

February 18, 2021

Read Genesis 4

Key verse: Genesis 4:10

And the Lord said, 'What have you done? Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground!'

You ARE Your Brother's Keeper

I don't know if there is anything a parent can do to prevent sibling rivalry; I think my parents were very even-handed in raising their three children, but I always felt jealous of my brother Jon. He was four years older than me, so he got to stay up later than I did. When we visited a cousin who had a mini-bike (with a motor!), my brother got to ride it, but I was too young. He graduated at the top of his high school class while I...let's just say I graduated.

The odd thing is that my brother probably felt jealous of me; as the oldest child he must have felt like he had to set the good example for his siblings. He probably got tasked with watching his little brother on occasions when he would have rather been somewhere else, and he probably also noticed that I seemed to get away with more than he ever did.

Jealousy is a dangerous feeling. It led Cain to kill his own brother. It leads us to hurt one another in all sorts of ways, and it shows that we are not at all centered in God. I don't particularly like the way God is described in Genesis 4:4-5 as showing more regard for Abel's offering than he shows for Cain's, but I notice that God is with Cain, asking him what's wrong, assuring him that all will be well if he does well, warning him of the sin that is lurking at his door. This is a God who cares for both sinner and saint, who wants us all to do well toward him and toward one another. We ARE our brothers' and sisters' keepers, and if we all strive to care for one another we come near to the Kingdom of God.

Prayer: Almighty God, we have not done a very good job of tending to our brothers' or sisters' needs. We have compared ourselves with others and acted jealously toward one another. Forgive us. During this season of Lent, help us to know the depth of your love which shows no partiality, and in knowing your love help us to love one another. Amen.