

What Kind of Being Is Man - Part 3

by Paris Reidhead

Man is a traitor, rebel, anarchist, and transgressor, and is an enemy of God, with the consequences of sin being physical death, legal death, spiritual death, and eternal separation from God.

Duration: 51:27

Scripture: Genesis 6:5, Genesis 11:9, Genesis 19:24, Matthew 6:33, Acts 17:11, 2 Corinthians 4:4, 2 Peter 2:5

Topics: "Sinful Nature"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the intelligence and ability of humans to organize and change their environment. He also highlights the presence of a sinful nature within every individual. The speaker references the story of Abel and Cain, where Abel offers a sheep as a sacrifice, acknowledging his own guilt and need for forgiveness. The sermon encourages listeners to study the Bible and understand the nature of man, his weaknesses, crimes, and potential for change. The speaker also mentions God's disapproval of sin, as seen through various biblical events such as the flood and the destruction of cities.

Transcript

We saw that man was made in the image of God given the ability to think, to imagine, to choose. And had he not been endowed with these qualities, he never could have been described as being made in God's image. We saw that temptation is the proposition presented to the mind, to the intellect, to satisfy a good appetite in a forbidden or an evil way.

We went into some detail in the first study in dealing with those appetites. I simply recap now. Rod Day to us urges or drives or propensities or appetites for the following, for food, for knowledge, for security, for authority, for pleasure, for sex.

For each of these there was a purpose and with each of them there was a legitimate and a proper means of satisfaction. And temptation was the proposition presented to the mind of in the first instance Mother Eve to satisfy a good appetite, appetite for pleasure, appetite for status or authority, appetite for food in a forbidden or an evil way. Now if you hold that in mind, that this ability to imagine, to see what wasn't as though it were, and then the power to choose, that sin has its beginning in the human heart and experience in the fact that God endowed us with these capacities, with these abilities to think, to imagine, and to choose.

And the result was that there was a decision by Mother Eve to eat. And in so doing she yielded to temptation and she sinned. Then she came back and as it were confronted Adam with the accomplished fact that she had done this and he had now the responsibility to choose whether he was going to stick with God or stay with her.

Because she had made the decision and he now as the federal head of the race made a decision not that he was beguiled and deceived, but he made a deliberate choice which was that he was going to stay with Eve and that he was going to decide how to be happy. He was going to determine what he would do with his time and his life and his energy and his intelligence. He made a choice.

And the result of that choice, her sin and Adam's choice, both were choices for that matter, was that the sentence was imposed. The day thou eatest thou shalt die. We dealt with several aspects of that death.

Man began to die physically. Physical death is the consequence of sin. It's the penalty for sin.

He didn't die instantly and that led to a sort of a misunderstanding, thinking that at the moment of death he'd fall down for not having any knowledge of death and didn't quite know what it was, of course. But it didn't occur quite as it was thought because he began to die. Death was imposed, but it didn't occur instantly.

Physical death, therefore, is part of the penalty of sin. And then legal death. He died legally.

That is, he lost all claim upon God. No longer could he look to God for protection or sustenance or anything of the sort. He had forfeited that.

And he died spiritually in that God in whom he lived and continued to live and move and have his being did not reveal himself longer to man. He didn't reveal himself any longer in that personal, intimate, warm sense. And so he came into the garden and sought him and there was revelation of God indeed.

But that conscious fellowship with him, that something happened spiritually in that man now in a state of rebellion is no longer in that same kind of intimate, conscious fellowship with God. That he is subsequent to regeneration and, we would assume, before the fall. Then there was a fourth aspect of this death, and that is eternal separation from God.

In each instance we saw that death has to do with separation. Physical death is separation of the spirit from the body. Legal death is separation from the claims upon one who previously been responsible and now no longer had to be responsible.

And, of course, spiritual death is the separation from God in that sense of an intimate and immediate awareness. And, of course, eternal death would be consignment in an appropriate environment for one in that state. We would think of that as hell or as the scripture revealed it.

So, consequently, we have recognized that temptation is a proposition presented to the intellect to satisfy a good appetite in a bad way. Sin is the committal of the will to self-pleasing and self-gratification. And the penalty of death is separation, not annihilation.

In any instance, the word death is so used, rather separation. Now it's important for us to understand something of man's moral character at this time. As he leaves the garden and there's an angel to keep him from returning, what kind of a being is it that walks out and walks out into the world? Now, work his will and

have it upon him.

What is he? Well, in the first place, he is a traitor because sin is treason. Treason against just and proper government. He has betrayed the rightful sovereign, the only one wise enough and good enough, powerful enough to deserve his obedience and his service, but he's betrayed him.

Sin is treason. But it's not just treason. An act of treason might be understood, but there's something a little more.

The Bible describes the sinner as being in pain, up is down, down is up, right is wrong, wrong is right. And so we find that he's not just committed an act of treason, but he's also a rebel living in a state of continuous rebellion against just and proper government. This is set forth in the Scripture right throughout from the beginning right on through to the end of it.

Man is in rebellion against authority, the authority of God, as well as the authority of his faith and the authority of the family. He's a rebel, a traitor and a rebel. But there's something else about him.

He's an anarchist. Having betrayed just and proper government, he's now established the principle, I will do what I want to do. Every man did what was right in his own eyes.

This is anarchist. And so that man who left the garden and those of us that have followed since have had this kind of a character in relation to God, anarchist. I'll do what I want to do.

But there's something else then that we have to see. We are not only traitors and rebels and anarchists, but transgressors. Because God has established, put up a fence, so to speak, to protect you from me and protect me from you.

Thou shalt not steal, lie, murder, and so on. But the history of you and me and this family of which we're a part is that when I want something you have, I'll cut the fence. I'll transgress.

I'll go across that fence. We lived on a farm in Minnesota when I was a young man and a boy growing up. And every fall we got kind of frightened.

You know, we wanted to go around and take a can of paint and paint cow on the sides of animals to fear they would be mistaken for a pheasant or a duck or something. Because you let a man from the city get a new gun, a new coat, and a belt of shells, and he's going to shoot something. I mean, that's why he's done it.

So we had in one pasture probably 100 acres of poor land, and we had some young stock that we're grazing and hopefully we're growing. And we had a pretty well fence. But the neighbors told us the first year, now look, when fall comes, these crazy people from town come up and you better post every 25 feet.

You better post that land. And so we put no trespassing penalty of the law. You know, we didn't know who was going to enforce it, but that's what they told us to put.

Signed our names, put up signs, and then we said, now, sensible, respectable people will, you know, they're not going to, people aren't like that. Well, we found out. About five days after hunting season opened, we got a telephone call with some three different farm families, and they said, we've had a call from so-and-so, had a call from so-and-so that there's a group of young stock about five miles from here, and we just got talking about whose it could be, and it looks like yours.

So we went out, and sure enough, with a shotgun, they'd blown all, no hunting signs off, so the trees had gone along the road. It was down the road. Tiger practice, you know.

And then they'd come to a place where they could drive in, and so it was obviously cut with clippers. That's part of a city hunter's outfit, you know, is wire cutters. And they'd gone in and cut the wire, wrapped it around the post, and driven in as far as they could in the woods, because, you know, you've got good boots to walk, but who wants to walk if you can ride? And they had a... So they'd gone into the woods down the road, and then they'd gone out, and they'd left it open.

And our young stock had gone out way down the road. Now, that's transgression. They wanted something.

There was a fence there to protect us from them, and when they wanted it badly enough, they'd cut the fence. And this is what transgression is. It's going across the line that protects others from you.

And incidentally, it depends on which side of the fence you are, protects you from others. We found, then, that man, by nature now, by disposition, having made sin the supreme ruling choice of his life, has become a traitor, and a rebel, and an anarchist, and a transgressor. He's prepared to cross the line, move over into the other side.

And then we find one other thing about this man, amongst the others, but only one that I'll give you now, and that is that he is an enemy of God. The Bible tells us that the carnal mind is enmity against God. It's not subject to the law of God, and neither can it be.

Of course it can. If God is... If you betray Him and rebel against Him, then you are His enemy. Now, I didn't say He is your enemy or the sinner's enemy at all.

I didn't say that. The carnal mind is enmity against God. I didn't say that God is enmity against the sinner.

But the carnal mind is enmity against God. So, here we are. This describes us.

This is the picture, and it's borne out, and God says such a thing as this. Is there one righteous? No, not one. Why? What's He doing? He's sitting there watching at the gate as everyone comes in, and watches as they reach the age of accountability, and He says, All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately weak. Who can know it? I, the Lord. Let's search the heart.

And the picture is God with a microscope, or an x-ray machine, looking inside everyone that comes, finding one, just one, whose heart is right for them. But no, to the contrary, finds that the heart is set to do evil. Fits to do evil.

Now, that's what the Scripture tells us about man. But this is not what the enemy tells us. Remember what he said.

You'll be as God. Okay? You'll be like God. If you just eat, you'll be like God.

So today we find, and it's been for a hundred years, it's been much longer than that. In fact, you can trace it through the centuries, and I don't propose to do that now, though it's an interesting study, that throughout the centuries, more recently, it's been said that man is good. Man is good.

The law is wrong. The rules are wrong. The standards are wrong.

For instance, in Ephesus, it was in other cities of Asia Minor, there were actual rules against right. Now, there were people driven out. They were hounded out of town because they were righteous.

They do not do as the custom of this town is drunken immoral argues, and they didn't do that. So they had to be driven out of town because wrong had become right, and right had become wrong, and they couldn't tolerate it. All right, so what's happened in the last hundred years? Well, it's this, that man is good.

Man is essentially good. The only thing that's wrong is the environment is wrong. It's the environment that makes man sin.

And if we could change the environment somehow, then the innate goodness and rightness of man is going to be manifested. It's the economic exploitation of man that makes him behave in this fashion. But if we can just do away with the exploiter, then the innate, intrinsic goodness and rightness and wholesomeness of man is going to be manifested.

That's one of the things we're going to be seeing down the road. Because who's the author of this? Well, it's the God of this world that's the author of it. He's the one who brought man into this state or enticed him, beguiled him, grew him into this state.

Now this man is at the point where he is described by God as being traitor and rebel and anarchist and transgressor and enemy. And, of course, the one who's the God of this world doesn't like to have this kind of a description of his product, of what he has achieved and accomplished. And so he turns around and says, man is intrinsically and essentially good.

All right. We're going to pursue the scripture because it's this in which we're interested. We want to find out what God's word has to say about such a thing.

Let's just look at a few scriptures here. In Genesis, the sixth chapter in the fifth verse, God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continuously. Now that's quite an indictment.

And it describes the generation that God visited with the flood. He was so disturbed by what he saw that he purposed to start all over again and he found one man who was not intermingled with the accursed descendants of Adam. And so he then said, Noah, I'll start over again with you.

Now he did. But how successful was this? Well, you see, he carried the same infection into the ark with him. And he had a fresh start.

In fact, that generation had been judged and had been destroyed. But we find that the descendants of Noah have not undergone, because they were 40 days in the ark, it did not mean that their character was any changed. And we soon find that there's a replication of what preceded it.

In fact, it gets even a little worse. In a few generations you have Nimrod. And the King James says Nimrod was a mighty hunter.

That word hunter in the Hebrew is rebel. And Nimrod was a mighty rebel before the Lord, against the Lord. And he organized that rather small family of earth in total organized rebellion against God.

And what you have in the Tower of Babel is organized human religion saying that man is good and God is bad. Man's conduct is righteous and God's law is unrighteous. And that there has to now be a system of philosophy or religion that endorses and supports the conduct of man.

So, Nimrod, we are told by Hitchcock in his book, *Two Babylons*, and he has pretty good archeological, historical evidence for, suggesting that Nimrod took his father's wife, Senna Rahman, in an incestuous relationship and made her the queen of heaven. Remember the promise that Satan made, ye shall be as God to mother Eve. Now it's being fulfilled and Senna Rahman is being set up as the queen of heaven and is, under Nimrod's guidance, giving a whole new code of ethics and morals and conduct which is totally contrary to everything God has written on the human heart and everything that God has revealed.

So we have an organized religion now that has come about subsequent to the flood. Before the flood, God said that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and every imagination taught to the heart was evil continually. But as bad as it was and as worthy of judgment as it was, it never came to the point that it did under Nimrod in the Tower of Babel.

That never happened before. So if God was righteous in judging what had taken place in the pre-flood period, if we were judging that generation with the flood, how much more so would he have been just in judging the generation of Nimrod. But there comes a time when God has spoken.

God has said, this is what I think about sin and the message is out. It's been said and no amount of... You know how I ask this? When Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Ghost and they came into the assembly and they died. If everybody that lied to the Holy Ghost had died the way Ananias and Sapphira did, boy, there wouldn't be anybody to preach and there wouldn't be any ushers to take up the collection either.

It would shut things right down to a bare core. You and I might be there, but boy, it'd be lonely. But God has spoken and he has said, this is what I think about it.

This is my attitude toward it. And he spoke with a flood. This is what I think about it.

And he spoke with the Tower of Babel and dispersed the people and confused their tongues and he said, this is what I think about rebellion. And we come down a little further and we find that in Sodom there's a people wholly given up to inverted morality and God judges the place with fire. And he said, this is what I think about it.

This is the kind of a time it is. This is the moral vulgarity and crudity and criminality of this conduct. And he's spoken now.

He hasn't gone on doing it every point. A number of years ago they had the Bible published that John Huston had in his motion picture. And my son James and I went to it.

And when he came out I said, Jim, what's your reaction to that film? His eyes were pretty big and he said, I get the idea that God doesn't like sin. Well that was an understatement from a high school student. But if you read the scripture you get that idea too.

But it's there. God just doesn't like sin. He's a pretty severe guy.

With a flood, with a confusion of the languages, with the destroying of a city, God's saying something. There's a message in it if you listen real close. This is what he thinks about sin.

And this is the kind of a being that man is. So I hope I've established this that there's no real challenge about it. That this is, you know your heart and you know, I asked a group of people once, how many of you are saved? How many of you know Christ in a real sense and have been given the eternal life? Raise your hand.

And there were about a hundred people there. All their hands went up. And I said, let me ask you, how many of you have ever been lost? You know you were lost.

You just were aware of it. You had a conscious awareness of your lostness. And forehands like that.

Now, I said conscious awareness of lostness. I didn't say how many of you believe the scripture that said you were lost. But I wanted to have some idea because I've been talking about that theme.

How many of you have ever seen your own heart? How many ever realized just what you were? And there were forehands. Now, I'd ask you the same question. I'm not asking you to raise your hand.

How many of you know that you passed from death to life? That you've been born again? Have you answered that question? Do you have in your mind a recollection of a time when you were aware of how lost you were? Have you ever seen yourself? You answer that question. I don't know what your answer is. I'm not asking for any exhibition or division of the group.

I'm saying this, that if you've ever seen your lostness, then you've discovered that you are capable of every sin that was ever committed by any member of the human race. That's one of the most startling, shocking, offending things that one can experience. It's traumatic.

To have discovered that the seed of every man's sin has been planted in the seedbed of your heart. Now, they didn't all grow because perhaps there wasn't room. Too many of certain kinds were growing and there wasn't room for other kinds to get sprouted.

But what you'll discover about your heart is the longer you go on with God is that nothing that anyone ever did that you weren't capable of doing. This is a horrifying revelation. It's disheartening to realize that the horrendous things that some have done, that when I was capable of doing, I lacked incentive, I lacked opportunity, I lacked pressure, and I had the capacity.

I could have done it. And the only, but for the grace of God, I didn't do it. But I could have done it.

And that was one of the first steps towards righteousness. Samuel Rutherford, whom some have said was one of the holiest men of which we have records. In some of his lovely books, he expresses a devotion and love for Christ that just makes you weep as you read it, to see this dear man.

At 83, he said, The longer I walk with God and the nearer I come to the time when I will see him, the more I realize the abysmal depth of iniquity in the human heart. And he said, The longer I go from that day when first I acknowledge myself a sinner, the more I realize that what it required, something to be said, what it required of Jesus Christ to redeem, what he had to pay, what it meant. He was saying that in these many, many years he'd met the Lord early in his youth, but the longer he'd gone on with God and the closer he'd come to him, the more he was aware of the capacity of his heart to sin.

And I think that one sees that and understands that, then there's no real challenge to the fact that sin is the pervading principle of human conduct. It's a basic fact. For many years in my early years in the ministry,

the liberal, the extreme liberal theologians were talking about the innate goodness of man and the fact that any teaching about sin was considered psychologically destructive.

But after the Second World War, some of them began to talk about the sin factor in human conduct, in human action. Now, let's look back. What is it? It's the committal of the will to the principle and the policy of pleasing oneself is the end and the rule of life.

And that can lead to any conduct anyone has ever done in pursuit of that principle of pleasing himself. There's nothing that anyone has ever done of which everyone is not potentially capable. Now, what happens when we repent? What is repentance? I've given you some definitions.

Death repentance is the decision of the mind, of the will to no longer live to please and gratify oneself as the supreme end of being. But it is the decision to live to please and to gratify God. That's the nature of repentance.

So a repentant person is one who has seen the nature of the crime of having committed his will to pleasing himself and who has changed his mind about this and has committed his will that from that point on to please God. So we're dealing now with trying to get in perspective. What happened after man fell and what kind of a being it was walked out of the garden and what kind of progeny has he been putting into the world ever since that first pair left? And the answer we've seen is that all that has come from that first family have, at the age of accountability, repeated the crime of Father Adam and Mother Eve and have themselves committed their will to the principle of pleasing themselves, living to satisfy and to gratify themselves.

We're not sinners. Now let's go back and ask ourselves some other questions. What did this do? What did this factor of sin do to the capacity that man had received from the hand of his creator? We've seen something of what it's done, something of its extension, but now I want to ask you, what didn't it do? Well, if you go back into Genesis, you'll find that it did not in any way affect his ability to invent because the sons of Adam invented musical instruments and the art of metalworking and developed cities and so we find that there was no effect on the creative abilities of man.

His ability to imagine, that is to see what wasn't there and to bring it into being, was not affected. Oh, his imaginations were evil in that moral sense, but he was also functionally capable of using that which God had invested in him, that which God had given to him as an endowment. It was used wrong, it was used in the wrong direction for the wrong end, but that ability had not been impaired by the fall.

He could invent musical instruments and a scale and music. We don't know much about it, but we know he did. He could invent instruments and tools for working with iron.

And he could make a ship according to the directions that God gave. God could give a verbal direction and he could transfer it into a three-dimensional reality. In other words, he could read blueprints and follow plans and he could proceed to accomplish the things that he had been instructed to do.

When God dealt with Noah, he told him just the kind of a vessel that he should make and he gave him the dimensions of it and the specifications for it. So whatever else sin did, it did not affect man's ability to change his environment. It did not affect his ability to imagine, to see, to picture, to plan, and then to proceed to accomplish his plans.

I think one of the most telling articles that came out in the 60s about the young people that were revolting on the American campus came from the longshoreman philosopher Eric Hofer. He wrote an article in some magazine. I saw his name in the article and so I bought it.

I don't generally buy the magazine. I couldn't tell you what it is exactly, but I read it. I still have it filed.

But he was describing what was happening to the young people on the American campus. And he drew this analogy. He said the young people all of a sudden became aware of problems, social problems, economic problems, and they felt that these problems shouldn't exist.

And so they ran and were screaming onto the campus and into the streets saying these problems have got to go away. But when they didn't go away with the first scream or lunge or kick, then the young people in their desperation to measure a problem, to weigh its difficulties, to analyze its complexity, and to start out today with the goal down the road of doing something. I suppose the highest dignification of man as a being is the moon shot, getting man to the moon.

In 19, what was it, 61, President Kennedy said during this decade we're going to get men to the moon and bring them safely back. And someone said 33,000 problems later they did. But it was man that was able to see the possibility of it and to develop the procedure of accomplishing it and step by step solve one problem after another.

And fallen man, rebellious man, sinful man, was endowed by his creator with the capacity to do that. And the fall did not affect that capacity. That's what I am trying to say.

Sin did not obliterate that ability. Man carried that ability with him after his moral, the moral degradation set in. He still was capable of picturing in his mind and then proceeding to accomplish what he pictured.

Nimrod sitting around talking to his family and rebelling against the message that's come down through these few years from the time of Noah against this God that wants men to live in a holy life of respecting the rights of others and he's revolting against God. And he's saying, you know what we really ought to do, fellas, is build a temple and touch way up to heaven and just knock God off of his throne. We can do it because we've got the engineers and the architects and we can do it.

And we know how to make the best, most solid mudbridge that's ever been made. And so here's them fellas sitting around planning and planning and talking. Somebody else sat around and he said, you know, see that thing up there? Boy, we've got to get somebody up there and find out whether it is green cheese or not.

And so the decision was made that we're going to send somebody in this decade to the moon. I saw a cartoon as well, a fella standing on his balcony and looking up and, ah, see that? Beautiful, isn't it? There's a picture of the moon rising. And the host said, yeah, but you should have seen it before people started walking on it.

But walking on it was just a hopeless idea. Now, there's a rule that someone, I don't know where it began, but it's true. And I think there's a tremendous amount of truth.

It says this, whatever the human mind can conceive and can believe, it can achieve. I'm going to repeat that. Whatever the human mind can conceive and can believe, it can achieve.

Oh, I've growled at some length on the effect of the fall. I hope you realize I haven't minimized it. And the nature of sin and the crime of sin.

Now what I'm talking to you about is the intrinsic endowment that God put into man, which was not rescinded, amended, or withdrawn because of sin. God had given to us, given to our kind, to this family of men, the ability to see, to imagine, and then to plan, to organize our efforts and our resources to achieve what we've seen or planned or imagined. Now I think we've got to dwell on that.

We've got to reinstate this. Because today we're hearing a great deal about man being the helpless victim of his environment, of his circumstances, of his conditions. And the Bible doesn't tell us that.

It tells us that he's a monster of evil. And instead it's hard to do evil. But evil does not, that does not in any wise counteract or remove the investment God made in man, giving him the power and the ability to change his environment.

So if you'll accept that, if you're with me to this point, then you better be careful. Because I know where I'm going and you don't. And if you don't fight me along the way in your own mind and verify me, you're going to end up where you didn't expect to be.

So you've just got to do like the Bereans did and you search the Scriptures daily to see if these things are so. Because I believe very firmly that it's time that we rediscover what the Bible says about man, what kind of a being he is, what his powers are, what his weakness is, what his crimes are, and what his potential for ceasing in those crimes is. So let's then think.

Here is this first pair. They have sinned. They've been judged.

The coats of skins have been made. And the Lord has driven them from the garden and set an angel at the garden gate to keep them from going in lest they should eat of that tree of life and just live forever. And so now they're out.

And it says, And Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten thee, man, from the Lord. And she again bare his brother Abel, and Abel was a keeper of sheep and Cain was the tiller of the ground. It came to pass that Cain brought forth of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord, and Abel brought the first fruits of his flock.

Here are men that have decided on their occupation. One's going to be a farmer and the other's going to be a herdsman. Tremendous intelligence and ability is implicit in that.

And sometimes when I try to picture in my mind what Cain's offering was, I can see the kind of thing we used to have at the county fair when all the women of the grains got together and they put the wheat into a nice little bundle and the tangerines and the vegetables and sang it up. Weren't those attractive? How long have you been since you were to a county fair or state fair and saw what they had put up? Wasn't it just beautiful? And that's what I kind of think Cain did. He just brought all the things he'd grown, the nicest things.

He'd say, Lord, look, look what you've done. You've given me intelligence and you've given me the soil. And now I've gone ahead and tilled the ground as you've said.

Yes, I've been fighting the weeds and I've been, but look, here it is. Here it is. This is it.

And it could very well be that Abel is the rascal of the two. I kind of think so. It takes a lot more discipline and a lot more effort and a lot more attention to detail in some respect to be a good vegetable grower than it does to be a good person.

Kids do a lot of it themselves. You just protect them a little bit. They're going to do a lot.

I think Abel was kind of, well, I'd rather have two sheep out here because it gives me more free time in the afternoon. And Cain, you've done the vegetable growing, you don't have much free time. He's disciplined.

He's organized. And he presents this. And it's an effort.

It's a reflection of his intelligence and his ability and his talent and his discipline. And Abel brings the sheep and Abel puts it up. Now, I think Abel had a pretty, a guilty conscience.

I think Abel was pretty well aware of the kind of fellow he was. He probably had a, what kind of a, what kind of a person, what kind of a citizen he was. And he figured that he needed all the help he could get.

And he remembered that that day when his mother and father had undoubtedly told him all about it, when the Lord had called them out where they'd been hiding and they confessed that they had sinned, that he took a lamb and he slew the lamb and he wrapped the skin around each of them, picturing that day when one would say of him, behold the lamb. So Abel now goes out and takes the lamb, cuts its throat, and lays it out and says, Lord, if my father and mother sinned, how much more have I? I've done everything that you saw them to be and here takes this offering. You've covered the sins of my parents with the death of the lamb and God has set this.

But here's a man who does not know. He has tremendous intelligence and tremendous ability and tremendous capacity to plan, to organize, to achieve, but he hasn't seen his own heart. And so he brings his vegetables and he lines them all up and he says, Now Lord, it took a lot of time and thought and patience and these are the works of my hands and I bring them as an offering.

And God's fire comes down and picks up Abel's, burns up, consumes Abel's offering and poor Cain sits there. Now Cain would not know his heart. If you'd have said, Cain, you're a murderer, you're the potential capable of murdering, he would have said, No, you quite misunderstand me.

I'm the gentleman in this family and that follows the rest of it. Look at him out there. There he is, one of the sheep he's taking.

Doesn't care about himself, doesn't do, doesn't worry about anything. He's just a priest there. Not me.

I've learned to accommodate myself and to discipline myself and he's the one you've got to be afraid of. He didn't know his heart but he becomes jealous. He becomes envious.

God has accepted Cain so he meets him in the field one day and he's true to his nature. What's his nature? I'm going to get what I want and do what I want and be what I want. I'm going to rule my life and he doesn't even know himself but he's committed himself to the principle of ruling and governing and choosing and he's offered God the worst of his hands.

He's never seen his own heart and so he picks up a nearby car but takes the staff in his hand and he clubs his brother into the ground. He's a murderer. He would have asked him, he would have denied him.

He's never seen him. He's a murderer. Now, what I've got to understand and you've got to understand is that I am potentially Cain.

You are. That and any other crime because of the horrendous nature of Cain. He buries him and hides him.

Did he bury him? And he said, Your brother's blood cries to me. So what was it? Well, he had carried into this life a tremendous intelligence and ability to organize, to plan, to change his environment and a heart that will betray him. You've got to understand what kind of people we are and if you haven't done what Cain has done it wasn't because you weren't capable.

It's just because you haven't had incentive or opportunity or God in this race to defend you. But remember when you were a youngster and you went out of the house and your mother said go and you slammed the door. When that door locked on its hinges and slammed against the sill you were really saying, I'd kill you if I wasn't afraid it'd cost me more than I'd get out of it.

What we've got to do is understand what this thing is saying, what it's done and what it hasn't done and deal with what we can and use what's not beneficial. Deal with the thing so that the potential is in it. Father we thank you for your words and we're asking that as we think about man think about what's happened to him and what hasn't and what you've seen in him and what you've invested in him and what the potential is that our lives are going to be shaped and molded and formed to the point where they'll bring the greatest possible glory to Jesus Christ.

So show us our own hearts, show us how great was that love of the Lord Jesus who was willing to be made what we were so we could become what he is and help us use our full potential for his glory. In his name and for his sake we ask.

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