



Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord." And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. 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 4:1-7

"Warning: Viewer Discretion Advised," "Wet Paint," and "Beware of Dog" are common warning signs you've probably seen. They all have this in common: They warn people that what they're about to see, touch, or do may cause harm.

We also receive warnings from people. A teacher may warn you when you're close to facing disciplinary action. Parents will warn you when your tone is leaning toward excessive attitude. Friends might warn you to avoid upsetting another classmate or teacher who is having a bad day. Warnings are not meant to ruin our fun; they're meant to protect us and keep us safe.

We see a great example of this in the story of Cain and Abel. Cain was angry that God rejected his offering over his brother's. God saw where this was going and reached out to Cain. He warns Cain that sin was ready to attack. Instead of recognizing his state of anger and heeding the warning, he elects to murder his brother.

What's remarkable about this story is we see how much God cares for Cain. God doesn't give him a warning just to scorn him, but to help him recognize his sin, repent of it, and turn away from it. God knows if Cain refuses to turn from sin, then he will become prey to it. God also knows we are no different today. We know the good we are to do, but we fail to do it. Paul summarized this really well in Romans 7:18-19 when he says, "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

Jesus said whoever commits sin is the slave of sin (John 8:34). No one can free themselves from the entanglement of sin. Cain couldn't. You and I cannot. That's why Jesus came. He alone was able to break the chains of sin and death through his own death. His victorious resurrection became the sign for us that sin was forever defeated, and that eternal life was won for us. God's plan of salvation ENDURED despite so many ignoring his warnings and commands because Jesus came and did what no one else could.

There are plenty of warning signs within Scripture that still speak to us today because sin still entangles us. We still need our Savior's grace and mercy to recognize our sin, repent of it, and turn away from it as a forgiven child of God. We're reminded that our hope rests with Christ alone. We receive our Christian identity as a child of God in our baptism. God reaches out to us through the Holy Spirit when sin is crouching at our door. He also assures us we are His and that Jesus won the victory that we couldn't win for ourselves. The next time you see a warning sign, take a moment and say a prayer of thanksgiving that God still looks out for us today.

Journal Questions

1. How do you recognize moments when "sin is crouching at your door"? What steps do you take to turn away from the temptation to sin?
2. No one is perfect and we continue to sin daily. How does our Christian identity comfort you when you struggle with sin?

Prayer

Gracious God, we thank You for sending Your Son to do what we could not do for ourselves. Jesus lived a perfect life and died a death meant for us so we would no longer be under the curse of sin. Help us to hear Your voice when You reach out to us. Remind us of Your endless love and that, even when we fail to do the good we want to do, You are ready to forgive us because of Jesus' sacrifice. It's in His most holy name we pray. Amen.