

## My will and God's will (part 2)

ODCC 14/06/09 (x.pages)

**Text:** Gen 4:1-8

### Introduction

1. Last week as we looked at Genesis we saw that God is not so much interested in rules as He is in relationship.
  - a. I mentioned last week that there were 2 things God gave to man. The first is purpose and the second is religion (they cannot be separated and you can't have one without the other).
  - b. Humankind were given certain tasks – they knew why they were here. They didn't have to spend time “finding themselves” because they were not lost.
  - c. God gave the gift of freedom of choice. He gave them so many possibilities, He gave them liberty, and individuality, and fulfilment, etc.
  - d. And God gave man perfect relationship with Himself so that when He met with Adam & Eve it was for companionship – God socialised with man.
2. Mankind has lost both things because of the fall (sin). They've lost their way and are not sure exactly why they're here, nor where they're going:
  - a. And they've lost their relationship with God so that re-establishing contact with God is not natural, like two friends meeting with each other.
  - b. The Bible tells us that our sins have separated us from God and, elsewhere, that we have made God into an enemy (Is 59:1-2 & Rom 5:10).
3. Adam & Eve were cast out of the garden barring them from the Tree of Life. Jesus is the Tree of Life and has come to re-establish both our purpose and our religion.
  - a. He said, *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy...* (Jn 10:10) and that's what the Devil did in the garden and has been doing ever since (although we must take responsibility for our choices);
  - b. Jesus said of Himself, *...I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of!* That's how “The Message” puts it and it's a good way of putting it when you look at the original Greek meaning.

### A sad story, though

1. As you read that horrific story about mankind sinning and continue reading, it goes from bad to worse! The population grows fairly rapidly and it says that *The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth.*
  - a. Many of those people living would have known Adam & Eve and known the story and yet there comes a time when in the whole population only one man (Noah) is serving God everyone else are doing their own thing – they are lost!
  - b. What has changed today? Not much. When you consider the world's population is more or less 7 billion people (7,000,000,000) and most do not have a relationship with God. Many of those are religious but Christianity is the only religion that teaches a personal relationship with a personal God.
  - c. Jesus prophesied how it would be when He returns and says, *As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be* (Matt 24:37).
2. But let's look at Adam & Eve's immediate offspring. We are told that Eve had a son by the name of Cain and later she had another son by the name of Abel.
  - a. We're not given much information but we know that God was still communicating with the fallen human race because Cain knew that God was displeased with Him.
  - b. Instead of repenting and changing his heart, Cain becomes displeased with God and because he cannot lay his hand on God, Cain vents his anger on his brother Abel because his brother had God's favour.
  - c. In other words, Cain was spiteful to God by destroying something that pleased God.

## The difference between them

1. Cain tilled the ground – he grew fruit and vegetables. Abel was a keeper of sheep (the first shepherd). And we are told that at some point both brought a sacrifice to God: Cain brought some of his produce and Abel brought a choice lamb from the flock.
  - a. There is debate as to whether God had clearly instructed an animal sacrifice and so Cain was rejected because he decided he would bring what seemed best to him
  - b. It seems probable that God did command a lamb to be sacrificed as the shedding of it's blood for the forgiveness of sin was to point to the death of Jesus as the ultimate sacrificial Lamb of God.
  - c. However, we are not told and so cannot say for sure why Cain's sacrifice was rejected.
2. But notice the words: it says that **for Cain and for his offering** God had no regard:
  - a. For Cain, God had no regard. Cain had a heart problem. The problem didn't lie ultimately with his sacrifice but with his heart, his attitude, his relationship with God.
  - b. If those things had been right then undoubtedly the sacrifice would have been right.
  - c. In one place God tells His people that He detests their sacrifices and their religiosity. What He wants is their heart; He wants their love; He wants their devotion, He wants their commitment, etc. because like a husband, that's exactly what God had given to them as though they were His wife.
3. Hebrews tells us that "by faith Abel brought a better sacrifice than Cain" (11:4).
  - a. Abel put his trust in God for everything and never trusted in himself for anything – that's faith!

## God's advice to Cain

1. God said to Cain, "*Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up?*"
  - a. The words used for "countenance" each time are 2 different Hebrew words. The **first** means angry or sullen look but the **second** means "to be dignified or exalted"
  - b. So God is saying to Cain, "Why are you sulking? If you do right you'll have a happy face because you'll be elevated, or esteemed."
  - c. God goes on, "But if you don't do right, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."
2. This may seem to contradict what I said earlier, that God is not so much interested in rules as He is in relationship. This could be saying, "obey me or else!" But it's not saying that.
  - a. True or false. All plants need water or else they die? It's true, even a cactus needs water.
  - b. The same rule applies. If we were created for relationship with God but willingly pull up our roots and deny ourselves relationship, we will die.
  - c. If, on the other hand we do everything to ensure we develop and build and enhance our relationship with God, then "our countenance will be lifted up". We will be exalted or, in the words of Jesus, we will have abundant life.
  - d. If you make a decision to go your own way, you'll have help. **Sin is crouching at the door, its desire is for you.**
3. What we have here, in a nutshell, is a choice.
  - a. The 1st choice: I can say, "I want everything God has for me and if I make it my life priority, I will experience God's blessing upon my life."
  - b. The 2nd choice: I can say, like Frank Sinatra, "I'll do it my way"
  - c. To me, there really is no choice.

## Conclusion

1. O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! (Psalm 34:8).