

"Being My Brother's Keeper"
(Gen 4:3-9)
July 30, 2017

Introduction:

- **Series:** "Relationships, A Mess Worth Making"
- While up to now we've been hearing about the DYNAMICS of relationships and the ROLES we play in them,; what goes right and what goes wrong.
- **MY AIM:**
 - To unveil the UNDERLYING SPIRITUAL FORCE at work in causing DIVISION, DISCORD between family members in the Body of Christ.
 - How to PREVENT OURSELVES from the TRAP that Cain fell into.

TITLE: "BEING MY BROTHER'S KEEPER"

- "KEEPER" means, TO KEEP, TO WATCH, TO PRESERVE (oversee, support)
 - This is a VERB = requires ACTION
 - Not just a MENTAL CONCEPT.

THERE ARE TWO INTERESTING QUESTIONS ASKED BY GOD IN GENESIS:

1. "Adam, where are YOU?"
 2. "Cain, where is your BROTHER?"
- These questions seem to indicate the DUAL, CENTRAL PRIORITIES OF GOD:
 1. He is interested in WHERE **YOU** are; HOW you're doing, etc.
 2. He is interested in WHERE **YOUR BROTHER** is and how he's doing?

Philippians 2:4 (NLT)

⁴ Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

NOTE:

IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT IN THIS SELF-CENTERED, ME-FIRST, ME-ONLY CULTURE WE LIVE IN, GOD'S INTERESTED IN US AND OUR BROTHER! HE EXPECTS US TO REVEAL OURSELVES TO HIM AND TO KNOW HOW OUR BROTHER IS DOING!

OUTLINE:

1. A SUBLE SNARE
2. A SATANIC SOURCE
3. A SURE SOLUTION

I. A SUBTLE SNARE:

- Remember that the serpent was the MOST SUBTLE (shrewdest) of all God's creatures!
- There is a DANGER facing the church at large today:

THE SUBTLE INFILTRATION OF WORLDLY, FLESHLY, THOUGHT PATTERNS AND MINDSETS INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST AND THE AVERAGE CHRISTIAN'S WAY OF THINKING.

Colossians 2:8 (AMP)

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception [pseudo-intellectual babble], according to the tradition [and musings] of mere men, following the ^[a]elementary principles of this world, rather than following [the truth—the teachings of] Christ.

- Thousands of SELF-HELP books line the shelves of bookstore and online providers
- Movies, Children's Cartoons, Books encourage us to "Believe in YOURSELF"
- We put SLOGANS in picture frames and place them in our CORPORATE OFFICES, DENS AND AROUND OUR HOME THAT SAY, "Become the best version of yourself."
- We call them INSPIRATIONAL and assume it's a good thing.

QUESTION:

WHAT ARE THE SCRIPTURES THAT SOLIDLY SUPPORT THIS TREND OF THINKING?

THE SUBTLE SNARE:

THIS WORLDLY MINDSET AND THESE CATCH-PHRASES ALL CENTER ON SELF PRESERVATION! THE BIBLE FOCUSES ON SELF-DENIAL. WHEN WE ADOPT THESE SLOGANS, PHILOSOPHIES AND MAN-CENTERED IDEAS, WE END UP USING THE BIBLE TO SUPPORT THOUGHTS, IDEAS AND DRAW CONCLUSIONS THAT GOD NEVER INTENDED TO SUPPORT. IT SOUNDS GOOD; IT FEELS GOOD; IT LOOKS GOOD; IT MAKES SENSE; BUT IT'S NOT GOD!

THE BIBLE IS NOT GOD'S SELF-HELP BOOK; IT'S GOD'S SELF-DENIAL BOOK! IT WILL TEACH US SELF-CRUCIFIXION, NOT SELF-PRESERVATION!

II. A SATANIC SOURCE:

- What was the source of such an act on Cain's part so early in the Biblical record?

KEY VERSE:

Genesis 3:14-15 (NLT)

¹⁴ Then the Lord God said to the serpent,

¹⁵ And I will cause (bring about) **hostility** between you and the woman, and between ***your offspring*** and ***her offspring***.

Note:

- God was not unfair to Cain
- God's question to Cain IMPLIED that he KNEW the good to do
- God said, "sin" was crouching at the door of his heart to devour him
- HE NEEDED TO MASTER IT! (There are only TWO CHOICES: MASTER IT OR BE MASTERED BY IT)

Genesis 4:7 (NLT)

⁷ You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue (reign, rule, have dominion over) it and be its master."

1 Peter 5:8-9 (NLT)

⁸ Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith.

NOTE:

THIS HOSTILITY EMERGED IN THE VERY NEXT GENERATION OF ADAM AND EVE'S OFFSPRING. IT HAS EMERGED THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL AND THE PAGES OF THE BIBLE – ESPECIALLY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT!

CAIN:

- The FOCUS became HIMSELF and his FEELINGS
- HE LIED WHEN ASKED WHERE ABEL WAS
- HE KILLED HIS OWN BROTHER – BECAUSE OF HOW HE FELT ABOUT HIMSELF
- **ALL THIS OCCURRED IN THE CONTEXT OF *RELIGIOUS* ACTIVITY**

John 8:40-44 (NLT)

⁴⁰ Instead, you are trying to kill me because I told you the truth, which I heard from God. Abraham never did such a thing. ⁴¹ No, you are imitating your real father.”

⁴² Jesus told them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, because I have come to you from God. I am not here on my own, but he sent me. ⁴³ Why can’t you understand what I am saying? It’s because you can’t even hear me! ⁴⁴ ***For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning.*** He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.

ALL THIS WAS OCCURRING IN THE CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY

NOTE:

THIS DOESN’T APPLY ONLY TO THOSE WHO CONSPIRED TO CRUCIFY CHRIST! THE HOSTILE SEED OF THE SERPENT IS STILL ACTIVE:

1 John 3:10 (NLT)

¹⁰ So now we can tell who are ***children of God*** and who are ***children of the devil***. Anyone who does not live righteously (DO RIGHT TO BE ACCEPTED) and does not love other believers^[a] does not belong to God.

1 John 3:12 (NLT)

¹² ***We must not be like Cain***, who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had been doing what was righteous.

Jude 8-11 New Century Version (NCV)

⁸ It is the same with these people ***who have entered your group***. They are guided by (FALSE) dreams and make themselves filthy with sin. They reject God’s authority... ¹⁰ But these people speak against things they do not understand. ***And what they do know, by feeling, as dumb animals know things, are the very things that destroy them.*** ¹¹ It will be terrible for them. ***They have followed the way of Cain, who killed his brother...***

Characteristics of “Cain”:

- Religious
- Self-serving/focused
- Driven by feelings - pride and emotion (anger)

III. A SURE SOLUTION:

IRONY:

- We have been the beneficiaries of RECONCILIATION to God through Christ!
- We have been given the ministry of RECONCILIATION by the Lord
- We are the OFFENSE CURING EXPERTS
- When we are offended we leave, or separate ourselves rather than reconcile!

Solution: Loving God and Loving our Neighbor!

Mark 12:29-31 (NKJV)

²⁹ Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments *is*: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one (compound unity). ³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'^[a] This *is* the first commandment.^[a] ³¹ And the second, like *it*, *is* this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'^[c] There is no other commandment greater than these."

NOTE:

THE KEY TO THIS VERSE IS IN THE WORD "ONE":

THERE IS NO DIVISION IN THE GODHEAD; THERE MUST BE NO DIVISION AMONG HIS IMAGE-BEARERS!

1 Corinthians 1:10 (NLT)

¹⁰ I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters,^[a] by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.

Ephesians 4:3 (NLT)

³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

Romans 15:2-3a (NLT)

² We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord. ³ For even Christ didn't live to please himself....¹

John 17:20-21 (NLT)

²⁰ "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. ²¹ I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

SIX STEPS TO TURN OFFENSES INTO GOD-GLORIFYING MOMENTS:

- 1. DON'T ASK, "HOW DO I FEEL ABOUT IT?"**
- 2. ASK: HOW DOES THIS REFLECT ON THE LORD WHOSE IMAGE I BEAR?**
- 3. FOCUS ON HIS WELFARE FIRST**
- 4. FOCUS ON MAINTAINING THE FLOW AND ANOINTING OF THE SPIRIT REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU FEEL OR WHAT IT COSTS YOU!**
- 5. OFFER YOUR 'LOSS' TO THE LORD: A VOLUNTARY SACRIFICE!**
- 6. THINK OF HOW IT LOOKS TO THE UNBELIEVER**

1 Corinthians 6:6-7(NLT)

⁶ But instead, one believer^[a] sues another—right in front of unbelievers!

⁷ Even to have such lawsuits with one another is a defeat for you. ***Why not just accept the injustice and leave it at that? Why not let yourselves be cheated?***

CONCLUSION:

JESUS EXEMPLIFIED SELF-DENIAL WITHOUT EVERY BECOMING A "VICTIM"! WE CAN TOO WHEN WE CHOOSE TO LOVE LIKE HE DID!

John 10:18 (NLT)

¹⁸ ***No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily...***

CHOOSING TO SACRIFICE SELF (SELF-DENIAL) IS CHRISTLIKE AND IS THE GREATEST DEMONSTRATION OF LOVE IN MAINTAINING UNITY AND BECOMING OFFENSE-PROOF; PROTECTING, CARING AND BEING YOUR BROTHER'S KEEPER.