

Sermon Series: "Front Page Faith"----Lord of Life Lutheran—Westfield, IN—1/6/2002

Title: "Family Feud" (Domestic Neglect/Violence)

Text: Genesis 4: 1-15

Introduction: *Illus.: Family Feud T.V. Program from the 70's*

Theme: When family feuding becomes no laughing matter, we must bring it into the light of God's Word for honest evaluation and empowerment to bring the reconciling love of God in Christ into it to bring healing and recovery.

*Why does family feuding, fighting, and violence happen?*

- **The facts which none of us wants to face**
  1. **ILLS.: PROGRESS DOES NOT GUARANTEE CIVILITY**
  2. 1 out of 3 women seeking emergency treatment/1 out of 4 women seeking prenatal care victim of domestic violence
  3. Teens playing out the violence seen not just in videos/movies but played out by parents in front of them
- **The circumstances which we all want to blame**
  1. **ILLS.: BUTTER'S KEEPER**
  2. Cain could have blamed God for his envy/anger when he chose to have the lack of relationship with God (3-4)
  3. Often violence begets violence in our home—we chose to propagate generational sins of envy, vengeance, rage
- **The root core of all violence, domestic or otherwise**
  1. How can violence happen in such a "good family" like ours? (Eve actually thought Cain was savior "*the man*" 1b)
  2. **When passion takes over reason**
    - a. Letting anger, bitterness, rage boil inside (*face fallen, exceedingly angry*—vs. 5)
    - b. "*My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. James 1: 19-20*
    - c. Until Abel Cain had never experience death and probably was amazed when Abel did not get up/laid so quiet
  3. **The sin of violence is in all of us and all of us need deliverance from it**
    - a. Original sin--Adam to Cain/parent to child-- "*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.*" Rom. 5: 12
    - b. All of us have snake of sin's violence within-- "*For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man.*" Matt 15: 19-20

*There is a way out!*

- **What to do with the moment of conviction?**
  1. God lovingly confronted Cain on his bad attitude but Cain refused to listen
  2. "*Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.*" Hebrews 3: 15
- **Why repentance— a change of mind and direction —is the best path to take?**
  1. God gave Cain options and a choice—turn and you will be blessed or continue and sin will consume your life (7a)
  2. **ILLS.: THE PRICE OF STUBBORNNESS**
  3. We have the power God gives you within not to be master by the urge to hurt—violence or revenge (7b)
    - a. "*For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.*" Romans 6:14
- **Who is the enemy?!**
  1. Cain could only see Abel as the physical embodiment of God whom he saw as the enemy but in reality Satan was
  2. **ILLS.: RISKING RECONCILIATION**

3. *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8*

#### **When God's grace is all that is left**

- **For the recipients of domestic violence**
  1. Remove yourself from violent moment and seek help and shelter from the protectors God has put around you
  2. **Entrust your soul and body to the one who can keep you safe for eternity** (*"May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept complete at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:23*)
  3. **Live in forgiveness of those who persecute you** (*"Lord, do not hold this sin against them." Acts 7: 60*)
- **For the perpetrators of domestic violence**
  1. **For Cain, the consequence of his action brought curse upon his lifestyle and very life** (vss. 11,12, 14b)
  2. Unlike Cain, stop perpetuating the sin/its consequence by humbling yourself and let God's grace lead you (13,4a,15)
  3. **There is forgiveness and grace for even the greatest of sinners**
  4. *"But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life." 1 Tim. 1: 16*

#### **Progress Does Not Guarantee Civility**

Here are some of the measurements of improved living made over the past 100 years in the United States:

Percentage of homes with flush toilet in 1900: 10

In 1999: 98.

Percentage of homes with electricity in 1900: 2

In 1999: 99

Average hourly pay in manufacturing (adjusted for inflation) in 1900: \$3.80

In 1999: \$13.90

Enormous prosperity in material terms, however, doesn't necessarily translate into greater civility. In spite of the progress as measured by most material indicators, Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam says his research shows that most people believe social and moral values are getting worse, the average American is less trustworthy, and the breakdown of community is a serious problem. As evidence, the number of murders in the U.S. in 1900: 140. In 1999: **16,000.****Citation: Rubel Shelly, Nashville, Tennessee; source: Andrew Curry, "Pursuing Happiness by the Numbers," US News & World Report (12-18-00), p. 56**

#### **Butter Keeper**

On a camping trip with the family, my husband searched the motor home for butter to melt over the popcorn. "Where's the butter? Who hid the butter?" he kept muttering to himself, loud enough for the rest of us, sitting outside, to hear. Finally, he yelled out to our daughter, "Judi! Where's the butter?" Judi answered back, "How would I know, Dad? Am I your butter's keeper?" *Citation: Ila Mason, Chula Vista, CA*

#### **The Price of Stubbornness**

Between two farms near Valleyview, Alberta, you can find two parallel fences, only two feet apart, running for a half mile. Why are there two fences when one would do? Two farmers, Paul and Oscar, had a disagreement that erupted into a feud. Paul wanted to build a fence between their land and split the cost, but Oscar was unwilling to contribute. Since he wanted to keep cattle on his land, Paul went ahead and built the fence anyway. After the fence was completed, Oscar said to Paul, "I see we have a fence." "What do you mean 'we'?" Paul replied. "I got the property line surveyed and built the fence two feet into my land. That means some of my land is outside the fence. And if any of your cows sets foot on my land, I'll shoot it." Oscar knew Paul wasn't joking, so when he eventually decided to use the land adjoining Paul's for pasture, he was forced to build another fence, two feet away. Oscar and Paul are both gone now, but their double fence stands as a monument to the high price we pay for stubbornness.

## **Risking Reconciliation**

In her book *Family Ministry*, Diana Garland relates the following account by R.L. Honeycutt on the origin of the Irish expression "Chancing one's arm": On display in St. Patrick's cathedral in Dublin hangs an ancient door with a rough hewn, rectangular opening hacked in the center. The story of this "door of reconciliation" and the related Irish expression of "chancing one's arm" are remarkable and instructive. In 1492, two prominent Irish families, the Ormonds and Kildares, were in the midst of a bitter feud. Beseiged by Gerald Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare, Sir James Butler, Earl of Ormond, and his followers took refuge in the chapter house of St. Patrick's cathedral, bolting themselves in. As the seige wore on, the Earl of Kildare concluded the feuding was foolish. Here were two families worshipping the same God, in the same church, living in the same country, trying to kill each other. So he called out to Sir James and, as an inscription in St. Patrick's says today, "undertake on his honour that he should receive no villanie." Afraid of "some further treachery," Ormond did not respond. So Kildare seized his spear, cut a hole in the door, and thrust his hand through. It was grasped by another hand inside the church. The door was opened and the two men embraced, thus ending the family feud. From Kildare's noble gesture came the expression "chancing one's arm."

## **Genesis 4:1-15**

<sup>1</sup>Adam had relations with his wife Eve. She became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "I have gotten the man that the LORD promised." <sup>2</sup>Then she gave birth to another child, Abel, Cain's brother. Abel was a shepherd, and Cain was a farmer. <sup>3</sup>Later Cain brought some crops from the land as an offering to the LORD. <sup>4</sup>Abel also brought some choice parts of the firstborn animals from his flock. The LORD approved of Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup>but he didn't approve of Cain and his offering. So Cain became very angry and was disappointed. <sup>6</sup>Then the LORD asked Cain, "Why are you angry, and why do you look disappointed? <sup>7</sup>If you do well, won't you be accepted? But if you don't do well, sin is lying outside your door ready to attack. It wants to control you, but you must master it." <sup>8</sup>Cain talked to his brother Abel. Later, when they were in the fields, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. <sup>9</sup>The LORD asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he answered. "Am I supposed to take care of my brother?" <sup>10</sup>The LORD asked, "What have you done? Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground. <sup>11</sup>So now you are cursed from the ground, which has received the blood of your brother whom you killed. <sup>12</sup>When you farm the ground, it will no longer yield its best for you. You will be a fugitive, a wanderer on the earth." <sup>13</sup>But Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is more than I can stand! <sup>14</sup>You have forced me off this land today. I have to hide from you and become a fugitive, a wanderer on the earth. Now anyone who finds me will kill me!" <sup>15</sup>So the LORD said to him, "Not so! Anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." The LORD gave Cain a sign so that anyone meeting him would not kill him.[GW]