

Cain's Connection

INTRODUCTION

"Cain, what have you done?"

..."My sin is more than I can bear"

That is why Jesus came, died, and rose from the dead, because Cain spoke the truth...it IS more than we can ever bear.

DISCUSSION

Discuss how sin usually leads to a loss of connection with God and others.

EXPLANATION

In what ways are Cain's actions like our own?

Do you think Cain was repenting or complaining?

Why?

APPLICATION

Read Proverbs 27:17-19

Define the word "fellowship" as you understand it.

How does our heart reflect who we truly are?

In what ways do we try to not see what our hearts are reflecting?

MISSION

How can we sharpen one another (as iron sharpens iron)?

What are the best ways to tend our fig trees (our relationship with God and others)?

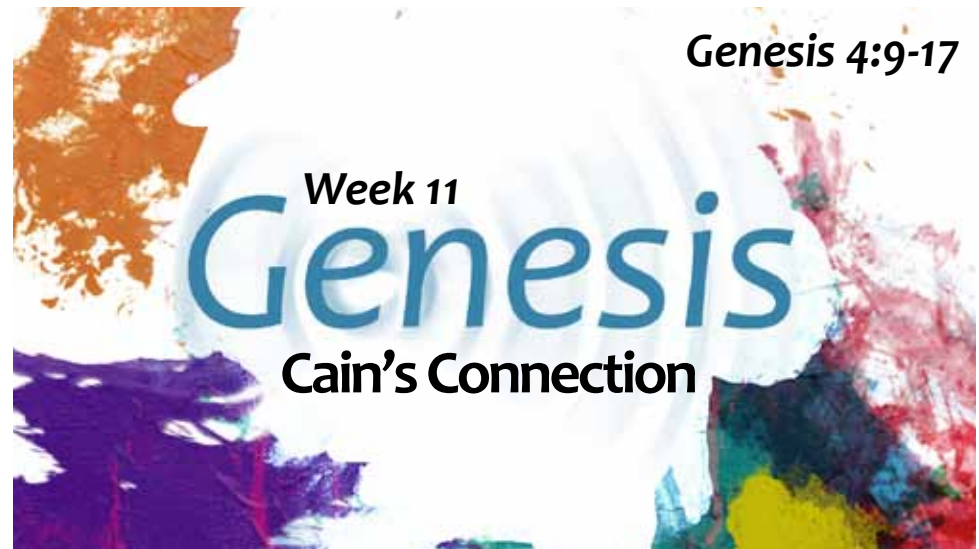
How can we be better iron to those around us?

Week 11

FAMILY & GROUP DISCUSSION



Genesis 4:9-17



Ecclesiastes 4:10

Genesis 2:18

Genesis 4:9-17

Proverbs 27:17

Ephesians 3:17-19

1 John 3:14

Proverbs 18:1

Hebrews 10:24-25

Romans 13:8

Genesis 50:20

Cain's Connection

Ecclesiastes 4:10 "For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!"

In chapter 3, when God came in judgment, He first asked questions. Here He does the same, "Where is Abel your brother?" After He shows the sin, He then hands out the punishment: *"You are under a curse [arur] and driven from the ground.... When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops to you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."*

The picture of Cain's judgment is remarkably similar to the exile Israel was warned of in Deuteronomy 28:16-18: *"You will be cursed [arur] in the city and cursed in the country (this literally means 'in the field'). Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed. The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks."*

The imagery of God's judgment against Cain appears to have become a metaphor to the prophets in picturing the judgment of God against Israel in the Exile: Isaiah 26:21 *"See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the bloodshed upon her; she will conceal her slain no longer."* (Isaiah 27 continues with images drawn from the early chapters of Genesis, of God's final victory over the "serpent" and God's watchful care over his "fruitful vineyard" where no "briers and thorns" are allowed to grow.)

There is truth in seeing both Cain and Abel as narrative examples of godlessness and godliness, but what most people miss are there are hints in the text that the author also shows Cain as an example of repentance and forgiveness. The central question in the narrative is the meaning of Cain's words in 4:13, if his words are to be understood as an expression of remorse and repentance, then Cain's city and the line of Cain's descendants are cast in a new light.

Cain could realize his sin and begin to understand all that he has lost; not only in His connection with God, but with other people as well. Part of what it means to be made in God's image is our capacity for connectedness, because God created human beings and then said, *Gen 2:18 "It is not good that the man should be alone."*

When a tree puts roots into the ground, those roots are able to take in nutrients and water, and the tree grows and has life and strength—but only if it is rooted. We are rooted and our souls are nourished in the love of God and other people. We experience this both physically and emotionally when we connect with God and others.

It has been shown that the destructive aspects of isolation are powerful. People who are socially disconnected are between two and five times more likely to die from any cause, than those who have close ties to family, friends, and other relationships.

When we live in isolation, we are more likely to give into temptation or discouragement. We are more likely to become self-absorbed. We are more likely to spend money in selfish ways. Not only do we suffer when we live in disconnectedness, but other people, whom God placed around us, get cheated out of the love God intends for us to give them. *Proverbs 18:1 "Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire."* Eugene Peterson paraphrased this as "Loners who care only for themselves spit on the common good."

We were designed to come alive through connection. Love is mostly something you do, not something you feel. Connection is marked by servant-hood (something Cain failed to understand).

God is faithful and He restores Cain to a community, and a family. This is grace... Cain's family follows his poor example, but God is good even when we are not.

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Tell Your Story

Tell us what Jesus and Element mean to you.

<http://www.ourelement.org/about/tell-us-your-story>

