

Genesis 4 – Are you an angry sinner?

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Main point –Cain murdered, yet our anger makes us equally guilty, so we must call on the Lord for forgiveness, and then turn from it.

When you think of **baddies**, who comes to mind?-----

The evil queen and stepmother in Snow White?(**SLIDE**)

Or mother Gothel of Rapunzel in Tangled?

Maybe Darth Sidious in Star Wars,

The boy, Sid, in Toy Story 1,

Or the giant in Jack & the Beanstalk?-----

It's easy to dislike these baddies, who selfishly hurt, and even kill.

And it's also easy for us to think, I'm not like them.

I'm good. They're bad.-----

In our society and in every age, killing and murder has occurred.

But it was in Gen ch4 that the murderous history of the human race began.-----

What we read today is confronting and terrible.

But I hope we won't be so quick to point the finger at others, thinking we're blameless.

This passage has a challenge for all of us.

And gives hope to all of us too.-----

You'll see from my **outline(SLIDE)** that we'll look at **What Cain does, what God does, What Lamech does, then What will we do?-----**

So **firstly, vv1-8 and What Cain does.**

Adam and Eve's first son is called Cain, for with the Lord, Eve 'brought forth' a man, which his name means.----

Their second son is named Abel, meaning 'breath', and this will point to the brevity of his life.

He will not last long, just like your breath on a frosty morning.

But maybe "breath" hints that he mattered less to his parents than Cain.

After all, while Abel tended flocks of sheep, Cain, the firstborn, worked the soil, like his father, following in the family business.-----

Abel is described as Cain's brother, emphasising the enormity of the crime to come.

Both men bring an offering to worship the Lord.

And the Lord looks with regard, or favor, on Abel and his offering, but not on Cain's.

Why is that?-----

It's not that God's being unfair, when Cain did his best.-----

Nor is it that God prefers sheep or meat, to fruit. No!

V4 tells us Abel brought the firstborn of his flock and the fat portions - the best parts [Lev 3.16-17].

So Abel brought to God the first and best of what he had, and we assume Cain did not.---

But the NT sheds more light on this for us.

Heb 11:4 says,(**SLIDE**) ⁴By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was approved as a righteous man, because God approved his gifts....

So this is saying Cain lacked faith. Cain came without a heart trusting in and devoted to the Lord.-----

But 1 John adds more light, **1John 3v12**, ¹¹We should love one another,

¹²unlike Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous..-----

Cain's heart, his heart-attitude was not right.----

And how does Cain respond in **v5**?-----

He becomes furious, or very angry, and despondent, down-----**(SLIDE)**

Envy and anger and sadness all mix together and fill his heart.-----

But thinking about his anger, and our anger...

Kids (or maybe as a child), I wonder if you remember a time when thought you did your best, and you still got rejected, got told off, or even punished?-----

And maybe you got angry and sad?-----

I wonder if like me, you remember being told as a kid, to "say 'Sorry'".

And you say 'Sorry', but they know you didn't mean it.

So you still got in trouble.-----

Maybe at the time you didn't realise how you had done wrong.

When we don't get what we want, we can get angry and sad.----- Like Cain did.

But Cain didn't give God his best, or do right, or trust God.

Still, in mercy, God comes to Cain and asks, **v6**:

"Why are you furious? Why do you look despondent? If you do what is right, wont you be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door. It's desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

This is not a rebuke, but fatherly counsel.

For the Lord knew what Cain was thinking & planning in his heart.-----

Sin waits to have Cain, like a tiger**(SLIDE)** waiting in ambush outside his front door.

He now has the opportunity to do right, and choose to not sin.

But will Cain say 'No' to sin, or give-in to sin?-----

Will Cain let sin rule his heart and choices?-----

v8 suggests Cain has premeditated murder in mind.

He is brooding with anger, and his anger & envy gives birth to murder.

Cain violently attacks and kills his brother Abel.-----

How does this apply to us?-----

Come with me to Matthew 5 and the words of **Jesus(SLIDE-Mt 5:21-22)**

"You have heard that it was said to our ancestors, **Do not murder**,^[d] and whoever murders will be subject to judgment. ²² But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother or sister^[e] will be subject to judgment.

And as Warren Wiersbe says, here Jesus declares anger is murder, in our hearts.----

As **1 John 3:15** says,**(SLIDE)** in that same passage that speaks about Cain,

¹⁵ Everyone who hates his brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.-----

Friends, I confess so many times growing up, I hated my siblings, and my parents, and others.**(SLIDE)**

I'm guilty of unjustified anger, anger driven by my own selfishness.

I am subject to judgment.----- Are you?

Particularly in my younger years, I hated and therefore murdered people in my heart.-----

Are you not guilty, and deserving of judgement & condemnation too?-----

We all are.-----

Sin is not just what we do with our hands, hitting n' murdering someone.

Sin comes from our desires within, from my heart and yours.(James 1:14-15)-----

From our own evil desires, in our self-absorbed hearts.-----

Kids, teens, and adults, Do you sin in what you think and in what you want, in what you say, in what you do?-----
You do and I do.-----

And our anger and sin brings consequences.

It does for Cain.

We see **that next(SLIDE), Point 2, What God does.**-----

God comes, and like with Adam, he begins with a question:

V9, 'Where's your brother Abel?'

And the reply?

'I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper (his guardian/ protector)'.

It's a blatant lie.-----

And while Cain needn't watch his brother's every move, he should have cared for him.

Cain overstates his responsibility, to deny his responsibility.-----

The only time Abel speaks in Scripture is after he's dead, when his blood metaphorically cries out to God from the ground, **v10**.

That describes the oppressed crying out for justice and vengeance.-----

And now what God does, is curse Cain.

While his parents weren't personally cursed after they ate the fruit, Cain is cursed.

And the penalty will fit the crime.

Cain cultivated the fields; Abel was killed in a field.

Now Cain's fields will bear no fruit, and he is banished from them; destined to be a restless wanderer. [Land of Nod = land of wandering, ie further from Eden/ the ideal.]

Picture the future tabernacle.(Num 2)

If Adam and Eve were cast out of God's presence in the Holy Place & tent, Cain has been kicked out of the camp, away from God's people.-----

His sin has further distanced him from God.-----

But how does he respond in **v13**?-----

He feels the punishment is too great, too harsh.

How many times have you heard that, "But that's not fair."-----

Kids how many times have you thought and said, "It's not fair?"-----

How many times have we all thought or said, "It's not fair?"-----

Cain also fears vengeance from his family and future blood relatives.

But the Lord gives him some special mark, and says, if anyone kills Cain, they will suffer vengeance seven times over.-----

What Cain deserves is death, an immediate death penalty.[Ex 21.12-14]

But what he gets, is grace.

Cain gets mercy not just judgement here.-----

Yes, Cain is banished, and driven further from God's presence.

But he's given time to repent, isn't he?-----

We've seen sin become more firmly entrenched in Cain.

Envy and anger leading to cold-blooded murder, then lying to try and cover it up.

Sin is advancing in the descendants of Adam, and with that people are getting more alienated from God.

And this is what we see **next, What Lamech does.(SLIDE)**

In **v17ff**, we're told about the descendants of Cain.----

The question often asked, and question I've asked is, **Who was Cain's wife?**-----

Well, as **1 Cor 15** says, Adam was the first man.(v45.**SLIDE**)

Gen 3.20 said Eve 'was the mother of all the living'.

And **Gen 5.4** says Adam & Eve had other sons and daughters.

There were no other people on earth as some claim (Acts 17.26), so I assume Cain married his sister.

[Remember too that Abraham married his half-sister Sarai (Gen 20.2,12), and Jacob his cousins (Leah and Rachel Gen 29.13ff).]

I know that seems weird and wrong to us.

Thousands of years later the law of Moses in **Lev 18(v9)** forbids siblings marrying each other.

But from my past biological background, I can imagine that soon after the fall there were few mutations in people's DNA.

So marrying close relatives wouldn't have produced the deformities and genetic problems it did in future years.

Anyway, instead of reading between the lines, let us read the lines, and focus on the matters the text raises.

And here the point is, Cain's descendants are just like their father, and worse than their father.-----

Seven generations after Adam, comes **Lamech**, and with him begins polygamy, **v19**. Yes his family is technological.

And they love music, but is it ungodly music?---

For what does Lamech boast about in his **v23** poem?

About killing a man, a young man, the word can mean a 'boy'?-----

Cain lied about his murder to hide it.

Lamech who names a son after Cain, boasts that he killed a youth for just wounding him.

He is proud of his violence.

In **v24** Lamech is saying, I can take care of myself.

And if anyone tries to get me, I'll get them back 77 times over;---- way worse than God will do for Cain.-----

It's proud pompous boasting.-----

And notice who he is saying this to... his two wives.

He is implicitly saying to his wives, 'Don't cross me'.

It's a threat of violence isn't it. And it's evil.-----

The song of sin plays on.-----

This is an awful and depressing story.-----

We don't hold out much hope for Cain's descendants.

And haven't violence, conflict and death been the hallmarks of a world marked by sin, ever since?-----

But, as **v25&6** reveal, Adam and Eve have another descendent – Seth.

'Seth' means foundation, for he will be the foundation of a new line, a new family; **a new hope**.-----

Better than the rise of Jedi, **(SLIDE)** Luke Skywalker in Star Wars: A New Hope, real hope for humanity is there is the last verse.

For 'At that time people began to call on the name of the Lord.'

People are turning back to God.

[Genesis 12 (v8) and 13(v4) tell us Abraham called on the name of the Lord.

In the OT it describes prayer connected to worship and sacrifice.]

In the midst of this dark chapter, there is hope.-----

Hope because of the character of the God people turn to.----

My final point is, What will we do?(SLIDE)

We live in the world of Genesis 4 – a depraved, sinful and ungodly world, where anger, vengeance and murder abounds.

And yet when we look at our own hearts, and look back on our lives, I think we will see things like envy, anger, violence and selfishness.

And as a consequence, just like in Gen 3 last week, we are facing a death we deserve.

We deserve to be cut off God and the life he offers.

Kids, I said at the start, we can think ‘they’ are the bad guys (**SLIDE**), these are the baddies.

When actually we’re not good either. We’re not the goodies.

We’ve all sinned and fallen short.

We sin in what we think, what we do, what we want and desire.

I think we’ve all been guilty of anger when we don’t get what we want. (**SLIDE**)

Angry at others, even angry at God.-----

There was only 1 human being who was truly good, and **Kids**, what was his name?
Jesus!

And he died on a cross, in our place, dying the death we deserved, so we can be given an eternal life we never deserved.-----

Gen 4.24 told us people called on the name of the LORD, and that’s exactly what we need to do.

Because do you remember **Romans 10.13?(SLIDE)**

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."-----

If you confess that Jesus is Lord, (**SLIDE**) and truly believe God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Rom 10.9-10)

And we need saving, don’t we?-----

And only trusting in the Lord Jesus will save.

Only trusting him and crying out to him, as the living and saving Lord, will save you.

That is what we need to do. -----

[**Hebrews 12.24** says (**SLIDE**) to believers, you have come to Jesus, and his blood, which speaks better things than the blood of Abel.

Abel’s blood “spoke of” vengeance, Jesus’ blood speaks of and communicates forgiveness.

Through Jesus’ death we come to God and join his forgiven covenant people.]

So will you hold back from calling upon the Lord, or will you come to, cry out to, and in your heart fall upon the Lord Jesus, who alone can forgive your sin?-----

Call out to Jesus to save you. And he will.-----

There is mercy for sinners.-----

And if we’ve done that, when we’ve done that, we need to obey Col 3.

Col 3:5-8, (SLIDE) says,

⁵ Therefore, put to death what belongs to your earthly nature...

And **v8**, now, put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth.

Whether our anger is outwardly and openly expressed in wrath and harsh words, or inwardly in malice, we need to repent of it. Stop it!

And we do that by remembering **Col 3.1-3 (SLIDE)** –we have new life in Christ, and by seeking and setting our minds on things above, godly things.-----

Remember God's words to Cain in Gen 4 v7?(SLIDE)-----

'sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must ruler over it."

Every day, sin is crouching at your door and mine, and it desires to have us.

If we don't master it, it will master us.-----

If we don't through grace turn away from sin it will overtake us.

Rule sin or be ruled by it.-----

Kids, teens, adults, is there a sin that is ruling your choices at the moment?-----

Too many people, and too often we, live in Cain's world and follow in his footsteps.

Will you follow in Cain's footsteps?-----

In Christ, sin is not our master anymore.(SLIDE)

Because of Jesus and his Spirit in us we can say 'No' to sin [Rom 8.13].

We need to cry out to the Lord for help and then make that choice to say 'No'.

'you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice,'
or whatever it is for you.

Choose to leave your bitterness behind.-----

Repent of your anger at your spouse, your brother or sister.-----

Repent of your envy at another's success, or blessing.-----

Turn from your selfishness, and return to the Lord Jesus for the acceptance you seek.-----

And **parents**, or if you have kids one day, or teach them: Our kids need to know this too

As one Facebook post I read recently read said(SLIDE)

Somewhere along the way,
we confused gentle parenting with permissive parenting.
Gentle doesn't mean no consequences.
Gentle doesn't mean endless negotiating.
Gentle doesn't mean your child runs the house.
It means calm.
It means consistent.
It means you don't scream...
but you also don't budge...
Yes, Teach them empathy.
But also teach them this:
No means no.
Respect isn't optional.
Actions have consequences.
The world does not revolve around you.-----

Kids and adults who follow Jesus, are called to live his way.

So we say 'No' to sin.

But then we are to **do what is right instead.**

As we read in 1John 3,(SLIDE) we should love another, unlike Cain.-----

Col 3.12-14 speaks of the actions and attitudes we are to put on.(SLIDE)-----

And over all of them it is love we put on, like the clothes you put on this morning.

What will that look like for you?-----

I close with this.

It's 1943, WW2, **Louie Zamperini(SLIDE)** is on a mission over the Pacific, when his plane crashes.

After 47 days afloat in shark-infested waters, Louie and one other survivor are captured and endure 2½ yrs of prison, with beatings, humiliation and torture.-----
 Returning after war and suffering severe PTSD, Louie became an alcoholic.
 Most of the time he dreamt and planned of returning to Japan to murder the Japanese sergeant who'd repeatedly hurt him.---

One night dreaming about this sergeant, he hurt his wife.

Not long after she filed for divorce.

He was too tormented by bitterness and his past to change.

Then one day in 1949 Louie's wife went to hear a young evangelist, Billy Graham.

And she came home saying she didn't want a divorce, but had experienced a spiritual awakening and wanted him to come and hear Billy Graham.-----

After days of resisting he finally went.

He heard Billy but came home, saying to himself, 'I am a good man'.

But as soon as he said it he knew it was a lie.

Several nights later he returned and walked to the front, repented and received Christ as his Saviour.**(SLIDE)**

Louie was immediately delivered of his alcoholism, but more than that, he felt God's love fill his life.

And he realised he was able to let go of all the anger at those who'd tortured him.---

He let go of the shame and sense of powerlessness that had stoked his hate and misery.-----

His relationship with his wife was renewed and deepened.

And the following year, he chose to go to Japan and speak through an interpreter to many who were his former prison guards.-----

He spoke about the power of Christ's grace to bring forgiveness.

And to the prisoner's shock, he embraced each of them with a loving smile.-----

While our anger makes us guilty like Cain, if we turn to the Lord there is forgiveness, and also strength to live for Jesus.

Let's pray.