

Problems – Study 8

The last time on “It’s a Good Life,” we looked at the symptom of depression. We started that study and, of course, the study that we’ve been going through is the subject of problems. We’ve been looking at what’s called symptoms of problems. One of the symptoms that we started talking about in this lesson is depression. I’d like to continue where we left off the last time. If you’ll remember, we talked about Cain. He was the world’s first baby, and we understand that by reading the Word of God he was born a sinner. Adam and Eve became sinners because they disobeyed God. Cain was born a sinner because of his parents, and he chose to continue that way.

We need to ask ourselves this: Is it right to go man’s way or is it right to go God’s way? I mentioned before that Adam and Eve sinned and they tried to cover their shame and sinfulness with fig leaves. God said He didn’t approve of that. That’s not the way to go to Heaven. That’s not the way to be forgiven. You know, there are ways today that people try to cover up their sinfulness and shame. One way people try to do this is helping the needy. They try to cover their sin by doing that. They think that if they help so many people or if they help someone that gives them points with God. That doesn’t work that way.

We also see that many people give money to a church. Whether they’ve been saved or are lost, they give money to the church and they think they’re going to get points with God. That doesn’t work that way. You don’t go to Heaven by giving money to a church or helping the needy. And some people do this. They say, “Hail Mary,” to a woman who was a sinner and not the mother of God. Mary was born into this world just as you and I are born into this world. The Bible says that we were shapen in

iniquity, and in sin our mother conceived us. In other words, every person who was born into this world after Adam and Eve was born in sin. Mary was a sinner. She was not the mother of God. She was the mother of Jesus Christ. He was in the flesh. He became like sinful flesh. He was not sinful. He did not have any sin that mankind has or has ever had. He was sinless, but Mary was a sinner.

Jesus Christ was in the flesh, and the Bible tells us that He put on flesh. He became like sinful flesh. In other words, He looked like us. He was a human being, but He was also God, and Mary did not give birth to God. God has always been. She is not the mother of God. You can say “hail Marys” until your hair falls out or until your hair turns white or gray or whatever, but that’s not going to do you any good. You must say, “Jesus Christ, come into my heart. I receive You as my Savior.”

We see that there are so many ways that people try to go to Heaven and try to get points with God. Another way is going to church. Some people think, if they go to church and they put in so many hours a week or so much time, they say, “Whew, I’m glad that’s over with. I’ve done my duty.” Well, God has given us the church for our fellowship. He’s given us the church to help us to live a life that is pleasing to Him. We need to be with other Christians. We don’t go to church to get points with God or to go to Heaven. We go to church because we are on our way to Heaven and we want to have fellowship with other Christians.

And just as many people try to go to Heaven by doing the wrong thing, Adam and Eve tried that by covering their sin with fig leaves and it didn’t work. Man’s way is always wrong, according to Proverbs 14:12. It says, *There is a*

way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. We need to go God's way, in other words, and God's way is always right. Isaiah 45:22 says, *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.* We need to go God's way and we need to go to Heaven God's way. That's the only way you're going to get into Heaven... by going God's way.

Notice this, that God clothed Adam and Eve with coats of skins, according to Genesis 3:21. God was teaching our first parents something very important. He was teaching that man cannot cover himself, Genesis 3:7. God must cover and clothe the man, Genesis 3:21. An innocent substitute must shed blood and die. In Hebrews 9:22, it says, *Without shedding of blood is no remission.* In other words, without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. There has to be bloodshed and it has to be from an innocent substitute.

In Genesis 4:1-5 we read about the offerings to God. We're not going to read all those verses, and what I'd like for you to do is read those later on if you would, and just understand this, that, first of all, in verse 2, it tells us there in Genesis chapter 4 that Cain was a tiller of the ground. In other words, he was a farmer.

In verse 2 also of that chapter, it says Abel was a keeper of the sheep. He was a shepherd. Cain's offering was fruit of the ground. His offering was vegetables, according to Genesis 4:3, and Abel's offering was the firstlings of his flock. In other words, he brought the best of the best. You say, "Well, how do you know that?" Well, the Bible says he brought the fat thereof in Genesis 4:4.

God's reaction to this was that He accepted Abel's offering and rejected Cain's. In Hebrews 11:4 it says, *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by the*

which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.

As you look back, I mentioned "the fat thereof" that Abel's offering was "the fat thereof." That means it was the best of the best. Although Cain's offering was not accepted, the vegetables, I don't believe he even brought the best of the best of the vegetables to God. He brought the worst, I believe, that he had. Now, that wasn't the reason God didn't accept his offering because he didn't bring the best of the best of the vegetables. He offered a bloodless sacrifice to God. God, no doubt, had instructed Adam and Eve, just as He tells preachers today, "Preach the Word." You tell your children about Jesus Christ, about the blood offering that Jesus died on the cross and He shed His blood. Well, Jesus had not died at that time, but God had shed the blood of an innocent animal and it covered the sin that was present in Adam and Eve's life, and, no doubt, Adam and Eve shared this with their sons, and they were without excuse. They needed to do as Adam and Eve had no doubt taught them, that the sacrifice to God needed to be a blood sacrifice. Well, that's what Abel brought.

As we look on, we see that Cain was depressed. When God rejected Cain's offering, two things happened, according to Genesis 4:5. Cain was very wroth. In other words, he was angry; he was all burned up. It tells about his countenance, his face. His countenance fell. This means he was sad and depressed. He felt terrible. In Genesis 4:5 it says, *But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect...* In other words, God had no respect for Cain's offering... *And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.*

As we look on, if Cain had brought the right offering, he would not have been depressed. He did wrong and, therefore, he felt bad. To do bad is to feel bad. Wrong actions result in

wrong feelings, and feeling bad does not fix the wrong.

What is God's cure? God spoke to Cain right away and God showed him that it was not necessary to be angry and it was not necessary to be depressed. If you read Genesis 4:6-7 and it says, ⁶*And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? ⁷If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest no well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.*

God said to Cain, *If thou doest well... do right, in other words... shalt thou not be accepted?* In other words, "If you do well and if you do right, will not your face be lifted up, Cain?" Well, Cain's face had fallen but God gave Cain the cure for a fallen face, in other words, being depressed. God told him how he could get a facelift. What must Cain do in order to have his face lifted up? To come up out of his depression? It was to do things God's way. God was saying, "If you do well, you will feel well."

The key to feeling well is very simple. To feel well a person must live well. Depression is not some strange power that suddenly overcomes a person. If this were true, then there would be nothing we could do about it. God told Cain that there was something he could do about it. Do well.

If you keep reading about Cain, you'll find that he was on a downward spiral, and that's where so many people are today. They keep going down and down. Cain did wrong. He was angry. It ended up in murder, and he lied to God. What was the result? He felt depressed. He felt terrible.

You know, David was in a downward spiral one time, but he stopped that downward spiral because of his confession and his repentance.

Psalm 51:1 says, *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.* Psalm 32:5: David said, *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*

What do we learn about Cain in I John 3:12? It says, *Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*

Feelings, control... most people are led and controlled by their feelings and emotions, and the result is disastrous. When asked, "Why did you do that?" the common answer is, "Because I felt like it." Every day is filled with many decisions that must be made on the basis of obedience to God rather than following one's feelings. There is much that we do not feel like doing.

The two ways to live are found in Romans 15:1-3... feelings and faith. Notice if you would, feelings and faith. We're saved by fact. Jesus died on the cross of Calvary. He shed his blood for us that we could be saved. That's a fact. He rose from the dead. That's a fact. He's living with God the Father today in Heaven. That's a fact. And all of those who will receive Jesus as Savior will go to Heaven. That's a fact. When you believe the fact, you're receiving Him by faith. You're receiving the fact by faith, so we see fact, faith in Jesus Christ, and then comes the feeling, the feeling of knowing you've done right. You've done right by receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and as a saved person, you receive that feeling of joy because you're doing what God wants you to do as a saved person.

Receive Jesus today as your Savior. Ask Him to come into your heart. That's the way you get rid of depression is knowing you're on your way to Heaven and you're serving God and you're doing what God wants you to do.

Would you receive Him today? Would you do what He wants you to do? Do it because Jesus wants you to.

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Until next time, this is Doug Anderson reminding you it's a good life living for the Lord. May the Lord bless you richly is our prayer.