

Remnant Life Church

November 3, 2019

Doing it Right

Genesis 4:6-7

“Do the right thing!” is an instruction that has been spoken by probably every parent at one time or another

- A good parent should instill that into their children from the earliest age
- It is the product of good character, integrity, and honesty – qualities that are fading from our culture more and more every day

But this is not a behavioral trait that some sociologist or psychologist developed out of a moment of sudden revelation – it is a statement from God

Context:

- Creation has been completed
- Adam and Eve have disobeyed God,
 - They have eaten of the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil
 - As a result, they have been expelled from the Garden of Eden (**Gen 3:23**)
- NOTE – their sin did not extinguish God’s love for them
 - Just as our sin does not mean God does not love us
 - **Rom 5:8** – ...*while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
- But sin carries consequence – and it did for both of them
 - For Adam it was an increase in the hardship of his labor
 - The ground was cursed (**Gen 3:17b-19**)
 - For Eve it would be the pain experienced in childbirth (**Gen 3:16**)

READ – **Genesis 4:1-7**

Focus on the 6th and 7th verses this morning:

- *Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”*

1. The first thing for us to understand is that God does not give up on Cain
 - a. God does not punish Cain
 - b. He doesn’t compare him to his brother (“Why can’t you be more like Abel?”)
 - c. God does not even come to accuse him
 - d. He simply asks him a question
 - i. Why are you angry?
 - ii. Why does your face look that way?
 1. In the original Hebrew, the word for downcast is *naphal*
 2. The word has several meanings that would apply here, and one of them is overthrown
 - iii. Another way to phrase God’s question to Cain is, “Why has anger overthrown you?”

- iv. Notice that God did with Cain the exact same thing He did with Adam and Eve
 - 1. When God asks a question of someone it is not because He needs information or doesn't know something
 - v. **Gen 3:11b** – *Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not eat from?*
 - 1. God instills the concept, from the very beginning the need for us to recognize and confess our sin
 - 2. It is the forerunner, and in fact, the introduction to the plan of salvation that begins with us admitting we are sinners and need to be forgiven
 - a. Our world today takes very little ownership for wrongdoing
 - b. It is always someone else's fault
 - e. Anger is a dangerous emotion if it is allowed to overthrow us
 - i. Do not fool yourself into thinking anger is not an issue for you simply because you don't have volcanic outbursts
 - ii. Silent anger is just as dangerous
 - 1. To others – silent treatment, drastic change in your personality and demeanor...
 - 2. To yourself – the physical destructiveness internally to a constant state or being always just on the edge of being angry
 - iii. Anger in and of itself is not a sin, but we are commanded not to allow it to control our emotions and our actions – turn into sin
 - iv. **Eph 4:26** - *In your anger do not sin*: *Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry*
 - v. But what leads to the anger is something you must understand and acknowledge in order not to let it overthrow you
 - f. But God's question to Cain is also saying, 'You have no reason to be angry and acting this way.'
 - i. How many times in our anger would that same sentence also apply?
 - ii. How often are we angry with no real just cause – especially as a child of God with a life surrendered to the leading of the Holy Spirit?
 - g. Finally, with that question God is also telling Cain to examine himself BEFORE it turns into a sin
 - i. He was saying to Cain, 'Check your heart before you act'
 - ii. God will always provide a way for us to avert our sinful intentions
 - iii. His Holy Spirit is present in each of us who know Him to change our course of thinking and action
2. We know that God has not given up on Cain because He tells him that he can still do it right.
- a. **Gen 4:7a** – *if you do what is right, will you not be accepted?*
 - b. In other words, if you go and fix this (bring the fat of the lamb instead of the grain) you will be accepted
 - c. But this was more than about what Cain brought as a sacrifice
 - i. God knew the hearts of both these men

- ii. Because a grain offering was acceptable to God (**Lev 2:1**)
 - d. This was not about Cain trying harder or the efforts of either brother that made the offering acceptable
 - i. It was then, and still is today, about doing it right!
 - e. There can only be one explanation as to why God did not accept the offering of Cain
 - i. His reasons, his motivation, and his heart were not right
 - ii. Cain was not bringing his offering out of gratitude and to honor God; He was bringing it out of obligation
 - iii. Abel had the right heart and Jesus taught this to His disciples and then Paul reinforced it later to the church in Corinth
 - 1. **Luke 21:1-4** - *As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."*
 - 2. **2 Cor 9:7** - *Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*
 - f. Cain could have made it right, but instead, he allowed his anger, his emotions, his own will to grow in and rule his heart and, as a result, the first murder was committed
 - g. It is never too late to change the emotion before the action
3. God then continues to show His love by giving Cain a warning
 - a. **Gen 4:7b** – *But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you*
 - b. God tells him he is in a dangerous place by allowing his anger to consume him
 - i. Anger, for that matter any destructive emotion such as jealousy and envy, are destructive forces that are both a choice and a habit
 - ii. Joseph and his brothers in **Genesis 37**
 - iii. If we choose to make anger a regular part of our lives, it will become the way we respond to anything that does not go the way we want it to
 - iv. At any point, Cain can choose to go a different way and change his heart
 - c. Sin is ALWAYS crouching at the door of our heart
 - i. If you are a Christian, your heart belongs to God and is guarded by the Holy Spirit
 - ii. So then how does sin get in?
 - 1. Because we open the door and invite it in!
 - 2. Our words, our actions, our pride, our emotions
 - 3. These must be surrendered to God every single day!
 - d. Cain's anger was about to open the door of his heart to sin
 - e. When he did, his actions were devastating to all
 - i. Abel's life was extinguished unfulfilled
 - ii. Adam and Eve had their son taken from them

- iii. Cain was cursed and marked for the rest of his life
- iv. Sin always impacts your life, and the lives of others, in a terrible way

4. But then God gives a word of hope

- a. **Gen 4:7c** - ...*but you must master it*
- b. God would have never said this to Cain if it were not possible
- c. How do we master sin and prevent it from having us?
 - i. **First** – admit that you need God to keep your heart in check and on guard
 - 1. We cannot battle sin, and temptation on our own – not and be victorious
 - 2. **Prov 4:23** - *Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.*
 - 3. **Phil 4:7** - *And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*
 - ii. **Second** – surrender your weaknesses AND your strengths to God
 - 1. satan knows both where you are weak and where you are strong
 - 2. he will want to use them both to gain entrance into your heart
 - 3. When I surrender them to God I am calling on His strength to bolster my weakness, and humility to cover my strengths
 - iii. **Third** – pray about all things
 - 1. Ask God for wisdom and discernment
 - 2. God's wisdom will help steer you clear of those areas that will always get you into trouble
 - 3. **I Thess 5:17** - ...*pray continuously*
 - a. Living a life of prayer does not mean on my knees praying all day long
 - b. It means a heart and a lifestyle of communication with God
 - c. Just as worship is a lifestyle so is prayer