
The Great Divide

A Brief Look Back

Genesis 1-3

A Tale of Two Offerings

Genesis 4:1-16

✓ **What Was Wrong With Cain's Offering?**

Hebrews 11:4/ Hebrews 9:22/ Proverbs 3:9-10/ Haggai 1:2-11 & 2:15-19/ Malachi 1:10-14

(1) It was **bloodless**

(2) It was less than **his best**

✓ **Notice God's Response:**

Genesis 4:6 & 10-16

- A **second chance** and **mercy** (even in judgment)

A Tale of Two Kingdoms

Genesis 4:17-5:32/ 1 John 3:11-13/ Colossians 1:13 & Ephesians 2:1-19

✓ **The Descendants Of Cain**

Genesis 4:17-24

✓ **The Descendants Of Seth**

Genesis 4:25-5:32

Homemade Religion

Five Well-Intended Offerings God Still Won't Accept

(1) Good **deeds** and **moral** living

Romans 3:23/ Isaiah 64:6/ Galatians 2:21

(2) A clear **conscience**

Jeremiah 17:9/ 1 Corinthians 4:4/ Proverbs 3:5-6

(3) Spiritual **sincerity**

John 4:23/ 1 Corinthians 10:20/ 2 Corinthians 11:14-15

(4) Religious **rituals**

Amos 5:21-24/ 1 Samuel 15:22/ Micah 6:6-8/ Psalms 51:16-17

(5) Cut & paste **obedience**

Matthew 28:20/ 1 John 2:3-5/ 1 Samuel 15:1-35

Growth Group Homework

For the week of October 21, 2012

QUICK REVIEW

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

MY STORY

1. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear you need to give God your best?

2. Looking back at the "Well-Intended Offerings God Still Won't Accept" from this week's sermon, which one have you encountered the most?

Which one might you be trapped into focusing on?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. This weekend we heard how Cain fell into the trap of thinking God is OK with getting our second best. How does Matthew 25:14-30 clarify what giving our best looks like (note - modern day equivalents to a talent could be skills, abilities, money, possessions, positions of influence, roles in relationships, etc)?

Matthew 25:14-30

"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. [15] To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. [16] The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. [17] So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. [18] But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

[19] "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. [20] The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

[21] "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

[22] "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'

[23] "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

[24] "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed.

[25] So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

[26] "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? [27] Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

[28] " 'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. [29] For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. [30] And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' [NIV]

What are one or two things you think you're good at and/or resources you believe God has given you?

Are there any you need to be careful of burying or holding back?

Can you think of any way you could invest what God has given you? If so, explain.

2. The first week of the fall quarter we briefly touched on the story of Saul in 1 Samuel 15. This week, we want to go back to it and dig a little deeper and see how it relates to the consequences of compromise that we heard about in this weekend's sermon, and the seemingly well-intentioned yet deceptive motivation that we use to rationalize it. What do you learn about compromise, good intentions and God in the chapter?

Saul, like Cain, tried to nuance what God had clearly called him to do and give. What might be some modern day examples of not giving our best and/or holding back in the following categories:

- Honesty
- Bitterness / Forgiveness
- Entertainment
- Finances
- Sexuality
- Relationships
- Other

3. The result of the brutal conflict between Cain and Abel is about as intense as it gets. It's a tough and pointed reminder revealing once again the result of sin and the conflict it brings in human relationships. The enemy's goal in all this is to keep us isolated and afraid to engage with and care for those around us. The good news is God gives us hope and strength to make a difference and stay connected. What insight does Romans 12:14-20 give us on how to deal with the intensity of conflict and still make a difference?

Romans 12:14-20

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. [15] Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. [16] Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

[17] Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. [18] If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. [19] Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. [20] On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." [NIV]

TAKING IT HOME

Looking back at this week's teaching and study, what's most important for you to remember and why?

Prayer Requests:

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