

## **“America’s Real Problem: God is Not Deaf!”**

Genesis 4: 1-10

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[Right to Life Message]

**Text:** Genesis 4:1-12 (NIV) <sup>1</sup> Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." <sup>2</sup> Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. <sup>3</sup> In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. <sup>4</sup> But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup> but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. <sup>6</sup> Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? <sup>7</sup> If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." <sup>8</sup> Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. <sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" <sup>10</sup> The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. <sup>11</sup> Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. <sup>12</sup> When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

Cain brought God his leftovers and when God showed his displeasure, Cain went into a rage. Instead of dealing with his own sin, Cain decided to kill his innocent brother. Consider the language of evidence put forward here by God. It is really very dramatic:

**Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.**

The great irony is that Cain made his living working the ground. The ground was friendly to him as it yielded its produce but no more! Now, the ground is defiled with innocent blood and it will refuse to bless the man who defiled it. It will refuse to bless Cain! Again, God said to Cain:

**Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.**

Can blood speak? Does blood speak? Yes, this language is figurative but science suggests that billions of atoms actually do create a sound that we typically cannot hear. But God can hear it. And as God speaks to Cain, he is also hearing a cry for justice. “Your brother’s blood cries out to me...” not just out to anyone who might hear but to God himself! He can hear it crying! And it is crying out because it has been treated unjustly and since God is the totally and completely JUST and HOLY God...he cannot ignore these cries forever. That God constantly hears the brutalized cries of the innocent should terrify all of us. And what does it suggest for a world of sin and for America in particular that God is not deaf? That God hears? What does it suggest that since last January when we spoke of abortion, two and one half million more gallons of innocent blood have been spilled into the ground in this nation...and every single pint was accompanied by horrified screams aimed up at the eternal Judge God himself...and God never sleeps and God never slumbers and God is not deaf?

I know. I know. There are people here this morning....men and women...who have abortion in their past. People who quietly cringe at such direct and brutal language from the preacher. I know. And many evangelical pulpits won’t touch the topic lest someone who needs salvation be alienated from the church because the words hurt them. But sin hurts and the pulpit is first responsible to Heaven to proclaim righteousness and warning before it is responsible to be tender with the feelings of those who hear. I take no pleasure in bringing to mind any sin from the past or present. My desire is to hurt no one...but I cannot help that if it happens. It will happen. This is why truly popular preachers are rarely if ever prophetic. So, I ask again: since God is not deaf...what should we expect from him in the days ahead unless we repent as a people? Unless we speak up to our neighbors? Unless we protest when our leaders ignore the current holocaust in the womb? We’d better pray...for ourselves and for America. We’d better pray even now before we say more.

A few weeks ago, during the Christmas season, a woman was driving home along the shoreline of Auchland Bay, Australia. It was late and dark and she misjudged the bend in the road. In moments her car was over the edge and into the deep waters. She could see her life slipping away and even as she screamed at the top of her voice she wondered...could anyone possibly hear her cries? It was late. Her windows were closed. She was desperate.

Then an amazing thing happened. A fisherman named Steven Bibby was nearby and somehow he managed to hear her screams in the dark! A few years before, Bibby had helped rescue another crash victim in the water but this time he could hardly see in the thick blackness and mist. But he followed the sound...wading and swimming.

Certain that he had no choice but to try to respond to the cries he was hearing. Only a man and not God yet a man who was not deaf. How could he go back to the shore for the sake of his own safety? Pressing on, Mr. Bibby came upon the mostly submerged car. He succeeded in breaking into the vehicle and the woman was saved! His quote afterwards was priceless. Said Mr. Bibby:

**"I was really stoked to get her out because once I had hold of her hand I was determined, I wasn't going to let her go, once I had hold of her hand if I had lost her it would've been devastating...eh?"**

Well...good for him. And yes it would have been devastating to be able to save someone and to fail. We can all relate to this great story and who among us would not run to the cries of someone desperate for help? Unless, of course, the cries are so drowned out that we cannot hear them. Or unless we have heard them for so long that we have just grown able to ignore them. Or unless we just don't care to help others. Or unless our sins have so overtaken our consciences that we have grown deaf to the cries. Or unless we can still hear but we just don't want to "get involved." After all, if someone drives into a lake and is drowning, it's not really our problem right? I mean...we are not our brother's keeper...are we?

Actually, we are. And that is why God's judgment on abortion will not be only focused on the women who choose abortion and the medical people and the politicians...but on all of us! Because we can all hear the screams...**UNLESS WE DROWN THEM OUT**. But we still hear them and we will not be able to say to God that we did not. Rather we will be like that horrific scene in the film series Band of Brothers. The war in Germany was nearly over when a company of Army Rangers come upon Hell on Earth. Just a mile or so outside of a German town they find a wooded area all fenced in. The guards have left but the prisoners are too weak to even escape. Hundreds of them...dead and dying ...and the smell is so horrific that many of the soldiers have to turn aside to vomit. The captain in charge just stares and has his aid call the colonel to say "We've come upon something sir...we're not exactly sure what it is." A concentration camp where Jewish prisoners have been systematically starved and tortured and burned. And left to die.

The next day the soldiers go into the nearby town where the air is still filled with the stench. And there they see the citizens going about their business as if they had no idea what was going on at that camp. As if they could not hear the cries and smell the putricity. Eventually the soldiers force the citizens to march to the camp and begin to dig graves for the dead. There they are...women in fine dresses and businessmen in suits and expensive shoes looking pale and nauseous lifting rotting bodies that are coming apart as they pick them up...still insisting they did not know. But they are lying. They knew.

And all I can see when I watch that scene are the doctors and nurses and clerks who work at the abortion clinics..the ones who collect the little body parts and put them in piles to be taken to the incinerator. And they act as if they do not know and

cannot hear. But they know. And God knows and he hears. And the citizens all around the clinics going about their business acting as if Planned Parenthood is no different from the local bank or insurance agency. The only thing is...when you go to the bank you stand in line and make you deposit. But at Planned Parenthood they ask our tax dollars to help pay for their services and then they put more babies to death than any other agency in America. And our President and our Secretary of Health and Human Services preside over this holocaust like the citizens in the next town pretending they do not smell the dead bodies...and they cannot hear the cries.

I suspect that we are seeing the judgment of God upon America. It started in the sixties with the godlessness of the free love movement and the worship of drugs and good times. We've had a succession of irresponsible Congresses and Presidents who did not promote economic discipline and whose ways were not righteous. That would include some very poor management from Republicans as well as Democrats. But I need not tell you that this current President is amazing with his ability to sound great and do the wrong thing anyway. On January 22, President Obama actually made this statement in response to the protests in D.C. against abortion:

**As we mark the 39th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, we must remember that this Supreme Court decision not only protects a woman's health and reproductive freedom, but also affirms a broader principle: that government should not intrude on private family matters. I remain committed to protecting a woman's right to choose and this fundamental constitutional right. While this is a sensitive and often divisive issue- no matter what our views, we must stay united in our determination to prevent unintended pregnancies, support pregnant women and mothers, reduce the need for abortion, encourage healthy relationships, and promote adoption. And as we remember this historic anniversary, we must also continue our efforts to ensure that our daughters have the same rights, freedoms, and opportunities as our sons to fulfill their dreams. [January 25, 2012]**

When I listen to this President's words I have to wonder if he thinks were are all stupid which would be a great offense...or is he so duplicitous that he actually thinks the average American cannot think clearly. Consider his comments: "Government should not intrude on private family matters." Really? Is a man free to beat his wife as long as it is at home? Is a man free to kill his children in their beds? Is this not the same government that regularly takes children away from parents if a social worker deems the parents unfit? How could anyone argue that protecting life is an unwarranted intrusion on private family matters?

Then he goes on to say we need to retain our "... **determination to prevent unintended pregnancies, support pregnant women and mothers, reduce the need for abortion...**" But why? Why be concerned with reducing the need for abortion if abortion is a perfectly acceptable "health care choice?" This is double talk! This is nothing less than living in the village next to the concentration camp

and pretending it does not stink! And it is a perfect example of the words of the prophet Isaiah from 700 BC:

**Isaiah 5:20-21 (NIV) <sup>20</sup> “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. <sup>21</sup> Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.”**

Some Christians ask “When is God going to judge America? Or even start to judge America?” But how will God do that? How does God judge nations? Does he always do it with fire and sulphur raining down as he did with Sodom and Gomorrah? No, not necessarily. God often judges nations by casting them into chaos and letting them reap what they have sown. And is God not judging America right now? Those of you who support our current President will not like what I’m about to say but it is my view. This President with his job performance was sent by God as judgment ...look at where we are! Deficits off the charts and economic problems that are wholesale...a total unwillingness to work with equally stubborn Senators and Congressmen...forcing policies on the people that seventy per cent do not like. Saying one thing and doing another day after day. “Wise in his own eyes” but willing to approve and even encourage the killing of the unborn? The only member of the Illinois State Senate a few years ago who voted against a ban on partial birth abortion?

We’ve all watched the debates and been stunned at the acrimony between people who should basically be on the same side. Republicans hateful towards Republicans and the Democrats the Same way. And the pity is that far more Americans are worried about whether their Social Security will be there when they need it...than they are about the killing of two to three thousand children per day. In fact, many Americans are so deaf to the cries of the unborn that gas prices, terrorism, and the price of coffee are higher on their list than abortion. If only we would repent and realize that God would send wisdom and Godly leaders into our midst and all of those problems would be solved quickly if Heaven would help us with terrorism and economics and Heaven would if we were to repent as a people.

But here is the question: whose job is it to prompt the nation to repent of Godlessness? Well it certainly is not really the job of government. Sure, it is best to have a God-fearing genuine Christian President and many in leadership who love the Gospel. But we’ve had that in the past and still we’ve seen evil expand. It is a colossal mistake for Bible-believing Christians to think that if only we can replace this President with a conservative who will fix everything that all will be well. I’ll never vote for any man or woman who supports abortion...not even for Drain Commissioner! But the real answer for America is for the church to be the church it is meant to be!

And what would that look like? That will happen when the church stops obsessing over growth in numbers and fame and celebrity and really begins to worry about growth in Holiness! When the church in America stops funding new ways to get so-

called seekers in so they can have new friends and hear about how nice it is to believe in Jesus....and gets serious about a call to repentance for our sins! Because when the church becomes a stench in the nostrils of a darkened culture it is usually a sweet smelling aroma in the nostrils of God!

So many of the most prominent churches are all focused on more people and more entertainment and more campuses. I've been asked repeatedly why we do not have branch churches that present my preaching at a distance on a screen....mini-churches here and there. Here is my answer: others may do that. I am not their judge but I do have a judgment on the idea. In my view, the true church is where Christians are together face to face with the under shepherd face to face! I have no right or calling to preach to people who cannot look me in the eye in the doorway and say "We gotta' talk!" Jesus was with them and they prayed together and wept together and took face to face care of each other! The emphasis was not on crowds who sing and hear a message in person or on the screen and then leave to go for breakfast as if the whole reason for the church is social interaction with a little Christianity thrown in. No...the whole reason for the church is to provide a place of Holiness gatherings so people can grow together and serve together and frankly worry together for the well-being of the lost world!

And we must examine ourselves including at Cornerstone How many Bible studies and how many films and how many musical specials are enough or even too many if we do not help with Love Inc. or at Military Avenue or even show up for the annual Life Chain Event in October? Why the same few people? Christian ...have you ever been a stench in the nostrils of the wicked? Have you ever been hated for Christ because you speak out for righteousness? I wish that every single Cornerstone person would come out next October and carry signs protesting abortion and experience having people ride by holding up one finger and telling you to "Go to Hell!"

We need to act and we need to pray. And allow me to say something more...we need to pray not first for the nation of the presidential race coming up. We need to pray for the church. Friends, it is amazing how many people visit Cornerstone on Right to Life Sunday...people who ordinarily go to Bible-believing churches but they come here that one day...why? Because almost all of those churches do not dare to mention abortion because it is too troubling and someone might be offended! But the true church is supposed to offend for righteousness! The true church is supposed to "Comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable!" Pray for God's people to wake up.

The true church must believe that God hears and God helps! Some years back, the atheist Madelyn Murray O'Hare was scheduled to speak before Congress about her anti-God views. A group of Christians prayed and fasted pleading with the Lord to close her mouth and he did. The night before the hearings she came down with such a severe case of hemorrhoids that she could not leave her bed. That's my idea of a Divine response to prayer! You may be in a place where your whole service to Jesus may be prayer for the church and America! Especially in our retirement years...we

must go out and serve and plead with God as to how we can help with our words and actions. But we all right now must pray.

When we come back from Russia we're going to begin a half-hour prayer meeting at 8.30 on Wednesday nights for the specific purpose of praying for America and the church and this upcoming election. And we're going to spend more time in our worship services specifically praying for renewal of the true church and repentance beginning with us for our indifference to evil in our midst. Because God is not deaf.

In closing...I am sometimes asked why I do not speak of this great passage from the Old Testament:

**2 Chronicles 7:13-15 (NIV) <sup>13</sup> "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, <sup>14</sup> if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. <sup>15</sup> Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.**

I strive to be a very careful presenter of the Word of God; it is important to be precise. This statement was made to King Solomon after the Temple was finished. The words "my people" were spoken to and about ancient Israel so this promise from God is not a promise for all times to all nations. But there is a principle embedded here and it is this: God always has a "people" within every nation and if those people will humble themselves within the nation...***FOR THEIR SAKE....God will bless the nation.***

Today...right now...the true church needs to humble itself intercede for the nation. And we need to please God by caring for the poor and needy and fighting for justice for the unborn. If we are living in any wicked ways we need to return. If we are spiritually lazy and do not serve the Lord except to forward dozens of articles and play away the days...we need to repent. If every single Christian would seek God and ask him "How may I serve the Lord Jesus Christ in righteousness?" they would hear from God to go and tutor or help at the crisis pregnancy center or sweep the parking lot and knock on doors for the candidate who will cry out for righteousness. This passage has a marvelous promise.

**"...then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."** It is our job as the church to let God hear more than the cries of the innocent...we must fill his ears with the pleas of the saved! Because God is not deaf and he has promised a time will come when Jesus will make all things new..and if we are longing for that we should be crying out that same prayer...forgive our sins and heal our nation! For God is not deaf. Let us pray.

