

## B. Distancing

- i. Not all people are equally as far from God as others.
  
- ii. We may never run to the end of God's grace in this world, but we will run past many a crossroads at which we have a choice and once passed there is no turning back the consequences.

Cornelius Plantinga Jr.: *Not surprisingly, the ancient fault line [of envy] runs through all of us. For we are people... who must struggle to rejoice "at someone else's good fortune, or even someone else's good joke," people in whom innocent Abel and guilty Cain are still fighting for supremacy.*

- C. God is offering you grace. Abel's blood cries from the ground... guilty; but Jesus blood speaks better things than the blood of Abel.

### LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- Does envy fit the description of what drives Cain's anger in Genesis 4? Explain.
- Was Abel at fault in this scene at all? Is there anything he could have done to make things better? (Explain from the text.)
- How is 1 Corinthians 10:13 demonstrated in this story? How does Cain respond? What does this speak to us?
- Are there areas in your life in which the Lord been giving you opportunities to repent and you haven't?
- Discuss the Allen Ross quote on page one. Are there conflicts in your life that may result from envy?

## Genesis: Truth for Understanding Our World (8)

Jerry Cisar — November 8, 2015

Text: Genesis 4

### Introduction: Moving Farther East

#### A. The Original Crime

- i. Jude 1:11 The way of Cain
  
- ii. 1 John 3:12 His deeds were evil.

#### B. What is it that motivates Cain?

Plantinga calls envy, "*an ugly sin and a motive for ugly sins.*"

Walton: "*In this second narrative of sin, we see the tragic descent from Adam and Eve's sin. Eve was envious of God ( 3 :4-6), Cain was envious of Abel.*"

Allen Ross: "*One brother apparently pleased God and found acceptance; but the other brother, thinking himself to be just as acceptable, was filled with envy and rage. The issue is how one reacts to seeing oneself passed over and another blessed. If we are self-righteous, we will react as Cain did.*"

### I. The Downward Spiral of Cain's Sin (4:1-7)

#### A. The Setting (4:1-2)

#### B. The Offerings (3-4a)

### C. The First Sign of a Problem (4b-5)

- i. Both appear to be worshipers, but God accepts one and not the other. Why?
  - a) Isaiah 29:13
  - b) Hebrews 11:4 Cain's offering was not by faith
- ii. Cain was filled with a burning rage.

### D. The Solution (6-7)

- i. *“Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?”*
- ii. Then the Lord points Cain to the way out of his anger.
  - a) He explains that sin is like a wild animal or a demonic force crouching and ready to spring on him, but he must now overcome it. It isn't too late.

*“Master, I am in great distress! The spirits that I conjured up I cannot now get rid of.” (The Sorcerer's Apprentice, Goethe)*

- b) This intervention by God is grace.
  - 1 Corinthians 10:13

Miroslav Volf: *To commit sin is not simply to make a wrong choice but to succumb to an evil power.*

## II. Cain's Rejection of God's Grace (8)

- A. Cain rejected God's offer of grace – the way out – and embraced his envy of Abel fully.
- B. The causes vary, but as far as envy is concerned, the problem is the other person.
- C. This chapter is not only about envy, it is about any sin for which we resist God's gracious offer of repentance, we deny responsibility and point the finger to others.

## III. The Effects of Rejecting God's Grace (9-16)

- A. Denial
  - i. Sin is unwilling to accept responsibility.
  - ii. Cain's response is a denial, not only of his sin, but of the very purpose for which he was created.
    - a) Sin dehumanizes us in the sense that it moves us further and further away from the very purpose for which we were created.
    - b) To be conformed to the image of Jesus is the be restored to the image and glory of God in which we were made. *Christ in us, the hope of glory!*