



Cain and Abel

Genesis 4:2-9

"Yodel-eh-hee-hoo!" GranMammy Jones cried over the din of the camper's conversations. Her piercing yodel always attracted the most attention. The campers settled into their seats as GranMammy smiled her crooked, gap-toothed grin. "Well, hello there boys and girls. Catastrophe had to go into town to get some supplies so he asked me to learn ya' about the Bible."

The creaking side door to the Bible Barn interrupted her as it opened slowly. Fishhead entered, dragging his feet and holding his lure and hook-covered hat dejectedly by his side. "Howdy, GranMammy. Howdy, campers." He greeted with a meek wave. Even his usually bright red hair looked decidedly sad.

"How-dee-do, Fishhead!" GranMammy greeted her grandson. "You seem a might down. What's the trouble?"

"Well, GranMammy, I am powerful upset at my brother, Shrimphhead." Fishhead declared with a huff, stuffing his hat into the back pocket of his overalls.

"Shrimphhead?" GranMammy said with concern in her voice, "What did he do?"

"Well, you `member how my Mama, just had a birthday?" Fishhead began.

"Course I do!" GranMammy exclaimed, "She's my own daughter!"

"Oh yeah." Fishhead gave her a sheepish, buck-toothed grin before continuing, "Well, I made her a really nice card with glitter glue and stickers and everything."

"Oh, that's real nice." GranMammy patted him on the back.

"But Shrimphhead, you know what he done?" Fishhead said angrily pulling away from GranMammy's reach. "He got Mama a rockin' chair!"

"Woo! Su-weet!" GranMammy shouted with a whistle. She pranced in a happy circle and said, "Ain't nothin' your Mama loves more than a rockin' chair!"

"I know!" Fishhead agreed in disgust. "But I only got her a card..."

GranMammy stopped her celebrating and resumed patting Fishhead on the back, "Well, a card is nice, too."

Fishhead shrugged his shoulders and sneered, "Yeah but, ole perfect Shrimthead, gots her the best gift ever, all I gots was a card. I looks like the bad son."

GranMammy looked confused, "So, you're mad at your brother for being thoughtful?"

"Well...no...well, yeah...well, I don't know what to think..." Fishhead stuttered.

GranMammy smiled a knowing grandmotherly grin, "When I don't know what to think, I turn to the Bible."

"GranMammy," Fishhead protested as she pulled the Bible out of the grain bin. "What are the chances the Bible has a story about family members and gift giving?"

"I'd say the chances are pretty good," she declared as she blew the grain dust from the cover of the Bible. She flipped open the pages, cleared her throat and announced, "Cain and Abel."

Fishhead tilted his head, "Who dat? Who are Cain and Abel?"

"They was Adam and Eve's sons." GranMammy explained. Her eyes lit up, "Hey, you know what would be fun? We should get two volunteers to act out this story." She pointed a crooked finger at two boys sitting in the front row, "Come on up here campers." She settled into a wooden chair and began to read Genesis 4:2, "Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil."

Fishhead handed the first boy a shepherd's staff and the second boy a shovel. "GranMammy, what happened next?"

GranMammy continued to read, "In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock."

Fishhead handed the first boy a piece of meat and the second boy a banana.

GranMammy nodded in approval and read further, "The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering He did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast."

Fishhead rubbed his hand through his red hair, "What does downcast mean?"

GranMammy explained, "It means sad or pouting. Cain was angry and sad because God liked Abel's gift more than Cain's."

Fishhead pointed to the second boy, "Show me a sad face." The boy lowered his head and stuck out his lower lip. "Perfect. So, why do you think God didn't like Cain's offering as much as Abel's?"

"Well, it doesn't exactly say." GranMammy said, closing the Bible. "But it could be because Abel gave his offering out of love and faith in God but, Cain didn't give from his heart. Or it could be because Abel gave his very best, the firstborn and Cain didn't give God his best. Or it could be that God could see that Cain was jealous in his heart."

"God could tell Cain was jealous of his brother?" Fishhead asked in amazement.

"Oh yes," GranMammy assured him. She reopened the Bible to Genesis 4:6. "Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?'"

"Wow," Fishhead gasped. He placed either hand on the shoulders of the pouting boy. "So, did Cain do what was right? Did he give his best?"

"Nope," GranMammy snapped. "In fact he made the worstest choice ever. He was so jealous and angry that he picked a fight with Abel out in the field and actually killed him."

Fishhead looked at the two volunteer campers, "Hmmm." He mused, looking at the shovel in the first boy's hand and then back at the second boy.

"Don't even think about it!" GranMammy shouted, jumping up from the small wooden chair to stand between Fishhead and the two boys. "We're not going to act that part out! Go on back to your seats, fellas. Thanks for volunteerin'."

"GranMammy, this story reminds me of my family. I was angry with my brother for doing the right thing." Fishhead confessed sadly.

"And what did you learn?" GranMammy asked.

"I should hit my brother in the head with that rockin' chair!" Fishhead declared, pulling his hat from his back pocket. He started walking for the side door.

"No!" GranMammy shouted, once again jumping in front of Fishhead. "Cain did the wrong thing. The Bible says, 'The Lord asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" And Cain answered, "I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?'"

Fishhead gasped, "So, Cain lied to God! What was he thinkin'?"

GranMammy shrugged her shoulders, "Well he sure wasn't thinking about the Camper's Code! That's what God wants from us! Do you remember what it says, Fishhead?"

"Course I remember." Fishhead said turning to the campers, "Let's say it together: I will love God with all my heart, I will love my neighbor as myself, I will be a light wherever I go!"

"And who is our neighbor?" GranMammy quizzed Fishhead.

Fishhead rubbed his head through his hat, "Well, everybody. Including our friends..."

"And...?" GranMammy nodded encouragingly.

"Um...and our family?" Fishhead guessed.

"Exactly right!" GranMammy said. "God wants us to love everyone. He wants every sister and brother to love one another."

"That sounds like a great verse for our Camp Critter song!" Fishhead shouted pulling a plastic comb and a small piece of paper from the front pocket of his overalls. He picked a few stray red hairs from the comb, folded the paper over the teeth of the comb and hummed a few notes. He stopped suddenly as a long sad howl wafted in through the windows of the Bible barn.

GranMammy slapped her hand on her knee, "Fishhead, I almost forgot to tell ya, today's Camp Critter is the coyote!"

"The coyote?" Fishhead replied, "Why do you think the coyote is today's Camp Critter?"

"Well, the coyote has a very sad howl." GranMammy said as the long, sad noise drifted into the barn again. "I think that's how sad God must have felt to see Cain make so many wrong choices."

Fishhead nodded. "GranMammy, I'm gonna' make a choice that God will really like." He jumped on top of a hay bale and put one finger in the air declaring, "I'm gonna do the right thing and go congratulate my brother for givin' Mama such a fine rocker!"

GranMammy applauded, "I think that will make God very happy. Before you go, let's sing that new verse you made up for our Camp Critter song."

Fishhead played his comb as GranMammy stomped her black lace boots on the barn stage. The campers clapped and sang the Camp Critter song.

**I spied the COYOTE overhead.
Here is what that COYOTE said,
"Every sister and brother,
Ought to love one another!"
Whew! I spied the COYOTE
who followed the OTTER
who followed the OWL
who followed the LOVEBIRDS
who followed a HOUND DOG
who followed a CATFISH
who followed an EAGLE,
And the EAGLE hollered,
"Yippee-kigh-yay!
At Camp Venture today!"**