

## You Are Able to Be Like Abel

Hebrews 11:4

There was an old Nike commercial with the theme “I want to be like Mike” (Michael Jordan). The Bible lays before us men and women of faith as our heroes. We have one such person named in our text. *“By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks”* (v. 4).

Three things are said about Abel in this one verse (based on the story of Cain and Abel in **Genesis 4:1-7**):

- (1). Abel brought God a better sacrifice than his brother Cain.
- (2). God declared Abel to be in right standing (righteous).
- (3). Though Abel died thousands of years ago, his legacy lives on.

### I. Abel’s sacrifice was better because it was all of faith in a substitution offering (the Lamb).

God placed cherubim at the entrance to the garden to guard the way, and God himself “dwelt between the cherubim” so that to reach the Tree of Life, one must come before God the right way. Jesus said, *“No one comes to the Father but by me”* (John 14:6). Others go *“the way of Cain”* (Jude 11).

#### A. The focus of our text is on the **object of Abel’s faith** (i.e. “the sacrifice”)

Christianity is not so much about people of great faith as it is a slain Lamb in whom we have faith.

1. Abel’s sacrifice was a lamb, a type of Christ, the Lamb of God.
2. The lamb was the firstborn of the flock, picturing Christ, the firstborn of every creature.
3. The lamb was the fattest of his flock, which speaks of the excellency of Christ.
4. The lamb was offered *“in the process of time”* (literally: at the end of days), just as Christ came *“in due time,”* or *“in the fullness of time”* to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.
5. The lamb was accepted by God (He “had respect” to it), and thus, Abel was accepted.

#### B. The focus of our faith should be the **Person of Christ**.

When the focus becomes “the work of our hands” or “the accomplishment of our lives,” then we come to God with an expectation of approval, only to be disappointed. Rest in Christ’s work.

### II. Abel’s faith in the Lamb brought a witness that he (Abel) was righteous before God.

Abel was not made righteous by his sacrifice (Hebrews 10:1-4). Neither was he made righteous by his faith. He was made righteous in exactly the same way we are, by the righteousness of Christ, which is credited to all who trust Him. As Abel looked by faith to God, he received a testimony from God.

**“Through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous...” (v. 4)**

Genesis said, “God had regard [respect] for Abel’s offering” and Abel himself. This approval was given perhaps by audible voice, or maybe by fire from heaven, but most certainly by proclaiming it to Cain.

### III. Abel’s faith in the Lamb means the **legacy of Abel’s faith continues to this day**.

Cain killed his brother Abel. The life of the believer contains no guarantee of temporal blessings. In Genesis 4:10, God said to Cain *“the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.”* Abel is among that company of whom the apostle said, *“I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held, and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”* (Rev. 6:9-10). There is coming a day when all that is wrong about this life is made right. No person of faith, touched by the grace of God, clutches this life. We are able to be like Abel. We approach God the only Way possible. We cast ourselves on His merciful Lamb and live.