

HE DID NOT MEAN TO DO IT

Genesis 4:8

Cain rose up against Abel and slew him. The most pitiful words ever expressed by man are the words, "I didn't mean to do it."

I remember reading about a mother who was bathing her baby one day. The father had stepped out for awhile. The door bell rang. The mother left the baby to answer the door. It was the paper boy. She quickly paid him and went back to the nursery. The baby had turned over in the water and was lying face down in the basket. In spite of all the efforts of the doctor, the baby was gone. The sad words she said, "she didn't mean to do it."

How often events of this type happen.

A boy pushes a girl into the pool - not knowing that she can't swim.

A father works hard to make money for his family. Not knowing his neglect will bring his children to ruin.

A hopeful politician makes a speech - not realizing it, but it opens up hatred and brings on riots and murder.

A physician gives an injection of penicillin - not knowing that the patient is allergic to this drug.

A night of fun can end up as a life's tragedy.

A thrilling ride in a car can end up with mangled bodies.

A short cut to success can be the road to disaster. In every one of these cases we can say, "he didn't mean to do it."

We might illustrate it with the soldier who enlisted in the civil war. He took along his kit of watch makers tools and while they were in camp, he did considerable business. One day when the order came to strike tents and prepare for battle - he looked around his tent in dismay and explained, why I can't possibly go - I have twelve watches to repair which I have promised by Saturday night. That soldier had forgotten what he enlisted for - he didn't mean to do it - but he had forgotten his duty.

Cain probably didn't mean to kill Abel. Now the two boys had been raised together. They had played together. They had fought as boys together. One day Cain took Abel out away from the homesite. And the blow from Cain felled his brother. I can imagine that he spoke to Abel and received no answer. He tried to arouse him and received no response. He was not breathing and the heart was not beating.

The way the story is placed in Genesis, we quickly realize that this is the first death mentioned. Cain did not know what death meant. He had never seen a person die. Now his brother was dead. He had meant to hurt him but surely he had not meant for this thing to happen. He didn't mean to do it.

Why did Cain kill Abel. The story is told here that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. Abel brought the firstlings of his flock. Cain brought a bloodless sacrifice. Abel brought a bleeding lamb. God had marked a way for men to come to him and that was the way that Abel took. But Cain came to God in his own way. Now these two boys were brought up the same way. They had the same parents - and yet, we find that there was a difference in the offerings which they brought.

V. 7 - The underlying reason why he killed his brother was that his offering was not accepted and sin lied at the door. It appears here from the story that God had given what he expects of Cain and of Abel - or else Cain would have not been condemned. He would not have felt that he had been condemned. God gave them both the same way - that the offering was to be a sacrifice. But Cain thought that he could bring any old thing. It was easy for him - that which he could bring in his own way and not in God's way. It was not a matter of faith with Cain.

If you do not make it right - sin is upon you and ready to enter in. And this is the thing that Cain realized. You remember, Christ said, if you love me - you will keep my commandments. You will obey me.

People do not go to church because they don't want to go. When people make excuses about their church, it is because they don't want to participate. And the thing that is wrong is their attitude toward God. Abel meant to try to meet all the requirements of God and he did his best. And he brought his sacrifice unto the Lord.

I think that we find the real reason why Cain killed his brother. I John 3:12 and 13. The Scripture says be not like Cain, who was the evil one, and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him - because his own deeds were evil. And his brother's righteous. Do not wonder brethren that the world hates you.

Jealousy originates anytime when someone does a good thing that we do not do.

I have had a number of women tell me that they come to church and it creates a serious difficulty for them. They do come and they want to come - but their husbands make it hard for them when they return home. The husband accuses them

of trying to be better than they are. Some husbands say that the wife is trying to embarrass him. Make him look evil. Now we resent anyone doing well when we do not do as we should. We resent anyone's success when we do not succeed.

Cain was angry and there was jealousy that was bringing on the anger. Quite often you read of an automobile accident that happened while people were angry. And probably it does - a person is angry and he jumps in his car and he jumps down on the accelerator - and there comes an accident right away.

Paul warns us - be angry - but do not sin. Eph. 4:26.

Jesus is more explicit when he says - everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable for judgment. Matt. 5:22.

Cain refused to listen to warnings. As we read the story, we find that God had warned Cain of the danger. But none of us likes to be warned - we think that we are being threatened. We nearly always reject personal warnings that are given to us.

Abel was available. We are usually very careful when we are angry - not to attack someone who would hurt us. Cain had nothing against Abel. His problem was with God. He didn't want to fight God - God was too strong. When the boss hurts the feelings of one who works for him - that person doesn't turn around and fight with the boss. He goes home and takes it out on his family. We vent our anger on those who are available and who will not fight back.

How many harsh words have you uttered to your family that they do not deserve. You knew that you hurt them because they love you. Cain took out his anger on his brother Abel - not because Cain was the evil one. And we are not to be like him in this manner. Why did he murder his brother - because his own deeds were evil, and

his brother's righteous. I John 3:12.

Cain probably did not mean to kill his brother. Perhaps he only meant to express his inner resentment.

Now the disaster came as a terrifying side effect. If we will face it, war not only kills the men on the front lines but it leaves orphans back home. So every evil deed - no matter how unintended - can have terrifying results. The most obvious results of Cain's murder of Abel - was in the character of Cain himself.

Let us look for a moment of some of the results that came out of Cain's experience. He didn't mean to do it.

V. 9. First, Cain became a liar - V. 9. God came and spoke to Cain and asked, where is your brother. Now this was right after the murder. This was right after the thing happened. Cain replied, I do not know.

Now this was a terrifying thing for him to say. He knew where his brother was - he was lying to God.

Do you know something - this is characteristic of you. You have done something evil - once you have made a mistake. What is your first reaction. The first thing you are going to do is tell a lie to get out of it. But one lie will not satisfy - that only brings on another. So Cain became a liar.

The man who is drinking has to lie about how much he has had to drink. I have heard men in court, after the officer testified that he was driving all over the road and could not maintain his side of the road - I have heard him say I have just had one or two drinks. So a man will lie about the books when he is not honest - the

accounts. The person who is not being faithful will lie. Actually evil deeds make liars out of us and so he didn't mean to do it but it made a liar out of him.

V. 9 B. Second, Cain became irresponsible - V. 9 Not only did he tell a lie but he said when the question was asked him - am I my brother's keeper. Surely he knew that he was his brother's keeper - just as his brother was his keeper. Up until this time, he had accepted the responsibility of protecting and securing the life of his brother.

Under normal circumstances, a boy is responsible for his date - but if he himself has hurt her, he will say - well, it was her fault as much as mine. I am not responsible for her.

It is the attitude. A boy gets a girl in trouble - he didn't mean to do it.

It is sometimes interesting to watch the cigarette companies battle over the effects of cancer and disclaim any responsibility for what the product produces.

The same is true with the liquor industry - they disclaim all responsibility for the effects of the product upon the public.

Jesus said whosoever causes one of these little ones who believes in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drown in the depth of the sea. Matt. 18:6. We are our brother's keepers and no amount of justification can over weigh our responsibility. Cain became irresponsible.

V. 12 Third, Cain was separated from the people that he loved, V. 14. It tells us that he was separated - he neither felt that his friends nor society would accept him - and that was the result of sin.

Now conscience does make us feel that others are against us. And that fate has taken a turn to destroy us and to battle against us.

Behold, thou has driven me out this day from the face of the earth - from the familiar surroundings of my home, and I have become a fugitive - he says. The thing that he had done had broken the bond of unity and the person who sins finds that he has shut himself off from the rest of society.

V. 14 Fourth, Cain was fear ridden. V. 14 - He says whosoever finds me will slay me. He didn't mean to do it. But now his heart was filled with fear. He has committed this sin.

Do you know any minister, physician, or doctor who has to employ a body guard. There are a number of criminal elements, who have many body guards to protect them wherever they go. The person who is engaged in lawlessness fears lawlessness will be directed at him. The person who murders feels that he will be killed. The thief that steals from other people - feels that other people will steal from him. The things that folks fear in others - are sometimes the things they recognize in themselves.

V. 16 V. 15-16 - it says in the fourth place, he left the presence of the Lord. Now this was a most tragic thing. Now he started out very innocently. He didn't mean to do it. But now he has gone out from the presence of the Lord. He became a liar, was irresponsible - and the important thing about this story is - is God's attitude toward Cain. Now God told Cain that if anybody should slay him - that God would take vengeance seven fold. And that God would see to this. But still God wished to protect Cain and to take care of him. He was interested in him.

This reminds me of the parable of the ninty and nine - that Jesus said he had come into the world to save sinners.

This brings us to the heart of the Gospel. If God loved Cain, surely he can love you. If God wanted Cain to repent, surely he wants you to repent. If God wanted Cain to come to his spiritual house - he wants you there.

David committed adultery and murder. But he confessed his sins and was restored to unity, and to friendship with God. How foolish it would have been for David to allow his sins to continue. And to destroy him and his family, and his faith.

He didn't mean to do it. How often we find this so practical in life of men today. There are so many illustrations. There are so many illustrations in the physical realm. For example, Eutychus, in the Books of Acts - Chapter 20 - sat in the window of the upper chamber while Paul preached. He fell into a deep sleep, fell out of the window, and when he hit the ground - he was dead. They revived him. But I suspect that Eutychus would have said to those people -- I really didn't mean to go to sleep. He didn't mean to do it.

And here is the great tragedy of this story - it lies in the fact that a man who committed an act - that he didn't mean to commit - became trapped by that act and became an irresponsible liar. A lonely man.

The glory of the story is that God stands waiting, protecting, and concerned. The question in the story is - did Cain ever come back to God. This seems to be your question today. I think in V. 13 - it really should be studied with care.

For here are some tardy tears - he didn't mean to do it - remember. My iniquity is greater than that that might be forgiven. Cain should have stopped - he should have looked - he should have listened before he killed. Had Cain thought upon the carnal ways and looked before he leaped - he would not be complaining about his punishment and the weight of his iniquities. Instead of bawling like a spoiled baby, my punishment is greater than I can bear. And instead of dispair and yielding to dispair, he could have and should have fallen at the mourner's bench and offered the blood of a lamb rather than the faithless, bloodless works of his own hands. He cries when it is too late. And it was too late. My crimes are too great to be forgiven. I remember reading an illustration by Dr. J. O. Williams, who conducted a revival meeting in a country community. The entire population attended the services. It was the time of the year when they were not busy with their farm work. And some of the prayer meetings were held in the homes during the afternoons. In this way, many more people could be reached. One afternoon they were in a home in the community and the service was held with the people on the back porch, which was shaped like an L. Some songs had been sung and many of the people had given testimonies. J. O. Williams said he had got out on the ground before all the people and began his sermon. He said I was talking when a very old man came up behind me in the yard and sat on a stump that was near. About the close of my talk, he touched me on the arm with his cane and asked if he might speak. I never had seen him before. I did not know him, he said. By some effort and leaning on the stump, the old man pointed his cane toward the people on the porch. And said, young people, let me ask you to do what this young man is asking you to do. And accept Christ as your Saviour, now while you can. I saw the day back yonder when I could have been saved - but I've waited too late and now I am doomed to ruin. There is nothing but eternal prediction for me. With these words - he was overcome. And took his seat back on the stump. Many times during the week, the preacher said he talked with the old man personally. Sought to get him to pray and accept Christ. The answer was always, I've waited too late. I'll never be saved. There is nothing but ruin for me. So far as I've been able to learn,

Dr. Williams said in later life, that man died in that condition. The Scripture says, (seek ye the Lord while he may be found.) Call ye upon Him while he is near. No doubt the old man didn't mean to do it - but he put off the Salvation of his soul, until like Cain, he was saying my sins, my iniquity is greater than it may be forgiven. And he knew that he was doomed for eternal damnation.

In closing, let me remind you, if you are one of those who didn't mean to do it - God's grace is still available.