

Jesus In Genesis: Pt 2

Intro: I don't think there is ANY area of the Scripture that is more misunderstood, mis-taught and confused than giving. On any given day you can turn on the TV or radio and you will hear and see some outrageous and contradictory things.

- God doesn't care what and how you give...totally up to you what you do (Never express thanks by time, talent etc)
- God is the great accountant in the sky, watching every penny, counting every hour you serve, monitoring every talent
- God offers you a deal/contract: If you invest "seed money" in someone's ministry, Or serve Him and Others If you just spend and Hour with him in the am...All day awesome! He is OBLIGATED to bless you 100, 1000!
- Because you are His child you can ask for ANYTHING...sign of His blessing when He gives you..RR, G5

Now, keep in mind, when I am talking about giving, I'm not JUST talking about money and finances. Giving includes:

- Time When and How do you spend time with Him? (Devotions/Study/Worship)
- Treasure Money I am going to give to you, return to you because you have blessed me...(What do I give?)
- Talent Abilities: I want to serve you...But I never find time or opportunity...(How do I use what I have?)

As we said last week, everything is in Genesis...Including giving.

In the account of Cain and Abel we get some insight/wisdom into 3 of the foundational principles of giving.

Simple story teaches us 3 essential principles that will give us insight into how God views our giving: Time, Talent, Treasure

Read The Story:

Gen 4:1-8

Pg 3

At first glance you find yourself wondering...what was wrong with Cain's offering?

He brought what he had. Why wasn't it as good as Abel's?

What made the difference? 3 keys you need to pay attention to in the account of what happened.

- The ATTITUDE of Excellence seen in Abel's Giving: Vs 3-4
>Cain brought "some of the fruit of the soil" His giving was casual and convenient
The feeling you get as you read the text is that Cain's giving was almost an afterthought, doing the expected
Looked up one day and thought...wow...I have so much...I should give something back
So he gathered some of his abundance and he made an offering to God...wasn't a BAD offering...wasn't rejected
Formalistic, Just kind of doing what was expected and going through the motions kind of action

>But Abel brought "some" of the fat portions of the firstborn of his flock"

The bible uses very different words to describe Abel's gift

Fat portions: Considered to be the very BEST of the animal

Abel looked at what he had and thought to himself...What should I give to God?

Let me give the VERY BEST I have to offer! So he went and got the "fattest" of the flock

Heb 11:4 "By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did."

Principle #1: When we give to God we should give of our very BEST!

Both the OT and the NT teach this principle!

OT: Deut and Malachi both tell us that when an offering is brought to the Lord, cant bring blind, lame, sick!

God doesn't want to be an afterthought in our lives. We need to demonstrate our commitment to Him by giving Him

~First part of our day in devotions; First part of our week in worship. First of our financial increase

Illus: Traveling to China: Meet with Pastor Allen Yuan

First met, took us out to eat...Peking Duck...Delicacy

Pick the choicest part of the duck...make a little pancake...put it on my plate!!!

Give the BEST is to honor that one that you are giving it to!

- The Attitude of FAITH seen in Abel's Giving:
>Cain looked around at all of his abundance, picked out some of what was there, making sure he had enough for himself
Nothing notable in his offering; Olives; Grain, Pomegranates
THEN he decided to give to God out of what was leftover

>Abel was different: Key: SOME of the fruits of the soil VS The FAT PORTIONS from the FIRSTBORN

Firstborn/Firstfruits: The earliest gathered produce(or firstborn) offered to God in acknowledgement and thanks for His blessing and provision

Fat Portions = BEST part Not just "some" but hand picked from the very First...and very BEST

This kind of Giving says, God, You get the best of what I have! I love you, want to honor you...want to thank you

When you give the firstborn/firstfruits it is an act of FAITH!

~Faith that there is more to come

~Faith to honor the one you offer to as more important than yourself

~Faith to say thank you in advance

~Faith to give the first and best to another...and wait for yourself! (Winter)

Illus: Older sister was dating...brought home for dinner...6 kids "Chicken leg" I'll get more when it comes by again!!

Principle #2: When we give to God we are to give in FAITH

What part of your day does God get..When do you spend time with Him? Does he get your best? Or leftovers
What part of your energy...and time in service does God get? Best? Or does He get what is left after everyone else?
What part of your money does God get? Does you give to him first? Or Do you give to him from what is left after all

Illus: That is what the tithe does for us! We get paid...we sit down and say...God...the first goes to you...You multiply
Look at calendar for day...God you get my time at my BEST! I am going to trust you to make the rest work!
That is what we do when we look at how we serve God. God...I'm putting you in my calendar FIRST, rest follow

And THAT is Why Abel's offering was looked on with favor

Because Abel was honoring God...Cain just going through motions Abel was trusting God...Cain was trusting himself

- **The SACRIFICE represented by Abel's Giving.**

>Cain gave out of what he had...looked at the abundance of the produce and selecting some for God (God got SOME)
I am convinced he did what we do quite often. God, This is what I need, This is what I require...From what is leftover

>Abel had a very different approach.

Looked at his flock...He picked the very best...and then the "fat portions" Best portions of the Best!

Cain sacrificed very little...while Abel sacrificed and offered the very best he had to God

And THAT is why the Scripture says..God looked with "favor" on Abel's offering

Lit = Kindled something: Could be literally...set the offering on fire and it was consumed

Or, it could be, caused God's eyes to light up and his heart to be warmed...Maybe ALL of those things!

Principle #3: Sacrifice: I am going to give what is mine to YOU...to Honor you!

Willingly lay down my rights to everything...Time, Talent, Treasure And Put YOU before Me!

I am going to give up the FIRST, and I am going to Honor you with the BEST of what I have

Jesus in Genesis:

Here is the question you have to be asking yourself right about now...WHY? Why would someone do such a thing?

Why are those things so important to God?

I am glad you asked...because the answer to that questions leads us to see Jesus in Genesis!

We give our BEST...Because God gave His Best!

We Give our FIRSTFRUITS/FIRSTBORN of our "flocks" Because God gave HIS first born!

God Gave US His First...God Gave US His Best...and God gave to us Sacrificially

John 1:14 *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Begotten who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

1John 4:9 *This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son {9 Or <his only begotten Son>} into the world that we might live through him.*

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one his only begotten Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

God looked with FAVOR upon Abel's sacrifice because it reminded Him of His own giving:

Giving His Best Giving His First Giving Sacrificially

When you see that...and Understand that...Doesn't that make YOU want to give your BEST, Your FIRST, SACRIFICIALLY

Illus; We read the words...God gave His son...but the reality of that seldom sinks in...40 years...until I finally "got" it
3-4 months ago I got on a plane and made a visit to a dear friend...I walked into the room, looked at me with tears in his eyes and he said, "Dennis, God took my firstborn" Wept I held him in my arms as he cried...the cry of a father that
Prayed: God give me the words: When He paused...I simply said
God may have TAKEN your firstborn...but He GAVE His only begotten Son...for you and yours.
Next day I stood in the room as he preached...and closed his sermon with those words...50 people stood to their feet

CONCL: Who Gets the Leftovers? Who Gets your BEST? Who GETS your FIRST? Who gets your SACRIFICE

The next time you do your calendar: Ask yourself Next time opportunity to Give Ask Next time Serve...Ask

Key: Who gets the first and best? AND Who gets the leftovers?

WORSHIP; DEVOTIONS: SERVICE .Once I have honored you with my time, then I GET THE LEFTOVERS!!!

That REALLY is the essential question, isn't it? Who gets the leftovers? Me...or God?

Because here is what I know, the one who gets first pick, the one who gets the best:

THAT IS THE ONE BEING HONORED!

Am I willing to SACRIFICE what I think of as MINE...for HIM!? Why: He Gave His Best..First..Sacrificed