

98-02-08a

As we prepare to take a look at the Word of God this morning, let's begin by going to the Lord in prayer. Father, we thank you for the privilege we have of assembling as a group that is called by your name, united by the blood of Jesus Christ, entered into union with him, sharing his destiny, sharing his standing before you. We thank you that it is his merit, his worth, and his righteousness in which we stand.

We thank you that we have been redeemed, that you have been propitiated, that your justice has been satisfied. And because of that, we have not only rescue and deliverance from the penalty of sin and from our lost and helpless condition, but we have a bright life and a bright future in Christ. We pray this morning as we worship through the study of your Word that God the Holy Spirit will enlighten us.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. For our scripture reading this morning, turn with me to Psalm 36.

The context of our study is Genesis chapter 4, Cain and Abel. We have seen the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice and the rejection of Cain's sacrifice. We know from the language of those first few verses in Genesis 4 that it is both the man and his sacrifice that is in view.

God accepted Abel and his sacrifice. God rejected Cain and his sacrifice. With that in mind, we have perhaps a longer than usual scripture reading, but it flows smoothly and it is so connected to our study that I could not find a way to cut it any shorter.

Let's begin in Psalm 36. This is a psalm of David. Both of these are psalms of David.

Generally speaking, the first 50 psalms are of David, and then you have several more of his scattered through the remaining 100 psalms that include those by Asaph and others. But this is David's contemplation on God's mercy and the presence of the wicked on the earth. Of course, Cain is the prototypical wicked man.

Psalm 36, an oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked. There is no fear of God before his eyes, for he flatters himself in his own eyes when he finds out his iniquity and when he hates. The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit.

He has ceased to be wise and to do good. You might just draw a circle around that last phrase there, to do good. He devises wickedness on his bed.

He sets himself in a way that is not good. He does not abhor evil. Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens.

Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the great mountains. Your judgments are a great deep.

O Lord, you preserve man and beast. How precious is your loving kindness, O God. Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of your wings.

They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your pleasures. For with you is the fountain of life. In your light we see light.

O continue your loving kindness to those who know you, and your righteousness to the upright in heart. Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked drive me away. There the workers of iniquity have fallen.

They have been cast down and are not able to rise. I think perhaps Psalm 36 and 37 have been in this order and have been connected since David wrote them. Look at Psalm 37.

In the light of this contrast that David has drawn in Psalm 36, the wonderful presence of God and His mercy and His sustaining grace, David continues to meditate on the presence of the wicked in this world. Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb.

Trust in the Lord and do good. You might draw a circle around that phrase. Dwell in the land and feed on His faithfulness.

Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Do not fret because of Him who prospers in His way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger and forsake wrath.

Do not fret, it only causes harm. For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait on the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall be no more.

Indeed, you will look carefully for His place, but it shall be no more. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. Reminds you of one of the Lord's famous sermons, doesn't it? The wicked plots against the just and gnashes at Him with his teeth.

The Lord laughs at him, for He sees that His day is coming. The wicked have drawn the sword and have bent their bow to cast down the poor and needy, to slay those who are of upright conduct. Their sword shall enter their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the Lord upholds the righteous. The Lord knows the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be forever.

They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord, like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish into a smoke. They shall vanish away.

We'll leave off there. But these principles are illustrated in this first great record of sin after the fall, after the expulsion of the garden in Genesis 4. And if you'll turn back with me now to Genesis 4, we resume our study. After the conception of Cain, and the naming of Cain, the birth of Abel, and the choice of professions, in the process of time, in verse 3 of Genesis 4, it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord.

Abel also brought of the firstborn 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.

The Lord said to Cain, Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, literally, if you do good, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do good, or the good, sin crouches at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it. Now Cain, and we have a little textual problem here in verse 8, literally in the Hebrew it says, Cain said to Abel, dot, dot, dot, and it came to pass when they were in the field.

It seems to be a, what they technically call a lacuna, L-A-C-U-N-A, which means something has dropped out of the text. This used to happen when they would find an ancient manuscript that had wormholes or damaged places where the text was missing and could not be reconstructed. However, some of the most ancient versions, like the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint, both read that Cain said to Abel, Let us go to the field.

We don't know whether this was supplied by an early copyist of the text who said, My goodness, there seems to be an awkward gap here. Let me fill this in with something that makes sense. But we get the gist of this.

Cain apparently, in some form or fashion, arrived with his brother out in the field. And it came to pass when they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and killed him. Now, let's stop and reflect on this for a moment.

A year has passed, based on the language of verse 3, when it says, In the process of time, this is a phrase that means after days. And this phrase is often used in the Old Testament Scriptures for a period of one year. You can document this over in the law, in Leviticus and so forth.

And this sort of makes sense because they've had one agricultural cycle. Abel has had the chance to gather and to shepherd a flock. And these are the first lambs to be born to the flock after he has taken charge of them for a year.

Cain, likewise, has had a complete agricultural cycle to plow, to sow, to cultivate, and to harvest. So, after this period of time, Cain brings an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. And we've seen under our study of minkah that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with bringing the produce from the field.

A minkah, that is generally what a minkah refers to in Leviticus, is a grain offering. However, we, at the same time that we recognize that, and I don't want to overlook the fact that there is a resonance, there is an interesting connection here, that Cain brings an offering that is the fruit of the ground that God has just cursed. And you do have a foreshadowing of redemption through blood, remission of sin through the shedding of blood in Abel's sacrifice.

But this really goes back not so much to the choice of sacrifice, in some ways, as to the choice of profession. It indicates, symbolically at least to us, not that all farmers have made a bad choice or that all cattlemen and ranchers have made a good choice, but in the between-the-lines language that the Bible often speaks in, this has some meaning to us. We find it meaningful that Cain has chosen to work with the cursed ground.

Abel has chosen to be a shepherd. And with all of the meaning that we find in shepherds and sheep and in the sacrifice of the first fruits, and all of the, especially from our vantage point, the significance that that has to the work of Christ, these things are foreshadowed and are not to be discounted. At the same time, we want to understand that the basis of God's rejection of Cain and his offering is not that it was an unbloody sacrifice.

It goes back earlier than that. It is the thoughts and intents of the heart. And we know that from Hebrews 11.

We've reviewed Hebrews 11.4. By faith, Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. It is faith that is in view. And that is intimated to us, it's suggested to us, implied to us in the choice of profession.

And again, it is in their particular case. It doesn't mean that everyone, whoever, obviously it's a wonderful profession to farm and to grow crops. God encouraged it.

Many acceptable sacrifices of grain were offered to the Lord from the fruit of the ground. But they were acceptable because of the attitude of heart of the person who brought them. Cain could have been a farmer and brought this sacrifice, and God would have accepted it.

But it rings, there's an extra resonance here, that he's working with the cursed ground

that is to be plowed and toiled in by the sweat of the brow. And Abel is a shepherd of sheep. So we keep all of that in mind when Cain is disrespected.

God does not accept his sacrifice. There's been a very ancient tradition that God consumed Abel's sacrifice by fire and did not do the same with Cain's, and that this was a very visible sign of God's acceptance or rejection. It could have happened, but there's nothing in this passage to tell us.

That's really read in from later experiences that people had, like Gideon, when he wanted to verify that God's call was, in fact, from the Lord God. The messenger comes to him and says he's going to deliver Israel. He says, well, let me make sure.

We reviewed that last time. God consumes the offering that Gideon puts on the rock with fire. You have God demonstrating his power on Mount Carmel by consuming not only the sacrifice, but the altar and the goodly portion of the top of the mountain and all of those barrels of water.

So people have tended to think since ancient times that God did likewise here, but we have no authoritative word. But it was clear. I don't think that it required anything quite that graphic because God routinely engaged in conversation with people at this early time, as he does here.

Isn't it interesting? Abel offers the acceptable sacrifice, and he is himself acceptable in the sight of God because of his faith. But we don't have any record of God having a conversation with Abel. You would think, well, the reward of his faith and his faithfulness would be God coming down and saying, Abel, you're a man after my own heart.

You've done a great thing here and so forth. But the presence of God, the word of God, the concern of God is all recorded here in Cain's case. Cain is the one that God comes and speaks to in verse 6. When Cain is not accepted, you would think, well, God is far off from Cain.

God is near to Abel. But to whom does God come? To whom does God speak? It echoes what happened in the garden right after the partaking of the fruit. Adam and Eve are hiding themselves with their little flimsy fig leaf aprons, and God comes into the garden, and God's voice is heard in the garden.

And he calls out, where are you? And that's the question that God asks us. Where are we? Hopefully we are living the life of faith, and we need only to continue in that vein, to continue to live by faith and to be faithful. But if we are not, God will seek us out.

And that's true and important to keep in mind, not only for ourselves but for others. Sometimes we think, well, I think that person over there needs a little help. I think I'll go tell them where they're wrong, and so forth.

And it's important to remember, God seeks believers out when we fail, when we are out of line. There is a time and a place for us to speak the truth to one another in love. There are certain individuals who are gifted and commissioned and charged by God with rebuking, correcting, instructing, preaching the word in season and out of season, and communicating these things.

I was reading 1 Timothy 4 the other day, and Paul talks about the wayward path that the church will take. And he's telling Timothy, things are going to happen, and people are going to go astray and fall into all kinds of errors. And he says, you need to communicate the truth.

And by so doing, you will be a faithful minister. That's your job as a pastor. But it isn't always our job when we see a misstep or an error.

We don't have Abel going to Cain and saying, you know, Cain, if you just do what I did, God would accept you. Who is it that comes to Cain and has this conversation? It's God Himself. And God the Holy Spirit is here on planet earth to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

So we need to be cautious when we find ourselves in conversation or in contact with believers that we believe to be in error. We need to be sure that we are on solid ground if we begin to provide correction or provide advice. God Himself comes to Cain, who is the disrespected individual here.

I believe that they are both believers in the sense of salvation. Otherwise, why would he bother to worship? He obviously believes in God. He has a relationship with God.

He's about to have a conversation with God. And in verse 6, the Lord says to Cain, why are you angry? Why has your countenance fallen? And this is symmetrical with verse 5 when it says Cain was very angry and his countenance fell. In Hebrew, it's such a beautiful language.

I wish we could all learn Hebrew and study right out of the original. But there's a word for face, and there's a word for fall. Nafal means to fall.

And it literally says his face fell. And sometimes when you're reading novels and things, it talks about somebody getting a piece of disappointing news, or whatever it says, and their face fell. Well, that's literally what it says here.

Cain apparently had high expectations of this salad offering, this grain offering that he brought to God. And when God does not accept it, by whatever means he signified that, Cain gets angry, and his face fell, and his countenance changed. The Lord says, why are you angry? We need to stop here and take a look at anger.

We know what happens in this story. We know where anger is going to lead Cain. Let's

review quickly a few principles about anger.

Because all of us are susceptible to anger, and as believers, anger can lead us into places that we do not want to go. You remember our scripture reading this morning in Psalm 37, talking about refrain from anger and turn from wrath. Do not fret.

Why? It only leads to evil. Anger leads to evil. That's what Psalm 37, 8 tells us.

And indeed, our entire scripture reading tells us the importance of not being thrown off track by things that we consider to be out of line. Proverbs 14, 17 A quick-tempered man does foolish things, and a crafty man is hated. That's the first part of that proverb.

A quick-tempered man does foolish things. A few pages over in Proverbs. Proverbs 16, 32 Better a patient man than a warrior.

A man who controls his temper than one who takes a city. You have won a greater victory by mastering your anger than the man who conquers a fortified town. And most of us know that when you have frustration, when you have anger, when you have bitterness in your soul, and these are all a complex that we experience, that can be one of the greatest struggles we face.

And it's an inner struggle. It is, of course, in the inner man where the victory of faith is either won or lost, and where the conquest of anger is either achieved or we fail. Proverbs 19, 11 Where does that patience come from? That patient man that's better than a warrior and better than the conqueror of a city.

Proverbs 19, 11 A man's wisdom gives him patience. It is to his glory to overlook an offense. Ecclesiastes 7, 9 Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools.

You might also note Proverbs 22, 24 and Proverbs 27, 4. Passages along the lines of the ones that we have seen. And, of course, the very famous passage, we can't think of anger without thinking of Jesus' words about anger in Matthew 5. Verse 22 I tell you, anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Anyone who says to his brother, Raka, is answerable to the Sanhedrin.

But anyone who says, you fool, will be in danger of the fire of Gehenna. This, of course, has sparked quite a lot of study and debate and inquiry. Is it possible to be angry with someone else and lose your salvation? On the surface of things, calling your brother a fool puts you in danger of hellfire.

With the superficial understanding that many believers have of what hell is and what salvation is, this can be quite a puzzler. But we have studied recently what the fire of Gehenna is. We understand that, generally speaking, when you encounter the picture of fire in passages prior to Revelation 20, it is not usually talking about eternal damnation.

It is talking about the fire of God's judgment. And those works of man that are not intrinsically valuable, that don't reflect divine righteousness, burn up. What happens when we reach the point of anger with the brethren? Anger to the point of saying, you fool.

We risk losing the ability to bear fruit. We risk having a life that is burnt up at the judgment seat of Christ. We will be saved yet so as by fire.

Have you ever thought about that phrase over in Corinthians, He will be saved yet so as by fire? The lake of fire judgment, the great white throne judgment, is a thousand and seven years in the future from the judgment seat of Christ. So why would Paul associate the judgment seat of Christ judgment of wood, hay, and stubble versus gold, silver, and precious stones with something that is more than a millennium in the future, the great white throne judgment, which results in people going into the lake of fire. Well, the answer is, he's not.

This is the fire of God's judgment. It is the evaluation of believers' lives and the purifying out, the boiling away of all of the non-essentials to see what divine righteousness was produced, what genuine fruit was born. We cut ourselves off from the ability to bear fruit through anger.

That's what Jesus is teaching, even the Old Testament generation in Matthew 5. If you are preoccupied with the faults of others, if this is a constant part of your thinking, you are the dead fruitless branch of John 15. And the result of your life is going to be nothing but the smoke of Gehenna, the fire of God's judgment, burning all of that away, and you find that there's nothing left. We can't afford to take anger in our lives lightly.

It is the killer of our fruitfulness. It's the killer of our faith. You can't be exercising faith when you harbor wrath in your heart.

James 1, verse 19, My dear brothers, take note of this. Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. James does not mince any words.

His book is a very forthright... I really look forward to meeting James, among several others, in the eternal future, because I think he is probably like what Jesus said when he saw Nathaniel under the tree. He said, here is a genuine Israelite in whom is no guile. I've had a few friends in my life that have absolutely no tact, no subterfuge, no veneer.

What you see is what you get. They just say what's on their mind. They don't think about or necessarily care about how people take them or what the consequences are.

They are absolutely transparent. And when you read the book of James, you get the idea that James was that kind of man. And he says, brethren, you are dear to me, but this is what you need to remember.

Take note. Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak. There is a credo to live by.

How many of us spend more time listening than we do talking? Especially if you have a communication gift, it's extremely difficult. Be quiet and listen. Slow to speak and slow to become angry.

Turn with me to Colossians 3. Remember again our context. Where does Cain's real problem begin here? He brings an unacceptable sacrifice and his reaction is anger. His reaction is wrath.

And we're looking at what wrath can do, what anger can do in our soul. Look at Colossians 3.5. And that therefore harks back to the appearance of Christ in verse 4. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore, for that reason, that's the hope, that's the motivation for living what Paul is about to say by faith.

Therefore put to death in your members which are on the earth fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry. Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. Now, why does the wrath of God come upon unbelievers? What is God's bone to pick with an unbeliever who's headed to the lake of fire? He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

The wrath of God abideth on him. But here, because of fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry, the wrath of God is going to abide on believers. And we have seen in the past that this is a long-running consequence.

The wrath of God will have consequence in the millennial kingdom. The wrath of God will have consequence even beyond into the kingdom of the Father. Those who are outside the gates are those who perpetuated a life of, you can go over to Revelation and read that list in two different places, fornication, idolatry, and so forth.

Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. Are we a son of God or a son of disobedience? Believers, make that choice. In which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them, but now you yourselves are to put off all these.

He doesn't say you have put off, does he? He's writing to the brethren and he says, well now that you're saved, you've put these things off. You don't have to sweat the wrath of God. He doesn't say that, does he? He says you must put these off.

You are a believer and you are responsible to get rid of these. If you don't want to be a son of disobedience, put off anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another since you have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man who is renewed.

How? How do you get that new man? Renewed in knowledge according to the image of him who created him. You don't worry about someone's ethnicity. You don't worry about someone's category.

You don't worry about whether they're religious or unreligious. You don't worry about whether they respect your taboos or not. That's what verse 11 essentially says.

What you focus on is Christ. Christ is all and in all. When you consider a fellow believer, whatever their faults, whatever their crimes, whatever they have done, Christ is in them.

And what you do to the least of these, my brethren, you have done unto me, Jesus says. We ought to treat the worst offender in our minds like they were Christ himself. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on the opposite of anger and wrath and malice.

Put on tender mercies. He doesn't say you have these as an automatic result of being saved, does he? We have to find out a way to do this. Can we just decide this? When we're angry and upset with someone, when we're frustrated with someone, can we just decide in our mind, oh, wait a minute, I'm not supposed to feel this way, so I just won't.

And suddenly it evaporates and goes away. This is something we have to put on. We have to do something for this to be our clothing.

When we all got dressed this morning, we had to find clothes that had been laundered and pressed and hung in the closet. It's a wonderful blessing to have someone who does that willingly and in love for you. But you have to look and find.

We look and find things that match. We went to the Gaither concert last night, and Bill Gaither was making much of the fact that he had dressed in the back of the bus, and nobody checked him, and he came out wearing navy blue pants instead of black pants. But we take care what we put on.

We spend time thinking about it, and it's a process. And depending on your gender, it can be a very lengthy process to actually be ready to go forth and feel like you've got everything on. You've got your face on.

You've got your hair done. You've got your clothes all matching, and your shoes and your belts and all your accessories and so forth. The point is when Paul says put on, this is not an automatic thing.

You can't just say, well, I'm saved, and therefore God's at work in me to will and to do, and it's all going to take place. I'm on the upward path. I'm going to progressively get better and better because of the sovereignty of God.

It doesn't work that way. We have to put these things on. Well, you have to know how to

put these things on.

I feel very sorry now, in retrospect, for a young man who came to my school when I was in junior high. He had lived in New York, and anytime you're an Okie and you see someone from the north or the east or whatever, you automatically get a little bit of an inferiority complex. You figure they've got bigger cities and better stuff, and they tend to look down their nose at us.

This young man had moved in from New York, and so we, I think, were felt a little threatened by him because he talked fast and talked strangely. And so for relief, and I am ashamed to say we made fun of the way he dressed because he constantly wore plaid shirts and striped pants. It was the 70s, and people had striped pants.

But we just tormented him unmercifully for the way he dressed and sort of felt like we were cutting him down to our size, I think. I'm speaking corporately. I thought he was kind of a nice guy, but I joined in in making fun of the way that he dressed because we knew, well, you don't mix plaid and stripes, and we made much of ourselves because we knew that, and apparently he didn't.

In later years, I look back on that and I felt really bad because it may have been that his family couldn't afford to get him anything else, but we didn't think of that. Anyway, we know how to dress. It's a process, and we choose things.

We purchase things ahead of time so that we have the right things that match, things that go together. It takes forethought. It takes planning.

It takes preparation to be able to put on clothes and go forth and be properly dressed. When Paul says, put on these things, we have to know the process. We have to know how to dress spiritually.

Put on tender mercies. Put on kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, bearing with one another and forgiving one another. If anyone has a complaint against another, he doesn't even say a legitimate complaint or an illegitimate complaint.

He says if there's a complaint, if there's an issue, you've got to know how to put on forbearance and long-suffering and tender mercies. Well, we've already seen the antidote to anger, the antidote to malice, and what is it? It's wisdom. It's the Word of God.

It is the transformation of soul that God does within us. But is that an instantaneous thing? Do we just throw a switch? Do we just think of a verse? It's a process, and of course for all of us, it's an ongoing process. We are never at the point where anger and frustration never cease to be an issue.

But this is our struggle. This is our battle. That's why God leaves us here in a fallen world

with a fallen nature.

This is the thing that stimulates us to want to keep in the Word of God, to want to keep learning, to want to keep growing, because it is a constant reminder to us that we need the Lord God. We need His power. We need His wisdom.

We need His Word within us to help us dress better, to help us put these things on more completely, more consistently. Woe unto us if we think that we've got this nailed. Oh, I'm always meek.

I'm always patient. I'm always kind. I never bat an eye in the face of the worst abuses.

We are constantly reminded of our need for God and our need for God's Word in our lives, and this is one of the things that reminds us we are not yet sanctified. We are not yet glorified in the way that we will be when the Lord returns. And this closes the loop of our faith, hope, and love, because as we look at our insufficiency in the area of love, it takes us back to our hope, and hope is the motivation for faith, and faith is the means of exercising love.

And as we look at our progress in the area of love, we're reminded, I still need more. Remember they made a big deal, I guess it's been probably 20 or 25 years ago now, about the Wankel engine, the rotary engine, that was going to be all different from the piston engine and so forth. I think Mazda put these in their cars.

But it's a rotary engine, and everything in modern industry, in modern science, a lot of it literally revolves around the wheel, something that cycles, something that moves in a circular fashion. And that's the nature of our spiritual life. So rather than being discouraged when we see that we still need to make progress in these areas, this is a stimulation to go back and review our hope, and review our faith, and put on more completely these things that we are called to.

It is a reminder to us when we think about Cain and Abel, where did Cain go wrong? Let me ask you this. Abel brings his sacrifice. He and his gift are accepted by God.

His minkah is pleasing in God's sight. Cain brings his gift, his minkah. It's not acceptable.

God doesn't approve it. Cain becomes angry, and his face falls. And that's emphasized when God comes and says, Why are you angry? Why has your face fallen? What is the problem here? Why are you upset? What is it you think should have happened? What do you think the injustice is here? Where do you think the process broke down? You could explore this quite a bit.

Does Cain think that God is an unjust God, that he's done everything he's supposed to do, and it's God's fault? God is remiss? God has somehow failed to properly recognize him? This simple question from God strikes right at the heart of Cain's problem. What

does he think is the problem? What does he have to be angry about? When we're dealing with anger, that's the question we need to ask ourselves. This is God's question.

Why are you angry? Why has your countenance fallen? And when we go back and start exploring, What is the root of my dissatisfaction, my frustration, my anger? This is the first step in putting off the old man in that situation and putting on the new. Because we often find, embarrassingly, that we think we deserve something that we didn't get. Like Cain, my efforts should have been recognized.

I should have been accepted, and somehow I wasn't. So it's a profitable question to ask ourselves. And God goes on in verse 7 of Genesis 4 to say, If you do well, will you not be accepted? This is a fascinating, and once again, I could probably just dwell here for quite some time.

In the Hebrew, every word is rich in content and in echoes and threads and parallels down through the rest of Scripture. But I want to focus, especially here, on this phrase, If you do well. Remember the two things I had you circle out of Psalm 36 and Psalm 37? To do well.

This is a Hebrew... You have lots of words to make or to do. You have bara, asah, and the other Hebrew words that talk about doing something, manufacturing something, causing something to come to pass. And you would think, well, I'm going to have a word for doing, and then I'm going to have tov out here, the Hebrew word for good.

But this is the verb form of tov. This is yatav. And it means, everything is wrapped up into one word.

You don't manufacture it, you don't perform it, you bring it about. This is the verb form. If you could make good into a verb.

I can't even think of how to do it in English. But if you could say, I good towards someone, or in this situation. You can't even use a helping word.

I performed the good, I executed the good, I identified and carried out the good. It's all in one word in the Hebrew. It's yatav, it's where tov comes from.

It means, good was the result. This is what happened in this situation. I brought it about.

I made it come to pass. Sometimes it has a direct object, and other times it does not. We're going to pause and take our break, and when we come back, I want to take us to some of the passages where this word shows up.

Because we want to understand what God means, in the face of this big problem that Cain has with his anger, and with his lack of acceptance before God, through his lack of faith. God is giving him the answer. If you do good, if you yatav, will you not be

accepted? Well, what better place to find out how to be accepted than to examine this concept.

Let's pause and take our break. When we come back, we'll explore it.