

1.8.21 pm Abel's Sacrifice

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Date: 01 August 2021

Preacher: Duncan MacPherson

[0 : 00] Good evening everybody and welcome to our service this evening to those of you who are with us in the building here and those who are online as well. And welcome everyone who is here this evening. I'm not immediately spotting any visitors but if there are any, you're very welcome.

The prayer meeting this Wednesday on Zoom as usual at 7.30pm and that will be led by the minister. And then next Sunday the services at 11 and 6 as usual will also be conducted by the minister on the return from his holiday.

And then the holiday club is on this week from Wednesday to Friday and if you are able to volunteer at any time, even if it's just for one session, you'd be very welcome.

And if you're able to do so, please speak to Lucy Tour or to Joyce King. The Lewis Christian Conference is coming up shortly. I'll not read the whole announcement as Gordon read it in full this morning.

But that's from Thursday the 12th to Saturday the 14th of August. And full details of that are online at the Garibas Free Church website and also the Lewis Christian Conference website.

[1 : 14] So there will be three messages from Habakkuk on that one. I think these are all intimations. So we shall commence the worship of God once again by reading and by singing from Psalm 100.

Psalm 100, this well-known psalm of praise. All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. Him serve with mirth, his praise foretell.

Come ye before him and rejoice. Know that the Lord is God indeed. Without our aid he did us make. We are his flock, he doth us feed. We are his, and for his sheep he doth us take.

We'll sing the whole of this psalm to God's praise. All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

His stead with mirth, his praise foretell. Come ye before him and rejoice.

[2 : 43] Know that the Lord is God indeed. Know that the Lord is God indeed.

Without our aid he did us make. We are his flock, he doth us feed.

And for his sheep he doth us take. O enter then his gates with praise.

Praise Lord and bless his name always.

For it is simply so to do. For why the Lord our God is good.

[4 : 09] His mercy is forever assured. His truth at all times firmly stood.

And shall from age to age endure. Let us pray.

Let us pray. Lord our Father, we thank you for this privilege once again of coming into your presence.

of coming as your redeemed people to sing your praises. And to declare the glory and the majesty of your name and of your kingdom in this world.

We thank you for this privilege. We thank you for this privilege once again of being able to meet together in person. Something which we took for granted for so long and yet was then taken away.

[5 : 21] We thank you for that. We thank you for that in your grace. We thank you for that in your grace you are ever loving towards your people. And we thank you for that even in a time of pandemic we are able to meet together.

And we are able to rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ. The one who is the perfect shepherd of the sheep. The one who died for our sins. And the one Lord who gives us his righteousness that we might stand in your presence clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

And what a glorious righteousness it is indeed. Perfect and spotless. Gleaming white. No taint of sin. And Lord we bless you that because of that we are able to stand in your presence.

Rather than be swept away by your holy and your righteous judgment. And Lord we bless you that though sin remains. That Lord you have given us your spirit.

And that Lord in the power of the spirit we are able to put sin to death. And Lord we pray that you grant us the grace that we need to put sin to death each day.

[6 : 33] And Lord to come each day anew to your word. And to the source of all grace. As we come to you in prayer.

And Lord we pray that we would know your grace. And that we would know your forgiveness. And that we would know your presence as we meet in worship tonight. That Lord we would have a greater understanding of the work and of the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that Lord we would have a greater understanding of our own sin. And the price that was paid for it. And Lord we pray that therefore we would have a greater understanding of the beauty of worship.

And being able to come to you in the beauty of holiness. And Lord to experience what it is to be in the presence of a holy God. Without being struck down by fear of judgment.

But coming into the presence of a holy God. Holy God to know your purity and your majesty. And to know Lord that one day we shall be with you.

[7 : 42] And with all the saints in heaven. In that same sense of purity. Where all sin will have been taken away. And where there will be no more crying. No more tears.

No more pain. No more suffering. But Lord an eternity. To be in your presence. Father we pray that that sense of eternity would come into our world today.

Into our community. And into our country. For there are great numbers who have no sense. Lord of the fact that there is an eternity.

No sense Lord that one day they will be called to give an account for their lives. And no sense Lord that they have in Christ. A perfect redeemer.

One who will forgive them for all of their sins. If only they will call upon his name. Lord we pray that you would enable us to take that gospel message. Into our own community.

[8 : 40] And that Lord you would bless by your spirit. The preaching of that message throughout this country. Which is so destitute of the truth in so many places.

And Lord we think of our holiday club this week. And pray Lord for all those who will be involved. That your blessing will be upon them. We pray Lord for the young children who will be coming to that.

That Lord they will learn new things of Christ. And that they will indeed learn how to run the race. In a way that will enable them to persevere to the end.

To the end. Lord we pray that you would bless and be with each and every one. Who will be there. We pray Lord for your blessing upon our minister.

And his family as they return from the holiday. And we pray that you bring them back safely. And that Lord we might know the blessing of their presence once again. And ask Lord that you would strengthen them.

[9 : 40] And their faith in Christ. And in their boldness for him too. Lord we ask that your blessing would be upon this world. And there are so many places that are suffering so badly.

From COVID-19 at this time. We pray Lord for your blessing. Upon all those who are working in hospitals. And elsewhere to treat the sick. For those who are sick.

All those who are working to vaccinate. Those who need to be protected. And Lord we pray for all your people everywhere. That at this time. They will be a witness to your truth.

And a witness to your mercy. And to your grace. And that Lord. You may through these terrible events. Yet call many into your kingdom.

And into the light of Christ. Lord we pray for your suffering church. Wherever it is found. That your spirit would strengthen it. And that Lord. Those who are opposing it.

[10 : 37] Would see. That they are not fighting against men. But they are fighting against you. The living God. And we pray Lord God. That you would turn the persecutors.

Into believers. In the same way that you did with Paul. And you have done with others. We pray Lord God. For your blessing. Upon those who are taking the gospel.

To places where. Militant Islam reigns. Or where. Fiercely. Independent Hinduism reigns. And where there is no. Scope.

Or little scope. For Christians to have freedom. Yet Lord. There are no borders. No boundaries. No boundaries. No men can stop. The work of your spirit.

And we pray Lord God. That you would bless. The spread of the gospel. To the ends of the earth. And we pray. That in all things. That your name will be glorified.

[11:33] Through Christ Jesus our Savior. In whose name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We shall sing once again.

This time from Mission Praise 656. Amen. Mission Praise 656. The Lord is King. Lift up thy voice. O earth and all you heavens rejoice.

From world to world a joy shall ring. The Lord omnipotent is King. A great hymn that speaks of the royalty. The majesty and the divine sovereignty.

Of the God whom we worship. The Lord is King. Lift up thy voice. The Lord is King. Lift up thy voice. O earth and all ye heavens rejoice. From world to world the joy shall ring.

[12:32] The Lord omnipotent is King. The Lord is King who then shall live.

Resist his will, distrust his fear. Or murmur at his wise degrees.

Or doubt his royal promises. The Lord is King, child of the dust.

The judge of all the earth is just. Holy and true are on his ways.

Let every creature speak his praise. He reigns, ye saints, exalt your strains.

[13:38] Your God is King, your Father reigns. And he is at the Father's side.

The man of love, the crucified. One Lord, one empire, all secures.

He reigns and life and death are used. Through earth and hell. One song shall reign.

The Lord omnipotent is King. Amen.

If we can now turn to God's word. And we find it in Genesis chapter 4. Genesis 4.

[14:50] And we shall read from the beginning. Adam lay with his wife Eve. And she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, with the help of the Lord, I have brought forth a man.

Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time, Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord.

But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favour on Abel and his offering. But on Cain and his offering, he did not look with favour.

So Cain was very angry and his face was downcast. Then the Lord said to Cain, why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 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. Now Cain said to his brother Abel, let's go out to the field.

[15:52] And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, where is your brother Abel? I don't know, he replied. Am I my brother's keeper?

The Lord said, what have you done? Listen, your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. 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. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth. 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. I will be a restless wanderer on the earth and whoever finds me will kill me. 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. So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

[16:59] Cain lay with his wife and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city and he named it after his son Enoch.

To Enoch was born Erad and Erad was the father of Mehujael. And Mehujael was the father of Methusael. And Methusael was the father of Lamech. Lamech married two women, one named Ada and the other Zillah.

Ada gave birth to Jabal. He was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all who play the harp and flute.

Zillah also had a son, Tubalcain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. Tubalcain's sister was Nema. Lamech said to his wives, Ada and Zillah, listen to me.

Wives of Lamech, hear my words. I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me. If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times.

[18:02] Adam lay with his wife again and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him. Seth also had a son and he named him Enosh.

At that time, men began to call on the name of the Lord. Amen. And may God bless this reading to us.

We shall sing to God's praise once more, this time from Psalm 101. Psalm 101 and we shall sing verses 4 to 8.

Psalm 101. Psalm 101. Psalm 101. Psalm 101. Psalm 101. Psalm 101. Psalm 101. Psalm 101. Psalm 101. Psalm 101. Psalm 101.

Psalm 101. YouTube. him that looketh high. Upon the faithful of the land mine eyes shall be, that they may dwell with me. He shall me serve that walks in perfect way. Who of deceit a worker is, in my house shall not dwell. And in my presence shall he not remain that lies doth tell. Ye all the wicked of the land early destroy will I, all from God's city to cut off that work iniquity. These verses of David are quite solemn, speaking about his kingdom and how he does not want to see evil people living there. But we can see also it's a reflection of the God whom he serves and of the danger of being cut off for not serving and living as God would have you live. And Cain in this chapter that we read is quite an example of that. So we'll sing from verse 4, a stubborn and a froward heart to part quite from me shall. I'm thinking that the young people might not know what the word froward means, quite a complicated one. It's an old English word that we would, today we would use the word perverse or use it to describe someone who would do something wrong even though they knew it was wrong and it was going to have bad impact upon themselves.

[20:18] And that we saw in Cain's actions here. So let us sing these verses to God's praise. A stubborn and a froward heart depart quite from me shall.

A stubborn and a froward heart depart quite from me shall.

A person give to wickedness I will not know at all. I'll cut him off the slanderer. His neighbour the haughty heart I will not bear nor in that looketh I.

upon the faithful o'er the land. My night shall be the day. My night shall be the day.

My dwell with me he shall be said that walks in perfect way.

[22:07] who of deceit a worker is. In my heart shall not dwell. And in my presence shall he not remain that lies the town. Ye all the wicked of the land. Early destroyed will lie. All from the city to the land. Now if I can ask you to turn to Hebrews chapter 11 and we shall read the first four verses.

Hebrews 11 and we shall read verses 1 to 4. Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command.

So that what is seen was not made of what was visible. By faith Abel offered God's command. 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. Abel in this chapter is the first man of faith. Abel in this chapter is the first man of faith that the writer to the Hebrews mentions.

And speaks on. And speaks on. And I want to think in some detail about Abel's life tonight.

Particularly bearing in mind that passage that we read in Genesis chapter 4.

[24:40] If you've got good memories. I think you may remember me preaching. Specifically from the same chapter on Cain. Quite some time ago. But tonight our focus is going to be on Abel.

And it's interesting as we read this chapter in Hebrews 11. The chapter of faith. That it actually starts with Abel himself.

We see here there is no mention of Adam. No mention of Eve. For they're just simply not there. It starts by speaking of Abel.

I think there are a couple of good reasons for that in this chapter. If we think of Adam. He was responsible for the fall of the whole of mankind.

And as a result of his fall. He came under a curse. And that was that the ground itself would be cursed. And that when he tilled the ground.

[25:46] It would yield weeds and thistles. And everyone who was born as a result. From Adam and Eve would come under the curse itself.

And Adam. He was in a very privileged position. As we look back. Because he was one who was able. To live.

Not by faith. But by works. If he had kept God's command perfectly. Adam would not have fallen into sin. And he would not have led.

The rest of mankind into ruin. So the writer here. In starting with Abel. Is looking at the first man. The representative of men beyond Adam. Of those who must live by faith. And a second reason as well. Is that in writing to the Hebrews there.

[26 : 44] He's talking to them. And trying to encourage them. To be faithful. And to continue in their faith. In the midst of persecution. And the whole of chapter 11.

List people. Who live by faith. In various difficult times. And many of whom were persecuted. And we can see. In Abel's life.

That he was the first ever. Believing man of faith. To be persecuted. Because of his faith. So that is why the writer here. Says first of all.

By faith. Abel offered God. A better sacrifice. Than Cain did. By faith. He was commanded. As a righteous man. When God spoke well. Of his offerings. And by faith.

He still speaks. Even though. He is dead. So in. Terms of thinking through. Verse 4.

[27 : 42] Of chapter 11. Key element there. Is that. Abel offered. A better sacrifice. To God. Than what. Cain offered.

It's interesting. To ask. Ourselves. The question. How did it come to be. That Abel. Offered a better sacrifice. And indeed. How did it come to be.

That both. Cain and Abel. Were able to offer. Sacrifices. In the first place. At all. And if we look closely. At Genesis chapter 4.

We get various hints. I think. As to why. That came to be. In verse 16. When we hear of. Cain. Going out. It says. Cain went out. From the Lord's presence. And lived in the land of Nod. East of Eden. So we can see. That even though.

[28 : 37] Adam and Eve. Had fallen into sin. And had so led. The whole of mankind. Into sin. Yet. They were not. Completely thrust. Out of God's presence.

They were put out. Of the garden. And yet. God's presence. Was still with them. In their new. In the new life. That they had. They had left Eden.

And they had effectively. Had to make camp. Outside. Of Eden. Itself. But God. Had not completely. Abandoned. Them. And. Because they.

Themselves. Were exercising. Faith in God. As a result. Of the promises. He had given them. When he pronounced. Judgment. Upon them. That.

They themselves. Had not. Abandoned. God. So there they were. Living. As a family. At some distance.

[29 : 33] In all likelihood. From Eden. Itself. But. They were still. A family. Working together. And a family. Indeed. I believe. At worship. Adam and Eve.

Could remember. The great height. From which they had fallen. They could remember. What purity. Was like. And therefore. They could teach. Their children. As to what.

This holy God. Was like. In particular. Before they. Themselves. Fell. And they could teach. Their children. Of God's mercy. Towards them.

When they knew. That they deserved. Instant death. But instead. God had been merciful. Towards them. And above all.

It would have been them. That would have shown. Their two boys. How to make sacrifices. As to God. God had instituted. Sacrifice. Himself.

[30 : 27] When he. Provided. Adam and Eve. With skins. To cover their nakedness. The animal skins. Would require. The death. Of animals.

To provide. The covering. That they required. And. So that would be. Where. The need. For sacrifice. Became clear.

In the minds. Of Cain. And of Abel. And we see. In the description. In Genesis 4. Of these two. Young men. Coming to make.

The sacrifices. To God. And. We know. That faith. By faith. Abel. Offered a better. Sacrifice. We see. In verse 3. Cain.

Brought some. Of the first fruits. Of the soil. He didn't bring. Some of the fruits. Of the soil. He didn't bring. The first fruits. He didn't bring. The first. That came.

[31 : 24] To be ripe. And to ready. And to be ready. He waited. For the larger crop. To come in. Nor did he give. The best. He just gave.

Some. There may well. Be the case. That he kept. The very best. For himself. And gave. What was second best. To God. But he thought. He could give. Of his second best.

To God. And he thought. He could put. Himself first. If he took. The first fruits. For himself. On the other hand. We have Abel. Coming to God.

In verse 4. And it tells us there. That he gave some. Of the firstborn. Of his flock. And not only. Some of the firstborn. But some. Of the fat portions.

He gave the very best. Of what he had. And of what. He was able. To give. John Owen. Commented.

[32 : 21] On these two sacrifices. And says that Cain. Was able to see. That God was his creator. And his preserver. But only Abel. Was able to see. That God was his redeemer.

And therefore Abel. Offered to God. The very best. That he could give. And it came from the firstborn. Of his flock. And it was the fat portions.

And on that basis. Abel. Was fulfilling. Hebrews 11. And verse 4. Now faith. He was able to. Be clear. That his faith.

He was sure. Of what he could not see. He was able to trust. In God's promises. He was able to believe. What God has said. And he believed it.

Very much. In his heart. And we see. In these two men. The outward offerings. That they made. Were reflections. Of the inner attitudes. That they had.

[33 : 18] Abel. Had a heart. That was soft. Towards God. One. That was trusting. In God. In his word. And in his truth. And one that was looking forward.

To things that Abel. Could not yet see. But by faith. He was able to grasp. Hold of them. On the other hand. Cain. Was happy to come. And fulfill.

What he saw as being. His outward duty. But the inward. Duty in his heart. Just wasn't present at all. So we then.

See from that. From. Hebrews 11. 4. That Abel. Was commended. As being righteous. And it says. God spoke well. Of his offerings. Question then arises. How did God speak well. Of his offerings. Because when we see. The narrative. In Genesis chapter 4.

[34 : 14] There's no mention. Of anything. That God actually said. It just simply said. He looked with favor. On Abel. And his offering. Now. Well. May well be.

That God said. Words. At the time. To Abel. Or to Cain. That spoke. Of the. The acceptance. Of Abel's offering.

Because certainly. We see God. Having conversation. With Cain. Afterwards. But it may also be. Something different. As well. Some commentators. Think. That one of the possibilities. For God. Showing. His favor. In terms of the sacrifice. Being accepted. Was that he actually.

Sent fire down. From heaven. And burnt up. The sacrifice. To show. That he himself. Was pleased with it. If we think. Of Elijah. And his.

[35 : 13] Sacrifice. When he was. Fighting. With the prophets. Of Baal. To show. Who was the true God. That should be worshipped. It was God.

Who sent fire down. From heaven. To show. The great. The great. The great unbelieving. Masses. That he truly was. The God. In heaven. When Solomon. Instituted.

The temple. Worship. And. The sacrifices. Were all laid out. But it was God. Who sent fire. Down from heaven. And into the presence. Of the temple.

And of the people. To show. That he was happy. To come into that place. And dwell there. So it may well. Have been the case. that God sent fire down from heaven to burn up Abel's sacrifice but that Cain's sacrifice just lay there unaccepted by God.

Equally, when we see God warning Cain about the attitude in his heart and of his need to master sin and to do the right thing he's implicitly commending to Cain Abel's example.

[36 : 24] He's not asking Cain to do anything that was impossible but he was simply saying to him you need to do the right thing and the right thing would be to do the same thing that Abel was doing not merely in sacrificing animals or the best animals but to come with a right heart into God's presence.

So there we see the two sacrifices one being acceptable and the other not and God speaks with Cain about his sacrifice and how he can get over the attitude in his own heart that is evil.

We won't talk on that tonight in any detail because our focus is upon Abel but if we look now at Cain's response to his brother Abel he says to him in verse 8 let's go out to the field.

In one sense that would be quite a reasonable thing to do and when we if someone said to you today let's go out to the field you might think I think of going out for a walk and just passing the time together.

I suspect that in this circumstance and given the fact that Cain was somebody growing crops the suggestion was let's go out to the field in order to till it for the next crop and in that Cain was simply being deceitful coming up with a ruse in order to get Abel to go out into the field.

[38 : 01] But look at the attitude of the man of faith when he's invited to go out to the field he went out willingly to work with and for his brother Cain and if he was working in the field he would have been trying to ameliorate the effects of the curse upon the ground.

Perhaps they were preparing the ground for the next crop or perhaps there was another crop in there and he was down there weeding. Whatever the case he had the right attitude of heart.

Not only was he willing to worship God he was willing to work for the good of others and he was willing to serve his brother and yet while he was at the field Cain came to him and killed him by his own hand and he was killed while he was in close contact with the ground.

There he was helping out Cain trying to reduce the impact of the curse upon Cain's life but yet Abel himself was killed and if you think about it that demonstrates the perverseness of sin how Cain was willing to kill a righteous man simply because he was angry at the fact that that man was righteous and he was not.

His life became immeasurably worse as a result of the death of Abel but in his anger in that moment Cain was willing to put him away.

[39 : 32] I think it's worth remembering at this point too that while we can think of Abel as being a man of faith and a man of righteousness and in Cain and being the prototype of the man of the world living in sin and enmity and rebellion against God yet Cain at this point we can say was within the family of believers.

He was in what you would call like a proto-church in those days he had been taught the correct way to worship God he had made an attempt outwardly to worship God and here he came and rose up and killed his brother.

We often think in the church that we can be immune from many of the sins of the world but what we see here is that one who is brought up in a family where he was taught about the devastating effect of sin where he was taught about the need to come to God by faith and to come to God in the way that God had prescribed yet he still rebelled against that and he ended up murdering his brother.

This needs to be a warning to us all of the need to pray for people in our families because any one who is outside of Christ can do the absolute worst of things and the worst of things can come and intrude right into our own family lives because of the effects of sin.

There was no reason for the enmity that Cain held against Abel other than the fact that he had a hatred of righteousness and he had a hatred of God's acceptance of Abel's righteousness.

[41 : 28] The very name Abel means breath or vanity and one minute Abel was there and the next minute he was gone. Our lives are just like a breath.

One minute we will be here and the next minute we will be gone. We trust that in the grace of God that few of us and indeed none of us would suffer a terrible end like Abel but each and every one of us knows that one day our lives will come to an end.

We are but a breath upon this earth. Before we move on it's important to recognise that behind the actions of Cain were the actions of another of the devil.

Jesus described him in John 8 and verse 44 as a murderer from the beginning and in doing so I think he was speaking clearly about his actions and inciting Cain to put Abel to death.

He's also known as the deceiver. First of all he deceived Eve into eating the forbidden fruit and then he put that spirit of deceit into Cain's heart when Cain said to Abel let's go out to the field hinting it would be a purely innocent activity and now we see that Cain himself has been deceived by the devil.

[43 : 08] God warned Cain to not give in to sin and told him he must have mastery over sin but what we see here at this point is that having murdered his brother shows quite clearly that Satan had his mastery over Cain.

Cain was not free of all the problems in his life because of Abel being taken away. He was actually under the power of the evil one.

And it demonstrates the control that Satan can have over men and women when they give themselves over to evil.

Satan himself wanted the line of faith to be extinguished because his own fate depends upon God fulfilling all his promises. So from the very beginning he was there acting as the murderer to try and stop the line of faith from happening.

Abel's sacrifice was better than Cain's and God commended Abel for that sacrifice.

[44 : 23] We see also in Hebrews 11 and verse 4 we're yet told but by faith he still speaks even though he is dead.

firstly he speaks within the chapter of Genesis 4 itself when we see God picking up Abel's cause.

Cain had wanted to silence Abel he'd wanted to silence this word of righteousness that was walking around in front of him. He wanted to have nothing to do with that word of faith and yet God comes to him and he says to him your brother's blood cries to me from the ground.

Abel himself might be dead but his blood is crying out to God. He was one who had exercised faith in God and he was still speaking. His blood crying out from the ground.

Now an interesting thing at this point is we can see how important this is to God how much it matters to him and yet there's no mention here of Adam and Eve. You can imagine they must have been absolutely devastated just as any parent is when their child dies and more particularly so if a child is murdered but there's no mention of them at all.

[45 : 48] And if we think today of a family having their child murdered in a sense absolutely nothing can prepare you for it and yet we do know that children are murdered and parents have to grieve over them but they had never seen death before of any human being whatsoever so they must have been absolutely devastated and yet there is no mention of Adam and Eve at all.

Why is that? I think first of all it must be because the offence to God is far more serious than it was to Adam and Eve. That is not to belittle the suffering that Adam and Eve must have gone through but to elevate the reality of the offence against God himself.

The death of an innocent person means so much more to God than it does to any parent or brother or sister or child on this earth.

So we need to meditate upon that thought. An innocent person dying is far more important to God than to anybody else on this earth and each of us have to answer for how we live at the end of our lives.

Today we see so many innocent people are murdered. God takes a note of them all and those who murder without repentance will have to face God seriously on the day of judgment.

[47 : 22] How many children are murdered within the womb each and every year as if they were absolutely nothing. Their blood cries out to God each and every time a child is put to death.

We should meditate upon these things and if anyone is tempted to abort a child think upon these things because this is deadly serious.

The offence to God is far greater than it is to the parents. I have a great hatred of trite sayings and one of the ones that I really hate hearing is when someone says and I think it was Bill Clinton that first heard saying this was he said we feel your pain and when we think on those words you have to say no that's not possible.

No one on this earth can feel the pain of another. We can empathise with the pain of another person and their suffering and indeed if something terrible happens to someone else and the same thing had happened to us we can empathise more strongly but none of us can feel that person's pain.

But I would say there's an exception here in a sense in that God more so than a person can truly understand the suffering and the loss that comes upon people in this earth because every individual is created in his image.

[48 : 59] Children bear a resemblance to their parents. Every person that's created on this earth is created in God's image and resembles himself.

So any death, any murder is understood to far greater extent and to a greater depth by God than any parent or any relative ever could.

And what we see here is the fact that sin itself is an infinite offence sin. That can only be comprehended by an infinite God. That one sin of Adam and Eve could only be comprehended by God at the time.

And here we see into the next generation Adam and Eve would never have guessed it would have led to this. Their youngest son being killed by their older son.

God can truly comprehend these things in a way that we cannot. So it's great encouragement to each and every one who is a believer that whatever trial you may go through, God understands it in an even deeper way than we can.

[50 : 19] That in itself may seem impossible for us to understand and yet that is the truth. A second aspect in terms of thinking through how by faith Abel still speaks.

Jesus spoke of the blood of the righteous Abel, Matthew 23 and 25. He spoke quite clearly and it wasn't just talking about Abel himself but he talked of the blood of righteous Abel having been spilled.

Abel was righteous by Christ's righteousness. Abel by being in that chapter 11 was someone who was trusting by faith.

He wasn't someone in the Old Testament as many people would believe trying to come to God by works and doing sacrifices and being accepted because of the goodness of the sacrifice. But he was accepted because of his faith which was demonstrated in the way he worshipped God.

He was righteous because he had Christ's righteousness given to him a long, long time before Christ came. But he could look forward and be certain of that righteousness that he could not yet see.

[51 : 43] I think it's in verse 6 of Hebrews 11. It goes on to speak about Noah. Noah. Sorry, verse 7.

By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen in holy fear, built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. He was an heir of that righteousness that Abel had already demonstrated. and that was Abel speaking down the generations to Noah.

Look at the book of Romans. Paul expounds at length on the whole doctrine of justification by faith and gives Abraham as an example. Abraham is also in Hebrews 11 and that was speaking there about the fact in the Old Testament the believers in those days believed by faith just as we do today.

Abel's faith speaks down through the generations and it speaks and has continued from the time that he was murdered right down to the current day giving us an example of what it is to live by faith and to trust in God's promises.

[53 : 10] But I think more than that we have in Abel in Hebrews 11. He's not simply showing us what it's like to be in Christ but he's actually giving us a picture of Christ or he's acting as a type of Christ as the theologians would say.

If we think of Abel's life what does the Bible tell about him? He was a keeper of livestock. He was there for a shepherd. He was one as we have seen who was willing to be a servant to serve his brother Cain.

There is no wrong recorded against Abel. Now we know that like the rest of us Abel was a sinner but in this picture that we have of him there is no wrong recorded against his name.

He fulfilled the demands that God placed upon his life. Cain deceitfully took hold of him and killed him outside the camp in the same way that Christ was put to death outside the camp and his shed blood was noticed by God.

All of these things add up together and give us that picture looking forward to Christ himself. Abel the first man of faith that is recorded in scripture for us in Hebrews 11 demonstrating the saviour who was to come.

[54 : 41] So he gives us that picture but beautifully we have more than that in pointing to Christ he's also pointing to something better than himself.

Gordon wrote in the beginning of Hebrews 12 this morning but later on in the chapter in verse 24 we have the writer saying to his readers you have come to God the judge of all men to the spirits of righteous men made perfect to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Christ's sprinkled blood speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. Abel's blood was spilt and went into the ground and it caused God to take notice and he went to Cain and asked for an explanation and he said your brother's blood cries out to me and his brother's blood was crying out for vengeance it was crying out for justice.

Christ's blood was shed upon this earth and it cries out salvation it cries out mercy it cries out it is done it is finished the blood of Christ speaks a better word because it speaks for us a word of hope and it speaks for us a word of certainty that enables us today to put our faith in his blood for salvation.

If all we knew today was the story of Abel's life and Abel's death we could sympathise with his plight and with his untimely death but the blood of Abel would do us no good whatsoever but Abel points us to the blood of Christ that better sacrifice and that blood that was shed for our sins.

[56 : 45] So the issue that lies before each and every one of us is are we covered by the blood of Christ? Are we trusting in the blood of Christ to wash away our sins and to enable us to stand righteous in God's sight, in Christ's sight, in Christ's presence?

In the same way that Abel was able to trust in the promises that he had which are much more cloudy and unclear than the promises and certainty we have today.

Are we able to trust in the same saviour that Abel was trusting in, that Abel was looking forward to and that we can look back to and that we can experience and that we can worship today.

I pray that each and every one of us would be able to trust in Christ. Amen. May God bless this reading of his word. Let us pray.

Lord our father we thank you once more for your word. We thank you for your truth. We thank you Lord for the example of Abel who you gave to us from the beginning of time to show that all hope was not lost when Adam and Eve fell and that Lord you had your perfect plan to send the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth.

[58 : 14] And we pray Lord that today each and every one of us here, each and every one who may be watching or listening online would be able to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ whose blood was shed for the forgiveness of sins.

And Lord we pray that you would enable us to live like Abel righteous lives that would be acceptable in your sight and that Lord we would give you the honour and the praise and the glory that are due to your name.

We thank you Lord that you are the one who makes your people holy and we pray that you enable us to be so. In Jesus name we pray.

Amen. Our closing praise is Mission Praise 708.

Mission Praise 708. To God to God be the glory great things he hath done so loved he the world that he gave his son who yielded his life an atonement for sin and opened the life gate that all may go in.

[59 : 28] In verse 2 O perfect redemption the purchase of blood to every believer the promise of God the vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

let's sing this hymn to God's praise to God be the glory great things he hath done. to God be the glory great things he hath done so loved he the world that he gave us his son who yielded his life an atonement for sin and opened the life gate that all may go in.

Praise the Lord praise the Lord let the earth hear his voice praise the Lord praise the Lord let the people rejoice O come to the Father through Jesus the Son and give him the glory great things he hath done O perfect redemption the purchase of blood to every believer the promise of God the highest offender who truly believes that moment that moment from Jesus the pardon receives praise the Lord praise the Lord let the earth hear his voice praise the Lord praise the

Lord let the people rejoice O come to the Father through Jesus the Son the Lord the glory great things he hath done great things he hath taught us great things he hath done and greater rejoicing through Jesus the Son the future the greater will be no wonder our rapture when Jesus we see praise the Lord praise the Lord let the earth hear his voice praise the Lord praise the Lord let the people rejoice O come to the Father through Jesus the Son and give him the glory great things he hath done and may the grace of the

Lord Jesus Christ the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all Amen