

“Summer of Sin” (Cain and Abel)

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Father in Heaven thank you for that beautiful, beautiful reminder that you are concerned about us. Lord as we have come to this point in the worship service, we are about to open Your word, and we are asking for miracles to take place. We pray that our understanding of you will grow that You will teach us things we need to know about our selves and that through Your intervention in our lives, our hearts will be changed and affected for eternity. Lord, we are asking this in Jesus’ name, Amen.

In the summer of 1970 I was 15 years old. The year before, we have moved to Monastic, MI. It’s a town in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. So we have lived there about a year, I’d made some fiends in school, I played sports through High School, so yeah you had some play mates and stuff, so yes, I had some friends. But I was not a happy camper. Fifteen, and all those issues, and in my family nobody knew the Lord back then. We knew about God, in fact we went to church every week. We had a Bible, we never read the Bible, we never gathered together as a family and prayed, we never prayed over problems or anything like that, so I really didn’t know God, no one in the household knew God. We knew about God and we were afraid of Him, to be honest with you.

Well that summer of discontent with me was also a problem for my mother because of me. And so she is trying to deal with life, and trying to deal with me, and I don’t recall what the incident was, by I know I had enough and so I packed a bag pack and ran away. I waited until night because you know, I wanted to sneak out of the house and get a good head start before they discovered I was gone. My plans were simple and stupid as most are when we are on the run. And I was going to hitch-hike down back to Lower Peninsula where we used to live, I knew some friends down there and I figured they would hide me from the authorities. All right! Well, what to do that night? I walked around town, and just kind of lurking in the shadows. My Dad was a state policeman, and he knew all the city police, and they knew me and all that, and it’s a small town and so you know, I was just kind of hiding out. I went by the Clark station, and there was a guy working there that I knew, his name was Tony. And he asked me what I was doing, and I said “I am running away.” And he said, “Cool man!” He said, “Where are you going to stay tonight?” and I said, “I don’t know?” And he said, “Hey look, my Mom and Dad and my sisters are all gone on a trip, the house is available, I get off at 2 o’clock, why don’t you come and stay with me tonight?”

All right! So I had a place to stay. So I am kind of back in the shadows there not wanting to be seen, and about that time a fellow showed up, we all knew him in town, his name was Hippy Houghton. Now, he was called Hippy Houghton because he had hair down to his waist, and he was very proud of that hair. And Hippy came, and he was drunk, and he went into the men’s room and he left the door open, just seated there, and he passed out on the stool as he sat there. Well Tony decided he was going to do something. He says: “Watch this!” He took a pair of scissors and he cut about a foot of hair off of Hippy Houghton. So there sat Hippy with hair all around him, and the door wide open, and Tony thought that was so funny. Two o’clock came and we left, we went to his house, he

pointed me to a room, he said, “That’s where my sister is, that’s her room, she is not here, you stay there.” So I don’t know what time it was? But at some point that night, there was a big commotion outside. I do remember this. Tony running down the hall, waking me up, handing me a shot gun and saying, “back me up.”

Now out in the front Hippy was there, and he realized what had happened, sobered up, and who did it, and he had some friends, and they had a gun, and Tony wanted me to back him up. I will tell you, I was on a stupid course, but I didn’t leave that bedroom. I just stayed there. Tony, you are on your own, you know. And as soon as the commotion died down, I got up and I left. It wasn’t too long before the sun came up, and there I was on Hwy US 2, hitch-hiking east. A car went by and I recognized it and I knew they recognized me, and I thought, well that’s easy phone call to my parents. I ran from the highway, there are fields on each side of a dirt road, and I ran down that dirt road to the woods and I sat in the woods all morning, and most of the afternoon. And because my Dad is the state policeman, I knew every policeman in Michigan will be looking for me, so every time a plane flew over, I would be ducking you know, and trying to figure out what to do, what the next steps would be?

Finally, after reaching a point where I just couldn’t stand it anymore, I felt like, I’ve got to risk it, so I started walking back towards the highway. My plans were simple. Get to the highway, hitch-hike, try to get across the Mecano bridge and then head south. Well, I got a ways down that road, and I saw what I didn’t want to see. The 1962, blue Rambler station wagon, I knew my Dad was driving it. He was there on the highway, passed in front of me, still a distance away, but my dad was looking for me. So he saw me, I ran into a field, there was one tree there. And I got behind that tree, and as he was driving down the road, I kept turning you know, in the hopes that he wasn’t seeing me. But he stopped right there and I knew that he had found me.

I want to ask you a question. As I sat there that day pondering what I was doing, I thought about going back, but how do you do that? I thought about going forward, it seemed the only choice. Have you ever found yourself in the situation where you realized you’ve done wrong, but you don’t know where to go so you just kind of keep going? I’d like to study that with you today. Please turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 4. In Genesis chapter 4, as we start our series about sin, we are going to find the first mention of sin in the Bible, the word sin that is. In Genesis four, the story of Cain and Abel; I am going to read 16 verses that deal with the story, and then we will double back and study a few of those verses. Genesis 4 verse 1 it says: “Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, “I have gotten a man from the Lord.” “Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the first born of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. So the Lord said to Cain: “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.” “Now Cain talked with Abel his brother, and it came to

pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain: "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. So now, you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth." And Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me." And the Lord said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him. Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden."

That's the story. Verses one and two are kind of introduction of the main characters, Cain and Abel. One is a farmer, one is a shepherd. Verses 3 – 5 we kind of get into the story, it says in verse 3, "And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord." Abel also brought of the first born of his flock and of their fat, and the Lord respected Abel and his offering. But He did not respect Cain and his offering, and Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell." What was the problem, what's the issue here? Why was God happy with one offering but not with the other? Well, there are several options that are presented, one is simply this; that God likes shepherds but He doesn't like farmers. Now, that's not likely. And some say, well one was an animal offering and one was vegetable offering. Well in the scriptures, there is cereal offering, and grain offering, and first fruit offerings all through the scriptures, so that wouldn't be it. Some say well, it says that Abel brought the first link of his flock and that must be the best, and maybe Cain didn't bring the best. I don't know? Some say it's simply Divine election, God accepts some, and He rejects others? You are born to be saved, and some are born to be lost. And you know the out right hideousness of that theology is that the vary people who teach that also teach an eternal torment.

So can you imagine being born pre-destined to suffer throughout eternity? What kind of picture of God is that? So let's just throw that one out. It's certainly not that. It looks like in verse 4 and in verse 5 that the problem is not the offering. "Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel..." Verse 5 "But He did not respect Cain." So, let's take the offering out of the equation. It's the person. God saw something in the person. And He respected Abel because of who Abel was. He did not respect Cain because of who Cain was, and consequently their actions were not acceptable to Him. Now brothers and sisters that's pretty important to understand when it comes to serving God. God is interested in you. Your actions are secondary. Do you understand what I am saying? They are important, but He is interested in your character, who you are, what you are all about?

Well it says here in verse 5 that Cain was very angry. Now keep your hand here, and turn to First Samuel chapter 18 where that phrase in Hebrew is used. Here you have a passage of scripture that most of you will be familiar with. Here is the setting. David has

concluded Goliath. David, a young man has defeated a giant. And the ladies of Israel are going to create a problem. First Samuel 18, verses 7 and 8 it says: “So the women sang as they danced and said: “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. Then Saul was very angry...” same phrase, “and the saying displeased him; and he said, “They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?” So Saul eyed David from that day forward.”

Now go back to Genesis four you have the same thing happening. Something about this whole setting and Cain is very, very angry. God is not accepting him or his offering and he is very, very angry, and he begins to “eye” his brother from that day forward. Now, it says, his countenance fell. That’s his appearance. He wasn’t even attempting to hide his feelings, his disappointments, his dissatisfaction, and his anger, his fierce resentments, and some wonder why? You know why is he so upset? Is he upset because God didn’t accept his offering, obviously not! He could have changed it. That wasn’t the issue. There is something much deeper than that. Some say maybe it was because of the birth right thing you know, he is the oldest son. And there may be something to that, but I don’t know if that was an established understanding or custom at this history in the world?

But there is something that I do want you to understand. And I want you to understand this very, very clearly. As you know I’ve just come back from classes, and we were studying the literary structures in the Bible. And I’ve never given that a second thought. In fact, I thought oh, this is going to be boring, you know. But what I discovered is that the authors of the Bible were far, far more intelligent than what I have ever given them credit. I figured when I saw things in it, or people thought me things in it, it was because of our particular brilliance or the teacher’s brilliance, but no, it’s written in their own purpose. Moses has a theme when he writes the book of Genesis. And I want to teach you what the theme of Book of Genesis is, and it’s extremely important. Because the Book of Genesis, many scholars say, is the entirety of the story, and the rest of the Bible is just explaining the Book of Genesis.

So the Book of Genesis is foundational for understanding God and humans, and the sin problem. Here is what the theme, the recurring theme in Genesis is. An attempt and failure of human effort in obtaining a blessing that only God can give. Let me repeat it: “An attempt and failure of human effort in obtaining a blessing that only God can give!” Eve attempted a blessing that only God can give. In her human effort, she tried to get that blessing- the fall. You have the tower of Babel, and they attempt and fail by human effort to obtain the blessing of protection if there would ever be a flood again. Sarah, with her handmaid Hagar, attempts and fails by human effort to obtain the blessing of a son. Jacob and Esau, you know the whole story, so you see this repeating theme in the book of Genesis, the attempt and failure by human effort to obtain a blessing that only God can give.

God will confront Cain about his fallen countenance and about his anger, He says in verse 6, “Why are you angry and why has your countenance fallen?” These are rhetorical questions; God knows that Cain knows the answer. You know, my grandmother was like that. When my brother and I would fight in the presence of my grandmother, it was

different. She would deal differently than my Dad or my Mom did. Grandma always sat us down in the chair and she'd say: "Now why are you doing that?" Oh, Grandma, can't you just beat us or something you know, why do we have to answer questions? And she'd make us answer them, and eventually we had to hug and say we love each other and all that, boy! God is doing that, why? He is asking why? And Cain knows the answer, but he is going to duck and run. He just doesn't want to deal with it; he doesn't want to be upfront with it.

Now we come to verse 7, the Lord says "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door..." That's why we are studying this story. This is the first mention of sin in the Bible. Sin is laying at the door! Now this is a little bit of conundrum in understanding sin. Because if you look at Genesis 1 verse 27 it says: "God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Now ladies, did you know you were created in the image of God as well? It's true! Mankind created in the image of God.

Look at chapter 5 of Genesis, verse 1: "This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created." Verse 3: "And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth." Now you see a big change here. When Adam and Eve are created they are made in the image of God, now you have the fall, there is sin, and we come to chapter 5, the children of Adam are created in his image. This is a different image than the image of God. Adam and Eve had already sinned, and Mankind, those born of them are born with a sinful disposition. They are born sinful. They are born depraved, they are sinner to the very core. That's why Jesus told Nicodemus that evening in the garden: "Look Nicodemus, we can talk about theology all you want, but the truth is, if you are not born again, you are not even going to see heaven." So don't worry about whether you should eat cheese or not! Because unless you are born again, it doesn't matter, you are not even going to see heaven. Do you understand what I'm saying?

So at the very core, mankind is fallen. Mankind is a waste; mankind is very, very wicked at the core. So let me ask you a question. Are Cain and Abel descendants of Adam and Eve? Yes! Are they born in trouble? Yes, they are born sinful! Now it is very important that we understand sin, in order to understand our Savior. If your concept of sin is like this, that sin is you know just kind of this downward stepping path, where it gets worse, and worse and worse, and you work your way down until you are at the abyss, and then Jesus comes along and He helps you, and you work your way back up, if that's your concept of sin, then you are going to be dealing with all kinds of peripheral issues. And your offerings may be like Cain's. Do you understand what I'm saying?

Until we get to the heart, to the core of what sin is, we will not deal with the sin at the core and at the heart. We will in fact seek by human effort blessings that can only come by God. You'll see that as we go on. Now verse 7, it talks about sin lays at the door. In some versions of the Bible it says sin is crouching at the door. Now this is a strange

picture because you have already agreed with me that both Cain and Abel need a Savior. They were born sinful, and they have sinful disposition. They are sinners at the core. But what is this “sin laying at the door?” I’ve always pictured it as an animal. And you read some scholars, they describe it as a lion, others say it could be a lion or it could be like a poisonous serpent. It’s there you know, and it’s ready to pounce, and it’s ready to inflict its venom, or it’s ready to growl and destroy.

Fascinating when you read what the Hebrews thought it meant. The Jewish people thought it was describing Demon, a Demon there! Just like, do you know what a gargoyle is? You know those ugly things that people put by their fences sometimes and by the gates of their house. Why do they do that, I have no idea? I guess to keep me away. We’ll just confess I am not going in there. And what they picture here is that there is a Demon there. Now, strange thing in this conversation, God says: “Look, sin is like a Demon, crouching, ready to take you over.” Well, the man is already sinful. Well we are dealing with two different kinds of sin in this sense. That, yes we are sinful, and that’s what we are going to learn about today, but we also have sin that we do! And what God is saying is: “Look, fight that! Don’t allow it to take over you. You control that.” Because by His grace we are able to say “No” to temptations! But here is how Hebrews describe it, as Cain is working this up within him, and he is getting all wrought up, that the Demon knows that and he is egging him on, go get him boy, go get him, go get him, and then when action begins the Demon is there to support him in that action, and basically they describe that as all falls that man takes into sin until many are captivated by sin’s habits and sin’s horrible tentacles and have no escape. It’s a terrible picture, but that’s what sin does.

Now, the question that I want to deal with you is this: what is the root of all sin? Is there one sin that we could say, this is the mother of all sins? This is where everything is birthed right there. Because if we can identify that, then we could say: “Aha, that’s what I need to deal with” because if we can go to the root of the weed, right, you can destroy its growth. So is there such a sin? Well, you read in the Bible, there are hundreds of sins mentioned in the Bible. And even if they are not mentioned specifically as we read the stories in the Scriptures, we probably could identify thousands of sins that are in the Word of God. So what is the mother of all sin; what is that core that root? Many believe, well it has to be love. And that makes perfect sense. I mean, think about it, what is the reflection of God? God is what? God is love. And His commandments are to love Him, and to love others. That’s kind of the total summation of our character when it’s expressed. Do you know when He comes in the last days, it even says, this is how I will know that you are Mine, you will have love one for another. So, some say that has to be the core, it has to be the antitheses of love which would be, and that’s were the problem is, what is the opposite of love? Some of you will say, “Well Pastor, its hate!” And you know, I can’t argue against that. Others of you would say, “No, it’s just not caring at all.” And I can’t argue against that. In fact, that’s why we can’t say that it’s love. Because we don’t even know what the opposite of love is. Is it hatred, or just ignoring people, just not caring? So it can’t be that.

Let's look at Eve's sin, when she falls. We are just going to look at two verses real quickly. And we are going to identify three categories of sin. These are big title categories, and if you are an outliner, then you'd have the sub categories under there, all right? So we are going to wiggle this down to three major sins. Verse 5: "For God knows in the day that you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." That's the Serpent. Verse 6: "So when Eve saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, she also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."

There are three major sin categories identified in what Eve did. Good for food, lust! And you have all the sub categories of impurity, gluttony, drunkenness, etc, etc. Delight to the eye, covetousness, "You will be like God," pride! There are the three. The big three! There they are: lust, covetousness and pride. How do we know they are the big three? Take Jesus in the wilderness, "Make these stones into bread", lust; "display power for self glory, throw yourself down," pride; "Gain the world through compromise, bow down to me" covetousness, and Jesus gains back the victory, you see. So those are the big three, there they are, pretty easy to identify. Now, remember though that an attempt and failure of human effort in obtaining a blessing is the theme of the Book of Genesis; a blessing that only God can give. How can we get those three down to one? What is the one sin that is the mother of them all?

Well let's look at the Book of Hebrews where it mentions Abel. Hebrews chapter 11 verse 4, it says: "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks." What was it about Abel's offering? How was it offered? By faith! Now look at verse 6, same chapter: "But without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." What is it impossible to please God without? Without faith! Faith! Brothers and sisters, faith is the foundation of righteousness. Believing God is the foundation of righteousness. God says, without it you can't please Him. It doesn't matter how hard you try to love, it doesn't matter how victorious you are in diet, it doesn't matter how sacrificial you are in time and giving to the Lord, without faith everything we do is an attempt of human effort in obtaining a blessing that only God can give.

Now, we are going to use some reasoning here. If sin has a core problem, and it's associated here by faith, and we are looking to identify the mother of all sin that gives birth to all sins, then if we can find in the Scriptures the antidote that God provides for sin, maybe there we would have a clue as to what He considers the root problem of sin. I'll give you an example. If I go to the Doctor and I have an infection, the Doctor most likely is going to prescribe to me what? Antibiotics, correct? So I have an infection, the Doctor prescribes antibiotics. If any of you came up to me and said: "You know Jerry, I am not feeling too well, I am taking antibiotics and they are affecting my stomach." If you tell me you are taking antibiotics, I am going to assume that something is wrong inside that is dealing with an infection, and some biological thing going on there. I am no medical person so, but I can figure that out. I can back it up. There is something wrong

with your “biotics” whatever that is? My apologies to you Doctors and Nurses, and people that just understand. So, what is God’s antidote to the sin problem? How does God deal with the sin problem? And if we can find that, then we can find out what the sin problem is. Are you with me? All right!

Turn to John chapter three. John chapter 3, take a deep breath, clear your mind, you’ve been sitting a long time. It’s been a long service, but I am not going to cut you short, I am not going to do it. I have a message from God for you today. John chapter 3, notice what is says, verse 16: “For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son that who ever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” What is the antidote to the sin problem? Believing in Jesus! God sent Him, do we believe in Him? Verse 17: “For God did not send His son to the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned. But he who does not believe, is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

The antidote to sin is believing. It is belief in God. Look at John 6, we need this supported, we need it strengthened in our minds. John 6 verse 35, Jesus is talking, He says: “I am the Bread of Life, he who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me, but yet you do not believe.” Look at verse 40, same chapter: “And this is the will of Him who sent Me that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” Verse 47: “Most assuredly I say to you He who believes in Me has everlasting life.” Keep your hand here, and turn to Galatians chapter 3, we are coming back to John 6 in just a moment. We are picking up speed now. Galatians 3 verse 6 Paul says this: “Just as Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.” What is the antidote to sin? Belief in God! What is the Mother sin? Unbelief! It’s not trusting God. That’s the Mother of all sin. And that gives birth to lust, coveting, and pride.

Now, we are very, very concerned about the sin that lies at the door. Rightly so, we ought to be. And we deal with that. But I am telling you brothers and sisters; Jesus says to deal with something else. Look at John 6 verses 28 and 29 it’s the passage I shared with the folks at prayer meeting the other week. John 6 verse 28: “Then they said to Jesus, what shall we do that we may work the works of God?” Now that’s a good question, isn’t it? Notice what Jesus says. Jesus answered them and said: “try harder.” Read all that it said, and apply it to your life, right? What does He say? “This is the work of God that you believe in Him whom He sent.” Do you realize what that is saying? All your effort, all your energy, all your time religiously needs to be bent upon believing in Jesus Christ.

That means you spend time in His Word that means spending time praying to God about what you’ve read in His word. We are so interested in sin and overcoming sin that we are fighting something that’s not even at the core. And brothers and sisters, you’ve probably heard the story of the Hydra, you know the Greek mythology, the seven headed creature and they go out to fight it, and you cut off the head and the head grows back. You’ve got

seven heads coming at you, and you cut off, and it grows back until one guy goes out, and do you know what he does? He stabs it in the heart and the thing dies. And we are spending our religious experience whacking off heads that keep growing back. Why? Because we don't deal with the root, unbelief! And you are saying, "well Pastor that sounds good, but what is a practical application, and I am so thankful that you asked.

Unbelief! Human effort in obtaining a blessing that only God can give. Let me show you unbelief in the work place. You got a friend or an associate, or you got a work associate and a Supervisor that is there and you don't like him. I don't care why you don't like him, they maybe people that are unlikable, or you might be just jealous of them, I don't know. But know this, sin lies at the door. What is the unbelieving way to deal with it? You'll destroy the person's credibility, you'll talk about them, you'll be negative, you'll go to their Supervisor with exaggerated issues, sin lies at the door! It begins to take over, and that's how you deal with it.

Here is how a believer in God deals with it. You pray about it, and they let God take care of it, and they follow His ways to deal with it. Do you understand what I am saying? So at the heart, the birth of all sin is not believing God. Not trusting Him to take care of it. But it is human effort in seeking to obtain a blessing that only God can give.

Let's try another one. You are looking for a spouse. Oh yes, you see there are problems in his life, your family warned you and your friends warned you, but man, you've got to have someone! And so you unite yourself with the living hell. That's the unbelieving way to deal with it. The believer prays about it and let's God take care of it, they follow His ways and they are blessed. Yes, they may have to wait. But you see, sin lies at the door! And the story of Cain and Abel tells us this: there are only two options. You either are blessed because of your belief, or you are cursed because of your unbelief. You see! That's what happens. Marriage! Fellows, listen, the Bible says angels don't marry, don't expect her to be one. Life is hard, there are going to be irritable times, there are going to be stresses, there are going to be bills and some day you might have children. And the unbeliever in the stresses of marriage seeks to correct and blame. They quit rejoicing in the gift that has been given them in the other spouse. They begin to lust for other situations or other people, they get mean, they get vindictive, and they rip and destroy a relationship. Why? Because the unbelief is the beginning of all sin.

How does a believer deal with the irritability and stresses of living with another human being? You pray about it! And you ask God to change you, and when you are changed, then you have the right to pray for your spouse to be changed. Are you with me, do you understand? The birth of all sin is unbelief, not trusting God, but seeking in your human effort in obtaining a blessing that only God can give. You are lonely, you are lonely! Unbeliever heads to the tavern, alcohol, drugs, you name it. Believer, "God, I am lonely, help me, please help me. Draw near to me; lead me to friends who want to serve you, lead me to associates that will support me in a walk with You.

Now ladies, I want to be like a brother to some of you and like a father to some of you, and maybe like a son to some of you. You don't have to dress like that if you are a

believer. The type of man that is going to love you, and care for you, doesn't want to see what you think he has to see before he would even be interested in you. Do you understand what I am saying? A believer will seek to please God and follow His methods. You don't have to dress in a way to get our attention in an unholy way. The men who are going to be at your elbow now will not be there later. Do you understand what I am saying? The root, the core, the mother of all sin is unbelief.

I sat there behind that tree and I heard the rambler coming down that road, and my Dad stopped. I knew that he knew I was there. I didn't want to see him; I did want to see him, but I didn't want to see him. My Dad did kind of an amazing thing in a way. He just rolled down the window, and in the kindest way he knew how, he said: "Jerry, I just want to talk to you." All right, so we talked, and after a little while I went home with my father. Brothers and sisters, your Father is here today, and He just wants to talk to you. He wants to talk to you about your unbelief in Him, your lack of trust in Him, how you seek by your own human effort to obtain blessings that only He can give. And He wants to take you home. If you hear Him saying, "I'd like to talk with you", and if you'd like to say, "I am willing to talk and I am willing to deal with my unbelief, and I am willing to have You help me to have faith and trust in You." If you'd like to say that to the Lord, I am going to ask you to stand right where you are at.

Father in Heaven, please take us home. Teach us to trust You, to have faith in You and not to live a life of unbelief, we ask and we pray this in Jesus name, Amen.