Abel's blood spoke of God's vengeance. The blood of Jesus speaks of God's pardon. You see, Abel's blood points us to another crime scene, to the place where Abel's future brother would stand and go to Calvary's cross, death. And there he would be killed by his own brothers, just as Abel was. But there his blood that flows is the blood and the means by which you and I can find and know forgiveness for our sins. Ephesians 1 verse 7, in him that is Jesus. We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace.

[ 33 : 36 ] So as we come to Genesis 4 one final time, and to this crime scene, as it has been unraveled for us by the greatest investigator of all time, I want us to see as we take one final look that it points us beyond Genesis to Calvary's cross, to the blood of the innocent one who stood in the place of guilty ones, the one who is the only way to God.

My friend, this evening, as we have been studying this crime scene, the model that Cain ignored, the motive that arose within him, the action of murder that he committed, and the memorial that his brother is, that's where I want us to finish.

That's where I always want us to finish, at the cross of Calvary, looking at the one who paid the debt that he never owed because we owed a debt that we could never pay.

Oh, my friend, I hope we all know the sinless Savior as our own friend, as our own redeemer, and as our own substitute.

May God grant it so. Let's pray. our gracious God, we give you thanks for your word, which teaches us, which directs us, and leads us invariably to the cross of Calvary.

[ 35 : 33 ] We pray, O Lord God, that you by your spirit would lead each and every one of us there, and that you by your grace would allow each and every one of us to close in with you by faith, and that you by your goodness, your love, and your mercy, would keep us every single day that we live in this world still trusting in the same Jesus, and that you would give to us the hope of that faith that longs for the day when we will be with him for all eternity.

Fill us with that faith, fill us with that hope, fill us with that love, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Our final singing this evening comes from the Scottish Psalter and Psalm 30.

Scottish Psalter, Psalm 30, you'll find that on page 240. We're going to sing from verse 8 to the end of the Psalm.

These words speak of the difference that is found in the life of the one who comes to know the Lord. Verse 8, Wherefore unto the Lord my cry I cause to ascend, my humble supplication I to the Lord did send.

What profit is there in my blood when I go down to pit? Shall unto thee the dusk give praise? My truth declare shall it? Hear, Lord, have mercy.

[ 37 : 30 ] Help me, Lord, thou turned hast my sadness to dancing. Yea, my sack lot loosed and girded me with gladness. That sing thy praise, my glory may and never silent be.

O Lord, my God, for evermore I will give thanks to thee. We'll sing these verses to the tune of St. Minver, standing to sing to the praise. Arthur Kramp Mary He is from my to the Lord this end.

What prophet is there in my God when I hold up to it shall come to thee the justly praise thy truth in heaven shall live.

Dear Lord, have mercy held me, Lord, the turn of my sadness to thou sing it my son, the who unguarded me with goodness.

[ 39 : 40 ] But sing my praise my glory day thou never silent me O Lord my God forevermore I will give hands to thee We'll close in prayer.

Our gracious God, give us to ever be singing praise to you for the wonders that you have done for us. Take us to our homes in safety and to your name be the glory now and forever.

Amen. Amen. Amen.