

Daily Devotional, January 5, 2021 I Am My Brother's Keeper!

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. ⁹ Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Genesis 4: 8-9 (NIV)

The Story of Cain and Abel is a story of daily struggles. Both Cain and Abel worked hard. They both wanted to please God, but Cain had many issues. He especially struggled with anger, jealousy, and selfishness.

Cain was a laborer in the fields, spending long grueling hours growing crops. Able managed flocks of animals, most likely sheep, working hard to increase his flocks. Each understood that giving a portion of their crops or flocks to God was the right thing to do. After Cain's crops had been harvested, he brought a small offering to God. At about the same time, Abel selected "Fat portions from the firstborn of his flock." Abel's offering pleased God, but Cain's offering did not find favor with God.

Cain made several decisions that led to the tragedy of the death of his brother. After Cain's sacrifice was rejected, God gave him the chance to do better but Cain ignored God and instead targeted his own brother for showing him up. Cain also let his anger get the best of him, but most notably, Cain forgot his duty to others. Cain was focused on himself. He held back on his offering to God and then focused only on himself when he attacked his brother. And when he was confronted by God, Cain asked that haunting question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The answer, of course is, "Yes!" We were made to look after one another, to love and care for one another and to put others first.

The struggle of all of humanity is the struggle against our selfishness. The human condition, from the time of Cain and Able and all the way up to today, is that we have a hard time seeing past our own wants and desires. The scriptures, early on, seek to teach us that we must struggle against this condition and look to the needs of others. God calls us to give and bless, not take from and harm others.

As a people of faith, we are called to love others, keep our brothers and sisters, and care for our neighbors. When we offer our best to God and to our neighbors, we will bring life to others and we will know the joy that comes from living for God and looking beyond ourselves. Make that a New Year's resolution—to be your brother and sister's keepers!

Prayers: Dear Lord, In the midst of all that you have blessed us with, there are so many hurting and needy people. We lift them up to You and ask that You would bless them, help them, and heal them. We also pray that You would use us to help them in any way we can. Open our eyes and make us aware of the opportunities we have to bless others in need. Help us to not be selfish, help us to share. All that we have is Yours and we surrender ourselves to You. May Your will be done in Jesus' name, Amen.