

On Earth as in Heaven: Attitude of the Heart

11/17/2018 Andy Figueroa

In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it." Genesis 4:3-7

This is the opening narrative after Adam and Eve are driven out of Eden. Sin is in the world and is manifest in their first-born son. Everything we know about Cain is contrary to our prayer, "thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

What is the matter with Cain's offering that puts him at cross purposes with God? Is it the wrong stuff? Is it the wrong amount? Does it fall short when compared to Abel's offering? The story does not reveal any shortcomings with the substance of the offering though much ink has been spent on such conjectures. Relying on the principle that scripture interprets scripture, we see that Cain does not seek to learn why his offering "had no regard." Cain is not sorry; he does not repent. The problem with Cain's offering is Cain himself, the state of his heart revealed in his anger and murderous vengeance.

The ESV Study Bible notes confirm this saying: "This passage and others suggest that God's acceptance of Abel and rejection of Cain had to do with the attitudes of their hearts. Cain's fundamentally bad heart can be seen in his resentment toward his brother and in his unloving attitude in the rest of the passage."

Jesus speaks to this in the Sermon on the Mount saying, "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." Matthew 5:23-24

At this time, we invite you to place your 2019 estimated giving cards in the offertory with praise and thanksgiving. As usual, a box will also be set up to receive estimated giving cards if you will find it convenient. We thank you for your thoughtfulness and for participating with us to further the practice of joyful and deliberate giving. Praise be to God from whom all blessing flow.

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
2 Corinthians 9:7

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