**CAIN REJECTS GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY**

Genesis 4:1-5:32 (Key Verse: 4:7)

*"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 master it."*

In the previous passage we learnt about how sin entered the world through the serpent who deceived the woman Eve to disobey God by eating the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden together with her husband Adam. Because of this disobedience, mankind was subjected to a curse to be born with sin, their fellowship with God was broken, and could no longer live forever. Through today’s passage we will learn how because of sin, one of Adam’s sons, Cain rejected the sovereignty of God and lived his own life with pride and self-centeredness. We will learn about God’s love for Cain, even though he sinned against God. God will show his love through counselling Cain to do the right thing, master sin so that he may not be absorbed by it. We will further learn how to master sin, and what happens to us when we do not make every effort to master sin. I pray that God may have mercy on us to receive one word, master sin as we live in this world daily.

The passage today begins with Adam’s family growth, he made love to his wife Eve who gave birth to 2 sons who also inherited the curse of sin, the first born was Cain and the second born was Abel. Abel was a Shepherd, taking care of flocks, while Cain worked the soil that produced fruits and crops. While the two sons carried on with their respective work, something arose which later caused a great tragedy in Adam’s family. Let us look at **verse 3-5**: “*In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. 4 And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.* From here we learn that both the brothers gave an offering to the Lord, Cain gave some fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord, while Abel gave fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. We are told that God looked with favor on Abel’s offering and to Cain he did not look with favor.

Why did God look with favor to Abel and not to Cain? God looked with favor to Abel because he brought the best of the best to God, and Cain did not. Bringing this kind of offering to God revealed Abel’s heart, even though he was born in the curse of sin, God accepted his offering because he offered it to God with great humility. In **Hebrews 11:4** it says: “*By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.”* God accepted Abel’s offering with favor because he offered it by faith. What does it mean he offered it by faith? This means he offered it with full trust and belief that all he has came from God, he offered with thanksgiving in his heart for God who provides for him, he offered the best of the best because he was convinced that all he has is from God. Basically, Abel’s heart was filled with the sovereignty of God, he accepted it and lived by it. Abel lived each day with full knowledge that God is indeed the creator of the heavens and the earth, that anything and everything comes from him. Even if he loses everything, God is able to make a way for him to survive.

Unlike Abel, Cain did not offer by faith and hence God did not accept his offering. When God did not accept his offering, he became angry, and his face was downcast. This reaction revealed more about his offering, it confirmed that indeed he did not offer by faith. It revealed that he did not offer by faith because it lacked humility, Abel offered to God with a humble heart, he knew he was a sinner, not worthy to offer to God. But Cain on the other hand, he thought he was doing God a favor, that God should be glad he is offering to him. But God is the Sovereign Lord and Creator. He is the Giver of the harvest. All things belong to him. Cain's offering should be an expression of praise, honor, worship and thanksgiving. However, Cain offered with pride and God rejected his offering.

How is your attitude in your offering towards God? Is it with sincere heart and faith? Is it with humility? Or are you doing it because you want God to bless you in a specific area? Or is it habitual? Because you are Christian you must offer? Is the encounter of Abel and Cain challenging you? I for one am challenged by this, for though my family offers a portion of our earnings somehow, I sometimes feel like it as becoming habitual, a part of our budget, a tick box at the end of the month. God does not accept habitual offerings, God wants to see our hearts, sincere hearts, faith in his sovereignty, faith that he is the creator of the heavens and the earth. Through our offering, God wants to see praise, honor, worship and thanksgiving. When we do not have these things, our hearts will become corrupt like Cain, instead of humility we will offer with pride. I pray that God may have mercy on me and you to meditate on the sovereignty of God daily and offer to God from this foundation.

When God saw that Cain who was angry and his face downcast, he came to him and said to him: *“Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?* Why did God do this? Did God say this to indicate to Cain that he is a terrible and disrespectful person and to show him the door? No, God came to Cain with love and mercy. Let is look at the **key verse 7**: “*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.””* Through these words we see God who came to Cain with gentle rebuke and words of wise counsel. Cain offered to God with contempt, he denied the sovereignty of God and instead he was filled with pride and self-centeredness. He was indeed deserving to be expelled from the face of God. But God in his great mercy, came to Cain filled with love, compassion and words of counsel. In the same way though we sinned so much before God, Our Lord Jesus Christ still lowered himself, he left his great glory in heaven. Born in the mostly lowly form, in a manger, he lived amongst us, great sinners, liars, adulterous, murders and many forms. He came down to love us and counsel us, to make us right before God.

In the same way, God lowered himself, came to Cain with a gentle rebuke and counsel. First God revealed to Cain his sin problem, he revealed to him that his offering was not accepted because he did not do what is right. This was Cain’s opportunity to examine his heart, it was an opportunity to think about himself and what is right before God. This word could have given him directions and light to his life. God assured Cain that if he does what is right, he will be accepted, he assured him that it is not over. God is assuring me and you today as well, that no matter what sin we have committed, our past shortcomings, it is not over, our merciful God is willing to give us another opportunity to do what is right, to repent from our sin. He said *if you do what is right you will be accepted*.

Furthermore, God said to Cain. 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. You must master it. Here God shared with Cain that he knows where he is, he revealed to him that he knows that he is aware of his sinful desires, he said sin is crouching at your door. This is mainly due to the sin committed in the garden of Eden of Eden, because of Adam and Eve, all generations after Adam and Eve were to be born with a sinful nature, man was no longer just in the image of God, but was with a sinful nature. Because of this, many of us like Cain battle with sinful desires, we battle with sinful desires of pride, jealousy, lust, anger, malice and many others. But this is not the end, this is not our final position. God said to Cain, you must rule over it, you must master it. We can master our sinful nature, and live out our Godly nature, live as the children of God created in his image.

How can we rule over our sinful nature, how can we master it? Firstly, we cannot master it by out own strength, we need God’s help to master our sinful nature. We can master it fully by accepting the sovereignty of God in our hearts, by putting out full trust in God, by obeying God, honoring him, worshipping him and coming to him with thanksgiving. Abel, though he was born in sin like Cain, he could master sin by fully accepting the sovereignty of God. Abel fully surrendered to God, and this is seen from his faith in offering to God. In **Hebrews 11:4** we are told that “*By faith Abel was commended as righteous.*” But how could Abel get to this point, how could he have the sovereignty of God established in such a solid manner in his heart? It was so because of the word of God, through the word of God Abel could get to know who God is, the creator of the heavens of the earth, the one who is in control of all things.

In order to master sin, to rule over it, we need to study the word of God by faith, we need to humbly accept it as God’s word directly to us, careful instruction of how to live. When we study the word of God just for head knowledge, we will not master sin. To master sin we need to accept the word in our hearts; we need to allow it to challenge us, rebuke us and correct us. That is why it is so crucial to write testimony, to meditate on the word of God, apply it with sincere hearts. When we do this, we will be able to do what is right and God is promising us that we will be accepted with favor. I thank God for helping our shepherds group to commit to writing testimony each week, through writing testimony I could meditate more on the word, reflect on it in my life, and it has revealed so much sin in my heart such anger, dishonoring my father, which I believe God in his greatly mercy is helping me to overcome and repent.

Even though God lowered himself and came to Cain a sinner, to counsel him with love and mercy. Can refused to repent, he did not receive the word of God with sincerity and humility, he rejected the sovereignty of God. And as result he did something terrible. Let us look at **verse 8**: “*Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.”* Cain failed to master sin, a sin one may say as small as jealousy towards his brother Abel, led him to commit murder. In **James 1:15** it says: “*Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”* Because Cain did not master the somewhat small sin, sin kept on demanding more from him, as the Lord said: “…*sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you*” And indeed, because Cain rejected the counsel of the Lord, he rejected the sovereignty of God, sin had him and turned him into its slave.

What then did God when Cain went on to commit this great sin? In **verse 9** it says: “*Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” “I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?””* God came to Cain again and asked him where is your brother Abel. Ofcourse the Lord knew what had happened, but he asked Cain to help him to repent once again, the Lord came with love and mercy once again, he did not abandon Cain but wanted to help him to realize his sin and repent. But Cain rejected God’s love and mercy, he rebelled against God. He said, “Am I my brother’s keeper? Cain totally had no regard for God, no reverence, Cain rejected the sovereignty of God. Instead of repenting, after countless opportunities, Cain yielded to his sinful desire, the sin of pride, jealousy and self-centeredness*.* He rejected God’s help.

When Cain rejected God’s help with rebellion and unrepentant heart, he cut himself from God’s forgiveness and help. In **verse 10-12** it says: “*The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. 11 Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. 12 When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.””* Cain rejected God's love and mercy and became a restless wanderer on the earth. He would have no roots, no fruit. What a miserable life Cain brought unto himself, living without God. When he realized all this he said to the Lord: *“My punishment is more than I can bear.”* Cain rejected the sovereignty of God, he was full of pride, he thought everything he had was because of his strength, he thought the crops crew because of his skillful hand, all this was just an illusion. It is an illusion to think that what we have is because of our skill alone. Everything we have is from God. The goal of sin is really this, make us think everything depends on us remove God from the picture, and as result separate us from God, and leave us wondering around and suffer in the world without the blessing of God.

I pray that God may help us to see sin as it is, not as freedom but a way to lead us to great suffering and wondering around without the blessing of God. I pray that we may surrender to God as the ruler and sole provider of our lives. I pray that God may help us to study his word, meditate on it so that we can know God deeply, his sovereignty and trust in him with all things. I pray that we may come to God with humble hearts, offer our best to him as a form of honor, worship, praise and thanksgiving.