

Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 6th February 2022 10 am

Welcome to all

Opening Scripture

Hymn MP 481 name of all majesty

Scripture Psalm 95 (page 602)

Prayer

Children's talk Two sons, Yes I will.

Chorus MP 245 How good is the God we adore

Notices HG at Chapel, Tim & Issy +2

Communion read from Sacred songs and solos no. 281

Reading Genesis 4 (p.6)

Hymn MP 619 Such love

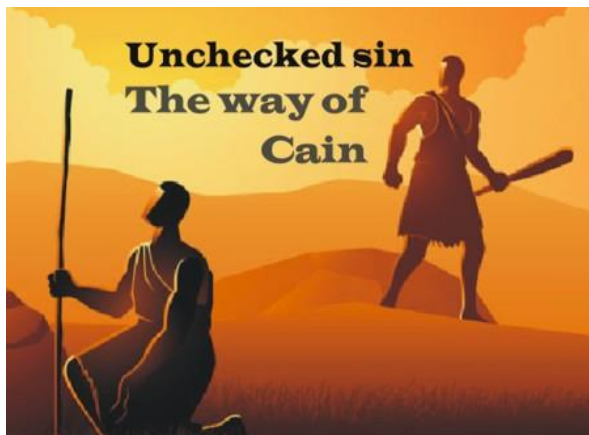
Sermon Unchecked sin - The way of Cain

Hymn MP 765 Who can cheer the heart like Jesus

Closing Prayer:

Close

MP 746 What a friend we have in Jesus



1a

Welcome and pray from Mark 4:23,24a

- I wonder if you recognize this old building? It has been stood derelict for many years. How did it become a ruin? by a fire? No. By an explosion? No, through neglect, letting things go, through leaving things unchecked, the water leaking in, the ivy and foliage causing the walls to crumble, the window frames rotting, etc.

So life, our lives, can like buildings, and fall into disrepair, it is very easy, very easy – it will happen - unless attention and care is given.

Last week we considered the thieves on the crosses with Jesus, and started by thinking about your old school class reunion, how we all start and head off into life much the same way - but then there are the choices we make....

- I remember while living in London, hearing that someone from my school was living nearby. So I went to see him. I was surprised to find he was living in a house that looked like a squat, taking drugs, everywhere was a mess, this was a reflection on his life.

He had let things go, x2 he had given in to his natural desires for selfish pleasures and let the important things go. Like the building his life had fallen into disrepair.

As we pick out important events in the Bible, this morning we are looking at Cain. Did he do the same? Had he neglected his life before God and let his selfish heart rule?

A few weeks ago we saw how Adam and Eve chose to disobey God and were banished from paradise, the garden of Eden. They were under a curse. The Lord had graciously enabled Adam and Eve to have children. The first two being Cain and Abel. Both born of the same parents, were they like each other? Are you like, or un-like, your brother or sister? How would these two each fare? How would they turn out?

God had promised (see Gen 3:15) that someone would come from Eve's line who would be strong enough to crush Satan's head. As Eve awaited the arrival of her firstborn Cain, she was wondering would it be him? Let's see.

v 2 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 But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.

The LORD looked with favour on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favour.

They both brought offerings to God. This was their worship. How was it?

1b

What did God think of it?

Let's compare, one difference is that Abel brought livestock presumably sheep, while Cain a worker of the soil, brought grain or something similar. However, I don't think that is the main point.

It is the manner in which it is brought that is noted here. Abel brought **fat portions**, he brought the best, and from the **firstborn of his flock**, in other words as soon as he could. You can see Abel's heart revealed here. For him the Lord had first place and in his love received the best he could bring.

For Cain, however, it was different. He brought **some of the fruits of the soil**, it doesn't say the best or even the earliest. to the contrary this was done **In the course of time**. (marg. "at the end of days"). There's no rushing here, there's no expression of love, the bringing of an offering to the Lord was not the priority for him. His heart was not in it.

Which one are you? How is your worship brought to the Lord?

Is it like Abel? Or like Cain?

The manner in which we bring our worship reveals really who we really are.

In Cain we see that though religious he's defiant in his attitude towards God. There was no love there, Cain was just fulfilling his religious duty.

Some have that approach when it comes to Sunday morning worship, arrive at the last minute, no preparation of heart and soul, little or no thought is given to the Lord until the music for the first hymn pipes up.

That is why some church, many churches sing for half an hour, or more, so as to try to get people 'woken up' to the things of God. No, true worship, God honouring worship, has to come from you, the music band can't produce it if it is not already in your heart, this is what the Lord sees.

✚ **How is your offering, your worship this morning, is it filled with Him, or is it distracted, or empty?**

Abel we are told in Heb 11:4 **offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.**

God saw Abel's love for him, he was pleased - and he was accepted.

How is the Lord looking at your worship this morning? Is he pleased with it? Is it offered in love the first and the best? Or something done because you feel you ought to?

Jesus warned the Pharisees about empty worship saying "**Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites: 'These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain.**" Mr 7:6-7

So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Why downcast?

If he could see that God was pleased with Abel, wouldn't Cain think what do I need to change so that he will be pleased with me?

If he wouldn't look up to God would he instead take a look within himself? Could he not see his own heart was the cause of it? No, he couldn't or wouldn't. Cain became angry and jealous of his younger brother.

The Lord warns him, out of his kindness the Lord warns him.

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 master it." 4:6-7

Sin lurks, crouches at the door, crouching ready to pounce and have him the moment there's a chance. This is sin pictured as a wild beast, Cain must keep the door closed, lock it, post a sentry.

This is a key moment in his life, here is a warning - but also a promise, now is the time to humble himself and change. Would he? What would he do?

Would he address what needs to be addressed? Would he confront the sin of pride that was attempting to take over and would lead him to Hell? So it is with many today. Would he see the seriousness of his position?

Or would he be weak and cowardly and leave it, let it go, be unconcerned, leave his sin unchecked, and so like that virulent weed growing through the brickwork - allow sin to destroys the house, his life, so it end up in ruins.

This sin of pride is hard to see, everyone else can see it - but it's invisible to me. Yet in a very real sense it is the worst of sins, the sin behind every sin.

Radio play with the title: "Better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven"

God is telling Cain something he must urgently do. Cain could seek the Lord to help him with his sin, he should try to see how serious it is, he could make every effort to master it, ... but he doesn't. he won't.

Jesus uses strong language to impress upon us the need for serious action: **"If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away.**

It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell. Mt 5:29-30

That is right, if you give in to sinful desires they will place you firmly on the road to hell.

The Lord had warned Cain about it. The great sadness is that God's warnings to him remain unheeded. Here the die is set, here his eternal destiny determined. Cain did not check his sinful impulses, his jealousy, instead he became very angry and cherished feelings of hatred against his brother. Cain is sullen, self-willed, haughty and vindictive.

What happens next? He goes off to plot how he might put his brother to death. He committed the crime of murder:

8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

What could he achieve by this? Would he inherit his brother's blessing like Jacob? No his murder was only to buttress his feeling of superiority.

Someone might momentarily take leave of his senses and throttle someone to death, but this premeditated murder reveals his true nature.

How sad. This murder, the next event recorded after the fall of Adam and Eve is God saying this is the new nature, this is the 'new normal' for the world. This is the hereditary disease coming down to all of us to every generation.

■ This murder is like a huge billboard warning sign.

When we talk about 'original sin' we do not mean Adam's sin, no it is the sin that lives in me - sin that came down from Adam - sin I am born with.

John says: **Do not be like Cain, x2 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.** 1Jo 3:12

God calls him to account

9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

What have you done? You are called to account. Cain the murderer now lies **"I don't know," he replied.**

Cain the covetous is Cain the murderer is Cain the liar, Cain who does not love God - does not love his fellow man.

✚ No love for God ⇔ no love for fellow man.

Once an image bearer of God Cain is made in the image of Adam. Gen 5:3

3a

That is true for all of us too. "Am I my brother's keeper?" He says disdainfully - In this new world ruled by sin it is every man for himself. Self-interest is had become – and is now - the new prevailing motivation.

Cain has taken human life, God who sees everything pronounces judgment **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."**

Cain is now to be away from God's favour, he is to be far away from God. He is a wanderer on the earth. Everything will be hard for him. Sure he hates the consequences. So he pleads for mercy.

13 Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is more than I can bear. 14 Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." 15 But the LORD said to him, "Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him.

Cain pleads for mercy and the Lord graciously protects his life. He is still, however to remain away from God.

16 So Cain went out from the LORD's presence. Away from God, away from godly restraint, where there's no fear of God evil roams unhindered.

Cain went off to make a name for himself, to build his own dynasty, his own line, he builds a city. What of this pre flood, antediluvian city?

We will look at this in more detail another time. Suffice to say that the flood is coming, Cain's line, Cain's way - leads to judgment.

Neglected buildings are demolished. Derelict buildings which have received no attention and have become useless are demolished.

So it will happen with every man or woman who neglects his soul and leaves sin unchecked.

Finally what can we learn?

Beware - the decisions you make – they have far reaching consequences.

- That person you are determined to marry, the job you give up for another, the thing you have to buy, the place you must move to,
- In sport these are charitably described as "unforced errors"

3b

But we chose our path. Rather than listen to sense you plough on and reap the misery. God had laid out before Cain life and death. Cain heard the word of God, understood it - but did not act on it, he rejected it.

May there be no-one here who does the same this morning. Don't ignore what God says, act on it, **it is like a lifebelt, put it on.**

Paul warns us today **“do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realising that God’s kindness leads you towards repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: .. but glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good..”** Ro 2:4-10

In other words, God is gracious and fair. Abel’s offering was not perfect, but Abel **by persistence in doing good** sought **glory, honour and immortality**, and God gave him **eternal life**. He declared him righteous through the work of Christ on the cross.

There is only one in the history of the world who has brought a perfect offering, that is the one Christ gave with his perfect life and that life given up as an offering, not an offering for his own sin – but for the sin of others.

Now through Christ anyone who humbles themselves will be accepted, - For **God opposes the proud but he gives grace to the humble.** Prov 3:34, Jas 4:6, 1Pe 5:5

Don't be like proud Cain who was rejected, but humble yourself before him and you will be accepted.

CROSS is there for everyone - it is a place of healing held out for everyone- but the proud will never come - only the humble will.

Cain inherited the sinful nature from his parents – just as you and I do. Jesus is the only exception. God said to Cain that he should master it, battle against it and if so he would be accepted. Cain didn't. Cain did not do what God said. Cain foolishly neglected his life before God.

Jude the brother of Jesus describes those who do this saying **Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain.** Jude 1:11

So the clear message for everyone is “Do not take the **way of Cain**” x2

✚ Jude is saying it's a key warning which is to be heeded.

✚ **Pride is my big problem too. I can see only a little of it, you can see more, God sees all of it and he hates it in me for it hinders me from Glorifying Him and enjoying Him as I should.**

Yes pride separates - from God and from others. All around pride is encouraged and so we have a fractious unloving divided society.

Sin or pride is crouching at the door of the church. Yes among forgiven Born Again believers if pride is allowed to hold sway there are problems.

One experienced church pastor who preached here, said almost every problem between believers he had seen - in his many years of church ministry - could be sourced back to pride.

The answer is to be obedient to God's word, to guard your heart and to grow in grace. The evidence of this is seen in that you no longer do things out of self-interest, Something Paul had to rebuke the church in Philippi for, but now like Christ - love and serve one another, seeking the best for others.

Jonathan Edwards said that pride is the worst viper that is in the heart, and greatest disturber of the soul's peace and sweet communion with Christ.

D. L. Moody said, “I believe firmly that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and everything that is contrary to God's law, the Holy Spirit will fill every corner of our hearts. But if we are full of pride and conceit and ambition and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God. We must be emptied before we can be filled.”

1, He that is down needs fear no fall,
He that is low, no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

2. I am content with what I have,
Little be it or much;
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
Because Thou savest such.

3. Fullness to such a burden is
That go on pilgrimage;
Here little, and hereafter bliss,
Is best from age to age.

John Bunyan.

May no-one here take the way of Cain, but be like Abel – who is in Glory now, one who pleased God and whose offering was acceptable to him.

END