

ABEL STILL SPEAKS

(Hebrews 11:4)

Intro.

1. Many of us remember lessons learned from or words or phrases said by someone who has passed from this life.
2. Those lessons or those words still influence us.
3. We'll say something like, I can remember what _____ used to say about a situation like this, or _____ taught me to do this.
4. I've done, you've done it, and hopefully we will have such an influence on others that it will done with what we've said or taught.
5. We often speak of those who've died as living on in our memories and they do so by the influence they had on us.
6. Hebrews 11:4 says that Abel, a man who died young, still speaks today and will continue to speak as long as the Bible is read.
7. Genesis 4:1-8 fills out the picture for us.
8. This man who lived over 6,000 years ago is still speaking today.
9. What does he say to us?
10. He says...

I. Faith includes obedience.

- a. We see this in the word "offered" in Hebrews 11:4.
 - i. Notice Hebrews 11:8.
 - ii. Abel didn't simply believe that a sacrifice would be acceptable.
 - iii. He is mentioned in the hall of fame of faith because of what he did, not because of what he believed.
 - iv. However, that he believed is seen in the fact that he did something.
- b. There are a lot of people who claim the name of Christian who say that faith is simply a willingness to accept facts regarding Jesus combined with a willingness to trust Jesus.
- c. The truth is, real faith is never shown to be faith until it does what God requires.
 - i. James 2:18.
 - ii. Faith is shown, not just stated.
 - iii. If someone truly has faith in Jesus, then it never has to be stated by that person he has faith.
 - iv. Everyone will know by that person's obedience to the commands of Jesus.
- d. When you read Hebrews 11, each of these great men and women of God have action verbs connected to the phrase "by faith" before their names.
- e. This shows in a tremendous way the very nature of biblical faith.
- f. It could have just as correctly been said that each of these heroes yielded to divine demand – they were given a command and they were obedient to the command.
- g. Abel's offering was by faith because it was obedient to the command of God (Romans 10:17).

II. God is watching.

- a. God is observing the lives of those He creates.
- b. He sees all that we do in general, and our worship in particular.
- c. You and I are not free to live as we please.
 - i. Proverbs 15:3.

ii. Hebrews 4:13.

III. **Worship involves sincerity and substance.**

- a. There are three things involved in true worship:
 - i. The proper object – God.
 - ii. A genuine disposition of mind – spirit.
 - iii. Following the proper format – truth.
 - iv. John 4:24.
- b. There are those in the religious world that say Cain's offering was rejected because he didn't have a pure heart or a sincere attitude towards God.
 - i. Nowhere in scripture is there any type of mention of this.
 - ii. He brought of the fruit of the ground, but he seemed to do so with a desire to please God.
- c. Cain's displeasing of God stemmed from him offering what he wanted to offer.
 - i. He seemed to believe that it didn't matter what he brought, as long as he brought something.
 - ii. Just like those today who feel that as long as they offer some type of worship they are okay and pleasing to God.
- d. Whenever man has changed the worship of God, no matter under what system, they have displeased God.
 - i. Cain displeased God in our text.
 - ii. Jeroboam displeased God by changing the worship of the Israelites.
 - iii. Those that changed the simple worship put forth in the New Testament displease God today.
- e. Abel offered his sacrifice by faith and Cain offered his sacrifice by sight.
 - i. Abel offered by the word of God, while Cain offered by his emotions, personal judgment, and his own desires.
 - ii. There is a great difference between the two ways of offering.
- f. When people today offer worship to God in the manner laid out in the New Testament they are doing so by faith, while others offer that which they want, the same differences are seen.
- g. Cain's anger after the offering being rejected does not mean that his original offering was offered out of an impure motive or heart.
 - i. In fact, the Hebrews writer says that Abel's sacrifice was more excellent than Cain's, not his attitude.
 - ii. Also, John wrote that Cain's works were evil, not his attitudes (1 John 3:12).

IV. **Obedience condemns disobedience.**

- a. Many times, those who are obedient to the Lord draw harsh feelings or even persecution from those who are disobedient.
- b. Notice Hebrews 11:7 – Noah's obedience condemned the world.
- c. Cain learned from God in some manner that the Lord accepted Abel's offering and had rejected his.
 - i. This, of course, angered Cain.
 - ii. God knew that it angered Cain and warned him that his anger was about to lead to more sin.
- d. Sadly, we know that it did.

- e. Today, when we do what is right, we need to be ready for those who don't do right to be upset with us.
- f. It follows surely as day follows night.

V. Influence lives on.

- a. Abel only lived a short time on earth.
 - i. We don't know how long it was, but it doesn't seem very long.
 - ii. Yet, the scriptures teach that he is still speaking.
- b. Think of the influence of John Calvin, Charles Darwin, and others who have taught false things.
- c. Every time we bury a loved one, we are reminded of the influence of Adam (Romans 5:12).
- d. Think about the influence of Joseph, Daniel, Jesus, and men like Paul.
- e. Both good and bad influences live on in this world.
- f. Jesus once spoke of this same truth (Matthew 26:6-13).
- g. This is a seemingly insignificant act, but it will live on as long as time does.
- h. What will be said about the legacy we leave behind?
 - i. Our actions, words, influence will live on.
 - ii. How it will affect those we leave behind and on further into ages yet to come?
- i. We know of people who obeyed the gospel and it has led to numerous generations of faithful Christians.
- j. We also know of others who have left the Lord and we see the sad results in the lives of their families.
- k. Our influence lives on even after we are gone from this life.

Conclusion

1. As I studied for this, I came across one writer who said that despite that fact that Cain tried to silence his brother, Abel is still speaking.
2. He has tremendous lessons for us to learn.
3. Abel made the hall of fame of faith because he simply did what God had told him to do.
4. It's really that simple.
5. Have you done what God has told you to do when it comes to salvation?
6. Are you doing what God has told you to do when it comes to living for Him?
7. Abel is still speaking.
8. Are we listening?

Much of this sermon came from an article by Wayne Jackson.