



Articles and Sermons :: The Best of Intentions - Part I

The Best of Intentions - Part I , on: 2010/11/28 18:55

Once there was a very hard working and industrious man who had a heart to seek God. We know that he could "hear" the Lord God's voice because the Scriptures reveal that he was greatly encouraged and counseled by God. He had a desire to please God so he brought to God part of all that God had blessed him with.

So far, according to popular religious standards this fellow has all the qualifications of a leader of the people of God -- very hard working, a heart to seek God, a desire to give unto the Lord and experience of fellowship with God. This is the type of person that the church is actively seeking, a spiritual mover and shaker. The problem is, "that the things that are highly esteemed among men are an abomination in the sight of God".

And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

Luke 16:15

The Lord was not pleased with this fellow's offering. We can only expect our offering to be received by God when we come to Him according to His terms and not in a way that seems good to us.

The man, whose name was Cain, had a brother named Abel. Somehow, Abel had an understanding of what was acceptable to God. In order for fallen man to be acceptable before God, there must be an atoning death. This is not really pertinent to the story, nor is the fact that Cain went on to be a murderer and a liar. But rather, the fact that man is constantly leaning upon his own understanding to come up with ideas, plans and schemes to do something for God is a principle that has brought more ruin to the people of God than all of our enemies without. Give some thought about this.

Cain is an example of religious flesh (the religious system) and Abel is an example of a man walking in the Spirit and being well-pleasing to the Lord.

You could say that Abel dwelt outside the camp. Heb 13:13

Outside the camp of accepted religious norms.

And Cain was jealous and antagonistic towards Abel, who dwelt outside the camp.

But Cain had the best of intentions. And he did offer something to the Lord, after all.

It looks like God does not accept our best intentions, doesn't it?

What was God interested in concerning Cain? The same thing that He is interested in concerning us. Transformation in the inner man.

There is a man in the NT who hid his talent because he thought God was a hard man who reaped where He did not sow. He was given an investment along with a couple of other men. The other men multiplied their investments. That means that they took a risk. And the risk they took, was doing things God's way. Obviously, they knew something about the Lord that the person who hid their talent did not know. They must not have thought their Lord (employer) was a hard man.

Have you ever wondered how much better it would be to actually know someone than to know about someone?

We get to read about many people on SI and we sometimes talk about these people we read as if we know them. But we don't, do we? At least not most of them. We imagine things about them. Sometimes we imagine great things about them and sometimes we imagine not so great things about them.

How much better is it to know God than to imagine what He is like.

Obviously, this person that said his employer (the Lord) was a hard man, imagined this in his heart. He really did not know

w Him.

Well, we all know that this little story talks about the Lord and us. The success of our walk with Him is directly proportional to the personal light and revelation we have received about Him, about who He is to us, to me personally. Not about reading about Him, but PERSONAL light and revelation that has entered our being about Him whereas we can say WE KNOW HIM.

Ever since Adam and Eve, God is trying to drive this point home. He is saying, that I don't need your best intentions. I need you to learn of my ways, for my ways are higher than your ways and learn of my thoughts for my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.

God will grind us down little by little by life's circumstances, situations and disappointments until someday, we will stop trying to walk this Christian walk and build His church in our own strength.

When we are ready to surrender, the real fun will begin.

There is a lot of security in being a nothing, a zero. If you don't think so, try it. There is a lot of rest getting rid of your false burdens and trying to do only what is God's job to do.

When you come to the place where you look to Him in everything and He is truly your everything, life is so much better. When you stop trying to do His job and get rid of your false burdens, you will begin to experience Him and His joy. Peace and rest will enter your soul.

Moses had a false burden and thought that by the strength of his hand he would do a wonderful thing and be the Deliverer of Israel. Yet it was not meant to be. Good intentions, yes, but not God's way. There is only one Deliverer in God's kingdom.

After 40 years of being ground down in the backside of the desert, God called Moses. The proof of Moses coming to the end of himself, is that when he was called, he did not even want the job. Now, there is a man that God can use.

Contrast that with men today that jump at the chance to "lead" God's people, or who plan it as a vocation and a career. And part of their career plan is to be educated and get credentials from man.

Very good intentions, yes. But not God's way.

The Lord's school is the school of the Spirit in everyday life. It is not a school of textbooks and term papers and degrees on parchment and letters behind your name and titles.

Here are some verses that might help.

Jer 9:12 Who is the wise man, that may understand this? and who is he to whom the mouth of the LORD hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth and is burned up like a wilderness, that none passeth through?

Jer 9:13 And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein;

Jer 9:14 But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them:

They have walked after their own understanding and ideas.

What is important to the Lord for you and me?

Jer 9:23 Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

Jer 9:24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 9:24 describes our employer. He is not a hard man at all. He exercises lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness. He delights in these things. He does not delight in wisdom (education), or strength and power over our fellow man and He certainly is not a slave to mammon, but He does know what mammon can do to our hearts.

Are you going to continue in your Christian walk with "the best of intentions" or are you going to STOP and LISTEN and LEARN from the feet of Jesus, what His way of doing things is all about.

Isa 55:6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

Isa 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Isa 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Isa 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

The wicked man is the man that will not forsake his thoughts and his way of doing things. God does not delight in our methods. He wants us to KNOW HIM. In Matthew 7 and Matthew 25, he says the same thing to the man that stands before him on judgment day boasting about all HIS works and the 5 foolish virgins, I NEVER KNEW YOU.

-Pilgrim

Re: The Best of Intentions - Part I - posted by MyVeryHeart (), on: 2010/11/28 19:34

Quote:

-----How much better is it to know God than to imagine what He is like.

I don't know a whole lot but one thing I do know and I cling to desperately. I was lost, I was dead, I was covered in filth, the stains of sin. And Jesus left his Father, came and wallowed in that filth, so that when I came to myself and turned to my Father he ran to me as a beloved son and clothed me with the righteousness of his Only Son, who loved me, and died for me. And that cross where his love was poured out for me I will desperately cling to. HE is all to me and all of me is His for eternity. My Lord, and My God. Jesus.

Re: , on: 2010/11/28 19:41

Those are sweet words to my ear, MyVeryHeart. The Cross.

It is at the Cross where we die and where we live at the same time. But not we who live, but the life we live now is by the life of the Son of God. It is the Cross that grinds us down, until we recognize and know that our way is empty and vain. And it is only, only, only at the Cross where Jesus Christ can be known. Jesus and the Cross are inseparable and the Christian and the Cross should be inseparable, too. If we avoid the Cross, we avoid our Lord.

We have the opportunity to know Him and not just imagine who He is. The Cross gives us this opportunity.

Re: - posted by MyVeryHeart (), on: 2010/11/28 19:43

Quote:

-----We have the opportunity to know Him and not just imagine who He is. The Cross gives us this opportunity.

Amen

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2010/11/28 21:37

hi, AMEN to the finished work of the cross... the only message that leads a sinner to eternal life.jimp

Re: - posted by davidc (), on: 2010/11/29 18:48

Pilgrim, you say

Have you ever wondered how much better it would be to actually know someone than to know about someone?

2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. 3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him. 1 Cor 8:2-3 (KJV)

This is how God can be known, by love. In His presence is fullness of joy, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us.

Thank you Lord

Re: The Best of Intentions - Part I - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2010/11/29 20:39

Quote:

-----Once there was a very hard working and industrious man who had a heart to seek God. We know that he could "hear" the Lord God's voice because the Scriptures reveal that he was greatly encouraged and counseled by God. He had a desire to please God so he brought to God part of all that God had blessed him with.

Wow! this is Cain???

I have never heard or read in the Bible that Cain had a desire to please God or a heart that sought after Him. This is definitely new.

If faith by definition is the belief that God is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. and we are told that Abel's sacrifice was more excellent than Cain because he offered it by faith. That means that Abel had faith while Cain did not. If faith is to believe that God will reward those who diligently seek Him, then how could Cain have sought God and yet did not possess faith?

Re: , on: 2010/11/29 21:03

Cain was obviously a hard worker in that he farmed the land. He obviously had a desire to please God like many religious folks as he offered the fruit of his toil to God not to idols. He offered it to the Living God. He also heard God's voice and was greatly encouraged by God to do the right thing, like many religious folks do from time to time. He also had faith that God would receive his offering, much like the man in Matthew 7, who was standing before the Lord at the Judgement.

Yes, Cain is like many in the Church today. They toil for God, seek God, want to please God, sometimes hear God and in the end, they offer the toil of their hands to God rather than trust in God's sacrifice for them.

Is there anything that is not clear? Scary isn't it.

We see Cain in the aftermath. We do not see Cain as he was before the murder.

Re: - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2010/11/29 21:36

Quote:
-----Cain was obviously a hard worker in that he farmed the land.

That does not make him someone who seeks after God or desires to please Him.

Quote:
-----He obviously had a desire to please God like many religious folks as he offered the fruit of his toil to God not to idols. He offered it to the Living God.

Sacrificing something to God does not have to come from a desire to please Him.

Quote:
-----He also heard God's voice and was greatly encouraged by God to do the right thing, like many religious folks do from time to time.

So, when God told him that his sacrifice was not accepted because there was a sin at the door, his desire is for it, and he can rule over it. If he was greatly encouraged by God to do the right thing, and God told him to repent of that sin, Why didn't he?

Quote:
-----He also had faith that God would receive his offering, much like the man in Matthew 7, who was standing before the Lord at the Judgment.

Both Cain and the man in Matthew wanted to please themselves and wanted a god that they can throw a bone to once in a while who would greatly appreciate their bone and bless them in turn.

Quote:
-----Yes, Cain is like many in the Church today. They toil for God, seek God, want to please God, sometimes hear God and in the end, they offer the toil of their hands to God rather than trust in God's sacrifice for them.

What I see in churches is people accepting Christ sacrifice for them, singing about it every Sunday, speaking highly of it, saying great and swelling words to describe what he did for them as long as He does not lay down any requirement to give their lives for Him as He has laid His for them. Scary, Isn't it.

Cain after the murder is Cain before the murder, only with the intent of his heart revealed, which was not the best of intent.

Re: , on: 2010/11/29 22:00

Yes and Christians before hating (murder in the heart) are Christians after hating (except they have to repent).

You keep missing the point.

He was religious! You couldn't tell him that he wasn't seeking after God. Just like you can't tell a religious person that they are not seeking after God. Because they probably are.

Have we all not been religious at times and still seeking God?

The entire time that he was tending his field, he was planning on offering the Lord a sacrifice and he did. He offered the Lord a sacrifice.

You know the rest of the story.

God gave Cain a chance and even warned Cain (as He often warns us that sin is crouching at our door).

Does your Bible say that Cain offered his sacrifice to an idol?

Does your Bible say that a familiar spirit talked to Cain or that God talked to Cain?

Cain and God had communication between each other. God spoke to Cain to warn him and also to encourage him.

Cain responded with an offering from the toil of his own hands (religious pride).

Have we not all had religious pride. But Cain crossed the line and murdered Abel. The one whose life was pleasing to the Lord because he trusted in God with living faith and not self-righteous works, as did Cain.

There are Cains all around us in the Church. Thankfully, God is not done with us yet and if we heed His voice we can be converted and saved.

Cain is a picture and type of the Flesh.

Abel is a picture and type of the Spirit.

Re: - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2010/11/29 23:25

I think we both agree on one thing, there is a seeking that is not of faith. That kind of seeking is always lacking the desire to surrender all to God. It is a seeing after some kind of god, a god that is not entitled to every part of His creation. When God shows Himself as He really is to such seekers, He is rejected, and His claim denied.

However, I refuse to use language that is not in the Bible. If the Bible does not say that Cain sought God or desired to please Him, then I will not.

I have no right to re-write the Scriptures.

About God and Cain having communication together because God spoke to Cain. So what! God speaks to Satan in the Book of Job on several occasions.

Quote:

-----Cain responded with an offering from the toil of his own hands (religious pride).

They both offered sacrifices from the toil of their own hands, but one offered the best, the firstborn, showing total commitment (always a sign of true faith). We are not told that Cain offered from the first fruit. The omission there may mean that he did not, thus showing partial sacrifice, a sign of false faith..

You remember the old widow who offered her two mites, all she had. While the others offered from their surplus. Now, that widow had to have 100% trust in God that he will provide for her. That is the point. It is not a matter of seeking versus trusting, but seeking whole heartedly (faith) versus seeking half heartedly.

Anyway, I appreciate the rest of your post, and I understand the point you are trying to make. But I truly believe the serious epidemic we have in the church is not that the people are seeking, but that they are seeking a god who does not require much of them.

Re: , on: 2010/11/29 23:47

Well, methinks you may be straining at gnats, now.

Rewriting the Bible? Honestly!

Cain was seeking a God that certainly did require much of him. That was the problem! He did not obey and instead offered the toil of his hands. He did refused the cross that would cause his self-life to suffer. He refused to come to God on God's terms and thought that God would receive him on his terms. Afterall, he saw himself at that time as a good person. A good person that worked hard in the field and brought God an offering.

It wasn't until his offering was not received and Abel's was that jealousy, hatred and murder entered his heart.

Don't you think that Cain was taught what pleases God as Abel was taught? Many Christians are taught what pleases God but then don't do it. Just look at some of the postings on SI and what people believe.

Cain gets mad at God and jealous at Abel because Abel's offering (born of the cross) was received and his offering (born of the flesh) was not. It's classic and has been repeated millions of times through the ages.

Re: - posted by mkal, on: 2010/11/30 0:21

Sorry, I feel I should not add a post. God bless

Re: , on: 2010/11/30 0:32

Yes, where were we mkal? Oh yeah, religion.

I said originally that Cain had a heart to seek God. That was true, unfortunately he did not have a heart to obey God. He was seeking God but wanted fellowship with Him on his terms, namely that he was a pretty good guy and worked hard and "God, you should accept all my hard work for you". Yech!!!

Can't be a seeker without being an obedient son. Can't be an obedient Son unless you are willing to pick up the cross.

Difference between religion and relationship, flesh and spirit, bastard and sonship, IS THE CROSS.

Re: - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2010/11/30 11:21

Pilgrim,

I agree with all that you are saying except for your description of Cain in the first few lines of your original post for the simple reason that the Bible does not speak of Cain or of any unsaved person in those terms that they sought after God or had a desire to please Him.

The Bible uses other expressions to describe false desire or false seeking.

For example: it says of Herod in Mark 6:20 that he heard John the Baptist with pleasure. A few verses later it says that he watched the daughter of Herodias dancing with pleasure.

In the parable of the sower some heard the Word with pleasure, but when tribulations arise they fall away.

Such is always the state of the ungodly, a double life that is void of the cross.

In Romans 9, Paul speaks of the Jews who sought after the law of righteousness but we know the story. When they found out that it requires a cross bearing, when their king came riding on a donkey instead of instituting a glorious kingdom and seating them on His right hand and on His left, they sought after His murder instead.

When we talk Bible language we will never describe an unbeliever as someone who had a heart to please God or sought after Him.

I challenge you to provide one account.

Re: , on: 2010/11/30 12:31

King Saul.

SPIRIT of GOD on KING SAUL:

1Sa 11:4 Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept.

1Sa 11:5 And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.

1Sa 11:6 And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly.

SPIRIT of GOD LEAVES KING SAUL

1Sa 16:14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

SAUL TURNED BACK FROM FOLLOWING THE LORD

1Sa 15:11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

SAMUEL EVEN MOURNS FOR SAUL (INTERCEDES FOR HIM)

1Sa 15:35 And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

Most people remember Saul as an ungodly man. A man of the flesh. But at one time he followed the Lord for the scripture says that "he turned back from following me".

We do not see any negative thing about Cain until he murders his brother. And as most humans are, we are unduly harsh and unforgiving of Cain and think that he never had any desire to please God. Yet, we would never say that about Saul if we were living in the day that the Spirit of God was on him or about church going people today. How are we to know men's hearts? They may have desire to please God, indeed we may all have desire in this area, but that does not necessarily mean that what we do is actually pleasing to God.

It takes time to see fruit in someone's life. We see the fruit that was ultimately borne from Cain's heart and we see fruit that was ultimately born from Saul's heart. But we do not have this advantage in real life (seeing the end from the beginning). That is why we receive all men and believe the best about people.

Gen 4:3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

Once again, Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. If we were living then, we may have judged that Cain is a good guy who wants to please the Lord. There are lots of "good guys" around that want to please the Lord, but it does not necessarily mean that the offering of their lives is pleasing to Him.

This is a very important lesson and this is the second instance of the religious system in the Bible.

The first instance of the beginning of man's attempt to appear righteous in God's sight is when Adam and Eve covered themselves with leaves. This was unacceptable to the Lord and so He covered them with animal skins. Animal skins just don't hang around in the closet. Some animals had to die.

Adam's attempt to clothe himself and make himself presentable to the Lord:

Gen 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

God's provision:

Gen 3:21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

So, the second time we see man trying to please God from his own righteousness and works is Cain.

The scarlet thread of the provision of God runs from Genesis to Revelation.

Likewise, the black thread of self-righteousness and religion runs from Genesis to Revelation.

Would you have also offered to God the works of your hands?

Have you ever done that?

I think we all have, but none of us stand in judgment on each other and proclaim each other's eternal destination.

Instead, our attitude is this, and we leave everything else up to the Lord.

Rom 15:7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Why are these lessons about Cain, King Saul and others so important to us?

Rom 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

We have no hope at all in refusing the cross. It is only in the cross where our hope lies. The cross is doing things God's way.

You and I are arriving at the same destination. I am giving Cain the benefit of the doubt, because I think God was giving him a chance to do the right thing. Just like the Lord is giving us the chance to do the right thing.

Re: - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2010/11/30 13:11

Quote:

-----I think God was giving him a chance to do the right thing. Just like the Lord is giving us the chance to do the right thing.

As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.