

98-01-10b

As we begin our second session this morning, we find ourselves in Genesis chapter 4 with the birth of Cain and the statement which follows a pattern we will see in the future many times. Remember when Benjamin is born to Rachel, the last of the twelve sons of Jacob. Rachel is dying and she calls him Ben-Oni, son of my pain, son of my sorrow.

And she actually finds this is her statement, but Jacob renames his son to Ben-Yamin, son of my right hand, but his mother named him Ben-Oni, son of my pain, son of my sorrow. But many times, in Genesis especially in the early days, you find women making a statement at the birth of their child that is the rationale for their name. And this is the first instance of that with Cain.

You will notice that that does not happen with her second son. Most of the sons of Jacob, you have a statement, a rationale for their name. Isaac, Itzhak, is named Laughter because of Sarah's laugh when God prophesied his birth and so forth.

And many times you have the etymology or the origin of the name based on some statement or some event. Jacob reaching out of the womb and grabbing his brother Esau's heel was one of the reasons he was named Yaakov or supplanter, the one who's going to take the place of somebody. He's struggling to get ahead kind of a thing.

So here she says, and we have made an attempt to understand more accurately this statement made by Eve, I have come to possess a man, the sign of the Lord. And I believe that this is a reference back because there is no parallel for saying with the help of the Lord here. There is no parallel for saying from the Lord.

That combination that we talked of last session with et or the aleph and the T there followed by the noun is never used for with the help of or from, from has a perfectly good Hebrew construction using the letter name. And so, and I think it makes sense. If you think about the uniqueness, this is the first human birth in history.

First time anyone has seen or experienced the paintings of childbirth. There's nobody there. There's no midwife.

It's just Adam and Eve. And here comes Cain after this, I assume nine months pregnancy and the usual things that accompany a birth. Certainly no anesthesia.

Nobody knows about hot towels and boiling water and any of that. And the most traumatic experience in Eve's life to date has just taken place. And she has come into possession of this baby.

Nobody's ever seen a baby before with their little necks and their big heads and their eyes and their little tiny fingers. And he is obviously by gender, a male and each. And it seems reasonable for her to think back and say, now I understand what God was saying

back in chapter three, verse 16, what it is to bring forth a child.

Not only, and many times these statements are sort of prophetic like they were with Jacob and so on. And the sorrow goes beyond just the physical pain of childbirth. There is a lot involved in giving birth to children and raising them and training them and then turning loose of them so that they can make their way in the world.

And all of that is in view back in verse 16. And I think Eve is beginning to understand what all is going to be involved in being a mother to her children when this takes place. So I have come into possession.

I have gotten, I have acquired this ish, the next man in the human race. This is the sign of the Lord. Verse two, then she bore again, this time his brother Abel.

We don't get the statement at birth on Abel. We don't know why she named him Abel. His name is likewise obscure as to meaning.

It has come to mean an exhalation or a breath. And again, I think that probably the Hebrew term has its source in Abel because Abel's life was brief. It was like Solomon says in Ecclesiastes, you have a chasing of the wind, man is a vapor.

He's here and then he blows away, he passes away. We all do fade as a leaf, Isaiah says. So Abel, his name has come to mean, I think in Hebrew, just a puff of breath, an exhalation or that which ascends perhaps in the sense that he died and went to God.

Now, Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time, it came to pass. This phrase in the beginning of verse three here, in the process of time, literally it says after a year, after a year.

And that makes sense when you think especially of Cain as a tiller of the ground. You have one agricultural cycle. You have the plowing, the planting, the watering, the nurturing, the weeding and so forth.

You have, he had to start at some point by gathering seed from whatever wild oats or wild wheat. Of course, I guess maybe that was the origin of the phrase sowing wild oats, perhaps Cain. Where did he get the seed to plant and cultivate these things? He had to gather it one season and save it and then plant it, plow and do all of the agricultural things that you do to get a crop the following year.

So when it says after a year, this is after Cain's first year of farming is the idea. That phrase, by the way, is not always translated literally. It can mean after some indefinite period of time.

A lot of times it just says after a time, but here just because of the context and because of the specifics of the construction, I think it is probably literal. And a lot of

commentators think it probably does mean after a year, you just have to figure out well, when was the beginning point of the year? Probably the first year of farming. So after a year, it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord.

Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. The Lord respected one, did not respect the other. Now, most of us have been through this story, perhaps many, many times.

Most of us already have in our mind what the problem is here. Abel is bringing an offering characterized by blood. Cain is bringing the salad offering.

It's not a blood offering. It's not an animal sacrifice. And we see in this immediately a problem.

Not to take anything away from that, there is significance in the word that is used here for offering. The word translated offering in verse three is minchah. M-I-N-C-H-A-H, minchah.

Now, the interesting thing, there are several words in Hebrew translated offering or sacrifice. And I want to stop and take a look at a few of these, having just elaborated at length on my desire to move forward and not, you know, post hole on cherubs and swords and trees of life and so forth. It is really important for our understanding of this part of the story to have an accurate idea of what's involved in this offering because this is the separation point.

This is what is going to be the determining place in Cain's fate. The process of time they brought, or after a year, Cain brought a minchah of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Well, if you go to the Levitical offerings, Leviticus chapters one through six especially, you have the details of the sin offering, the guilt offering, the peace offering and so forth.

Leviticus concentrates much of its attention on the feasts and on the offerings. And what we discover is that minchah is generally the word used for a grain offering. Minchah is not the word used for the sin offering, generally speaking.

Again, as I was saying during the break, we would love it. We would love to have God use technical language where one word always means the same thing. It never means something else.

Minchah is sometimes applied to other things. Sometimes it's applied to an incense offering. But its most general translation, especially in Leviticus, is grain offering.

I'm going to read to you from Brown, Driver and Briggs, the classic standard Hebrew lexicon under the entry for minchah on page 585, if you have the book. It is translated as gift, tribute or offering. Under definition number one, it is a gift or present.

And it is so used in Genesis chapter 32, several places, Genesis 32, 14, 19, 21 and 22. If you turn over to Genesis 32, you will find that this is in the life of Jacob after he leaves the household of Laban. Remember, he's finally worked for seven years and got tricked and married Leah.

And then he works another seven years and finally gets Rachel. And then he works another six years and gets all of the striped animals in the flock and so forth. So he's been working for Laban for 20 years.

He finally packs up and leaves. And Laban comes and follows him and they have a conversation and they make a covenant. And then he goes forward.

Now he's got to reconcile with his brother Esau. And in chapter 32 and 33 of Genesis, you have Jacob making his plan for meeting Esau whom he big dealed and deceived and sort of beat out of his inheritance. So look at verse 18, after he tells his servants in verse 13, 14, 15 and 16 to bring these 200 goats and 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 milk camels, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, 10 foals, puts them in the hands of his servants.

And in verse 18, he says, when you meet Esau and he says, who do you belong to? And what is all of this flock that you have around you? Then you shall say, these are your servant Jacob's. It is a present sent to my Lord Esau. The word present there is minka.

It is a gift. It is an offering for you. And in all of the narrative here in chapter 32 and 33, when he actually does meet Esau, look at verse 10 of chapter 33.

Esau says, I don't need all these things you brought. Jacob says, no, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my present from my hand in as much as I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God. And Jacob actually has seen the face of God.

He's just named the place Peniel, face of God in the previous chapter. So he says, I see your face just as though I had seen the face of God and you were pleased with me. Please take my blessing that is brought to you because God has dealt graciously with me.

So this present, this reconciliation offering, if you will, between Jacob and Esau is called a minka. So the word is used of this group of animals that is offered between men. It is also used of tribute.

You find this in Judges chapter three, verses 15, 17, and twice in verse 18. We won't turn there, but it has the idea of a gift to a king. And that's the second definition in Brown, Driver, and Briggs.

It can be a gift or a present. And our illustration there is Genesis 32. It can be tribute or something to appease somebody who has the power to come in and attack you with

their army, Judges chapter three.

The third definition here is an offering made to God of any kind, whether grain or animals. And it cites our passage, Genesis four. Also numbers 16, 15.

And number 16, 15 is interesting because this is the priests who come before God with censers. Remember the rebellion, the Korah rebellion? You have Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And they're saying, who made you a prince over us, Moses, that you should set yourself up and rule over us.

who made you a prince over us, Moses, So Moses fell on his face in verse four of number 16. And in verse five, he spoke to Korah and all his company saying, tomorrow morning, the Lord will show who is his and who is holy and will cause those who are holy to come near to him. That one whom he chooses, he will cause to come near to him.

Do this, take censers, Korah and all your company, put fire in them and put incense in them before the Lord tomorrow. And it shall be that the man whom the Lord chooses is the holy one. You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi.

They think that because they're Levites, that they ought to have the same right as Moses and Aaron. So to shorten a more lengthy and interesting story, go to verse 12. Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, but they said, we will not come up.

Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey? They're calling Egypt the land flowing with milk and honey. To kill us in the wilderness, that you should keep acting like a prince over us, rejection of authority, dissatisfaction with the status quo and the assignment of function. They are Levites and they have been assigned a function as Levites in the worship life of Israel, but they're not satisfied with that.

They want the function that the sons of Aaron have. They want the function that Moses has and that Aaron has. They say, why should we be assigned some other function? We're just as good as you.

And there's wonderful application of this story in the modern day when people reject the structure that God has designed. So he says, moreover, you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey. Notice that's what they're interested in is the milk and honey.

You took us out of a land flowing with milk and honey. They were slaves in Egypt, but they think that was the place of prosperity. And he says, you've not brought us to another place flowing with milk and honey.

Where's the milk and honey? We want the milk and honey. We have a desire that's not being fulfilled. Haven't brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us

an inheritance of fields and vineyards.

We're Levites. We don't get to own land. This law thing that you're cooking up here and saying it comes from God, we're left without possessions.

We're just supposed to serve and be supported by the rest of the congregation here. Will you put out the eyes of these men? Because we see this, are you going to blind us so that we won't see these things and see the way things really are? We will not come up. Then Moses was very angry and said to the Lord, do not respect their offering.

When they come before you, O Lord, with their censer full of fire, their minkah, do not respect it. I have not taken one donkey from them, nor have I hurt one of them. And you will recall the outcome of this story.

When they approach, bad things happen. Much like we're going to see in Genesis chapter four, where the earth opens its mouth to swallow up the blood of Abel, the earth is going to open its mouth and swallow up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and all of their followers. But that's a minkah.

It was an offering brought before the Lord. It is something that accompanies approach to someone that you have an issue with. Jacob brings it when he approaches Esau.

These priests are going to bring it when they approach God. The fourth definition given here in the lexicon is a grain offering, whether raw, roasted, ground to flour, or prepared as breads or cakes. In the authorized version, it is often translated meat offering, which is deceptive.

If you go to the original King James, the AV as they call it, you'll see a meat offering, but this is meat in the sense of food. It actually means the opposite. It means cereal grain.

And this is a very large section in the lexicon because there are many, many references to it in the Old Testament. It's a very common usage, much more common than the preceding three. It is mixed with oil in Ezekiel 46, 14, and baked in verse 20 of Ezekiel 46.

Extensive references here. In Exodus chapter 30, verse 9, in Exodus chapter 40, verse 29, this is a grain offering specifically. There is no other way to take it.

The minkah is a grain offering. And we could go on and document this. A very common word used extensively through Leviticus for a grain offering.

Why do we go through all of that? Well, if the issue was that this was not a blood sacrifice, if that was the big deal, he should have brought a lamb and instead he brought a salad. That should be indicated by the occasion, by the type of offering that is being offered. A burnt offering, a whole burnt offering is not a minkah, it is an olah, O-L-A-H.

The sin offering of Leviticus chapter 1 is an olah. It is an offering made by fire. It is a whole burnt offering.

And that is the kind of sacrifice that Abel offers. But it's not called an olah, it's called a minkah. The same word is used throughout this account in Genesis chapter 4. So the issue is not that this should have been a blood sacrifice, that this was a technical detail of the offering that Cain violated.

A grain offering is a perfectly acceptable offering. In fact, the law of Moses, which of course is going to come much later, but apparently was reflected even in the early days of the family priesthood here, requires an offering of firstfruits. And this is after a year, and although it doesn't say that this is a firstfruits offering, it well could have been.

After a year, Cain brought the produce of his efforts. And that's a legitimate offering under the law. The law requires this, to bring a grain, and a minkah is a grain offering in many cases.

So the detail here is not telling us that this should have been in a law, and instead he brought a minkah. He brought a minkah, which is a perfectly good minkah as far as its components. One of the other common terms for offering, which if this was symbolic of atonement, remember the offering that was offered on the day of atonement, this was another Hebrew word, which is a verb, and it's a verb that is derived from the Hebrew word zebak.

The zebak is from the verb zabak, which means to slaughter something for sacrifice. And the noun that is derived from this, zebak, is translated sacrifice. This was the common sacrifice.

It's a very common word. And this was the sacrifice that always involved an animal. It's more or less a technical term.

This was an animal sacrifice, specifically one in which the offeror ate a portion of the meat, or the priest ate a portion of the meat. You know, this was the problem with the sons of Eli, is that when the sacrifices were being brought, they were using the three-pronged hook and pulling the meat out and eating more than they were supposed to. This was the issue with King Saul when Samuel came to him and said, I'm going to give you the upper thigh portion that is God's portion, because you are assuming God's role in Israel as king.

And there's a lot involved in that if you've gone through that portion of 1 Samuel. But the zebak was the offering that involved an animal. Many times these are gonna overlap.

A zebak could be an olah, a whole burnt offering. But there are portions that are saved out and there are things that you do with the fat and so on. My point here is, in Genesis chapter four, if God wanted to make a point of the fact that this should have been an

animal and was not, it would have been very effective for him to use zebak, or olah, or any of the other words that indicate that this was supposed to be, maybe this was the annual day of atonement as it existed in those early days.

But minka is not used to describe the offering on the day of atonement in Leviticus. It's zebak, it's olah involved in that. And that's not what's used.

And I think it is very significant that minka, a lot of people in Israel would have been scratching their head if someone had said, well, the reason Cain was not accepted is his minka wasn't composed of the proper elements. That's what a minka was, is a grain offering in Israel. If you wanted to talk about a grain offering, that's the word you used.

So I don't know about you, but it certainly left me scratching my head. I was quite surprised the first time I translated Genesis chapter four back in my early seminary days that minka was the word used here because I had been taught all my life, well, Cain should have brought a blood offering and he did not. So what is the issue back here in Genesis chapter four? Now, Abel brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat.

And this tells us something. Have we had any mention of sacrifice yet in Genesis? Where does this whole concept of sacrifice come from? Why does Abel say, I think I'll take the firstborn and I think I'll bring their fat? There has been communication from God to Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel about worship. That is a fact.

And that communication is not recorded in the Scripture. This is very important. There has been communication from God to Adam and Eve, to Cain and Abel about worship.

And that communication has not been preserved for us in Scripture. They know what a sacrifice is. They know what the significance of the firstborn is.

Now Passover and coming out of Egypt and the slaughter of the firstborn is hundreds of years in the future. They're not aware of any of that symbolism or any of that teaching. But Abel brings the firstborn of his flock and of the fat.

And when you see that phrase of the fat, that carries you over into Leviticus and the burnt offerings and the zebak, sacrifices of animals where there are specific things to be done with specific parts of the animals. And I would love to go over there and do a whole thing on sacrifices, but here's the point. God has told them how to worship.

Who is worship for? Unbelievers or believers in the salvation, ultimate destination in eternity sense? Believers. The minkah is not the means of coming to God for salvation. The minkah is often the grain offering.

It is a grain offering that was first fruits. A grain offering could be a Thanksgiving offering. This was part of the worship life of believers in Israel.

The minkah, especially the grain offering does not speak of salvation. That's why it's not a blood offering. I shouldn't say it doesn't speak of salvation.

It doesn't emphasize the sacrifice aspect of salvation the way the slaughter of an animal does. It still speaks of it, but in a different sense. And there's a wonderful truth there.

We've done the doctrine of bread in the past and what it means for that grain to be parched and to pass through the fire and to be ground and refined and mixed and so forth. There's a wonderful study there that can be done. The point here is this worship is a function that believers perform.

This is a gift that is brought when one approaches God within the bounds of relationship. Esau is not a stranger to Jacob when Jacob approaches him, is he? They are brothers. But there has been a disruption in the relationship.

He's not saying, come and be my blood brother. Here's a minkah. He says, you are my brother and we need to be reconciled.

It speaks of reconciliation within the bounds of an established relationship. That's how it was used in Israel. That's how it was used by Jacob.

And that is the idea that this indicates a desire to bridge the gap that may exist in a relationship to approach with a gift. So the Lord respected Abel and his offering. Now, how did they know? How did they know that God liked the one and didn't like the other? Whatever the, we have to assume that the mechanics of this sacrifice, this minkah offering were similar to those in Leviticus.

And Abel going through the, actually as a bak type of offering with the animal and segmenting it into its parts and bringing the fat especially as an important part of his offering. But the intent was the minkah. That was the type of offering that it was.

How would you know? Whatever you do, if you bring the grain and you have the fire and so forth, how do you know whether God accepts it or not? Well, the assumption, and you may have heard this, there have been people that actually thought this was in the biblical account, that God came down and consumed it by fire. Sort of like Elijah on Mount Carmel. Abel got his offering assembled and stood back and kaboom, big bolt of thunder and the whole top of the mountain is taken off and his offering is accepted.

And Cain keeps lighting matches under his grain offering and nothing ever happens. We are not told how they knew that God accepted one and did not accept the other. We just know that they knew by some means or other.

It doesn't say that fire came down from heaven and consumed the animal and like the prophets of Baal, Cain danced around and nothing ever happened with his. We just don't know. It says the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but he did not respect Cain and

his offering.

And I personally think that there is something in these early days, because of that gradual nature of the separation of the presence of God that we talked about, because of the fact that Cain did not have a presence in the world before, I think there was a much more immediate means of communicating with God in those days. Could have been angels, could have been voice from heaven. That's certainly a common theme here.

God is going to talk to Cain, have a little conversation with him here in a few moments. But this appears to have been sort of a two way conversation or communication by some means with Abel and God, and Cain and God. I don't think it was some sort of a sign of fire.

I think that this was much more real. Because think about it, these people had no Bible, no Old Testament. Where do they get their truth? It has to come in a pretty direct form from God.

Not only truth in the spiritual realm, but also truth in the practical realm. What is a sacrifice? How do we do it? And so forth. And we know that angels were employed in the early days of human civilization to help get things rolling.

Whatever the means was, God respected Abel. And this is one of the reasons I say this, is that it mentions the individual and his offering. It doesn't just say God respected Abel's offering.

It says God respected Abel and his offering. And it says that God did not respect Cain himself or his offering. And that's important, because the offering, this minkah that is brought, is not disassociated from the individual who brings it.

And it isn't what they are doing, it's why they are doing it that counts. I don't believe that there is anything intrinsically wrong with Cain's minkah, the grain offering. It is certainly a well-documented, legitimate, and even commanded offering to Israel.

They are commanded to bring a minkah, to bring the grain after they have had a harvest. But God does not respect the individual who brings it, and he does not respect his offering. God respects Cain.

And I think that it is indicative, and there is a lot of significance in the fact that Abel brings a lamb of the flock. And we'll come back to that momentarily. He did not respect Cain and his offering, and Cain was very angry.

What is the reaction when God does not respect him and does not respect his offering? Is he confused? Is he repentant? Is he questioning? Is he seeking? Is he just surprised? Oh Lord, what is the matter? I've done everything you've said. I don't understand why you haven't respected it. It doesn't say that.

It says he was very angry. By the way, the first occurrence of anger in human history is right here. It doesn't say God got angry in the garden.

It doesn't say the serpent got angry when he was cursed. But here you have anger. He was very angry and his countenance fell.

So the Lord said to Cain, why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? What does it mean for your countenance to fall? That's a quaint Hebrew expression that means that you're out of sorts. You don't have an uplifted face and all is right with the world. When your countenance falls, that's like depression.

You're depressed. You're upset. You're dissatisfied.

You don't have an upturned face. You have a downcast expression. God says, why are you angry? Why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door and its desire is for you.

But you should rule over it. If by now you have not already detected the link back to the previous chapter, that language should ring a bell in our minds. Remember that its desire is there.

You shall rule faster over it. God told Eve in the previous chapter, your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you. And you have the same language here.

An almost identical statement. And one of the keys to understanding what's happening here goes back to the previous chapter. One of the things I would like to point out is that there is a similarity with Cain's transgression and Eve's transgression.

But look at the difference. What happened when Eve sinned? There was an outside agent in the form of the serpent that came and cajoled and deceived and was the catalyst for her sin. There is no serpent coiled around a tree or climbing up in the tree or sitting in the tree with still having its legs or whatever.

There is no serpent involved here with Cain, is there? The agent of temptation is no longer outside. It is now within. This is a sign of the change that has taken place as a result of the fall.

It doesn't take a serpent on the outside anymore to suggest and to steer and maneuver thinking into bad channels. Now we, by way of application, we each have our own serpent who does not have to be heeded and doesn't have to be listened to and can be answered with the truth for us as believers. But if we follow the path of his thinking, we wind up in transgression.

So it doesn't take an outside agent now for Cain. And when God does not respect His offering, He is angry and His countenance falls. The Lord comes to Cain, doesn't He? The

Lord says to Cain, and this could be, I think, in the course of this conversation in which Cain finds out that He's not accepted them and He's not respected.

The Lord said to Cain, in the same way God came to Adam and Eve in the garden, didn't He? He approached and asked questions. Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree? Why are you angry? Why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? Isn't there a way to acceptance? Why are you angry over not being accepted? The implication here is God has spelled out the way to be accepted. All you have to do is follow it.

And this is something that Cain is to do. If this were salvation for Cain, if this is God evangelizing Cain, why is the issue works and not faith? If you trust in Me, will you not be accepted? Accepted would have been an easy thing for God to say. But He doesn't say, if you trust in Me, if you place your faith in Me, if you come to Me and believe that I am and that I will reward those who diligently seek Me.

As it says in Hebrews 11.6, He says, if you do well, and the performance of command, obedience to God's command is a responsibility for believers. And this is why I believe that Cain and Abel are two believers with two different responses to their task, to their responsibility and their opportunity for worship. Cain, in bringing his menka, hasn't necessarily transgressed the way of bringing an offering.

To make that point in this passage, we could have had that communication from God included. And behold, the Lord said, when you come to Me with a sacrifice, bring a lamb from the flock, a firstborn and offer the fat and so forth. We could have had two verses here to tell us mechanics for sacrifice.

But behold, when Cain brought his sacrifice, he brought a salad. And then we would clearly see this is a transgression of type of sacrifice. But to an Israelite reading this, and that's who got this book, first recipients were Israelites who already had the law.

What does it say? Cain brought a menka, grain offering, nothing wrong with that, but God didn't accept it. And we don't know why yet, why God did not accept it. But now we're finding out because God tells Cain, if you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door.

He's not saying if you sin, you won't be accepted. The doing well is this attitude of obedience, this attitude of desiring to serve God in the way that God has specified. Sin lies at the door, waiting to pounce on you if you do not do well.

We think, well, not doing well must be to sin. But there's something that precedes sin, and that's not doing well. So sin, it reminds us what it says over in, now I can't remember the address, that's terrible.

When lust has conceived, bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, brings forth

death. When lust has conceived, it brings forth sin. If you do not do well, sin lies at the door.

And this tells us that this is doing well in our thinking. And if you go back to where we had our Scripture reading this morning in Hebrews 4, what did the author say there about Cain and Abel? He said, By faith, Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. The difference in the sacrifice was not wrong mechanics per se, but it was faith and the lack of faith.

And this is living faith. These heroes in Hebrews chapter 11, this is not the account of their salvation, is it? This is the account of their living. This is chapter 11 of Hebrews, not chapter 1. Enoch walking with God.

Noah preparing the ark. Abraham obeying when he was called to go out. Dwelling in the land of promise and so forth.

These are all accounts of believers living by faith. These are illustrations of believers living faith. Abel in living faith.

This isn't the account of Abel's salvation when he brings this sacrifice. This is his obedience. He is doing well because of his faith.

Cain is not doing well because he lacks faith. And it's not saving faith, it's living faith. And through which was obtained witness that he was righteous.

Righteousness by faith, the theme of Romans. A big theme in Hebrews. And that is the issue.

Living faith, living righteousness is the distinction. And that's why God says in Genesis 4, 7, if you do well, will you not be accepted? Being accepted into fellowship. Having your offering accepted.

Having your person accepted. There is the strong possibility that believers cannot be acceptable in God's sight. Romans chapter 12.

Offer yourselves a living sacrifice which is your reasonable service. This is your service as a believer to offer sacrifice. The conclusion for us, and again, most people think that Cain is a hellbound unbeliever and so forth.

And I don't want us just to hang up on whether or not Cain's eternal destination was heaven or hell. The point here is clear, especially in the light of Hebrews 11.4. And that is that we do well through faith. Doing well involves faith.

It is not the mechanics of our service as much as the faith that lies behind it. That's what makes our service acceptable. That's what makes our sacrifice acceptable is when it is done in faith.

That is how we do well. What does that mean for us? We have to do what we do because we recognize the way God looks at it. We desire to please God and be acceptable in His sight.

We do it heartily as unto the Lord. Everything that we do, the small things, the big things. And what we do is not nearly as important as why we do it.

Cain is rejected here and is not respected because he doesn't do what he does in faith. It isn't so much that the mechanics of the sacrifice are wrong. It is that his heart before God is wrong.

And this understanding is going to help us understand the next section of Genesis 4, God's dealings with Cain and the results after the murder of his brother Abel. We're going to see some wonderful things in connection with Cain, Abel, and Seth next time. But this is a good place to stop, so we'll close in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank You for the wonderful truth that You have communicated to us through Your Word. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will give us insight and understanding and enable us to see the application and the relevance of these things to our lives, our circumstances, and our thinking and deciding before You. We ask all these things in Jesus' name, Amen.