

## Undeserved Mercy

General Topic: The Source of Justice

Sunday, January 2, 2022

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### Lesson Text: Genesis 4:1-13

*Background Scripture: Psalms 9 and 10*

*(Gen 4:1) And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. (Gen 4:2) And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. (Gen 4:3) And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. (Gen 4:4) And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: (Gen 4:5) But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. (Gen 4:6) And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? (Gen 4:7) If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. (Gen 4:8) And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. (Gen 4:9) And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? (Gen 4:10) And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. (Gen 4:11) And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; (Gen 4:12) When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. (Gen 4:13) And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.*

### Lesson Objective(s):

God is gracious in mercy and we never deserve it!

## Teaching Tools:

Word puzzles may be developed from the following site: [www.puzzlemaker.com](http://www.puzzlemaker.com). Also, [www.dtlk.com](http://www.dtlk.com) has several visual aids that may be beneficial, as well as [www.kidssundayschool.com](http://www.kidssundayschool.com) which provide other helps for teaching.

Bible Journaling may be an interesting way to involve older teens in self-expression of the lessons they are taught. Visit [www.lifeway.com/Articles/how-to-start-bible-journaling-in-six-easy-steps](http://www.lifeway.com/Articles/how-to-start-bible-journaling-in-six-easy-steps) to find ways to use this valuable tool to learn and reinforce Scripture.

### Questions:

### The Lesson:

I pray each of you had an enjoyable Christmas and celebrated Jesus who came to reconcile us back to the Father. Many efforts had been made in the past with priests who were unfaithful, prophets who were often killed because of the messages they carried; however, none of them could return this untoward, unholy world back to God. Consequently, He decided to buy us back, completely and finally snatching us from the grip of the enemy by putting on a body of flesh, born into poverty, so that we might have abundant life.

When I saw this week's title, I laughed out loud! I am so grateful that God grants undeserved mercy; brand new every morning. I'm not forced to use yesterday's mercy, more than likely because I would have none left (used it all up!). I'm also not forced to use tomorrow's mercy, as I cannot make a claim on a day I have not yet obtained. Therefore, I only get enough for today and it is sufficient all day long. Whatever the case, it is fully and totally undeserved.

I'm going to be brief as I have two injured fingers on my left hand and typing is a chore, but I will do my best to hammer out some ideas that struck me as I prepared for and studied this lesson.

In Genesis 3, we are introduced to the original sin with the disobedience of Adam, and Eve, his wife. Adam and Eve consummated their relationship and she gave birth to a male child. Her heart was pleased that God would allow her to have a son. In my mind, it was an act of mercy on His part; giving birth to males was as important then, as it is now. It guarantees that the family bloodline will be maintained and possibly carried on perpetually.

She then had Abel. These young men were very different from each other, as Cain worked by the sweat of his brow, and Abel preferred more menial work-taking care of the sheep. In my opinion, Abel had the worst job; sheep are stubborn animals.

I believe that Adam taught his son's a great many things in the process of time between Genesis 4:2 and Genesis 4:3. I believe he taught them about who God is and how to bring a proper offering for sacrifice to Him. Cain brought the fruit of his work to God, but unlike Abel, he failed to offer a sacrifice. Now, scripture does not give us enough information about the offerings to know why one was accepted and the other rejected; however, Cain's immediate anger indicated that he was not happy with God's choices.

Listen, since God maintains Sovereign control, He has the right and authority to bless or withhold blessings, as He chooses. Man will never be able to lead Him around. The cattle on a thousand hills belong to Him and He will distribute them in a manner that is pleasing to Him.

The Great I Am who does not take cues from anyone, noticed Cain's anger and called him on it, giving him an opportunity for healthy banter. Rather than take

advantage of the opportunity to explore his anger, he became angrier. God told him that if he had done what was right, he would have been rewarded; however, he did not take that option.

We live in a world of sin; consequently, the only way to get away from sin is to leave the world. God cautioned Cain to get a handle on the sin that was right at his door. I am a fan of the Matrix, so I was pretty excited to hear that a fourth one was coming out. One of the key issues in the movie is the fact that people have choices. When you take away the choice, they become mindless robots who function as commanded. God does not want mindless robots, but people who desire to serve Him, who love Him because it was their choice. While I almost cannot stand it and think it a horrible idea, man has the power to choose his own way.

Now you would think Cain would take advantage of his 'Get Out of Jail Free' card, but he did not. His uncontrollable anger with God caused him to take out his feelings on his brother. He lured him into the field to meet an untimely death at the hand of one who should have loved and cared for him. Uncontrolled anger has caused many family break ups and even murders, throughout history. I remember an incident between twin brothers, One killed the other because he confronted him about abusing his wife. When twin bonds are broken, the result can be fatal.

When God asked Cain about Abel, I believe he responded with an attitude. Since God created man to fellowship with Him, we are a community created to fellowship with one another. We have a sole responsibility to care for one another. He knew what Cain was going to do before he did it; therefore, when He asked what he had done, he already knew the loathing in his heart that led him to kill his own brother.

This is where this story gets interesting. God forbid Cain to do the one thing he was skilled to do. He could no longer gather his living from farming/tilling the ground and he would become a fugitive and a vagabond. What

really got my goat was Cain's response in verse 14. Really? When given the choice to do the right thing, most will reject that idea when lack an unrepentant spirit.

Cain was a fool because he believed that he could give God whatever he desired, however he desired. If you pay your tithes and insist on raising hell in the church, what purpose does your giving serve? We must be careful to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. We need to be pleasing to Him.

Verse 15 of this text is not included in the exposition this week, but I was blown away at how God showed Cain mercy after his display of haughtiness. He put a mark on his head so no one would take his life, as he willfully took his brother's and declared that if anyone killed him, vengeance would be taken on them sevenfold. While we behave foolishly, He still protects us! Who would not serve a God like this?! Thank God every day for undeserved mercy. He's still making a way...

***Be Salt! Be Light! Be blessed!***