

Why are you so angry and miserable?

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[0 : 0 0] Well, we are going to turn to our reading this morning, and we're going to be looking this morning in Genesis chapter 4, way back near the beginning of the Bible, and the story of Cain and Abel.

Well-known story, and I'm going to be focusing particularly on this question that we find in verse 6 of Genesis chapter 4, but I'm going to read chapter 4, verse 1 down to verse 16.

And this gives us the context of, I suppose, what's quite a famous story, although often when people think they know a story of the Bible, they only kind of know it vaguely.

So let's pay attention to what is actually being said here. Genesis 4, verse 1, now Adam knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, I've gotten a man with the help of the Lord.

And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. In the course of time, Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground.

[1 : 1 0] And Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering, he had no regard.

So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The Lord said to Cain, why are you angry? Why has your face fallen?

If you do well, will you not be accepted? If you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you.

But you must rule over it. Cain spoke to Abel, his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel 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 the Lord said, what have you done?

[2 : 1 8] The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you're cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth. Cain said to the Lord, my punishment is greater than I can bear.

Behold, you have driven me away today from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me. And the Lord said to him, not so.

If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him.

Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. Amen.

[3 : 2 2] And may God bless to us his word. Well, do turn with me in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 4 and to the passage that we read there together.

And God's question to Cain, and through Cain to every human being, why are you so angry and miserable? I want to focus on this question, one of the many questions that the Bible pointedly asks to human beings.

Very important, because people today often think that we're the ones who are asking the questions of God, that God, if he exists, has got to answer us and bow down to us. But in fact, it's God who has been putting human beings on the spot right since the very beginning.

Look at verse 6 here in Genesis chapter 4. The Lord said to Cain, why are you angry? And why has your face fallen? Why are you so miserable?

Well, it's a relevant question today, isn't it? A study sometime ago into mental health in this country found that 1 in 10 people admitted to losing their temper badly at least once a day.

[4 : 37] And 1 in 6 of those said that they'd considered resorting to physical violence as a result. Why are you so angry?

We have road rage. We have people abusing people in shops. We have railway workers being abused and so on. We read about even young children in schools having to have anger management training, even in primary schools.

And all kinds of things, much, much worse than that. And that's before we even begin to think about the results of the recent lockdown and so on. Why are you so angry and miserable?

Here's a psychologist who specializes in anger management. He says this. Rage has a dramatic effect on the body. Problem is it can become seductive and it creates feelings of empowerment.

And the physical effect is similar to sexual arousal. We come across rageaholics who are literally addicted to the adrenaline rush. But why are you so angry and miserable, unhappy?

[5 : 47] Why has your face fallen? Depression is such a scourge in modern life, isn't it? And of course there are many factors in that.

But anger that isn't dealt with is certainly one of those. One of those factors. Hurt and disappointment. Disappointment. It often results in anger.

If it's cherished, if it's held on to. And it tends to lead to deep bitterness, to deep resentment. To a poisoned frame of mind and outlook.

To real unhappiness in life. Angry people are rarely happy people, are they? Well, the Bible tells us that anger and unhappiness, although rampant in our society today, is not a modern phenomenon.

These things are problems which are as old as man, or almost as old as man. Right here at the beginning, God himself is asking that question to man.

[6 : 48] Why are you angry? Why are you unhappy with such sour faces? And he's asking that question, of course, not because he needs to know the answer. He knows. But he's asking it in order to force us human beings to come to term with ourselves, and to see the truth about ourselves, and the anger and the unhappiness that so often is festering in our hearts.

God wants us to see that the anger, the bitterness, the unhappiness, the depression that so pervades this world can always ultimately be traced back fairly and squarely to man's anger against God.

That's the truth that you really need to grasp as the God of the Bible. All the resentments, all the bitternesses in your hearts that affect your relationships with other people, and that cause such misery within yourself, in the world, in reality, all of that stems from resentment and bitterness and anger that you yourselves harbor towards God who made you.

And that's as plain as a pike star right from the beginning, way back here in the story of Cain and Abel. And I want to look this morning about this question in chapter 4, verse 6. And I want us to consider three things about Cain's anger.

It's etiology, it's sequelae, and it's therapy. Okay, let's use normal words. It's cause, it's consequences, and it's cure. First of all, then, the cause of Cain's anger.

[8 : 27] Well, we're told quite plainly why Cain was angry, aren't we, in verses 4 and 5. And it's double-sided, you see. The Lord had regard for Abel in his offering, but for Cain in his offering, he had no regard.

So Cain was very angry. And his face fell. He was angry and upset and unhappy. Why, then, should God be pleased with Abel and not with Cain?

Well, people have had all sorts of speculations about that. One quite common one, I think, is that Cain's offering was just crops, fruit of the ground, whereas Abel's, that was an animal. That was, it included a blood sacrifice.

But actually, the word offering that's used here is used in the Old Testament of quite legitimate sacrifices, of grain and of fruit and so on, not just used of blood sacrifices.

And so I don't think the text here is making any comment about Cain's sacrifice lacking anything in and of itself just because it was of the fruit of the ground. Now, what the text does draw our attention to, if you look carefully, is something else.

[9 : 33] It draws our attention to the attitude of the worshiper. Cain just brought an offering. That's all we're told in verse 3. But Abel brought, look at verse 4, of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions.

Now, that might not seem like a very big deal to us. We might even think, well, imagine giving God the fatty bits. But there was no fat police in ancient Israel.

You were allowed to enjoy fat, and fat was the tastiest part of the whole thing. So it's actually quite the reverse here. And the first readers of this story, do you remember the people under Moses who were traveling through the wilderness?

Moses wrote this, told them these stories, they would understand absolutely perfectly what he was saying here. To give God the firstborn and to give him the fat portions was to obey God's command to give of your very best to God as a way of indicating that God has the very best of us and God must have all of us.

There's lots and lots of references you could look up throughout the law of Moses about that. But here's just one. Numbers chapter 18, verse 17. The firstborn are holy, he says. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar and bring their fat as a food offering, which is a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

[10 : 59] So you see what the text here in Genesis 4 is telling us. It's telling us that Abel had a humble and obedient attitude. He responded to the way God had obviously told them to worship him.

And he showed it by giving of his best, giving of his most precious to God in a response of loving obedience. But Cain, by contrast, had a different spirit, an arrogant spirit.

He just said, well, this is what I'm going to offer to God. And of course, it's up to God to accept what I offer to him. It's the heart of the worshiper, you see, that's the crucial thing here.

Not so much the nature of the sacrifice, whether it's meat or grain or anything else. And that's made clear also, I think, in the order of the words in verses 4 and 5. Notice, the Lord had regard for Abel, the man, and his offering, but not Cain and his offering.

That's the Bible's consistent message about God, isn't it? That's what he wants. He wants the man. He wants our heart. David says it plainly, doesn't he, in Psalm 51.

[12 : 09] It's not outward sacrifices and offerings that God really wants. It's the real sacrifice of a broken and a contrite heart. And Abel's heart clearly was.

But Cain's wasn't. He had a wrong attitude to God. And God knew that. And that's why he wasn't pleased with Cain. And God expressed that to Cain.

We don't know how. We're not told here. Maybe God spoke to him directly in these ancient days. Maybe his father Adam challenged him about it. We don't know. However it was, it came to Cain. And it really got to Cain.

And he became angry and unhappy. And God's rebuke provoked him. How dare you say my religion isn't good enough for you? How dare you suggest that my way of worshipping God isn't as good as yours?

I can choose my own spirituality. I can decide the way that I want to be in touch with God and be right with God. And God will be pleased with whatever I choose.

[13 : 10] You see, it's very contemporary, isn't it? It's not just ancient history. It's just the same way people think today. Cain is a man of the world.

Especially, I suppose, what you would call our postmodern world. Where you can be very keen on spirituality. Or having all sorts of experiences. Wanting the supernatural, the divine. But really, your view of spirituality just amounts to this.

Well, I'll choose my spirituality. I'll choose my way of expressing my faith. I'll come to God my way. And surely God will accept me.

Surely God will be delighted with whatever I choose to do. See, the world's full of people like that, isn't it? Maybe you're one of them here today. Well, if you are, you're in very good company.

But if you are, I suspect also that if somebody said to you what God said to Cain, then you'd probably be pretty angry too. Sorry, no, God isn't pleased with that.

[14 : 12] God says that there's only one way to approach him. He says that there's only one offering that pleases him. And that unless you humble yourself and come that way, then I'm afraid God's going to be very angry with you.

God will not be pleased with your spirituality. Well, you say that to somebody and they'll probably get very angry with you. Especially if it's somebody who's very religious.

Especially if it's somebody who's very keen on spirituality. Who thinks that they should decide what God gets from them. People really get mad at a God who has the temerity to say, No, I decide how I'm going to be worshipped.

I decide. And I make it plain to you by giving you my authoritative word that tells you. And people get very mad with somebody who passes on from God that kind of message.

Christian preacher, an evangelist. Somebody who might just be reporting the very words of Jesus, for example. Where Jesus says, I am the way and the truth and the life.

[15 : 26] No one, sorry, comes to the Father except by me. And if you think otherwise, I'm afraid you're wrong. Well, people get very angry today. If you say that to them.

Actually, soon, if our government's out of the way, It might be a hate crime to even suggest such a thing. But friends, the problem is God has always been saying things like that right from the very beginning.

And people have always got angry right from the very beginning. Like Cain. It made him angry and unhappy. Or like the people of Jesus say, Day when Jesus said exactly the same thing to them.

You must come and worship God through me. You must humble yourself and accept God's sacrifice for your sins that I have come to bring. And just the same today.

If you dare to challenge somebody else's way of worship. If you tell them that God has commanded them to come to him one way. The way of obedient trust.

[16 : 25] Through his sacrifice for sins. Through Jesus Christ alone. Well, that was Abel, you see. Hebrews 11 tells us very plainly, doesn't it?

That it was by faith that Abel offered a better sacrifice. It wasn't the sacrifice itself, but it was Abel's faith that pleased God. And without faith, Hebrews tells us it's impossible to please God.

But not Cain, you see. Cain was angry. Cain couldn't stand a God who really was God. Who tells you what to do.

Who tells you how to live your life. Who tells you how to be acceptable in his sight. Why are you so angry? I'm angry because I want to be God myself.

Myself. Is the real answer. Of Cain. And I'm upset. I'm unhappy because you dare to challenge me. That's the cause.

[17 : 24] Of Cain's anger. And a lot of other people's anger too. When the message of verse 5. Gets to them. That God dares to say to them. I'm sorry.

I'm not pleased. With your life. The way you want to live it. Well. What about the consequences. Of his anger. Well anger is terribly destructive.

Isn't it? Just look at the. The destructiveness. Of Cain's anger here. Not just for Abel. But also in the end for Cain himself. We all know the story.

That verses 8 to 10 tells. It tells of. Resentment and revenge. Even Jeffrey Harcher picked it up. And wrote a book about it. Didn't he? But don't miss the second half. Of verse 7 here.

And it's significance. God says. To Cain. Sin is crouching at your door. Its desire. Is for you. Or as the footnote says. Against you. Its desire.

[18 : 21] Is to rule over you. But you must rule over it. Says God. That attitude to God. He is saying. Is the very essence. Of sin. If you allow yourself.

To be taken over by it. You'll see. That sin is a dark. It's a destroying power. It will enslave you. It will dominate you. It will drive you.

To destruction. This is the first mention. By the way. In the whole Bible. Of the word sin. Did you know that? And notice. It's not just. Peccadilloes.

It's not just mistakes. Skeletons in the closet. It is a vicious power sin. Bent on dehumanizing humankind.

His desire is for you. To dominate you. To enslave you. To rule you. See if you allow sin to rule. Then having de-godded God. You will inevitably.

[19 : 18] Unman man also. That's C.S. Lewis's phrase. For his anti-hero. In his book. Perilandra. The voyage to Venus. It's a remarkably evocative.

Fictional retelling. Of the entrance of sin. Into our world. And of the. The vitiation. Of the reversal. Of the image of the divine. In man. That it causes. So that man becomes.

The very antithesis. Of what he's meant to be. And he calls him. The unman. And Cain here. Is unmanned. Because sin. You see. Is dehumanizing.

You see it. In his resort to God. There. In verse. Nine. Am I my brother's keeper? He says. Implying that. Obviously he's not. But remember. Back in Genesis 2. Verse 15.

That is precisely. What God created man. To be. God put man in the garden. Of Eden. To work it. And to keep it. It's the same word. And now he's turned.

[20 : 16] His back upon God. He's turned his back. Upon his whole purpose. As a man. And having coveted God's crown. He now despises.

God's image. He's created for love. To love God. With all his heart. And soul. And mind. And to love his brother. As himself. And now.

You see. He's living for the opposite. For anti-love. And so he kills. His own. Brother. See how that word. Brother. Is repeated. Again and again.

Through verses 8 to 11. Six times. To emphasize the horror. The inhumanity. Of the unman. Who kills. His own brother. You see friends.

That's reality. Where God. Is not honored. As God. And as sovereign. Then you will quickly find. That God's image. Is not valued. Either. That life.

[21 : 15] Becomes cheap. That society. Descends into chaos. Listen to. To Paul's way. The apostle Paul's way. Of putting it. The beginning of the letter.

To the Romans. This is what he says. In Romans 1. Verse 21. For although they knew God. They did not. Honor him. As God. Or give thanks to him. But they became futile.

In their thinking. And their foolish hearts. Were dark. And claiming to be wise. They became fools. And exchanged the glory. Of the immortal God. For images.

Resembling. Mortal man. What happens then? Well it goes on. Just as they did not see fit. To acknowledge God. God gave them up.

To a debased mind. To do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner. Of unrighteousness. Evil. Covetousness. Malice. They're full of envy. Murder.

[22 : 11] Strife. Deceit. Maliciousness. And so on. You see. You despise. And you devalue God's image. And you despise.

And turn away from God. Anger at God. Very quickly. Leaves to anger. And resentment. And malice. Towards human beings.

And so Abel. The humble man. Who listened to God. Who obeyed God. Is murdered by Cain. The man of the world. The man who's angry. At God.

He destroys his brother. But in destroying his brother. Also. He ends up destroying himself. Cain. Slew himself. Eternally. By slaying Abel.

Mortally. As Sir William Stoll once put it. Look at verses 10 and 11. See there's the real tragedy. Isn't it? The Lord said. What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood.

[23 : 09] Is crying out to me from the ground. And now you. Are cursed. From the ground. Which has opened its mouth. To receive your brother's blood. From your hand. Cain might not value Abel's blood.

But God does. And it cries out for justice. And Cain. Do you see. He brings on himself now. Personally. The curse. That God put upon mankind.

Generally. In Genesis 3 verse 15. Now you. Are cursed. From the ground. You see. When. When people reject God.

As Paul said. In Romans 1 there. God gives them over. To their own devices. And he removes. His restraining hand. And the dark power of sin. That's crouching at the door.

It pounces. It takes over. And the terrifying thing. Is to see. Just how quickly. And easily. We dehumanize ourselves. All the more. Look at the curse.

- [24 : 08] That Cain visits on himself. He articulates it so clearly. There in verse 14. Doesn't he? The man who's angry at God. And becomes bitter. And resentful. Of his brother.
- Loses his whole sense. Of identity. The. Verse 14. Driven from the ground. Hidden. From God's face. He loses all sense.
- Of what he's created for. And who he's created for. And he loses his whole sense. Of society. Verse 14. The second half. I shall be a fugitive. I'll be a wanderer. On the earth.
- His relationships. Of disappointment. He's restless. He can't find peace. Anywhere on the earth. And as a result. He loses also. His whole sense. Of security.
- Whoever finds me. He says. He's going to kill me. And his whole life. Becomes governed. By fear of the future. And of people. Because I want to hurt him.
- [25 : 06] And he's unable. To really trust. Anyone fully. Ever again. He can't commit. To people. To relationships. Because they're all out. To harm him. Well there's a lot of Cains.
- Out there. In our world today. Aren't there? People with. A lost sense of identity. Of society. Of security.
- But that's the consequences. Do you see. Of Cain's anger. At God. And his resentment. At God. And his refusal. To let God. Be God.
- Over his life. The result. Is he destroys. His brother. And he destroys. Himself. As well. And the most.
- Chilling thing. I think. Of all. Is his. Reaction. There in verse 13. Do you see. He's. He's totally blind. To the reality. He's still angry. With God. He's still protesting. His own victimhood. My punishment.
- [26 : 01] Is more than I can bear. This is outrageous. I don't deserve this. This is all your fault. God. Verse 14. Look. Behold you. You have driven me away.
- See. There's not a shred. Of recognition. Is there. That somehow. He is responsible. For this calamity. That he's created. It's all God's fault. I'm the victim here.
- Says Cain. Look at everything. That's happened to me. Not a word. About what's happened. To Abel. Not a word. About his own guilt. In God's eyes. Now which has been.
- Compounded all the more. By murdering his own brother. Now it's all about me. And my misery. He's indignant. Look at all these things. That life has thrown at me.
- Look at what God. Is allowed to happen to me. It gets even angrier. With God. Well that's pretty familiar too.
- [26 : 57] Isn't it? In a world. Where God's been. Banished to the periphery. If he exists at all. He's there to. To revolve around us.
- And our wants. And our desires. And if we don't get what we want. Well. It's all his fault. And we're a victim. We live. Don't we? In a culture of victimhood today. Came across.
- Something. Written by a professor of psychiatry. And the article was entitled this. How the culture of blame. Has made victims. Of us all. And he says that we come from such a pampered society now.
- That it's virtually impossible to get anyone to take responsibility for themselves. We have to find some external force to blame for everything that happens to us. Someone or something else is always responsible for our misfortune.
- Never us. And he says. I quote. This victim mentality has had a dramatic impact. On the nature of politics. On our mental health.
- [27 : 55] Our physical health. On crime rates. On the amount of drug abuse. And teenage pregnancy. And even on how fat we've allowed ourselves to become.

We're all victims. That was Cain wasn't it? Wallowing. In his victimhood. Plenty of remorse. Plenty of unhappiness.

About the consequences of his actions. The misery that he brought in himself. But absolutely no sense of responsibility for his guilt. For his offense against God in the first place.

By his arrogant self-assertion and autonomy. About doing it his way. And no sense of responsibility for his terrible crime. By killing his own brother.

Just self-justification. Self-pity. And more. Anger at God. And more disaffection from the world. You're responsible for this God.

[28 : 50] And they're all out to get me. That's the consequence. Of Cain's anger. A killer who thinks he's the victim. A God-hater who thinks God hates him.

And yet. The reality in this story is quite the reverse. Isn't it? Look at verse 15. Doesn't it speak of an extraordinary grace? In this God. A God who protects with all his power.

An amazing show of mercy. Even this sworn enemy. Cain. The Lord said to him. Not so. If anyone kills Cain.

Vengeance shall be taken on him. Sevenfold. And the Lord put a mark on Cain. Lest any who found him. Should attack him. Derek Kidner says.

It's the utmost. That mercy. Can do. For the unrepentant. See how kind God is. Even to Cain. And yet this is the God.

[29 : 55] That people are angry at. That people rage at. Even today. The God whose grace. In our world. Steps in to protect us. From ourselves.

Even in our waywardness. The God who makes the sun to shine. And the rain to fall. On the unjust. As well as the just. The God. Without whose protection. We would annihilate ourselves.

As a human race. Destroy the whole planet. But this is the God. Who in these. In many many ways. Doesn't abandon us.

And keeps on. Speaking to us. And saying. Like he says to Cain. Why. Are you angry. And unhappy. And that brings us.

To the third thing. The cure. For Cain's anger. See God's question. Here in verse six. These questions. Are not just. His general. Beloved. And it's not just. His common grace.

[30 : 51] As we sometimes call it. In his words. There is an offer. Of his special grace. His sovereign. Saving grace. Coming into this. This world of angry.

And rebellious. And bitter. Human hearts. This is a question. That's designed. Isn't it? To help Cain. Admit his failure. And to repent.

God doesn't say. To Cain. Does he? How dare you. Be angry at me Cain. That's what we sometimes say. Isn't it? Maybe to our kids. Or to somebody. Who's. Who's been angry with you. In an unjustified way.

How dare you be angry? No God doesn't say that. See what he's saying. He's saying. Come on Cain. Don't be like that. Why are you so angry? It doesn't have to be this way.

You know that. Look at verse seven. If you do well. Will you not be accepted also? Of course you will. Of course you will. Just like Abel. That way is open to you Cain. Just as it is to your brother.

[31 : 49] Don't spoil it. Don't miss it. This is the God that Cain is so angry with. That our world is so angry with. It's the God who is gently wooing. Even the bitter angry resentful grudging man.

Who's blind and blinkered to his own condition. There's a way back Cain. That's what God's saying. Come on. Have an obedient heart. Do it my way.

Repent. Leave all that anger. That bitterness behind. Have faith. Come back. And if you do that. Won't you be accepted? Of course you will.

You see verse seven. There's a footnote there. The word. It's I think deliberately ambiguous. You could read it. If you come back. Won't your face be lifted up? Won't you be happy and joyful again?

I think it's probably a deliberate ambiguity. Because really the two are the one in the same thing. To be accepted by God. Is to find happiness. Ultimate happiness and joy in life.

[32 : 51] But alas Cain refused the Lord's pleading. Just as much later on Judas. Refused the same pleading didn't he? When the Lord Jesus offered him at the last supper.

The choice morsel. Judas. Come back. Come back. A terrifying thing though isn't it? That people can allow their anger. Their bitterness against God.

To seal themselves in opposition to God forever. Even in the face of the most blinding revelation. Of God's truth. In Revelation chapter 16.

We're told about the revelation of God's judgments on the earth. In clarity and certainty. As it rains plagues. Upon the nations. To make them repent. And yet far from repenting.

People rather curse the name of God. Who had power over these plagues. They did not repent. They did not give him glory.

[33 : 50] Utter. Entrenched. Perversity. And that was Cain. And sadly that is many others too.

All through the ages. All through the ages. And still today. But if you refuse. You see. To bow the knee. To worship God. In the one acceptable way. That he tells you to.

Through the better sacrifice. The sacrifice. At last. Of Jesus Christ. The only way of forgiveness. The only way. To the father. And if you get angry. When somebody lovingly pleads with you.

To tell you there is no other way. Come this way. Then you are. Ultimately despising the grace. And the mercy of God.

You are asserting your own sovereignty. You are despising. His own sacrifice. For sins. And that means that you are despising him.

[34 : 50] Who himself became that sacrifice. To be the only way. Our God and Savior. Jesus Christ. And you can't do that friends.

And please God. It's impossible. How could you? You are spitting in the face of God our Savior. Anger and resentment. And real faith.

In God. Can't coexist. And maybe God's saying that. To somebody here today. Or somebody listening in. Why are you angry?

Why has your face fallen? You don't have to be that way. There is a way. There is a cure. If you do well. Won't you be accepted? Won't you find true happiness and joy in God?

Yes you will. For whoever comes to me. Said the Lord Jesus. Whoever comes to me. I will never ever. Cast out.

[35 : 47] Is God saying that? To somebody listening to me today. If you're not yet a Christian believer. Don't. Reject that plea. Don't be like Cain. But you know.

There's a word here for everybody. Even those of us who are. Believers. Confessing Christ. Because here's the truth friends. We have to. Realize. There can be an awful lot.

Can't there? Of the spirit of Cain. Still residing in our hearts. Anger. Resentment against God. Deep down.

A sense of self pity. A sense that. We are the victims. A very. Foolsome sense. Of our own self righteousness. But a very empty sense. Of our own faults.

Of our own wrongs. Against God. Our own wrongs. Against. Our brothers and sisters. And that seeps out. In all kinds of ways. Perhaps we get angry.

[36 : 45] Don't we? At any hint. Of any criticism. Of ourselves. From somebody else. Or we just deeply resent. Any word. Of rebuke. That a brother or sister. Who knows us. And loves us.

And who wants to help us. Speaks to us. In truth. And in love. We just get jealous. So often. Don't we? Of others. Who seem to have blessings. In life from God.

That we don't seem to have. And on and on. And on and on. And on. That God is often saying to us. Why are you angry?

Why is your face fallen? And he gently chides us. You see. Because. He wants us to see the truth. He wants us to see. That deep down.

Beneath all that sense of victimhood. All that sense of. Of feeling hard done to. Being angry towards others. Bitter. Especially when it's with our Christian brothers and sisters.

[37 : 40] Behind it all. Actually. Is just anger with God. God. And that's sin. That's the spirit of Cain. That just won't accept. That it is God. Who's sovereign. Over our lives. Over the world. It's a spirit that refuses to accept. That the disappointments.

The challenges. That intrude into our lives. Are things that God has allowed. And is God's way for us. It's a spirit that just wants to assert. It always our way.

As knowing better than God. Do you recognize that. Spirit of Cain. I'm afraid I have to say. I recognize it very readily indeed. In my own heart.

But God says to me. Why are you angry. And unhappy. Don't let that spirit get a hold of you. You know the way. To a heart that's cleansed.

[38 : 41] From all of that. You know the way. To the face that's lifted up with joy again. It's the way isn't it. Of God's better sacrifice. It's coming to kneel humbly again.

At the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whose sprinkled blood speaks a better word. Than the blood of Abel. That's the only way to come. That's the only way for God to cleanse you.

Of your anger and your pride. Once and for all. On your knees. Looking to Jesus Christ. But that's where I need to keep coming. Isn't it?

Again and again and again. Day after day. To be reminded that still it is. The only way. That it's grace at the start. That it's grace right. To the very end.

But it's so sad. That there. Are many people who won't do that. And that's because. To really grasp.

[39 : 38] The grace of God in Christ. Is. To be utterly humbled ourselves. In our own eyes. And in the eyes of the world. And the spirit of Cain.

Would rather be angry. And bitter. And resentful. Than ever. Admit defeat in that way. Than ever be humbled. In that way. But it needn't be that way.

Even. For someone who has been. Proud and arrogant. And refusing to bend the knee. Let me close by reading you. Briefly a story about another.

Angry and proud man. Just like Cain. But one who did listen to God. And who did humble himself. His name was Naaman. Maybe you know the story. He was a great man. He was a pagan.

He was the commander. Of the army of Syria. The enemy of God's people. But he was a leper. A decorated five-star general. A big man. But struck with this leprosy.

[40 : 35] And he came. To Israel's prophet. To seek healing. Because he knew that healing. Could be found there. You remember the story. Elisha the prophet. Didn't even bother to go out. And see him. He just sent his servant.

And he said. God wash seven times. In the Jordan River. And you'll be clean. But listen to Naaman's response. But Naaman. Was angry.

And he went away. Saying behold. I thought he would surely come out to me. And stand. And call upon the name of the Lord his God. And wave his hand over the place. And cure the leper. Are not Arbana.

And Farpar. The rivers of Damascus. Better than all the waters of Israel. Could I not wash in them. And be clean. So he turned. And went away in a rage. But his servants came near him.

And said. My father. It's a great word. The prophet has spoken to you. Will you not do it? Has he actually said to you. Wash. And be clean.

[41 : 37] So. He went down. And dipped himself. Seven times. In the Jordan. According to the word. Of the man of God.

And his flesh. Was restored. Like the flesh. Of a little child. And he was clean. It's the hardest thing.

In the world. To humble yourself. And bow the knee. To the command of God. In Jesus Christ. But it's a great.

Word. That he has spoken to you. Will you not do it? Said the servant. Why are you angry? Why has your face fallen? Says the Lord. It doesn't have to be.

That way. Jesus came. You see. To cleanse your heart. And to bring joy again. To your face. Don't resist him.

[42 : 39] Keep on. Bowing. To him. Let's pray. Heavenly Father. We. Confess before you. That our hearts.

Are so often haughty. And proud. We look upon ourselves. With great forgiving. And we look on others. With such condemnation.

But we it is. Who stand condemned. Before you. And yet your grace. And your mercy. Is abundantly sufficient. For us. Will it not go well.

With you. If you. Will heed. My word. What a promise. There is. In the gospel. Of our Lord Jesus. What a promise.

We need. Every day. Of our lives. Help us. We pray. Not to turn away. To give up. Our anger. To stop harboring.

[43 : 36] Resentment. And to gladly. Come to you. Through Jesus Christ. Our Lord. For we ask it. In his name. Amen.