

TRUSTING GOD'S PLAN, PURPOSE, AND DESIGN

"I Can't Do It" Genesis 4:10-16

October 27, 2024

INTRO.: The Danger of Unrecognized Heart Trouble

In his book, *The God Shaped Heart*, Timothy Jennings writes of the dangers of unrecognized heart issues:

Hypertension—high blood pressure—has been called the silent killer, but medical professionals didn't always realize this. In fact, some doctors argued that hypertension was a made-up disorder that didn't need to be treated at all. For instance, in 1931 Dr. J.H. Hay proclaimed, "The greatest danger to a man with high blood pressure lies in its discovery, because then some fool is certain to try and reduce it."

Tragic results followed from this idea. Consider the true case of Frank. Frank was diagnosed with hypertension in 1937 at the age of fifty-four. His blood pressure was 162/98 and was considered by physicians at the time to be "mild hypertension." No treatment was initiated. By 1940, his blood pressure was running 180/88. In 1941, his pressure was 188/105. He was encouraged to cut back on smoking and work. But his condition didn't improve.

By 1944, his pressure was running higher, and he suffered a series of small strokes. This was followed by classic symptoms of heart failure, so he was placed on a low-salt diet with hydrotherapy and experienced some improvement.

But by February 1945, his pressure was 260/145, and on April 12, 1945, he complained of a severe headache with his blood pressure measuring at 300/190. He lost consciousness and died later that day at the age of sixty-three. Perhaps you know him better as Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the thirty-second president of the United States.

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Unrecognized heart problems can cause devastating results, but it is even more devastating to not recognize sin and the need for the forgiveness of God. Some pretend sin doesn't exist while others redefine sin in their own terms. Some churches choose to not talk about sin for fear of the controversy it might produce, or the fear that they might get cancelled by the culture.

Two weeks ago, we began looking at Cain's sin in killing his brother Abel. God warned Abel that "*sin was crouching at his door, and that it desired to have him.*" We want to continue this morning by looking at 3 things: **Sin's Consequences**, **Cain's Complaint**, and **God's Mercy**.

Let's begin by reading Genesis 4:8-16 together.

Genesis 4:8-16 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. 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. 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.

SIN'S CONSEQUENCES

v. 10-12

We talked about this two weeks ago and I want to spend some time reviewing and discussing it further. It may appear that some people or we may even think that we ourselves get away with sin, but that is never the case. God had warned Cain about sin as God warns each of us throughout the Bible. We may think that our sin is a small sin, but every sin is against a holy and righteous God so that makes it serious. God tells Cain that there will be the following consequences of his sin.

Genesis 4:11-12 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."

1) "*you are under a curse:*" *this points out the seriousness of Cain's sin. Earlier we see two other times where "cursing" of something or someone is mentioned.*

*God talking to the serpent:

Genesis 3:14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

*God talking to Adam:

Genesis 3:17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' 'Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.

This speaks not only of God's judgment but the removal of God's blessing.

Allen Ross: "essentially means to be removed or banished from the place of blessing."

2) "*driven from the ground:*" "this cursing is of the ground from which Cain made his living. So the very ground from which Cain made his living is now cursed further." (Arnold Fruchtenbaum)

Genesis 4:11 (ESV) And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

"Cain's curse will come from the ground just as his brother's blood cries out from the ground." (Arnold Fruchtenbaum)

The picture of the ground opening its mouth is found in other places in Scripture.

Numbers 16:1-3 Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites—Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—became insolent **2** and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council. **3** They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD's assembly?"

Numbers 16:28-35 Then Moses said, "This is how you will know that the LORD has sent me to do all these things and that it was not my idea: **29** If these men die a natural death and experience only what usually happens to men, then the LORD has not sent me. **30** But if the LORD brings about something totally new, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them, with everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the grave, then you will know that these men have treated the LORD with contempt." **31** As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart **32** and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, with their households and all Korah's men and all their possessions. **33** They went down alive into the grave, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community. **34** At their cries, all the Israelites around them fled, shouting, "The earth is going to swallow us too!" **35** And fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense.

Deuteronomy 11:1-6 Love the LORD your God and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always. **2** Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline of the LORD your God: his majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm; **3** the signs he performed and the things he did in the heart of Egypt, both to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his whole country; **4** what he did to the Egyptian army, to its horses and chariots, how he overwhelmed them with the waters of the Red Sea as they were pursuing you, and how the LORD brought lasting ruin on them. **5** It was not your children who saw what he did for you in the desert until you arrived at this place, **6** and what he did to Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab the Reubenite, when the earth opened its mouth right in the middle of all Israel and swallowed them up with their households, their tents and every living thing that belonged to them.

3) "*When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you.*"

That which Cain used to make a living would now be gone. This speaks of the power of God when it comes to His giving discipline for sin. Look at what God said to Adam about him working the ground.

Adam, when he sinned, faced the following consequences:

*the ground would be cursed

*he would face painful toil in working the ground

*he will have to fight weeds (thorns and thistles)

*it will be hard work to produce food (by the sweat of your brow)

What God tells Cain goes beyond what God's judgment for Adam's sin was.

4) "you will be a restless wanderer on the earth." there would be no place Cain could call home. Can you imagine what that would be like?

ILLUS.: Before we moved here from the Poconos, we had five sons living with us, the oldest son was already married and out of the house. When we moved only two came with us. The next oldest two stayed in Stroudsburg and still live there. The next one went to college right before we moved. He told his friends that when he left for college his parents moved and didn't tell him where. This is now home base. Cain would never again have a home base.

CONCLUSION ABOUT CONSEQUENCES: God's judgment on Cain's sin should be a huge warning light for us! It's not going to be worth it. I seem to have the ability to go home at the same time one of those big, long trains is going through Riverside. What happens when the train gets close to the intersection? Lights go on and the crossing barriers come down. Why do they do that? To protect me and you from major damage and possibly death. In a similar way God provides warning signs in Scripture telling us to not only stay away from sin but to run from it. Don't play with sin!!!

1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee (present tense command) from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

1 Corinthians 10:14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee (present tense command) from idolatry.

1 Timothy 6:10-11 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. **11** But you, man of God, flee (present tense command) from all this, and pursue (present tense command) righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee (present tense command) the evil desires of youth, and pursue (present tense command) righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

SIN IS NOT WORTH IT!!!!

We see the consequences of Cain's sin and then we see:

CAIN'S COMPLAINT

v. 13-14

Genesis 4:13-14 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."

This is where I got the title for this morning's message: "I can't do it!" It's a little late for Cain to be saying that! God gave a warning, like He does to all of us, and Cain did not heed the warning.

It is interesting to note that Adam did not protest his expulsion from the Garden, but Cain clearly objects. Cain is beginning to get a sense of the magnitude of his sin and the magnitude of God's judgment on his sin.

Cain shares the basis of his complaint:

- 1) You are driving me from the land
- 2) I will be hidden from Your presence (fellowship between he and God would be broken) The presence of God was very important to Moses and the Israelites. After they made the golden calf God said that He would not go with them into the Promised Land, but Moses pleads with God to go with them and God does so (Exodus 33).
- 3) I will be a restless wanderer on the earth
- 4) Whoever finds me will kill me (quite ironic since he was the first murderer: he was fearful of revenge: there must have been other brothers or sisters)

As you look at Cain's response, what is missing? There is a huge piece missing (picture of a puzzle piece)! There is no sense of repentance. Although he might be gaining a sense of the magnitude and consequences of his sin, he doesn't seem to take the blame for his actions. His crying out seems to be in the form of a complaint.

What is repentance? It is a recognition that we are headed in the wrong direction (wrong way sign) and need to turn around. Look at what Jesus tells the people as He ministers.

Mark 1:14–15 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. **15** “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent (present tense command) and believe the good news!”

Matthew 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent (present tense command), for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

Luke 13:1–3 Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. **2** Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? **3** I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

Matthew 11:20–21 Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. **21** “Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

John the Baptist:

Matthew 3:1–2 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea **2** and saying, “Repent (present tense command), for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

The disciples: (when sent out by Jesus)

Mark 6:12 They went out and preached that people should repent.

I believe that it’s wrong to not tell people that part of coming to faith is turning (repenting) from sin to the Savior. There is a change of ownership when a person comes to trust Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; **20** you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

1 Corinthians 7:23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.

What was the price that God paid for our sin? The cross!! Jesus changes everything!! We can’t be changed apart from the work of God in our lives. The Holy Spirit must convict a person of sin and the need of the Savior. He shows us the need to turn (repent) of our sin and turn to Jesus as Savior and Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come (perfect tense)!

God **NEVER** saves anyone to be the same!!

What should Cain have done? How about admitting his sin and pleading for God’s mercy. We see sin’s consequences, Cain’s complaint, and:

GOD’S MERCY v. 15-16

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.

What is the definition of mercy? Not getting what we deserve! People cry out for God to be fair. I get a sense in Cain’s complaint that he is mad that God isn’t fair. Praise God that He isn’t fair!!

God promised Cain that He would protect him. In fact, God put a mark on Cain so whoever found him would not kill him. There are various thoughts about what this mark was, but no one knows for sure. Where Scripture is not clear I prefer to not conjecture. The word used here for “mark” is translated “appointed a sign” in the New American Standard Bible. It is the same word used in the following Bible accounts.

The last of the 10 plagues that God sent on Pharaoh and the Egyptians for his refusal to let the Israelites go was the plague on the first born. (Exodus 11-12)

Exodus 11:4–7 So Moses said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. **5** Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave

girl, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. **6** There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. **7** But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal.’ Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.

What would the distinction be between the Israelites and Egyptians?

Exodus 12:7 Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.

Exodus 12:12–13 “On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. **13** The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

Exodus 12:23 When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

This same word is used to describe the protection Rahab and her family would be given because of her protection of the Israelite spies (Joshua 2).

Joshua 2:12–13 Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign **13** that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you will save us from death.”

Joshua 2:17–18 The men said to her, “This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us **18** unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house.

Joshua 2:21 “Agreed,” she replied. “Let it be as you say.” So she sent them away and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

Based on these passages the mark or sign that God placed on Cain must have been visible.

James Montgomery Boice, “One of the clearest marks of sin is our almost innate desire to excuse ourselves and complain if we are judged in any way. How many times have you said, “But that’s not fair”? How many times have you complained against God who, if he was only fair and not also merciful, would have sent you to hell before you awoke this morning?”

How many of you woke up this morning? Our first breath should be to thank God for His mercy.

Lamentations 3:22–23 (ESV) — **22** The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; **23** they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

ILLUS.: I was reading a story about chickens and roosters this week that reminded me about Haiti. One of the times we went to Haiti we stayed in a place that had roosters next to it. These roosters loved to crow all night long. They were incredibly noisy and at times I wondered how they might taste. Rooster crowing reminds me of Peter, the one who denied Jesus. Jesus told the disciples that they would all fall away, but Peter said, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will (Matthew 26:33).” Jesus replies, “Truly I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” In response Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same.

After the third time Peter denied knowing Jesus, the rooster crowed, and Peter remembered what Jesus said and he went out and wept bitterly. In Mark 16, after Jesus had died the women went to the tomb to anoint Jesus but they found the stone rolled away and the body missing. The angel told them Jesus was risen and he gave the ladies a mission. “Go, tell His disciples and Peter.” (Mark 16:7) Later, when the disciples are fishing, Jesus appears to them and causes them to catch a net full of fish. John declares, “It is the Lord.” Peter jumps in the water and comes running to Jesus who commissions Peter to feed God’s sheep. Is that not a picture of God’s mercy!!!! I wonder, if after that, when Peter heard a rooster crow, he was reminded of God’s mercy. Can I challenge us this week, when you hear a rooster crow, that we be reminded of God’s mercy. Maybe you could put the sound on your phone to come up every day at a certain time and take some time to thank God for His mercy.

Lyrics from the hymn, “And Can It Be?”:

’Tis mercy all, immense and free,

For, O my God, it found out me!

SO WHAT???

*Have I come to know the only One who can forgive my sin?
Repent and believe

*Am I fleeing from sin (be accountable)

*Am I pursuing godliness

*Thank God for His mercy!!