

98-02-08b

Okay, we are back now from our break. In Genesis chapter 4, we see that one of the keys to understanding this passage is understanding the problem. And God points it out in verse 6 and verse 7. The Lord said to Cain, why are you angry? You've not been accepted, we know from observation as well as the explicit statement in Hebrews, that there is a problem in Cain's relationship with God in the area of faith.

Abel is accepted, his Mimcha gift is accepted, because he offers it by faith. That is obviously the area of deficiency on the part of Cain. When this deficiency in his relationship with God is manifested in the non-acceptance of his gift, Cain becomes angry.

Cain has the problem, not God. But when the problem is pointed out, Cain gets angry. So God says, why are you angry? And this strikes right at the heart.

And we know the damage that wrath and anger can do. We reviewed that in the first session. We know what the remedy is.

We know how to put on kindness and meekness and love. We know that it is not a simple decision that we make. It is a process that we undertake that requires planning, that requires thought, and that requires time.

And it is an area in which we make progress. I don't think any of us anywhere in the human race can say that we have completed that process. We have fully put on love, meekness, kindness.

We have fully put on Christ. We are completely selfless. We are completely without sin in this area.

This is a process in which we grow. And when we find ourselves falling short, it is our reaction to that that counts. Cain has had his deficiency pointed out in the non-acceptance of his gift.

What is his reaction going to be? Is he seeking God? Is he willing to be humble? Is he willing to acknowledge that he has failed and seek God's solution, to work at putting on humility, meekness, love, and so forth? No, he's not. And once again, a parallel with the situation in the garden, when God walks and His voice is heard in the cool of the day, and He calls out to Adam, What have you done? Who told you you were naked? The response, the great response of Adam and Eve, I did eat. It was my fault that things went sour.

I made a mistake. I committed a sin. I am at fault.

And that is the thing that God is looking for. That is the key that releases His grace. And

without acknowledgement, without confession, cleansing does not take place.

Forgiveness in the experiential sense does not take place, even for believers. We reviewed that extensively when we were in Genesis chapter 3, but you will notice that that is the essential step. We noted in Genesis 3 that when God addresses the serpent, He addresses Adam, He addresses Eve, but when it comes to the serpent's turn, the serpent doesn't say, Yes, Lord, I deceived the humans.

I led them astray. I gave them half-truths. He doesn't confess, and he gets cursed without any to-do.

God doesn't ask him any questions, engages in no dialogue, makes no allowances. He doesn't confess, and he is immediately cursed. Cain here, when confronted with his problem, does not acknowledge his sin, his faithlessness.

He doesn't acknowledge his anger, doesn't acknowledge and doesn't search out the reason for why he is angry and why his countenance has fallen. And this is his great mistake, because God is unable to be gracious to those who do not acknowledge and who do not seek. God says, Why are you angry? We looked at some passages, just a few, dealing with the devastating results of anger, if it's present in our lives.

You can probably find many more. But we want to move forward here. If you do well, will you not be accepted? We saw that do well or do good here is the Hebrew verb yataw, from which one of the most common words in the Old Testament Scriptures, tov, t-o-v, comes.

This is the concept that carries over into the New Testament under the Greek word agathos, a-g-a-t-h-o-s. Probably the easiest verse to think of in that regard is Romans 8.28. All things work together for agathos, for good. To those who love the Lord, to those who are the called, to those who avail themselves of the opportunity to be the called, to live like the called.

Many are called, but few are chosen. And why is that? Because when confronted with the opportunity, when confronted with the requirements, there is a Cain reaction instead of an Abel reaction. If you do well, will you not be accepted? I would like to look at some passages that help us understand what God is talking about.

Is He saying, well, if you bring a better sacrifice next time, if you hold your mouth just right next time, you'll be accepted? Where is it that Cain failed? Let's see some other uses of this verb form of the Hebrew word for good. You can turn over to Genesis 12, verse 16, to see an example from the life of Abram. Abram, we just recently reviewed this strategy in the life of Isaac, where he decided that he might be killed because of his beautiful wife, and so he deceived the people in the region.

In that case, it was Isaac with Abimelech. Here it is his father Abram. Verse 12, he's

talking to Sarai, and he says, It will happen when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, This is his wife, and they will kill me, but they will let you live.

You're so beautiful, they'll kill me to get you. Please say that you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you. So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw the woman.

She must have really been a striking woman. The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. This is a woman whose beauty is worthy of the king, worthy of the Pharaoh.

And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. He treated Abram well for her sake. The verb here is yataw.

He was good to Abram. This is one of the cases where it has a direct object. For her sake, he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys and camels.

He favored Abram. He blessed Abram. He had thoughts of how he could benefit Abram on account of Sarai.

Of course, you know how that story goes forward. The Lord plagued Pharaoh because this was all based on deception. But that's a use.

And it has the idea of thinking of ways to benefit. Thinking of ways to be a blessing. Looking favorably at someone.

In Exodus 1.20, this is a fascinating use of this verb. Exodus 1.20. The situation where the Egyptians, in order to keep the Israelites subservient and in bondage, were killing the male babies. And the story of Moses and the bulrushes and his deliverance from this purge and so forth.

But even before that, in verse 15 of Exodus 1, the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, whom the name of one was Shephra and the name of the other Pua. These ladies' names have been recorded for eternity because of their faith and because of their respect of what they knew to be God's will. He said, when you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him.

But if it is a daughter, then she shall live. But the midwives feared God. And they are going to risk their lives to disobey Pharaoh.

They did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive. So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, Why have you done this thing and saved the male children alive? The midwives said to Pharaoh, Because the

Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women. They are lively and give birth before the midwives come to them.

We get there too late. The children have been spirited away. And whenever we think about deception and lying and so forth, everybody goes to Rahab the harlot and wrestles with, Well, can it be ethical and moral? Can it be righteous in God's eyes to just tell a bald-faced lie like Rahab did? And people have made excuses, Well, she hadn't yet come into the company of the people of God, and she would have never done that had she been an Israelite and so forth.

There are many other places in Scripture, and this is one of them, where people stare other people straight in the face and tell them a bald-faced lie, and God approves. God is pleased. It was true in the case of Rahab.

It was true in the case of the prophet when the army was going to come and attack Israel. They found him on the border, and he said, Sure, I'll lead you right to them. Then he strikes them all blind and leads them to the border and sends them off.

He tells them flat out, As a prophet of God, I will take you to the city that you're looking for. He doesn't take them anywhere near it. He strikes them blind and leads them away.

Here, the midwives look straight into Pharaoh's eyes and say, We would love to do that, but we just can't find them. These ladies just popped these babies out before we can even get there. And it's a lie.

It's a bald-faced lie. And in verse 20, Therefore God yathad the midwives. He blessed them.

He looked upon them with favor and approval and blessed them. Not only blessed them in their lives, but recorded their names for posterity. That's a good use of that word.

Joshua chapter 24 and verse 20. This is right at the end of the book of Joshua. Talking about God's dealing with the nation of Israel.

And in reviewing the history of Israel after the conquest of the land. Joshua 24, 20. Joshua here in verse 19 is talking to the people.

You cannot serve the Lord, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God. He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

That would be an interesting passage to preach. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has yathad you. After He has done you good.

Do you think that there is not retribution? Do you think that there is not wrath from God on believers whom God has blessed, to whom God has done good? Well, it's certainly

true in terms of the nation of Israel. If you forsake the Lord, you're with the Lord now, but if you forsake Him, He will withdraw His blessing. He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done you good.

Yathad. So, we begin to get a flavor for what this word means. Look in Numbers chapter 10.

This section of the story of Moses and the children of Israel is one that I have always found interesting because of the different ways that Scripture refers to Moses' father-in-law. If you were playing Bible trivia or whatever and someone said, well, what was the name of Moses' father-in-law, what would you say? It's Jethro. Well, here, he is referred to by another of his names in Numbers chapter 10, verse 29.

Now, Moses said to Hobab, it sounds like he might have been from Texas instead of from Midian, Hobab, the son of Reuel the Midianite. Well, Hobab is Jethro, but in the ancient Near East, many times people would have different names for different occasions. God Himself is sometimes Yahweh the Lord and sometimes Elohim God.

And He has many names. You've all seen these posters where all the names of God are listed out of the Bible. Well, it was not uncommon, especially for someone of prominence, to have more than one name.

Sometimes it would be their title. Agag was the title of the king. Was that the Amalekites? If my memory serves me correctly.

Like Pharaoh. It was a term like Pharaoh. Sometimes you see two or three Agags and you say, well, how could he have lived so long? Well, he didn't.

Of course, Samuel hewed Agag in pieces and that particular Agag ended his career on that day. But here we have Hobab, the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law. We are setting out for the place of which the Lord said, I will give it to you.

Come with us and we will treat you well. For the Lord has promised good things to Israel. The Lord has promised to Yathav, Israel.

He said to him, I will not go. I will depart to my own land and to my relatives. So Moses said, please do not leave.

Inasmuch as you know how we are to camp in the wilderness and you can be our eyes. And it shall be, if you go with us, indeed it shall be, that whatever good the Lord will do to us, the same we will do to you. The Lord will Yathav us.

We will Yathav you. We will do you good. You will notice here that in all of the instances that we have seen, and in the majority of instances that you would find if you did a concordance study on this word in Hebrew, Yathav is doing good in the context of

relationship with others.

Think about the passages that we have seen. You are to be of benefit. God is going to Yathav Israel.

Moses and Israel will Yathav Jethro or Hobab. Over and over again, the midwives, God does them good. It's in the context of relationship with someone else that this verb is often used.

1 Samuel chapter 25. Record of another very wonderful and very spiritually mature lady.
1 Samuel chapter 25.

David is on his way to slay Nabal for wronging him. David is angry. David is in the grip of wrath because of the injustice after having guarded and worked with Nabal's shepherds and flocks and so forth.

He put himself and his men at risk. Nabal isn't going to favor them. He isn't going to do anything for them.

He is ungrateful. And David is furious. And David saddles up with his men and he is on his way to wipe out Nabal and everything that he has.

Do you remember the story? Abigail interposes herself. She says in verse 28 of 1 Samuel 25, Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant. She represents her household and says it's a trespass that we as a family, that we as a household did not honor you instead of disregarding you.

She says, Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant. For the Lord will certainly make for my Lord an enduring house because my Lord fights the battles of the Lord. It's amazing to see how much Abigail understands about David when he is still a fugitive in the wilderness.

She knows about his anointing. She knows about God's promise to him. And this is not common knowledge at this stage in David's career.

We've been through 1 Samuel and hopefully you'll remember those things. So she knows and she restates and reminds David of God's promise. What is the antidote to wrath? Abigail knows what it is.

Abigail starts reminding David of God's word and God's promise. Where he is in God's plan. What the potential is.

What the hope is that God has set before David. He says, Remember, you're not subject to Nabal. Your fate is not in Nabal's hands.

The Lord God has promised you an enduring house. And here's this lady prostrate in the

dust in front of David and his army giving him the antidote to his wrath. Reminding him of the word of God.

My Lord fights the battles of the Lord and evil is not found in you throughout your days. Yet a man has risen to pursue you and seek your life. But the life of my Lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the Lord your God.

It's a beautiful phrase. I wish we could take time and just study that. I've done some work on that.

What does it mean to be bound in the bundle of the living? It's a wonderful, beautiful expression. Poetic. And the lives of your enemies he shall sling out as from the pocket of a sling.

That ought to remind David of something. God's past faithfulness. Victories that David has won in the past because of operating in the strength of faith.

Operating in the strength of the Lord. None of these phrases, none of these words that she uses are without meaning. And in this case when she says the lives of your enemies God will sling out as from the pocket of a sling.

That wakes David up. Pours water on the coals of fire in his soul. And it shall come to pass, verse 30, when the Lord has done for my Lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you.

When the Lord God has yetaved you according to all that he has spoken. And has appointed you ruler over Israel that this will be no grief to you. This is not going to besmirch your shield.

This is not going to mar your joy. Nor be an offense of heart to my Lord either that you have shed blood without cause or that my Lord has avenged himself. But when the Lord has dealt well with my Lord, has yetaved my Lord, then remember your maidservant.

And in a similar way to how God used Nathan to wake David up and put his life and his circumstances in perspective, here the words of Abigail, a wonderful lady who knows when to speak and how to speak and what to remind David of, this averts a great crime that David is about to commit in anger and in wrath. So this is another use of yetav in 1 Samuel 25, 31 specifically. When the Lord has yetaved my Lord, then remember your maidservant.

Psalm 36 and verse 3. Again, part of our scripture reading this morning. Psalm 36. The wicked one who has no fear of God before his eyes, who flatters himself, the words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit.

He has ceased to be wise and to do good. And once again you see the connection

between wisdom, genuine wisdom and doing good. The means of performing yetav is wisdom.

And this is divine wisdom. This is the transcendent word of God. A few pages over in Psalm 49, 18.

Our final passage on this verb. Psalm 49, 18. Again talking about the self-centered.

It begins in verse 13. This is the way of those who are foolish and of their posterity who approve their sayings. Like sheep they are laid in the grave.

Death shall feed on them. The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning. Another one of those key phrases in the morning.

We saw that just recently about what's going to happen in the morning here. The upright will rule over those who are foolish and depart from the way of the Lord in the morning. The morning is the resurrection.

There is going to be some who are ruled and some who are ruled over. There will be the greatest and there will be the least in the kingdom. This is in the category of believers.

It reminds us that this applies to us. So many of these things are assumed to apply to unbelievers and they don't. The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning and their beauty, their earthly transient beauty here, will be consumed in the grave, far from their dwelling.

But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me. It's incomprehensible to me that there's been this widespread notion that there's no hint of resurrection in the Old Testament. You can't turn a page, it would seem, without finding it.

This is one of those passages. Do not be afraid, in verse 16, when one becomes rich, when the glory of his house is increased, for when he dies he shall carry nothing away. His glory shall not descend after him, though while he lives he blesses himself.

For men will praise you when you do well for yourself. Well, that do well for yourself is Yataav. It is possible to do good, but you're doing it for yourself.

You're looking out for number one. This is what I deserve. This is what I need.

This is what makes me happy. This is what gratifies, satisfies, completes my expectations in life. Though while he lives he blesses himself, he's doing well for himself, he shall go to the generation of his fathers, they shall never see light.

If you're not seeing light, these that bless themselves, and who are we talking about, believers or unbelievers? This is believers. These believers will not see light. We have

studied at length the darkness which is outside.

There are those who will not see light. A man who is in honor yet does not understand is like the beasts that perish, no fruit of the life in the eternal sense. What should Cain have done at the point that God confronts him and says, why are you angry? Why has your countenance fallen? What should we do when God the Holy Spirit convicts us through the word of God in our souls? Just as a small side note, there's been a lot of fat-chewed about the filling of the Holy Spirit.

When you sin, the filling is gone and so forth. My only question to those who hold that view in a very strong and absolute sense is, how do you think you recover? If God the Holy Spirit leaves when you sin, then are you recovering in human strength? When I get a good answer to that question, then I'll believe in the light switch theory of the presence of the Holy Spirit. When you're in fellowship, you're filled.

When you're out of fellowship, he's gone. That means that recovery takes place in human strength because the Holy Spirit is not there until you confess. How do you confess a sin? You have to identify it and acknowledge it.

That is the application of the word of God. How do you apply the word of God apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit? You can't. God the Holy Spirit does not leave when we sin.

If anything, he is more active because now he is going to start pricking our conscience with the point of the sword of the word of God. He is going to divide us asunder and lay bare the thoughts and intents, the joints and the marrow. Something to think about when you're meditating on fellowship and ministry of the Spirit.

What should Cain have done? We have this ministry of the Spirit when we are out of line, when we are functioning in anger and wrath, when we are not operating in faith. What should our reaction be? We know what Cain's reaction was. Look at Leviticus chapter 5. Leviticus chapter 5. I took a course with Dr. Alan Ross at Dallas Seminary.

Alan Ross is one of the finest living Hebrew scholars. The title of the class was Exposition of Leviticus. But those of us who were in the class called it Excavation of Leviticus.

It was a very in-depth study. Anytime I come back to Leviticus, I am reminded of that. Leviticus chapter 5. Let's begin at verse 4. If a person swears, speaking thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, yatah, whatever it is that a man may pronounce by an oath and he is unaware of it, when he realizes it, and he will, it doesn't say if he realizes it, does it? It says when he realizes it, then he shall be guilty in any of these matters.

Now we can offend and be unaware for a time. And this implies that God does not impute the guilt of that offense until we become aware of it. You can't be held responsible for something you just don't know about.

But when you find out, and you will, when you realize it, when he realizes it, he shall be guilty in any of these matters. Now that you're aware, you're responsible. Responsible for your reaction.

What should the reaction be? It shall be when he is guilty in any of these matters, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing. Now if you want a good passage, if you feel like you're kind of wearing out 1 John 1.9, well just come back to Leviticus 5.5. When he is guilty in any of these matters, because he has realized it in verse 4, he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing. Not just confess that he has sinned, he has sinned in that.

This is naming your sin. And if you aren't convinced by the grammar, and by homologeo in the Greek and so forth, well just come back here and it's spelled right out. You acknowledge that you have malfunctioned in that thing.

And he shall bring his trespass offering to the Lord for his sin which he has committed. He knows why he's bringing it. He knows what he has done, and he brings the trespass offering.

A female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, as a sin offering. The priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin. He goes on to give the other things that he can do if he's unable to bring a lamb.

Now, let me ask you this. Have you ever wondered, when you think about Cain and Abel, why is it that this issue of acceptance of the gift seems to be an issue between Cain and God? Right? Why does Cain go kill Abel? If God doesn't accept his sacrifice, if God comes down and says, look, why are you angry? Why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? Well, Cain immediately goes out and slays his brother. How did Abel get in this situation? Well, you have the issue of jealousy, perhaps, but the passage doesn't suggest it.

Why does Cain, he's looking for a place to vent his anger, and Abel is the victim? Well, what should Cain's reaction have been? We said before that a mink of grain is perfectly acceptable in God's eyes. And at the point of offering the gift, that would have been fine. However, now Cain is guilty of a sin, and he needs to bring a sin offering.

Now, he does need to bring a lamb from the flock. Where is Cain going to get a lamb? What is this going to do to the arrogance and the self-centeredness and the pride of the older brother Cain having to go to his younger brother and acknowledge that he has sinned, and could I exchange some grain for a lamb so that I can go offer to the Lord and perform my trespass offering? Now, we understand that Leviticus is much later than Cain and Abel, but God has obviously communicated the basics of the sacrificial system and of the family priesthood that is in operation at this time. And there is obviously instruction and teaching that has not been preserved for us to the first generations of

mankind on the remedy for sin.

And at the point that Adam and Eve leave the garden, God instituted sacrifice. Everybody knows it. It's assumed all the way through these early generations, isn't it? Noah offers sacrifice.

Abraham offers sacrifice. All of these are before the law. This is instruction from God that they were given, that God explained and illustrated more fully in the Levitical system, and therefore did not preserve the earlier.

But Cain knows what he's supposed to do. Now, when God confronts him, he is guilty. He knows that he has sinned.

Anger is a sin. His countenance has fallen. His unacceptable sacrifice because of lack of faith, that's all sin.

Now, Cain is responsible for a lamb blood sacrifice. But the only place he can go to get a lamb is his brother Abel. So this is the occasion, and this is the excuse, I think, for Cain to turn and vent his anger and his wrath on his brother.

Well, if I'm going to have to kill something, I'll just kill you. And so, in a sense, he does slay something, but obviously this is in no way a sacrifice. But it's food for thought.

It may be that this is a part of the problem that Cain had initially, that he chose to bring a grain offering which reflected his own efforts rather than having to go to his younger brother to obtain a lamb, because the only shepherd and the only flocks on planet Earth belonged to Abel. So once again, when you look back, there are things that precede the malfunction. There is thinking and pattern of thought in choice of profession and in choice of sacrifice and in the heart when the sacrifice is brought that render Cain guilty.

And when God points that out, and He says, if you yataw, in the context of relationship, what is yataw in relationship to God? It is bringing sacrifice with a genuine heart, with a genuine faith. If you yataw to your brother Abel, you don't bear a grudge, you don't find in him a convenient place to vent your anger, but you have the humility that if you need to go get a lamb for sacrifice, you go. He who humbles himself will be exalted, and the one who exalts himself will be humbled.

A girl said that as a memory verse this past week. Obviously, they probably memorized it better than I did. I don't remember where it is.

But this is Cain's problem. It's in the heart. And now he does need to bring a blood sacrifice.

And instead, as we see in Genesis 4, verse 8, Cain meets his brother in the field, rises up against Abel, his brother, and killed him. Once again, God comes to Cain after this. And

as you can imagine, if you just look at these three or four verses, there are about 12 different categorical studies we could do at this point.

But look at what happens in the story. The Lord said to Cain, Where is Abel, your brother? When's the last time God asked a where question? Remember Genesis 3, verse 9. Adam and Eve hear the sound of God in the garden. They hide.

The Lord God says, Where are you? What have they done? They have gone to the wrong place. They've gone into hiding at the presence of God. And God says, in essence, why are you hiding? Where are you? And now, for Cain, after his egregious sin, God says, Where is Abel, your brother? And Cain replies, I do not know, which is a lie.

Directly to God. I do not know. It's extraordinary to me.

How could Cain possibly think that God is unaware of what happened to Abel, or that he doesn't know about it and wasn't responsible for it. But it is an indication of the degree of self-deception we can get into when we malfunction. He thinks he can put one over on the Lord God.

I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper? We will save a discussion of that for next time. But what I want to conclude with this morning is to take a look at what should happen to Cain at this point.

Because he has now committed a murder. And there is a law, and a principle of law, that comes into play. And that is, in Latin, I think it's Lex Talionis, L-E-X, which means law.

And Talion, or Talionis, T-A-L-I-O-N-I-S, This Talion means one for one. Retribution. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

Lex Talionis is the law of retribution. If you shed man's blood, then your blood will be shed. I just had an example of that here in the state of Texas.

First execution of a woman since the Civil War. Interestingly, in both cases, it was an axe murder, or a pickaxe murder. The lady back in 1863 was found guilty.

Some question about whether she actually was, but she was found guilty of killing someone with an axe. The lady that was apparently a believer, but was sent to glory this past week, was also guilty of murder by pickaxe. Anyway, Lex Talionis means what you do, the retribution, is equal in response.

There's a couple of legal terms, and these are the only two I know, so don't panic, I'm not going to give you a whole lot of these. There are two different kinds of law, and we find this in the Levitical Code in the Old Testament. You have casuistic law, that's C-A-S-U-I-S-T-I-C, casuistic law.

This is case law. This applies in a specific situation. If you have a situation where men

struggle, and a woman who is pregnant is harmed, this is what to do.

This is a specific case, specific set of circumstances. Here's the rule that applies in that specific case. It's a casuistic, or case law.

You also have apodictic law, A-P-O-D-I-C-T-I-C, apodictic law. This is a universal law. Thou shalt not murder is a universal law.

It doesn't get down to cases. Under these broad legal categories, you have lex talionis. This bridges the gap between your apodictic law and your casuistic law.

The application of the principle gets down to cases. If you have caused a man to lose his eye, you owe an eye. An eye for an eye.

If you knock out a tooth, you owe a tooth. The ultimate expression of this is when you take someone's life. When you murder, you are under penalty of death.

The great question here is, how come God does not execute Cain? Cain has not confessed. You could make a case that under confession, the death sentence can be commuted somehow, as in the case of Adam and Eve. In the physical life sense, in the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die.

That did not take place, did it? Something happened to that sentence of death for Adam and Eve. They did not die on that day in the physical sense. We say they died spiritually, which depends on how you want to take that.

But God said, in the day that you eat thereof, which is a physical act, you shall surely die. But for some reason, Adam and Eve do not die. We could say, perhaps it's because they acknowledge their sin.

As a part of forgiveness, something happened to that death penalty. Here you have Cain. It doesn't matter how far back you want to go, murder, that's life for life.

Shed man's blood, your blood is shed. Consistently through the scriptures, that's the case. Why is Cain not executed? Why does God allow him to live? You don't even have confession.

All you have is whining. Even the smaller sentence that he's given, he whines about it. He says, oh, my punishment is greater than I can bear.

Well, how would you like the original punishment? I'd just snuff you out. Why does Cain not suffer the death penalty? When you think about it, there are some other cases. Most notably, perhaps, King David, in the murder of Uriah the Hittite.

That is under the Mosaic Law, which has been in existence for some 400 years at that point. David is worthy of death. But God says, you shall not die but live.

How can God do that? Is God contradicting himself? Well, that's where we're going to pick up next week. What I want us to leave today with is the choice that we face when anger enters our soul. Regardless of the cause, regardless of how justified we may think our anger is, we need to remember and reflect on the danger, the fire that we take into our bosom when we harbor anger.

This is why the Bible says, do not let the sun go down on your wrath. You have got to find a way to rid yourself of anger, the Bible says. Its effects are devastating.

It only leads to evil. We have to know how to cope with anger so we don't wind up like Cain, who I believe is a believer. I think we will see Cain and Abel and Seth all in the eternal future in the ranks of believers.

It is a terrible thing to get this far away from the plan and purpose of God. He's the firstborn. He's the rightful heir of Adam.

Through him could have been the line of promise. He makes a terrible mistake and the thing that seals his fate is his inability to cope with his anger. His anger seals him off from the mercy of God in the sense of blessing and the sense of fulfilling promise.

We don't want to find ourselves in that category. Hopefully this morning, in reviewing the concept of anger, the antidote for anger, that great illustration of Abigail reminding David of the word of God, the promises of God, the perspective of being a participant and a beneficiary of God's plan through God's grace, that is the means of quenching anger and restoring the perspective of humility that enables us to confess, enables us to avail ourselves of God's forgiveness and move forward in his plan. Let's close in prayer.

Father, we thank you for the truth of your word. We thank you for the power that it imparts in our souls. Its inherent power, coupled with the power of the Holy Spirit, is a solid fortress and a guarantee of victory in any battle that we face.

We pray that we will understand how to take advantage of those resources and of this opportunity that you have given us to work against the resistance of our nature, to work against the presence of evil, both in us and in the world, to learn and to grow and to ever more consistently reflect your glory. We ask these things in Jesus' name, amen.