

Scripture: Genesis 4:9

Scripture: ⁹Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where *is* Abel your brother?”

He said, “I do not know. *Am I my brother’s keeper?*”

Many of you are familiar with the story of Cain and Abel. In the story, Cain kills his brother Abel because of jealousy. I chose this particular passage of scripture because it deals with relationships. Our relationship with God and one another.

Earlier in scripture, God encourages Cain to avoid letting his emotions control him and to focus on doing good. But Cain ignores the warning, gives in, and sin. Scripture says, “Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.” (Genesis 4:8) God immediately confronts Cain, saying, “Where is your brother Abel?” And Cain replies, “I don’t know. *Am I my brother’s keeper?*” (Genesis 4:9)

Am I my brother’s (or sister’s) keeper?

It is a question, a good question that looms throughout the whole Bible and all of history. In this story, Cain was trying to escape responsibility for his actions, and his attitude reflected in his statement, “*Am I my brother’s keeper?*”

“Am I responsible for anyone other than myself; my job is to look out for me.” It is an attitude that has been widespread throughout history. But to the question, “*Am I my brother’s (or sister’s) keeper,*”

Yes, I AM.

Jesus gives us the answer, as He teaches us to love God and our neighbor. Then He takes it a step further, in the Sermon on the Mount, when He says to also “Love your enemies . . . so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, for God makes the sun rise on the good and bad, and sends rain on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:44-45). Quite in contrast to Cain, who despises and attacks his brother, we are to be concerned about and show care not only to our family but for all people—whether they are close to us or not, whether we like them or not, whether they are worthy or not, because God has compassion and shows care to all.

So, I am convinced that some of the most Influential people in this world are “YOU!”

It is not the president, even though he has great influence.

It is not Bill Gates, even though he too has great influence.

It is not even the Black Panther, I just thought I would throw that one in there since we talked about the movie last week. Even though that movie too has great influence.

But some of the most influential people in the world are “YOU!”

Because “You are” Mothers, Fathers, Grandparents, Sisters, Brothers, Daughters, Sons, Uncles, Aunts, Nieces, Nephews and Friends. “You are great influencers!”

And You have power!!!

Somebody shout, “I GOT POWER!”

Let me encourage you this morning, “O man or woman of God.”

Listen!

We all have the power to influence, we could either build a dream or kill it.

Let me just break that thing down a little and make it plain. I believe that YOU are some of the most influential people on earth because, if you have enough power or influence to lead a man or a woman to the bedroom, you have enough power or influence to lead them to Christ.

I’m going to let that sit there for a minute.

Like I said, “YOU HAVE POWER!”

Who am I talking to this morning?

Do you realize “People of God” that YOU HAVE GREAT POWER! YOU have the influence of tomorrow in your hands today. You can either build or you can tear it down.

The question then becomes “which one will you do?”

Are you the one that builds or are you the one who tears things down?

Are you the one who helps dreams come to pass or are you the one who kills it before it is birth?

Are you an innovator?

Trend setter? Warrior? Overcomer? Developer?

Or are you a murmurer? Whinner? Complainer? Grumbler? Criticizer?

I am told that it is always easier to tear down than to build up.

If you have ever watched construction, then you know that it hardly takes any time to bulldoze a building, yet it will take years of construction to rebuild it. More often than not most people take the easy way and tear things down then put in the effort to build things up.

Who am I talking to this morning?

Listen!

Don't miss this!

They say it is easier to tear down than it is to build up. It is easier to point fingers at others than to look at one's self.

I saw a remarkably interesting excerpt from an interview yesterday. Lisa Ray was being interviewed by Wendy Williams and the topic came up about her divorce. She said that at first, she was pointing the finger at her ex-husband and you did this, and you did that, blaming him. Then she had to stop! Wait and look at herself. What did I do to contribute to the break-down of the marriage?

It's always easier to tear down than to build up, but that is the total opposite of Jesus. Remember, all kinds of people flocked to Him and He had a way of touching their lives. He had a way of building people up instead of tearing them down.

Remember the woman who was caught in Adultery? Jesus didn't join in and ridicule her, but He built her up and gave her HOPE.

It is said that criticism comes more naturally than creativity. But why take the easy route. Who wants to be remembered as the one who destroyed HOPE? Who wants to be remembered as the destroyer of dreams?

Many of you know the name **John Lewis**. The American politician and [civil-rights](#) leader who served in the House of Representatives for the state of [Georgia](#) [since](#) 1987 until his recent death a few weeks ago. Had he not been one who built up, the memorial or commemoration of his life would not have been celebrated.

He will always be remembered for the contribution he made to humanity.

The 17-term congressman from Georgia, will always be remembered as the "Conscience of Congress."

He will always be remembered as a lifetime civil rights leader in the United States who inspired the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. He was the last of the "Big Six" civil rights figures led by the late great Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

No normal person wants to build monuments or celebrate the lives of critics. Although some people do. But notice I said, no normal person wants to build monuments or celebrate the lives of critics.

John Lewis' life influenced the lives of many people. And just like him, we all influence others, whether right or wrong, good or bad. I am just saying, you are a person of influence.

Listen, I believe that everyone in this room and everyone who is watching this stream wants to live lives of **significance**—lives that make a difference.

I believe that we were designed to live for something greater than ourselves. As a matter of fact, write this down. "I AM made for greatness." Each of us were born with an ingrained desire to accomplish that, to accomplish greatness.

Earlier this week, as I was laying on my bed meditating, God said to me "with God nothing is impossible." Write these scriptures down too: Luke 1:37 and Matthew 19:26 because they remind us that, "with God nothing is impossible."

There is Greatness in YOU!

We were born with an ingrained desire to accomplish "Greatness."

To live is to influence. We live lives of influence.

Whenever and wherever our lives interact with others (at home, at work, on-line, or in our community), we have influence. We have influence and can change lives. We affect people every single day with our words, the looks we give, our actions, interactions, and the decisions we make.

The interactions we have with others, are great opportunities to influence the lives of others. It can be positive or negative, good or bad. Our interactions can add value to the lives of others, or it can take value away. Our opportunity for influence can become an important agent for change or it can further cement the status quo of keeping things the same. It can make our world a better place or a terrible place to endure.

Every day, whether we interact with one person or a hundred people, our lives produce a ripple effect that extends far beyond us. So, let us model integrity, celebrate growth, encourage strength, and push for positive change.

That's the stuff that great leaders are made of.

The Bible tells us that Jesus called the most unlikely bunch of people to be His disciples, to be under His influence, to model what He did. And after he trained them, He gave them a great mission: Go into all the world!

As we follow Jesus, we are following the greatest leader of all time, and we can be great because nothing is impossible with Him!

Our world, and the church, desperately needs great leaders – Leaders accomplishing great things with integrity and a vision to live and lead for something greater than themselves.

“I believe that the Holy Spirit is saying that Somebody said that’s too hard. I can’t do all that!”

But we should never limit what God can and wants to do with our lives, regardless of age, limitations, disposition, past or whatever one may be facing.

“With God nothing is impossible.”

If a 90-year-old woman and 100-year-old man can have a baby. How hard do you think your issue is for God?

“Nothing is impossible with God.”

That’s why here at Washington Heights, we want to use our influence to create an environment of equipping, encouraging, empowering, and vision to help all we come in contact with to fulfil who God has called each of us to be.

We believe that God has called every person to a life of significance and of influence.

Somebody shout: “Power!”

It’s funny because when you said POWER I thought about this TV show called “Power”

Now I am not promoting this show, and I am not saying that I use to watch this. I’m not telling on myself but y’all know I told you last week that I love movies (to include all kinds of T.V. shows). Any way this show has a character named James St Patrick a.k.a. Ghost, one of the main influencers of the show. He had Power. He had great influence. But he used it for criminal activity, manipulation, political advancement, and control. He used it to advance his position as a leader.

But Leadership is not primarily about a position, but it is always about influence. So, use your influence for the good.

I want to challenge you as Men and Women of God to step up. Life is short and fragile, and God is calling us to initiate leadership, starting with ourselves and moving out to all the relationships and influence we have.

You may not have thought of yourself as a great influencer, but you are.

God has placed you at the center of a circle of influence.

Everybody! Please grab a pencil or a pen and draw a circle with a smaller circle in the center of the big circle on a piece of paper, and then divide the larger circle into four sections connecting it to the smaller circle.

In the first section, write the word "friends." In the second section, write the word "family." In the third, write the word "work." And in the fourth, write the word "church."

Start writing the names of people who are within the sphere of your influence. Once you get started, you may find that some of the sections need to become separate sheets of paper.

You have influence on your friends; the only question is what kind of influence that will be. God has placed them around you for a reason. You are at the center and your influence will depend on where you are going. Are you building or tearing down?

If you are tearing down I want to invite you today to join me and let us start building one another up.

Let's build with our words.

Let's build with our actions.

Let's build with love all that God has given us.

You Somebody shout "I" hold the future of tomorrow in my hands, today!

Think about it

God has placed each of us at the center of a sphere of influence our families, on jobs, in businesses, and even **At church.**

God has joined us together in the body of Christ. Some of us are full of joy. Some of us are not so quite joyful. Some of us are full of faith. Some of us are full of doubts. What will your influence be? What will be the result of your conversations? Know this: Your influence matters.

Somebody say, "I Matter!"

Write this down think about it later and answer the question "Where am I in this Christian life?" Am I adding to or Am I taking away? Am I building up or Am I tearing down?

Would you take a chance and join me in building? I want to challenge you to make it up in your mind that you would be a builder.

If that's you, shout: "I AM a builder."

The first mark of a builder is that we be faithful follower of Jesus Christ. Building begins by learning to follow. Would you say today, "Jesus lead me!"

The bible tells us in the 29 chapter of the book of Jeremiah that God "know the plans that he has for us." Plans for good and not evil. There will be gifts of grace mixed in with shattered dreams, intense pressures and great sacrifices.

In a world of convenience, there are many people who are not interested in that kind of journey. They are looking for a god who will give them a comfortable life. Following Jesus will lead you to a cross, but it will not end there. Following Christ will lead you to glory.

Because there is Greatness on the inside of you and I pray that you realize that!

That's my prayer for you today.