

Faith: Dead man speaking

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1)

At some point in our lives we choose to believe, (or not to believe). When we come to that point the scripture tells us to continue to and walk in that faith.

“Faith is that which keeps us looking with confidence beyond what we can see with our natural senses, knowing that we will not be disappointed”

- **Faith looks beyond oneself to God as its object.**
- **Faith believes God.**

“...for he who comes to God must believe that He is...”
(Hebrews 11:6)

There will be times in our lives when all we have is God’s promise from his word.

Dr. Tony Campolo did some research asking people (95 years or older); if you could live your life over what would you do different? These were the top three:

- Reflect more (Pause cherish, thoughtful, taken time to appreciate things around me)
- Risk more (Why didn’t I step out and take a chance)
- Do more things that would live on after I was gone

We’re going to look at faith that speaks long after we’re gone.

“By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.”
(Hebrews 11:4)

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“Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, “With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.” 2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. 4 And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

6 Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. 9 Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” “I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

*10 The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. 11 Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. 12 When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.” **(Genesis 4:1-10)***

These are not just ancient history stories, but they are about us. We tend to identify with the more positive characters in the bible. But we can learn a lot from seeing the “Cain” in our lives.

At first glance this doesn’t seem fair, it appears God is showing favoritism. As we read we realize that our view on “worship” may not be exactly correct. Able shows us that bringing a sacrifice that is our expression of his provision and who God is an acceptable sacrifice.

1. Worship is based on God’s Revelation: *Your worship of God will equal your view of God.*

- **The bigness of God**

*“By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.” **(Hebrews 11:3)***

- **The goodness of God**

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“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6)

2. Worship is approaching God through His Provision

“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.” (1 John 3:12)

Possibly Cain’s sacrifice was rejected, because he offered what was made with his own hands. As opposed to a sacrifice made from a heart that sacrificed through God’s provision, actions that were called righteous, in contrast to Cain’s that was evil.

“To the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:23-24)

Abel’s blood cried out to God, it cried out for vengeance, for revenge. Even though people want to think we’ve evolved through the centuries in the last 100 years millions have ben killed. This includes wars, the unborn, people killed unjustly on our streets, etc. Their blood still cries out to God.

But in sharp contrast the blood Jesus spilled on the cross will speak on our behalf. His blood purchased us and even cleansed our conscience.

“Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”²⁸ Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” (John 6:27-29)

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8)

“The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.” (Genesis 4:10)

“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,²¹ and having a High Priest over the things of God,²² let us draw near with a true heart, with full assurance of faith, with thanksgiving, and with reverence, and with awe, holding fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promises will also fulfill it.” (Hebrews 10:19-23)

blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and having a High Priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Hebrews 10:19-21)

3. Worship is Offering God the First and Best

- **From the Heart**

“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.” (Matthew 15:8)

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.” (Romans 12:1)

- **From the “Herd”**

"Bring an offering and come before him; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness." (1 Chronicles 16:29)

Throughout Scripture, there are four principles about giving that did not change from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

- **Everyone should give as they are able**
- **God should get our first and best**
- **Giving should be worship**
- **God blesses generous people**

Bring your best; anything done in faith will speak long after you are gone!

Discussion Questions

- 1) On page one of our notes we talked about the importance of not only coming to a place of faith but also continuing to walk in that

- 1) On page one of our notes we talked about the importance of not only coming to a place of faith but also continuing to walk in that faith. Please discuss this quote: “Faith is that which keeps us looking with confidence beyond what we can see with our natural senses, knowing that we will not be disappointed”
- 2) Also on page one take another look at Tony Campolo’s research of those 95 years of age or older. When he asked them if they could live their lives again what would they do different. Do you identify with any of the top three answers? In relation to our study please discuss answer #3: “Do more things that would live on after I was gone”
- 3) On page 3 of our notes we learn that our worship is based on God’s revelation. Discuss that “*Your worship of God will equal your view of God*”, specifically the bigness and goodness of God.
- 4) As you look at the scriptures and your notes beginning on page 3, what does this statement mean to you; “*worship is approaching God through His Provision*”? What is the difference (to you) between worshipping and approaching God through his provision as opposed to worshipping him based on what you have done with your own hands?
- 5) Referring back to your notes on pages 3 and 4, contrast the innocent blood that cries out to God for vengeance and revenge and the blood of Jesus that was spilled at the cross that will speak out on our behalf.
- 6) The third point in our teaching is, “*Worship is Offering God the First and Best*”. Our worship is meant to be from the heart and our first and best. If you could explain this to a person in our time what would it sound like?
- 7) Lastly we see that there is four principles about *giving* that did not change from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Look again at them on page 5 of your notes, which one sticks out for you and why?