

“He Being Dead Yet Speaks” (Heb. 11:4 RSV).

Introduction. The writer of the Book of Hebrews assembles in chapter 11 a list of the heroes of the faith. These giants from the past are described as a great cloud of witnesses which not only watch us, but which would seek to cheer us on as we run the race of life (Heb. 12:1 -2).

In our text the spotlight is placed upon Abel and his generous and appropriate sacrificial gift to God. The writer of Hebrews declares that by means of Abel's faith and faithfulness expressed in giving, that though he is no longer present with us, "he is still speaking."

Long after our tongue is silent in death and long after our visible appearance is no longer possible, we continue to speak to the living. This possibility can be frightening if we leave a negative and destructive message. It can be exciting and challenging if we continue to speak as a servant of God and a helper to others. Abel, though he is dead, continues to speak to us.

I. Abel speaks of the necessity of faith,

"By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice."

This character from the very dawn of human history speaks to us of the importance and of the value of really believing in God. The psalmist says that only the fool declares that there is no God (Ps. 14: 1). One can believe that God exists, but this belief does not necessarily have a vital effect upon one's life (see James 2:19-23). Abel had a faith **in** God that enabled him to involve himself with God and for God.

II. Abel can speak to us of the importance of worship.

Although Abel's act of worship contributed to his untimely death, the fact that he worshiped God speaks to us of our **need** to open ourselves up to God and to give ourselves to God,

Worship is something more than just attending a Bible class or being present for a worship service. Genuine worship is the response of our innermost being to God's revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ. To genuinely worship is to let God's Holy Spirit do His work within us and upon us and through us. Worship on our part involves a response to God.

III. Abel speaks to us concerning the grace of generosity.

Abel gave a gift to God that was acceptable to God. He gave what he had. He gave the best that he had.

He would recommend to us that we live lives of generous giving of ourselves, our time, our energies, and our words of appreciation and encouragement. The only thing that we can take with us when it comes **our** time to depart from the walks of life are those things which we have given to God for the good of others.

IV. Abel speaks to us of the importance of being prepared for death.

Abel died an early death. Life at its longest is brief. The time for our departure is almost always unexpected.

In a world that emphasizes the value of being prepared in every area of life, we need to recognize the value of being prepared for the experience that people call death.

Conclusion.

It is important that a person attempt to be prepared to die financially. Many people secure insurance to provide resources for their families as they contemplate this inevitable experience.

It is good for a person to be prepared for death legally. Many persons could greatly aid their families by giving careful thought to the making of a will.

The highest wisdom that anyone can demonstrate is to be prepared for death by trusting Jesus Christ as Savior. Only Jesus Christ can save us from the penalty of sin, which is spiritual death. Sin separates us from God, and Jesus Christ died upon the cross for our sins that He might return us to God (I Peter 3:18).

Let each of us live each day that we have left in such a way as to speak for God and for those things that are good. Thus we will be speaking for God, not only while we are living, but in the days when we are no longer among the living.

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