

The Worship of Faith

Hebrews 11:4

Introduction

Hebrews 11 is known as the Hall of Faith. It lists great people, or "heroes" of the faith. This week we come to our first person of faith recorded in Hebrews 11. Abel is called a man of faith because he specifically demonstrated what it means to worship the invisible God by faith.

In order for us to worship by faith, we have to come to God on His terms, not our own. Abel and his brother Cain both offered God worship, or "went to church" in a sense, but both did not have their worship equally accepted. Abel brought an animal sacrifice. Cain brought vegetables from the ground. God had prescribed, starting with Adam and Eve, that blood had to be shed to atone for sins committed. Abel brought the type of offering that was prescribed by God and he was willing to adjust his attitude to God's requirements. Cain, on the other hand was not willing to do so.

It is the nature of man to want God to adjust to us, rather than for us to adjust to Him. It is possible to be religious but not be right. It is possible to believe in God and not operate in faith. We must come to God on His terms. God wants us to be conscious of our sin and of our need for a sacrifice. This means that we have to be willing to deal with our sin and do it God's way. God doesn't expect us to be perfect when we come to church, but he does want us to be honest with where we are, and willing to come to Him to address our hearts His way.

Getting Started

1. Explain in your own words what the phrase "atonement for sin" means.
2. Cain had a different attitude than Abel toward God's terms for worship. What kinds of right or wrong attitudes do you see exhibited by Christians today toward God's standard for worship and atonement for sins?

Let's Get Personal

1. Abel's sacrifice was costly. It was a sacrifice that affected the source of his livelihood. What sacrifice might God be asking you to make that would affect you in this way?
2. Cain's sacrifice implied that he wasn't serious about dealing with his sin. Is there an area of unconfessed sin that you are struggling to deal with God's way? How could you begin to address that area of your life?
3. The word says that Cain's countenance had fallen. How might unaddressed sin affect your emotional well being? Have you witnessed this in your life or in the lives of others?
4. Communion is one of the ways that we can address sin in our lives. It is a time to remember God's sacrifice for us and also to confess our sin. Do you regularly participate in communion? Why or why not? Is it more of a ritual for you or a heartfelt practice?

Take the Next Step

1. If you have not been placing a priority on communion, make it a point to participate regularly and to use that time of worship to deal with unaddressed sin, remember Jesus' sacrifice for you, and receive renewed grace to continue your walk with Him.
2. Based on this week's sermon, where are you convicted to adjust your worship to God's prescribed way?

Renew Your Mind

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen..." Hebrews 11:1
