



Hebrews 11:4

By Faith Able Offered Sun, Sept 28th 2008

Unless you are a big sports fan...you probably did not even know

- **3 Weeks ago – Marion Jones was released from her prison sentence**
- **Marion Jones?**
- **“the world's biggest track and field star” “media darling during the 2000 Olympics” Associated Press**
- **Last Dec formally stripped her of her three gold and two bronze medals for cheating, for taking illegal performance enhancing drugs**
- **International Association of Athletics Federation’s president Lamine Diack said “Marion Jones will be remembered as one of the biggest frauds in sporting history.”**
- **October 5, 2007 guilty plea, the disgraced athlete tearfully apologized, saying “...with a great amount of shame...I stand before you and tell you that I have betrayed your trust...and you have the right to be angry with me... I have let my country down and I have let myself down**

I don’t know how such stories hit you – but they hit me kind of hard

- It is right that the medals are taken away
- Bible gives us the same standard **2 Tim 2:5**
- But find myself sad – all that work, effort...gone, dissipated
- Wonder what thinking? During, what led them to, how felt...feel – sad
- Sad truth is that such stories – not uncommon, more – that just haven’t been caught...yet

I want to tell you about just such a story today....

- Not involving sports...life....eternity....far more serious

Context – we are working through Hebrews – in Heb 11 – hall of faith

- Heb 10:38 – the just, righteous, right with God – live by faith
- Began with a statement about what faith does- holds, compels
- 1st Illustration – creation – underscoring the place of the Bible
- 2nd Illustration...1st of a person in the Bible...Abel....

I. By Faith Abel Offered

1. This is what it tells us here in Heb 11:4 Background, let's go to Genesis 4

2. Why was Abel accepted and Cain rejected? Sacrifice or person?

- a. Much debate on by Bible students and teachers – disagree
- b. Biblically – the answer is “yes” – respected Able AND his offering

3. Abel brought the Right Offering

a. Abel brought a blood sacrifice – w/o shedding of blood – no remission

b. How would they know? Issue is faith

- i) Faith is not creative – responsive – God must have revealed
- ii) **Rom 10:17** – faith comes by hearing

c. There are details that point to God revealing more than we have

- i) There is a place for sacrifice
- ii) There is a time for sacrifice
- iii) Seems – God communicated what sacrifice as well

A. On top of this – example of Adam and Eve covered in garden

d. Cain rejects God's clear instructions – brings own offering, of his works

4. Abel had the right heart, life

a. Many point out: we don't have it clearly revealed that need blood offering

b. Further, when God rebukes Cain–calls him to “do well”, not just right offering

c. Important Biblical truth–could bring right offering, wrong heart, unacceptable

- i) **Isa 1:11-13; 29:13** – possible to have the right sacrifice...and be wrong

d. Abel's sacrifice was a consistent sacrifice- life agreed with

- i) God looks at Abel – and says He respected Abel, but at Cain He did not
- ii) Don't misunderstand – not here talking about being perfect – none are
- iii) Point is that your life and sacrifice must go together – be in agreement
- iv) Can't say one thing with mouth and different with heart
- v) Consistent issue that God deals with throughout Bible–being a hypocrite
 - A. Being a pretender. One face here, another at home, at work, in life
- vi) God wants you – not just from you. Not just the right motions

e. Abel's sacrifice was a personal sacrifice

- i) God is wanting it to be you, from you – real
- ii) It is a relationship – that cannot be mere buying hell insurance

5. Let us try and give a summary statement to Abel's Offering/Approach

a. By Faith Abel approached God - Biblically–Right way & Right Heart (life)

II. By Faith Abel was Righteous

1. Found, obtained God's righteousness – by faith

- a. Righteous, Just – Right with God
- b. Does this mean perfect – no. None ever have been
- c. Declared righteous...by faith – always has been
- d. But the key is to see, clearly, Cain was wrong with God
- e. Abel was “saved” 10:39....Cain drew back to perdition 10:39

2. The Difference between Cain and Abel...is vital to see

- a. Danger is that I would not present this clearly – Lord help me
- b. When you think of Cain – don't picture person at home, rejecting God
- c. Both Cain and Abel believed in God
- d. Both Cain and Abel were seeking God
- e. Put it this way - in this room, Cain and Abel are present
- f. Both were seeking the right God – not an idol or false god
- g. Both set aside time for God – right time, came
- h. Both came to the right place – place God seems to have set for them
- i. Both offered to God an offering
- j. One brings the right offering...and one a wrong offering
- k. One whose heart is right...and one whose heart is wrong
- l. One accepted by God...and one rejected by God

3. What was the key to one being right and the other wrong- faith

- a. Faith is responsive – believing God
 - i) About himself, what is needed, how to come – more
- b. Cain – came with a different attitude
 - i) Perhaps thinking God would accept his own way

4. Abel was right – accepted....Cain was rejected

III. By Faith Abel Approved

1. **Key part – is God declared Abel acceptable, offering acceptable**
 - a. How did God do this – we don't know
 - b. Was it verbal? Was it fire falling from heaven?
 - c. Key is – they knew it – Cain knew it
 - d. God made it clear to them...and making it clear to you
2. **Key to focus on here – is the issue of what God says about the offering**
 - a. In this world, many will approve of Cain – encourage
 - b. Perhaps majority would tell a Cain that they are “fine”
 - c. But the real issue – is what does God say – all else is pointless
 - d. **Luke 16:15** – danger of living by what others think

IV. By Faith Abel Speaks

1. Abel speaks declaring how to be righteous

- a. Calling to us from the first family ever – from beginning of time
- b. From back before the flood, before Babel – Abel shares with us the place of righteousness...and how it is found – by faith

2. Abel Speaks encouraging us to Submit to God's Word

- a. That is faith, remember, faith comes from hearing – believing and obey
- b. This is an issue that every one of you has...and will face – Christian & non
- c. What will you do – when what you believe contrasts with what God says
- d. What will you do – when God's ways seem to restrictive or difficult
- e. Ask David – when he decided to bring the Ark of God home
 - i) 1 Chr 13:5-8 – doing the right thing, wrong way – with passion –ok?
 - ii) 1 Chr 13:10-12 – God rejected, judged...David angry, scared
 - iii) 1 Chr 15:1-15 – David redid the offering, right – according to the Word
- f. What David did...Cain would not – go back to Gen 4
 - i) Note the gentleness and yet firmness of God
 - ii) Cain – instead of submitting – rejected – killed Abel
 - iii) Cain became first of a long line of those who persecute true believers
 - A. Real issue – is their own rebellion
- g. Question is – what will you do when you disagree with God's Word
 - i) Exclusivity of Jesus – no other way, His blood required
 - ii) Or what about lifestyle agreement – 1 Cor 6:9-11

3. Abel speaks of the worth of pleasing God – no matter the cost

- a. Abel testifies to us – that such a stance is worth it – no matter the cost
- b. For Abel his faith, his stance cost him his life**
 - i) He was literally the first person ever to die...and died as a Martyr
 - ii) History from then – till today – filled with such
- c. To you – tells you it is worth – though you will be persecuted**
 - i) Perhaps you have already found – in life, family
 - ii) **Matthew 10:34-36**

Conclusion

Are you with me...do you understand how serious these words are?

Matt 7:21-23 – Many

- Hate those words...right...but they sadden me greatly
- People who think they are OK, not – in the way of Cain
- Some – Think because say Lord...but don't do – ok
 - Lives in disagreement – think they hell insurance
- Some – think because of what do – ok, though not with Jesus
 - No relationship, not come to God through
- I long...that this misunderstanding is none of you
 - Want to stand dividing between Cain and Abel