

## Part II of XI

This is the first story of great faith toward God after the great failure of Adam and Eve to trust God.

This first example in all of Scripture of an authentic **life of faith** has to do with **how we worship** God

- Worship is the most important thing—the Glory of God
- Not “how” in the sense of form or style or liturgy
- But “how” as an **issue of the heart** and a matter of **faith**—trust
  - If worship and the glory of God are the most important things, then we should always seek to bring our best before God—takes **faith**

H e b r e w s 1 1 : 6

Everything has to be **by faith** to please God

- Faith = trust
- We make faith/trust decisions everyday
  - Finances
  - Sexuality
  - Recreation
  - Business
  - Relationships
  - Heart
    - We can only please God in these areas if we make decisions **by faith** (ones that express **trust** in God)
    - If we're not, then we are not pleasing God in that area

H e b r e w s 1 1 : 4

- **Able offered to God a better sacrifice**
  - This is to be understood as an act of adoration—a work of worship
  - There was no levitical law yet
  - This was not a mere sin offering—it was not something prescribed
  - It was unsolicited **authentic worship**
  - Sacrifice = **an act of giving up something valued for the sake of something else regarded as more important or worthy**

- We are told that **Abel** offered a **better (more) sacrifice** than **Cain** (KJV/NKJ + excellent; ESV/NLT + acceptable)
- Based on **the gift** he brought to the Lord—the sacrifice
  - God's assessment of Abel was that he was **righteous**
    - Cf. **Matthew 23:35**
  - It was not **the gift/sacrifice** itself, but the **heart** behind it
- Why was Abel's sacrifice (1) **better** and (2) **by faith**?
- What is the **faith story** here that we can imitate?

## G e n e s i s   4 : 1 - 8

**3** When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the Lord.

**4** Abel also brought a gift—the best of the firstborn lambs from his flock. (NLT)

- Abel brought of the **firstlings** of his flock (v. 4)
  - Def: *The first agricultural produce or animal offspring of a season*
    - **Notice** it does not say that Cain brought from the **firstlings** or **firstfruits** of his agriculture (simply **of the fruit**)
- The **firstling** or **firstfruits** are what God's people have been encouraged to bring to him throughout Scripture—requires **faith** | **trust**:

### 1. Giving God priority

- a. The “first thing” says a lot about your heart
- b. It is simply a matter of priority

### 2. Trusting God for the rest (because of the unknowns)

- a. Bad weather could destroy rest of crop or wolves the flock
- b. Recession could affect your paycheck

### 3. Against human nature

- a. self-preservationist (me first)
- b. safe as opposed to trusting (you give later)
- c. greedy (you never give)

Proverbs 3:9-10

- 9** Honor the LORD from your wealth  
And **from the first of all your produce**;

**10** So your barns will be filled with plenty  
And your vats will overflow with new wine.

- Notice the accompanying, conditional promise
- Cf. **Hebrews 11:6<sup>b</sup>**

: Giving to God of our firstfruits and worship

We understand why this is a matter of **faith**

1. It is giving God priority
2. It is trusting God for the rest (of what we need)
3. It is contrary to fallen human nature

**What does this look like practically?**

- Lets take a simple example: **Tithes and offerings**
  - They are meant to be an act of worship
  - **Firstling** = the first check you write each month
- Another simple example: **Time**
  - Time with God and for God = worship
- These 2 things are tell-tale
  - You can really discern a person's heart and passions and priorities from
    1. **The way they spend their money**
    2. **The way they spend their time**

Lets allow Jesus to speak into this idea of **giving to God by faith as worship**

M a r k 1 2 : 4 1 - 4 4

Notice (v. 41) that Jesus was **observing how** they where giving money

- Again, not “how” in the sense of **debit or cash**, but “how” as in their **heart**
- **It was easy to do:** What they gave revealed what was in their hearts

**This poor widow put in more** (v. 43)

- **More** = the exact same Greek adjective as in Hebrews 11:4 (more sacrifice) **πλείων**
- The widows sacrifice was **more** than all the others—the **more sacrifice**—why?
  - Her gift required **faith!** (Hebrews 11:6)
    - It was all she had to live on for that day!

- The others gave **out of their surplus** (v. 44)
  - **Giving our best or our leftovers—in worship**

The widow's offering was less in earthly value but of more value before God

- Because it required **faith**—trust!
- Therefore it was **authentic worship** and not mere religion

**Are we making faith decisions (trusting God) with our finances?**

**Are our worshipping with and in our finances? (big part of our lives)**

There is potent and heinous sub-plot that emerges immediately

- Cain killed Abel because Abel gave a **more sacrifice**
- Opposition that comes against the **life of faith** in worship
- From those who do not want to fully give their hearts **to God in faith**
- We see this heinous thread running throughout Scripture (From Gen 4 to Mark 14)

M a r k 1 4 : 3 - 9

Just a couple comments

1. This act was lavish, enthusiastic, and sacrificial and it clearly **pleased the Lord** (v. 9)
  - a. It was **by faith**
  - b. A sacrifice—an act of giving up something valued for the sake of something else regarded as more important or worthy
2. There was immediate **opposition** (the subplot)
  - a. Who did it come from? Judas!
  - b. **Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.** (John 12:6)
  - c. Cf. Mark 14:10-11
  - d. Cf. Cain
3. The dichotomy between being **self-serving** (Judas) or **self-sacrificing** (Mary)
  - a. Again, the act of faith:
    - i. Gives God the priority

- ii. Trusts God with the associated costs
- iii. Is contrary to human nature

Cain vs. Abel

## R o m a n s 1 2 : 1

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies** a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

Yesterday morning I was studying in couch for this sermon and Daisy Love woke up and came out and sat on my lap and snuggled me. She asked me what I was doing and I told her I as studying to teach today. She asked me what I was teaching and I told her I was talking about faith and giving good things to God. She said: "Like yourself daddy. Because the only thing that God wants is you. That is what we give to God. Not money, not things, just you. That is what you give to God."

By faith we give our whole lives to God as worship—a living sacrifice

- o **Have you ever really done that?**
- o **IS Jesus LORD of your life**

What does that look like?

1. Giving God priority
2. Trusting God for what we need next
3. Living contrary to human nature
  - o **The problem with a living sacrifice...**

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Self-serving vs. self-sacrificial

Allow me to speculate:

- Perhaps Cain and Abel had a discussion

Cain said, "Hey lets worship the Lord by taking Him sacrifices!"

"What should we give Him?" asked Abel.

"Well I have the crop I have been cultivating," said Cain.

"And I have the flock I've been caring for," realized Abel. "Some of my animals are just giving birth for the first time ever! I am going to take one of my very first ones to the Lord!" he exclaimed.

"Well, Abel are you sure you want to give the first one? I mean you may need that. What if your next animal miscarries or some of the young ones die or a predator gets some of the flock? That could really cost you if you gave the first one to the Lord. Keep the first one to make sure your flock will continue and when you have more, you can give that one to the Lord," explained Cain. "I am going to keep the firstfruits for myself, just to be safe," he continued, "and give some of what is left to the Lord. He'll be stoked... He's God... what does He care?"

Well, everything we see in Scripture indicates that He does care. (Heb 11:6)

Because he is after our hearts

- And they were made to worship (that can be perverted and made selfish)

God is to have priority in our life... that requires faith—trust... surrender.