



December 3, 2023

Pastor Note:

It was a defiant, don't bother me, leave me alone, answer. An answer rooted in guilt, in never having liked God speaking to him, in never dealing with his sins, sins that finally had spun completely out of control.

He didn't see it, neither did he hear it; sin does have a way of rendering us blind, deaf, and foolish. God wasn't trying to rub his nose in it, He was trying to help him, deliver him from the ever-tightening grip of sin, from his soul surrendering to the darkness reaching for it, from repeating the sin of his parents – the rejection of God.

And so, his mean-sounding answer matched what his mean hands had already done, **“I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?”** Cain threw back in God's face when asked, **“Where is your brother Abel?”** (Genesis 4:9).

“Am I my brother's keeper?” has echoed through the ages right down to you and me.

God didn't ask Cain to get information as to Abel's whereabouts. God witnessed the murder; He saw where Cain dug a hole in the ground to hide his brother's body. God's question was for Cain's benefit, a chance to be broken, to weep, to confess, to repent, to cry out for mercy, to be delivered from the sin he couldn't master, the sin that had mastered and enslaved him. Cain didn't take God's offer, instead, he lied and hissed the defiant answer across his clenched teeth, **“Am I my brother's keeper?”** He sure wasn't, hadn't been, but he should've been. He surely shouldn't have been his brother's murderer.

It wasn't that Cain didn't know or believe in God, or that he wasn't religious. God spoke directly with him several times. What Cain didn't like was God being adamant about holiness and righteousness, God's rigorous demand that his sin had to be dealt with and that an offering, no matter how fancy, means nothing if the heart and actions don't match. Cain hated that God had no regard for his offering, that God declared his religious approach empty. Empty religion, Christian or otherwise, is no help with our depravity, is of no assistance with mastering sin, has room for hate, and finds ways to justify most anything, even murder – the plot

to kill Jesus, the Son of God, was hatched by the religious leaders. **“Am I my brother's keeper?”** Abel wasn't a bad brother, Jesus called him righteous (Matthew 23:35). The only way to be called “righteous” is to do what is right, to do what is right before God. Instead of appreciating his brother's righteousness Cain was jealous of it, hated it. That's how sin and righteousness work. One is light and the other is darkness. Your and my sin looks a whole lot dirtier when we stand next to someone who is good, has a heart that beats for God, is Christlike. Cain's solution was to turn down the light, to not deal with his sin and inner darkness, to not address his own unrighteousness, and instead attack and snuff out the light. According to Jesus, Cain's lying and murder inform us about who his true spiritual father was **“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies”** John 8:44 (NASB).

“Am I My brother's keeper?” A similar question is **“Who is my neighbor?”** Luke 10:29. A righteous person answers them very differently than Cain, or how they have been answered most often throughout history. Both questions need to be answered by each one of us if we are going to celebrate a truly meaningful Christmas and live righteous lives. Christmas, when we remember that God sent His only Son into our world filled with big and little Cains, our world sick with empty religions and philosophies, our world overflowing with lies, our world where too much blood cries out, our world lacking brother's and sister's keepers, our world in need of more neighbors and fewer enemies, our world needing forgiveness of and deliverance from sin.

Our world still desperately needs the light of Christ, it needs the Jesus light to shine through you and me. **“The people who live in darkness have seen a great light - Jesus, and for those living in the shadowland of Cain, sin, and death, light has dawned”** Matthew 4:16 (HCSB, italics mine). Thank you, God.

Have a most meaningful and God-glorifying Advent and Christmas season.

Love you, Pastor Hans



Lord Hear Our Prayers

PRAYER REQUEST

Health: Mabel Mayes, Julie Ebel, Foster Children and those who foster, And that we do “SHARE”.

If you notice someone has been absent from Small Group or Worship Services for awhile, why not call them or stop by to let him/her know that they have been missed. A kindness that cost you nothing could mean everything to someone who is suffering in the silence of self-exile.

Military And Those Serving

Michael Berger, Austin Downing,
Noah Martin, John Michael Chavez,
Chris Kelly, Austin Kroeker, Brian Sula,
Thomas Hoffman, Joel Thelen,
Clayton Brown, Jonathan Grinols, Joshua Grabowski,
Christopher Sula

CARD & FLOWER MINISTRY

If you know of anyone who is ill or hospitalized, please let us know by calling: **Lynnette Barrera** – (559)400-1862 and
Rachel Aratin - (209)206-5236
Prayer Request e-mail to: **Judy Mahar** ldpbepayer@gmail.com

Church Board Members:

Hans Frei - Pastor . Richard Mayes - Head Deacon ,
Dan Hankemeier . Sue Kluding .
Gabi Cox . Chuck Arndt

Christmas

Calendar of Events for December



- **Annual Church Business Meeting**
December 3rd, following the service
(*All* members are encouraged to attend)
- **Christmas Baskets**
by the Food Ministry -
Saturday, December 16th (9 AM - 12 noon)
Per-registration required, Contact Leslie Farrow, 852-2481
- **Christmas Caroling -**
Saturday, Dec. 16th (Meet at the Church at 4:30 P.M.)
- **Candlelight Communion Service -**
Sunday, Dec. 24th (6:30 P.M.)
- **Christmas Sunday Worship -**
Monday, Dec. 25th (10:30 A.M.)

November Announcements

Upcoming Events

- Men's Gathering - Tuesdays @ 6:00 P.M.
- Women's Morning Bible Study— Wed. @ 10:00 AM
- Wednesday Night Bible Study for all ages - 7:00 P.M.
- Food Ministry - 1st Wed. & 3rd Tues. @ 9:00 AM - 11:00 A.M.
- Grief Share - Wed. @ 6:30 P.M.

**Church Annual Business Meeting TODAY
after the service**

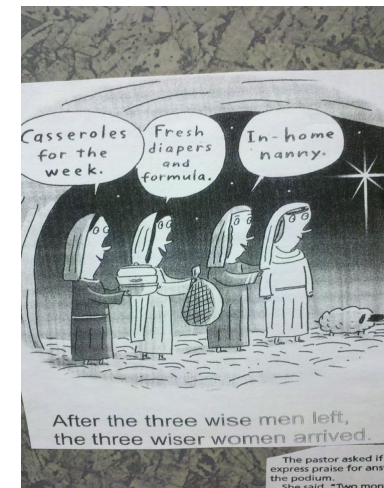
Fellowship Time Snacks were provided
By - "Merle's Class"

Thank you

Next week Hans' Class is up!!



A Bit of
Humor
Corner



Giving

November 26, 2023

Offering:
\$2,380.00

Food Basket:
\$160.00

Books:
\$145.00

World Hunger:
\$265.00

Attendance:
87

Weekly Events

Sunday School/Small Groups:

9:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship Service:

10:30 AM

Sunday Evening Worship Service:

6:00 PM

Tuesday: Men's Gathering: 6:00 PM

1st Wednesday & 3rd Tuesday

Food Ministry:

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Wednesday:

Women's Bible Study - 10:00 AM
Bible Study/Small Group - 7:00 PM
Grief Share - 6:30 PM

Thursday: Chicken Foot - 1:00 PM

Lake Don Pedro Baptist Church

4175 Abeto Street

La Grange California 95329

209-852-2029

ldpbaptistchurch@gmail.com

www.ldpbaptistchurch.com

S H A R E



1 Timothy 6:18



December 4th - December 10th

DAY 1 - Matt. 10
(Prov. 4)

DAY 2 - Matt. 11
(Prov. 5)

DAY 3 - Matt. 12
(Prov. 6)

DAY 4 - Matt. 13
(Prov. 7)

DAY 5 - Matt. 14
(Prov. 8)

DAY 6 - (Prov. 9)

DAY 7 - (Prov. 10)

Welcome all of you who are guests with us today. Our desire is for you to relax and be blessed by worship, God's Word, and fellowship. We, the members, have committed ourselves to underwrite the church financially. We do not expect you to contribute to the offering, but you are free to participate. We would like to get to know you and for you to know us better.