

The Story–Week #18
The Tale of Two Brothers
Genesis 4:1-24

How to Defeat Sin — Part 3
Genesis 4:5b-15

Overview of our Story

Two Brothers - Cain & Abel (& Seth)

Two Offerings - Farmer & Shepherd/Cereal & Lamb

Two Attitudes - Pride or Humility (Humble awareness)

Two Choices - Good or Bad (*Tov* or *Ra*/Right or Wrong/Life or Death)

Two Seeds - Woman & Serpent

How to Defeat Sin — Part 3
Genesis 4:5b-15

The Door of Awareness

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.”^[d] 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.”

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^[e]; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. 16 So Cain went out from the LORD’s presence and lived in the land of Nod,^[f] east of Eden.

Three things today:

1. God’s **Invitation** into Awareness - His Pursuit -
 - Through Conviction

2. God's **Education** for Awareness - His Punishment -
 - Through Consequences
3. God's **Restoration** from Awareness - His Pardon -
 - Through Compassion

Awareness Defined

Awareness is the process of some **truth** about **God** (and His purposes) or **ourselves** (who we are) **coming to light**. It is seeing what was previously unseen, understanding what was previously not understood, knowing what was previously unknown.

Antonyms for Awareness: Ignorance at best, Denial at worst

CS Lewis:

“When a man is getting better he understands more and more clearly the evil that is still left in him. When a man is getting worse he understands his own badness less and less. A moderately bad man knows he is not very good: a thoroughly bad man thinks he is all right.”

Some possible examples of coming into awareness could be...

Discovering within yourself: ignorance, denial, pride, addiction, insecurity, fear, anxiety, prejudice, jealousy, defensiveness etc.

Discovering God's: love, acceptance, forgiveness, kindness, holiness, omniscience (He's everywhere), Spirit, Comfort, Compassion etc.

- I. **Accept God's Invitation** into *Awareness of Sin*. This is God's **Communication** & Conviction - It's God's **Pursuit** of sinners.

Genesis 3:9 (NKJV) “Then the LORD God called to Adam... ‘Where are you?’”

Genesis 4:6-7 “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.”

Romans 5:8-10 “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still **sinners**, Christ died for us....

Awareness of sin can empower us to Recognize that in our vulnerability, sin can be:

- A**.ctivated by pride or anger?
- B**.roken by doing what is good or right?
- C**.lose, “at the door” - proximity & vulnerability?

D.riven by deceptive desires?

James 4:1 *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. ...You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives."*

Thomas Merton

"Lord give me humility, in which alone is rest and deliver me from pride, which is the heaviest of burdens.

When we are driven by deceptive desires and resist God's pursuit we experience the repercussions of sin, and God will use it to **educate** us; to get our attention and draw us back to himself.

CS Lewis:

"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

II. Accept God's **Education** for **Awareness of Sin**.

This comes through **Consequences** - It's His **Penalty** for sin. This is the school of hard knocks

1 Corinthians 10:11-13 (NIV84) *"These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us (ESV: "for our instruction"), on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come (i.e. Jesus). So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! (a call for humility) No temptation has seized you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."*

Six ways to recognize that God is trying to get your attention:

When you see yourself (or someone else points out):

1. Acting **Defiantly** (& **independently of God**)

Genesis 4:8 *"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."*

- In other words you are unwilling to listen...(Headstrong)

2. Denying **Responsibility**

Genesis 4:9 *"Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Where is your brother Abel?' 'I don't know,' he replied. 'Am I my brother's keeper?'"*

3. Aching over your *Insanity* (Iniquity)

Genesis 4:10 & 13 “The LORD said, ‘What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood **cries out** to me from the ground’ ... Cain said to the LORD, ‘My **punishment** is more than I can bear.’”

“Insanity is doing the same thing and expecting different results.”

Punishment in Hebrew is Avon and means (can be translated) **iniquity**, punishment and **guilt**, and is closely related to the word avah which means to be crooked and can describe the consequences of sin or being crooked.

You find this idea in the biblical phrase “to punish,” which in biblical Hebrew is to “visit someone’s avon upon them,” that is, to let them **sit in the consequences of their crooked choices**.

2 Cor. 7:10 (MSG) “Distress that drives us to God does that. It turns us around. It gets us back in the way of salvation. We never regret that kind of pain. But those who let distress drive them away from God are full of regrets, end up on a deathbed of regrets.”

4. Losing *Productivity*

Genesis 4:11-12a “Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. **When you work** the ground, **it will no longer yield its crops for you.**”

(ESV) “...it shall no longer yield to you **its strength.**”

(MSG) “...it will no longer give you **its best.**”

5. Experiencing *Insecurity & Instability*

Genesis 4:13-14a “Cain said to the LORD, ‘My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence...’”

Genesis 4:14b “I will be a **restless wanderer** on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

Restless in Hebrew is Nua and means to **quiver, totter, shake, reel, stagger, wander, waver, and tremble.**

Wanderer in Hebrew is Nud and means to **shake, waver, wander, move to and fro, flutter,** and to grieve.

III. **Accept God’s **Restoration** from your Awareness of Sin.**

This comes through God's **Compassion** - It's His **Pardon** from sin.

Genesis 4:26 "At that time people began to **call upon the name of the LORD.**"

Deuteronomy 4:29-31 (MSG) "But even there, **if you seek God**, your God, you'll be able to find him if you're serious, **looking for him** with your whole heart and soul. When troubles come and all these awful things happen to you, in future days you will come back to God, your God, and **listen obediently** to what he says. God, your God, is above all a **compassionate** God."

Psalms 86:15 "You, Lord, are a **compassionate** and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness."

Ephesians 4:31-32 "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and **compassionate** to one another, **forgiving** each other, just as in Christ God **forgave** you."