

BE VULNERABLE

How would you summarize Pastor Brandon's message in one or two sentences?

In what ways has God's grace exposed the Cain inside of you?
(i.e., unrighteousness, bitterness, enviousness, anger, disobedience, hatred, etc.)

PRAYER REQUESTS

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TIPS ON TOPICAL PRAYER

Prayer is an important part of being in a Life Group. We believe that prayer goes better when we follow three simple guidelines.

1. We pray for one topic at a time.

Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request either before prayer begins or during the prayer time. Once a topic is introduced, the group focuses on that request alone. Once it is covered, the group moves on to the next topic.

2. Pray more than once.

Because the group is focusing on one topic at a time, each person is encouraged to pray several times during the prayer time for those topics they feel most led to pray about. No one is required to pray.

3. We keep prayer short and simple.

Group prayer goes better when members keep their prayers short and to the point. When someone prays for a long time, it is hard for the other members to stay focused and long prayers tend to intimidate those who are just learning to pray out loud in a group. No one is required to pray out loud.

CREATION TO CHAOS

A SERIES ON GENESIS 1-11

Pastor Brandon Babcock, Ph.D.
February 11, 2024
Creation to Chaos: Part 4
springfieldfaithcenter.org/sermons

SCANDAL EAST OF EDEN

Genesis 4

The Story of Cain and God:

Genesis 4:3-16, Leviticus 2, 1 Samuel 2:17, Proverbs 21:27, Hebrews 11:4, 1 John 3:11-15

- The rejected offering has more to do with the attitude of the heart than the gift offered.
- Sin is a destructive beast that desires to ambush.
- The "mark" is a symbol of guilt and grace.

Making Sense of our Story:

Matthew 5:21-26, Romans 7:15-25, Ephesians 2:1-5

1. Life is perpetually tainted when we are unwilling to deal rightly with the Cain-like bent within us.
2. We cannot carry the weight of our sin; it will kill us.
3. God does not give up on sinners.

LIFE GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

For the week of February 11, 2024

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

BE FRIENDLY

Where are you in the birth order of your family—oldest, youngest, somewhere in the middle? What are the best and worst parts of your order in the family?

If you're an only child, would you prefer an older or younger sibling? Why?

Who are some of your favorite celebrity/sports siblings?

BE OPEN

#1 Genesis 4 is another sad story of human failure. This story is about the fractured relationship between Cain and God, but it also shows the scandal of harboring enough anger that would lead someone to murder his or her sibling. Jesus talks at length about the dangers of harboring anger toward a brother or sister. We could take his words both literally and spiritually. Either way, his teaching echoes much of what is going on in Genesis 4 and has profound implications for making sense of our stories today. Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

Matthew 5:21–26, NIV

²¹ "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

²³ "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

²⁵ "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Why do you think Jesus draws a comparison between anger and murder? Asked differently, why do you think Jesus increases the intensity of the OT law "you shall not murder" to include storing up anger?

What is easier—to continue harboring anger against a brother or sister, or to go to the person to be reconciled with them? Why is that the case?

#2 God's grace is on full display in Genesis 4: God still offers his protection to Cain even though "Cain went out from the presence of God" (Genesis 4:16). God has not lost interest in the murderer, nor has he given up on him. The same is true for us. God doesn't give up on us in our failure; he pursues us with his grace. Read the following passages and note God's amazing grace for unworthy sinners.

Romans 5:6-8, NIV

⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Ephesians 2:1-5, NIV

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

How do these verses give you a better understanding of how God's grace is given, exemplified, or shown to you?