

Title: By Faith: Cain or Abel // **Scripture:** Hebrews 11:4; Genesis 4:1-16

ARRIVAL / SOCIAL TIME *15-20 minutes*

Spend the first 15 minutes or so of your time together catching up and socializing with one another. Also find time to catch up together on how the assignments from last week turned out.

SERMON REVIEW *5-10 minutes*

This week we continued our series By Faith. In this series we are journeying through Hebrews 10 and 11. We are taking time to think through what it means for us as Christians to live by faith. Hebrews 11:4 invites us to consider the story of Cain and Abel found in Genesis 4:1-16. In this passage both Cain and Abel bring an offering to God. Abel's offering is accepted. Cain's offering is rejected. This commendation for Abel comes not simply because of what he offered but by how he offered it—He made his offering from his first-born flock by faith. In contrast, Cain's offering leaves him in a conundrum. His offering is rejected by God, but Cain is not rejected. In fact, God pursues Cain and invites Him into His acceptance. However, instead of moving toward God in faith, Cain takes his life into his own hands when he kills his brother Abel. Possibly motivated by the unfairness of life, Cain refuses to trust God is just, and in the end his actions only lead to more brokenness and unfairness. Hebrews tells us Abel's life still speaks and even though his blood cries up from the ground, the blood of Jesus speaks a better word. It reminds us even though life is unfair, God is just.

THE MAIN THOUGHT *keep this in mind as you facilitate discussion*

Living by faith means giving by faith.

SEE IT – Questions *10-15 minutes*

Picture (What is the story saying?): What does Genesis 4:1-16 tell us about the offering of Cain and Abel? What does Genesis 4:1-16 not tell us about the offering of Cain and Abel? What was the significance of their offering? (It demonstrated they were stewards not owners of God's good gifts) Why was Abel's offering accepted? (It was offered in faith) Why was Cain's offering rejected? (We don't know for sure) What was God's response to Cain? How did Cain react to God?

Mirror (Where am I in the story?): What does your giving tell you about your life of faith? Where are you tempted to act like an owner instead of a steward of your time, talent, or treasure? When in your life have you struggled with the idea of fairness? How did you react in those moments? What do you think it looks like to trust God in the unfairness of life? Who have you seen model this?

Window (How does the story change how I see those around me?): What might it look like to give the first fruit of your time, talent, and treasure to God? How might the justice and goodness of God change the way you look at even the unfairness of your life circumstances? What might it look like to move toward God with your giving right now instead of running away from Him?

BE IT – Practice

Change UP // Give UP

Invite your group to close their hands as tight as they can for 10 seconds. Then invite them to open them. As they feel the release from opening their hands, ask your group to prayerfully call out things they have been holding onto they might need to let go of. After the individuals of your group have called out several things, invite them to lift up their open hands to God as an offering of these things to Him given in faith.

Change IN // Give IN

One of the ways we can give to each other is through words of encouragement. Invite the group to name out places of faith they see in each other's lives. Invite them to share with each other where they see each other giving generously of their time, talent, and treasure.

Change OUT // Give OUT

Invite your group to think about one person each of them might give to in some way this week. Encourage your group to name out loud who that person is and what he or she might give to them this week. This could be as simple as taking someone to lunch or giving someone a word of encouragement or an hour of their time. Make a commitment together to live as givers to those who are named this week.

CLOSING PRAYER *5 minutes*

Take a few minutes to gather any prayer requests and pray for each other to SEE IT and BE IT this week.