

The first shedding of human blood was a terrible experiment. Whether Cain’s murderous blow was premeditated or not, the sight of a bleeding human corpse must have been incredibly shocking to him. Keep in mind, he had not been desensitized by the details of war, or slasher movies or first-person-shooter video games; killing and slaying were new terrors to mankind, and Cain, the pioneer of violence, must have been filled with astonishment at the result of his action, and apprehension about its consequences.

I see him standing there by Abel’s body, for a moment paralyzed with fright, awestruck at the sight of blood. Will the thunder roll, and God’s lightning strike him? Will the earth, now watered in blood, open up and swallow him whole? What questions must have flashed through the murderer’s mind? But listen: it is horribly quiet as Abel’s blood flows, and some ghastly comfort descends on Cain as he observes the earth soaking it up; absorbing and concealing his brother’s blood. Cain went his way dreaming that the awful matter was all over. He had done the deed, and it could not be undone; he had struck the blow, ridden himself of the one who was obnoxious to him; the blood had been swallowed up by the earth, and it was over. There no point in dwelling on it.

In those days there was no organization of police and law and judges and prisons; Cain had little to fear; he was strong and healthy, with no one to punish him; no one to accuse or confront him, except his father and his mother, and they were possibly too staggered with grief to do anything. He may therefore have imagined that the deed was speechless and silent and completely hidden, so that he might go on as though it never happened. It was not so, however, for though that blood was silent in the seared conscience of Cain, it had a voice elsewhere. A mysterious voice went up; it reached the ear of God, and moved His heart, so that God revealed himself and spoke to Cain: “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries to me from the ground.” Then Cain knew that blood could not be idly spilled, that murder would be avenged, for there was a message in every drop which flowed from his brother. God heard its cry, and he would investigate, judge and punish.

An even more terrible experiment happened at Golgotha. The One slaughtered there was not the son of Adam and Eve but the Son of God; make no mistake, he was human, yet also God revealed in the flesh; flesh that could bleed.

It was a dreadful experiment, a lot like Cain’s. Having dragged him before the judgment seat; having falsely accused him; having shouted, “Away with him, away with him,” they actually dared to nail the Son of God to the cross, to lift up his body between earth and heaven, to watch his suffering until it ended in his death, to pierce his side, and see blood and water flow from it. No doubt Pilate, who had washed his hands in water, thought that the problem was over and done with. The Scribes and Pharisees went their way, and said, “We have silenced the accusing voice. No more, ‘Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.’ There will be no voice to that blood.” They could not have been more wrong. The blood of Jesus cried to the father from the rocky ground of Golgotha, and what did it say?

“Father, forgive them,” resounded from the wounds of God’s Son. The blood of Abel was not voiceless, and neither was the blood of Jesus; it was heard amid the thrones of heaven, and thanks be to God, it spoke *for* us and not against us. It did not demand fiercer vengeance than what fell upon Cain, it did not ask that we might be driven as fugitives upon the earth, it did not

ask that we be banished from God into hell for ever, but it cried, "Father, forgive them," and it prevailed, and the curse was removed.

There's one other comparison we need to make. Did you notice? The blood of Abel spoke to God long before Cain spoke. Cain was deaf to the voice of his brother's blood, but God heard it. Long before you hear the blood of Jesus, God hears it, and spares you. Long before that blood comes into your soul to melt you to repentance, it pleads for you with God. It was not the voice of Cain that brought down vengeance, but the voice of Abel's blood; and it is not the cry of the sinner seeking mercy that is the cause of mercy, it is the cry of the blood of Jesus.

When you run out of words, or just don't know what to say, what a mercy it is that the blood of Jesus is pleading for you. If you are to receive pardon from God, it will not be by the quality of your prayers and tears, but through the quality of the blood of God's dear Son. Cain did not ask for vengeance, but it came through the blood; and you, though you feel you shouldn't even dare look for forgiveness, you will find it when you trust the blood of Jesus, speaking for you. The blood does not need your voice to increase its power with God; he will hear your voice, but it is because he hears the blood of Jesus first of all.

Or think of it this way: Jesus' blood does not plead for the innocent. The innocent need no atonement or sacrifice. Jesus pleads for the rebellious; for you who have broken his laws, and despised his love, and fought against his power; the blood of Jesus pleads for you, for he came into the world to save sinners. "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."

Now, many of us here this morning have known Jesus a long time, maybe our whole lives, but even so, our faith occasionally faints, and our doubts grow strong. So let's go to the cross like it's the first time we've ever heard of it, for the blood still speaks. The blood is just as powerful at this moment as when the thief said, "Lord, remember me." The precious blood of Jesus is just as persuasive as when the centurion confessed, "This man really was the Son of God." Let's think of this and rejoice in this. When you cannot plead with God, when you dare not, when your mouth is silent, and despair gags your mouth, even then Jesus pleads. Come and cast yourself on him; rest completely in him, he must prevail even though you cannot, he must succeed although you have no power whatsoever. Come then and link yourself with the plea of Jesus' blood, and it is all well with you, all safe with you, and safe forever.