

# The Way of Cain

by Zac Poonen

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*The way of Cain is a lifestyle of hatred and accusation, while the way of Jesus is one of intercession and love, and it's crucial to have a right attitude towards others to bear fruit for God.*

**Duration:** 1:23:13

**Scripture:** Genesis 4:12, Psalm 130:4, Luke 4:16-30, John 13:35, Hebrews 10:25, James 4:10

**Topics:** "Cain"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of relying on God's defense rather than trying to defend oneself. He refers to the story of Moses and the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, where Moses falls on his face and allows God to handle the situation. The speaker also highlights the message of victory over sin, which was proclaimed by God from the very beginning in Genesis 4:7. He explains how God provided the righteousness of Christ as a lasting solution, contrasting it with the temporary and withering fig leaves of human righteousness. The sermon concludes with a reference to 1 John 3, where the speaker discusses the need for justice and the importance of humility in serving others.

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## Transcript

I would like to turn to 1 John and chapter 3. John wrote this episode when he was about ninety-five years old. He was the only apostle living at that time. All the others had been killed.

And he had seen the day of Pentecost, the tremendous revival with which the Church of Jesus Christ had started. And he saw in his time the decline of those churches. Some of the other apostles who died earlier may not have seen that.

But he saw how churches that started with tremendous power, great fervency, filled with the Holy Spirit, had declined to the place where they had, as we read in Revelation 2, lost their first love. Elders who were still sitting on their thrones, having lost their love for the Lord, elders and messengers of churches who had named that they were alive but were dead, who were lukewarm, messengers who were in the Lord's mouth, whom the Lord said, I am ready to spit you out of my mouth. Churches that had lost their zeal, churches that had allowed women false prophetesses like Jezebel to rise and lead people astray, and elders sat back and did nothing.

This is the condition. I am only telling you what you can read in Revelation 2 and 3. You can imagine how that would have grieved John's heart. How he must have sorrowed as he saw all this.

And with all this in his heart, he writes this first epistle of John. That's the background to this letter. And it's very significant to see the things he emphasizes and the things he doesn't.

Because Christendom today is in a similar condition. There are great movements that were there in the 19th and 20th century, different parts of the world. Mighty movements of God, where God raised up great men who knew Him.

There was revival in many parts of the world. But you look at those movements today, and it's exactly like John saw in his time. Decline, declension, corruption.

Elders who've gone the way of Balaam after money, who permit immoral standards in their churches. That's also the way of Balaam, who led Israel astray through allowing them to mingle with the daughters of Moab. And there's so much similarity in what's happening in Christian churches.

The problem is not with doctrine. It's with life. It's evangelical churches, charismatic churches that have gone the way of the world.

And the power is gone. John, bearing all this in his heart, writes a lot in this chapter, in this episode about loving one another. And in 1 John chapter 3, I want to read from verse 10.

By this, the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious. He divides people into children of God and children of the devil. There's two categories.

And he says, the way to find out the difference is, anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. It's a categorical distinction. One who does not love his brother is not of God.

He can have ten thousand reasons why he doesn't love his brother, but he's not of God. For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, and not be as Cain who was of the evil one, and slew his brother Abel. When Jesus spoke about the righteous, he started with Abel.

He said, from the blood of righteous Abel, to the blood of Zechariah who was slain, between the court and the temple. So there was a righteous Abel, and here was Cain of the evil one, who slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brothers were righteous.

Now, I want you to read that carefully. It does not say, that after he slew him, his deeds were evil. Before he slew him, why did he slay Abel? Because Cain's deeds were evil, even before he slew Abel.

That's why he slew him. And his brother's deeds were righteous. Now, we have often heard, that the reason why God accepted Abel, was because he offered blood, and Cain didn't offer blood.

But it's more than that. See what it says here. His deeds were evil.

His brother's deeds were righteous. And he says, don't marvel brethren, if the world hates you. He's talking about Cain hating Abel.

Don't marvel if the world hates you. That's the mark of the sons of Cain, and all who follow what Jude calls in his epistle, the way of Cain. They hate.

But we know, we have passed out of death into life, not because we got baptized, not because we partake of the bread and the wine, but because we love the brethren. He who does not love, abides in death. He's still thinking of Cain here.

Everyone, and it doesn't matter which church they belong to, who hates his brother, is a murderer. Everyone. And you know that no murderer has eternal life, abiding in him.

The way of Cain, is the way of hatred. But in contrast to that, he says we know, verse 16, love by this, that instead of slaying your brother, you slay yourself. You lay down your life.

We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. You see, in both cases there is a death. Cain kills his brother, that's the way of evil.

In this the children of the devil are manifest, that they slay their brothers and sisters. Today we don't use a rock, like Cain. Cain went out and took a rock and smashed Abel's head in.

Today we are gentler, we use our tongue, to slay our brothers and sisters. But, it's just as bad. When you slay your brothers and sisters, with your tongue, tear them down, speak evil of them, make them look bad and small, and evil, in the eyes of others, you are slaying them.

In this, the children of the devil are obvious. Because that's what the devil does. The Bible says in Revelation 12, verse 9 and 10, that the devil accuses the brothers, day and night.

And just like God looks for co-workers, in His work, the devil looks for co-workers, all over the world. What does the devil do day and night? It says there in Revelation 12, he accuses the brethren, day and night. And I want to tell you, that the devil can't tell lies to God.

He does not tell God false things about the brethren, because he knows that God knows everything. He tells the truth. And he is looking for co-workers across the world, the devil, who will speak the truth, with the spirit of accusation.

An accuser need not tell false stories. The devil tells no false stories to God. He tells the absolute truth.

But he is the accuser of the brethren. And you can speak the absolute truth, and be an accuser of the brethren, hearing how the children of the devil, made obvious. That's the way of King.

And no murderer, has eternal life, abiding in Him. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. No murderer has eternal life, abiding in Him.

Whatever you may say, whatever doctrine you believe, whichever way you were baptized in, whether you speak in tongues or not, whether you break bread or not, however long your skirts are, no murderer has eternal life, abiding in Him. Do you slay your brother, or your sister? When Ham, went and told Shem and Japheth, that their father was drunk, and lying naked, he spoke the absolute truth. He never added one word.

He said, dad is lying naked, after having got drunk. God not only cursed him, He cursed his children. And that curse remains.

For what? For speaking the truth. From Noah in Genesis 9, from that time, all the way to Revelation 12, we read, accusers speak the truth. So, we don't escape, by saying, I only spoke the truth.

It's exactly what Ham said. It's exactly what the devil says to God. I'm only speaking the truth.

Jesus also does something day and night. It says in Hebrews 7.25, He ever liveth, to make intercession for them. Here's a brother, or a sister, who's got a fault.

Maybe he's drunk. Maybe he's naked. Stupid thing to do.

He's a brother. Maybe it's not so bad. We don't wait for something to do.

We don't wait for a brother to get that far. To be drunk and naked. We start judging and accusing long before Ham did.

We wait for a small fault. Drunk. Oh, drunkenness and nakedness would be extreme, long before a brother has got that far.

There's a fault in a brother, or a sister. Something that irritates us. Jesus sees it.

Satan sees it. Satan is quick to accuse. Jesus is quick to intercede.

Both, Satan and Jesus, are looking for co-workers. You can have your choice. You see that weakness too.

And in that moment you decide, there's a fork in the road there. As soon as you see a weakness in a brother or sister, there lies before you a fork in the road. The way Jesus is gone, and the way Satan is gone.

The way of intercession, and the way of accusation. And every one of us, we don't usually stand there. Some people think they're spiritual, just because they stand there.

They don't go take either road. But Jesus has taken one road, and Satan has taken another. And when we accuse, we take one fork in the road.

And you know who you're in fellowship with. And when we intercede, we take the other fork in the road. Herein are the children of God, and the children of the devil, made obvious.

There's no hiding it. It says, herein are the children of God, and the children of the devil, made obvious. Why did Cain slay his brother? Let's turn back to Genesis in chapter 4. Genesis 4. It says here that Cain brought an offering to the Lord.

Verse 4, verse 3. Genesis 4, 3. Verse 4, Abel also brought an offering to the Lord. Cain was not an atheist. Cain was a deeply religious man.

The children of the devil are not all atheists. 99% of them are deeply religious people. The way of Cain is not the way of atheism.

It's the way of religion. It's also the way of sacrifice and offering to God. Cain offered.

He brought a sacrifice. Abel also brought an offering, and notice, we've always, as I told you, thought that the Lord accepted Abel's offering. But read carefully.

It says in verse 4, the last part, the Lord had regard for Abel, and for his offering. It was Abel he regarded, and therefore he accepted his offering. Don't read the other way around.

That the Lord had regard for his offering, therefore he accepted Abel. That's often how we have heard it. There are many wrong doctrines we get when we read scripture wrongly.

The Lord had regard for Abel, and his offering. But for Cain, and his offering, he had no regard. Who was the one he, what did he disregard in Cain? We have always been told, the Lord disregarded his offering, therefore he disregarded Cain.

But no, it was Cain he disregarded, and therefore he disregarded his offering. We think, if I bring the blood, I'm okay. No.

If, when you come to the altar with the blood offering, with the blood of Jesus, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, your offering will not be accepted. Leave your offering there, it says. Go and settle things with your brother.

That's what Jesus said, Matthew 5. Then come, and offer what you have. Lot of believers are living in this deception. If I bring the blood, I'm okay.

You're not. If your brother has something against you, because you're not right with him, because you've used your tongue to slay him, go and settle that. Then come with your offering.

The Lord has regard to you, then your offering. And if your heart is not right, he will not accept your offering. It's clear.

And we read here that, the Lord said to Cain in verse 6, so Cain, verse 5, the last part, became very angry, and his countenance fell. It's a mark of those who are not right, one mark of those who are not right with God. There's no cheerfulness in their countenance.

Their countenance has fallen. The psalmist said, the Lord is my glory, and the lifter of my hand. When your countenance has fallen, something is wrong.

The very first words, that God ever asked a human being, outside the garden of Eden. First words that God ever asked a human being, outside the garden of Eden, were, why is your face falling? Why are you angry? Don't forget that. Why, why is there that cloud over your face? You just came from the meeting.

You just came after offering something to God. You came from a prayer meeting. You're a deeply religious person.

You came from the revival meeting. Why is your face falling? Cain came from a meeting. He had gone and offered something to God.

Should your face be falling, after you've gone to a meeting? After you've read the Bible, and you've met with God? Why is your face falling? I'm always suspicious and wary, of people who cannot look me straight in the face. I'll give you a simple bit of advice. When a person can't look you straight in the face, eye to eye, when he cannot make eye contact with you, something is wrong.

That's what the Lord was saying. Why can't you make eye contact with me, Cain? What's wrong? Why is your face falling? Why is it long? It's the first question God asked man. You're angry.

You're angry with something. And the Lord said to him, if you intend well, in your heart, I'm paraphrasing those words, won't you, won't your countenance be lifted up? Surely you'll be accepted. I have no

partiality, Cain.

All are the same to me. If your heart is right, and you intend well, towards your brother. If you do well, if your intention, the intention of your heart, towards your brother or sister is good.

Your countenance will be lifted up. Sure. When your countenance is fallen, it means something is wrong.

It's not the way the other person treated you. It's your attitude towards that other person. Maybe your husband, maybe your wife, maybe your parents, maybe your brother, maybe an elder brother, maybe anyone.

But there is something wrong. But if you don't intend well, in your heart, then God says to Cain, sin is crouching at the door of your heart. Don't think sin is far away.

Jesus said, pray, our father who art in heaven, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. That means, Oh God, please keep temptation far away from me. Don't lead me that way.

Deliver me from evil. But if you don't intend well, sin is not far away. Sin is crouching at the door, like a lion or a tiger, waiting outside your door, waiting for a slight opening of the door, and he's got his foot in.

He's going to come right in. But, and his desire, his desire is for you. Sin's desire is to eat you up like any tiger or lion.

And here is the first place in the Bible, in the very first message that God ever gave to man outside the garden of Eden. The very first message that God ever gave to man outside the garden of Eden. He says to them, he says to him, you must have victory over sin.

This is not in Romans 6.14. This is Genesis 4.7. You must master it. You must master that sin that's crouching at your door. The message of victory over sin is there in Genesis 4.7. Not an afterthought with God, it's the very first thing that God ever proclaimed to man.

Inside the garden of Eden, God killed that animal, shed its blood, a picture of Jesus shedding his blood on Calvary, took the skin of that animal, threw away the fig leaves of Adam and Eve, symbolizing religion and human righteousness. Throw it away. It will wither up in no time.

And God told Adam, you can't keep fig leaves on you forever. Human righteousness will wither away. Let me give you something that will last forever, the righteousness of Christ.

That's how he was clothed. That's the first thing. The shed blood, get rid of the fig leaves of your own righteousness, filthy rag, fig leaves that dry up.

That's why Jesus cursed the fig tree. When he saw the leaves on it. It's all human righteousness.

Cursed it. It was cursed from the day of Adam. And God cursed those fig leaves and put the skin of the animal on Adam and Eve and sent them out.

And then the next message was, okay, the first message is, you need the blood shed and you need the righteousness of Christ. The next one is, you must have victory over sin. It's all there, way back in Genesis 3 and 4. You must master it.

This wrong attitude towards your brother, you must overcome it. And I believe the Lord is saying that to many of us this evening. Do you intend well? Is your attitude right? Sin is crouching at your door and you must master it.

It's a voice of love pleading with you. Why should God plead with man? He could have said, well, I came, he's got enough understanding that he shouldn't have such an attitude towards brother, but he pleads. Just like the father of the elder son, of the prodigal son, went outside and pleaded with his elder brother, elder son.

Why do you have such an attitude towards your younger brother? Why do you have such an attitude? Why are you jealous that we are honored your younger brother and he's sitting in the right hand. Come in. But he wouldn't come in.

Well, the same story with Cain and Abel. God went out and pleaded with him. And what's the very next thing that Cain does? He doesn't listen to the voice of God.

He has no fear of God. He went and told Abel, spoke to him, called him out for a walk and innocent Abel went out with him and Cain smashed his head in and killed him. And the Lord said to Cain, where is Abel your brother? He said, I don't know.

You know when your conscience is hardened, you can tell lies even to God. It's a terrible thing. After God has spoken to you and you don't listen, he pleads with you, you don't listen.

Your conscience becomes so hard, you can not only tell lies to man, you can tell lies to God. He said, I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper? God said, what have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground and now you are cursed from the ground which has opened its mouth to receive you.

When Adam and Eve sinned, God never cursed them. Read Genesis 3, He never cursed them. He cursed the ground.

Not Adam and Eve. But this is the first time He cursed a man. When this man had a wrong attitude to a brother.

Please remember this, my brothers and sisters. The first time God ever cursed a man was when he had a wrong attitude to his brother and slew him. Have you slain your brother? Or your sister? Do you fear God? In this it is obvious, the children of God and children of the devil.

And he said to him, what is the mark of the curse of God? When you cultivate the ground, verse 12, it shall not yield its strength to you. You shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth. You will preach, there will be no blessing.

There will be no fruit. You will go somewhere and you will try to build a church and you will preach what you heard on all those tapes and what you read in all those books. But it will not produce fruit.

You will cultivate the ground and you will work hard. There will be no church. You will be alone.

You will be a vagrant and a wanderer. You will gather people and they will go away one by one. You will be alone.

And you will go from one church to another. You will be a wanderer, a vagrant, a beggar. You will try this church.

There will be something wrong there. You will go to the other one. There will be something wrong there.

And you will be a wanderer all your life. I have seen so many people like this. And this is obvious.

The children of God and the children of the devil. Something is wrong in their heart towards somebody. God has spoken to them but they will not break.

They have no lack of knowledge. Their doctrines are all correct. But something is wrong in their heart.

And when they work, they cultivate the ground. It does not yield anything. Are you like that? Fruitless.

Jesus said, I have chosen you and ordained you. John 15, that you should go forth and go and bring forth fruit. John 15, 9 I think it is.

Herein is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit. It is impossible for a branch to remain in the vine and be fruitless. Impossible.

Not Jesus the vine. Some other false vine, maybe. But if you are in Jesus, grafted into Jesus, it is impossible.

If the sap from the vine, the Holy Spirit is flowing into the branches, it is impossible to be fruitless. To be without fruit. You have to be fruitful.

And if you are a wanderer, wanderer does not necessarily mean just being alone. I have seen numerous people who have come to our conferences in India and think that the secret is this doctrine that we preach. And so they get our books and our tapes and they sing the songs that we sing and they think the secret is in the pattern of our meetings.

And they go and try to duplicate that pattern where they are and it is death. It is not there. The secret is not there.

The secret is into falling into the ground and dying to your self-life. Being cut off from that old vine and being grafted into the new and letting the sap, the fullness of the Holy Spirit as it comes forth, bring forth fruit. It is not in a doctrine.

It is not in a pattern. It is in a life. In the life of Jesus.

Cain said, My punishment is too great to bear. Thou hast driven me from the face of the ground and I shall be a vagrant and wanderer. And the Lord, I am amazed at the Lord's tremendous compassion.

Even to Cain. He says, No, I won't allow anybody to kill you. The Lord appointed a sign for Cain, verse 15, lest anyone finding him should slay him.

He could have repented. He could have said, O God, be merciful to me. But he didn't.

He went out from the presence of the Lord. And, one of the first things he did when he went out from the presence of the Lord was to build a city. Verse 17.

The origin of city life. Do you know where it is? It's in Cain. Verse 17.

And he named it after his son. Let the name of my son be honored. He couldn't care less for the name of the Lord.

City life. And he produced people who were interested, verse 21, in music. Jubal was the father of those who played the lyre and the pipe and they sat in the night in those cities and played music.

The origins of rock music is right there, verse 21. A lot of things happen when you go away from the presence of the Lord. Lots of things happen.

You don't know. You don't have any sense of direction. You're a vagrant.

You're a wanderer. And you think, oh, what's wrong with city life? You say, what's wrong with music? Yeah, yeah. You lose all sense of God when you're not in the presence of the Lord.

Where did it all start? See, this is, what we've looked at is the end of it all. But where did it all start? Let's, you know, nip it in the bud. Have you got something of that in us? It started with the fact that the fire of God fell upon Abel's offering and no fire fell on Cain's offering.

And to, I mean, if Abel was older than him, he could have borne it. But Abel was younger. How can God anoint somebody younger than me? How can God put a fire in someone younger than me? It bothered him.

Bothered him. Bothered him. And he was determined to find some fault with Abel.

Does that sound familiar? God's blessing on somebody's ministry. And you can't bear it. And you're determined to find something or the other wrong with him.

No. Can't be. And yet it is obvious.

The fire of God is there upon him. If you are humble, you say, well, Lord, maybe I don't see any good in him, but you must be seeing a lot of good in him. Because you have regard for him and his offering.

That would have been the right approach. I have told the different brothers who work with me, my co-workers, brothers who have accepted the doctrine we preach, the doctrine of victory, the doctrine of building the body of Jesus Christ, of coming out of Babylon and being, building Jerusalem, and who have understood all this. I say, well, you have understood all this.

But I want to still sit back and watch whether the fire of God falls on your sacrifice or not. Because if the fire of God doesn't fall, brother, I'm sorry, I can't support you. I'm always, I'm not going to jump one step ahead of God.

I want to go behind God. If God supports you, and it manifests, God bears witness to your life, to your family life, to your ministry. Even if I don't like your faith, I'm going to support you 100%.

But if God doesn't bear witness to you, or to your family life, or to your ministry, even if you're my thickest friend, I'm sorry, I cannot support you. I go behind God. I don't jump ahead of Him.

I don't care if your adoptions are right. I don't care if you're following the same pattern, singing the same songs, doing the same thing. And you say you're one of our churches.

No use. If the fire is not there, you are not one of our churches. Sorry.

And you can't be so close a friend of mine that you'll get me to support you without the fire of God on your life. It's impossible. I say, I will recognize what God recognizes.

And I will not recognize what God does not recognize. I have no friend after the flesh. I look, where does God bear witness to a man? And to tell you honestly, doctrine is in a sense, secondary to me.

I don't care whether he believes in the baptism in the spirit or not. Whether he preaches it like me or not. Whether he speaks in tongues or not.

Whether he has the gift of healing or not. Whether he is this denomination or that denomination. I say, some of these things I've discovered through the years are matters of how we understand it.

We can have problems in how we explain things. If the fire is there, God is there. I don't care what doctrine he's talking about.

If the fire is not there, God is not there. Whatever noise he may be making or whatever he claims to have. And if he's a vagrant and a wanderer, God obviously has left him.

You see, you can be a vagrant and a wanderer even sitting in a large church like this. You know that? You say, I'm not a vagrant and a wanderer. I sit here, in a church with so many people.

What do you mean by being a vagrant and a wanderer sitting in a church like this when you don't have fellowship? You can have 1,000 people sitting in a movie theater. It's a big crowd, isn't it? Person sitting here doesn't know the person sitting next to him. He doesn't know the person sitting next to him.

There's no fellowship there. But there are 1,000 people. And 1,000 people can sit in a church.

They can all be lonely. Can't a husband and wife live under the same roof and be lonely with no fellowship? Sure. Parents and children sitting, living under the same roof.

Lonely. Husbands and wives glorying that we haven't divorced one another, but lonely. They are vagrants and wanderers.

And you can sit in the best church in the world and be a vagrant and a wanderer. God doesn't bear witness to your life. And very often, because you have something in your heart against your brother.

Jealousy. You cannot bear to see God bearing witness to someone. The first sin, described in detail outside the Garden of Eden.

Jealousy. Where, which leads Cain to kill Abel. And John speaks about it.

When he sees the condition of all those churches in his time. What does he write to them? He writes to them about Cain. When Jude writes, what does he write? He writes about the way of Cain.

Must be important. Cain is mentioned at the beginning of the Bible. Cain is mentioned at the end of the Bible.

Learn something from that. What is the way of Cain? It's the way of jealousy. Which leads to loneliness.

Which leads to wandering. No fellowship. He could not bear that God could bless someone.

He could not humble himself and say, Lord, I accept that God, that you have borne witness to him. I probably have a wrong attitude towards him, but you obviously have a different opinion. I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters.

Do you think it's likely that God's got a different opinion about that brother, whom you don't like too much? Is it possible that God's got a different opinion about that sister, whom you can't get along with? God seems to be able to get along with that person fine. But you don't seem to be able to. Jealousy gets in so easily.

There's so much of jealousy in Christian work. And when there's jealousy in your heart, one thing it clearly proves is you haven't seen the body of Jesus Christ. In this body, there is no jealousy.

The left hand is never jealous that all the checks are signed by the right hand. \$500, \$700, I never get a chance. It's always him.

Always him. He's getting the honor. He's getting the honor.

And one day if the right hand gets hurt, does the left hand rejoice in that? Ah, now is my chance to sign the checks. The bank won't accept it. They can't recognize the signature.

Humble yourself. There's no jealousy in the body. The left hand rejoices.

When the right hand signs the check and takes \$700, the left hand says, that's mine too. It's not the right hand. If that soul is saved, so what if that brother saved him? That's praise God.

It's for the body of Jesus Christ. Can you see that? When you see God blessing another brother's ministry somewhere and a church is established through his ministry, can you rejoice and say, praise God! That's for my Lord. I'm excited.

I had nothing to do with it. But praise God, one part of me went there and established a church. Can you rejoice? Ask yourself honestly whether you can rejoice when God doesn't use you at all, but uses somebody else.

The foot rejoices with every part of the body. Think of those little toes. I never get a chance to be seen.

I'm always closed up in socks and shoes. Nobody ever sees me. I wish I could move up a little in the body.

Get a little promotion. Come up to be in the hands at least or somewhere in the face. Never.

It says if God keeps me covered with socks and shoes the rest of my life, I'm quite happy. I rejoice with other members of the body. So jealousy comes where people haven't seen that it is God who has placed them in the body in a particular place.

It says in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, 1 Corinthians chapter 12, This is what they haven't seen. 1 Corinthians 12, 18. But now God has placed the members, each one of them in the body just as He desires.

He chose the place for me in the body. And He chose the place for you. And if you have a quarrel, your quarrel is against God.

Don't say that brother is not giving me an opportunity to minister. That's a lot of garbage. How can that brother hinder you from fulfilling your ministry in the body if God Almighty has decided to give you a particular task? Nobody can do it.

I remember in my younger days, I used to be in an assembly where I was just 23. And the elders were jealous of my ministry. They wouldn't let me speak in the church meetings.

So I used to speak on the street. Nobody could stop me there. That's where I learned to preach in all the streets.

Every street corner, I'd stand and preach the gospel. The elders were not interested in coming there. But when I came to the church, the Lord said, Humble yourself.

Submit to these elders. Love them. Keep a good relationship with them.

And I did that. Even today when I see those brothers, I have a good relationship with them. After nearly 40 years.

God broke me in those years. Crushed me. People made me sit at the back of the assembly because they were jealous.

Okay. Maybe it's not your time for me. I think of Jesus sitting in the synagogues in Nazareth.

Listening to all those boring sermons of the Pharisees. Year after year. He knew the scriptures at the age of 12.

Can you imagine Jesus sitting there? Listening to all this trash they were preaching from the pulpit. And he kept quiet. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 years, 26 years, 27.

Quiet. Can you imagine the number of boring sermons Jesus heard? His parents took him to the synagogue regularly. 52 Saturdays into 30 years.

How much is that? That many boring sermons he heard. And he sat. He sat through it all.

He endured until the end. Without wasting his time bothering. His hour had not yet come.

I see today young people who are impatient. They are ready. They are not.

They haven't been broken. They have never submitted to authority. They are jealous.

God can never bear witness to them. God did this with me once in one assembly, another assembly, another assembly. Crushed me.

Humbled me. Keep your mouth shut. And I kept my mouth shut.

Keep a good relationship with these elders. Submit to them. I did it.

God never commits authority, spiritual authority to a man who has not been broken. It would be too dangerous. It would be like having electricity, wires going around without insulation.

It will kill. Electricity is very useful, but all the wires have got to be insulated. Not enough to have power.

We need insulation. Not enough to have the power of the Holy Spirit. We need brokenness.

Then you don't kill people. That's the insulation. And that comes only if you will allow God to crush you and humble you.

God has got a plan for you, brother, sister. Not a human being in the world can ever frustrate that. No matter how much they try to keep you down.

People tried to keep me down for many, many years. I said, fine. If God wants me to sit here all my life, I will sit here.

But one day, after God had observed Jesus for 30 years, He said, go. And He said, I am well pleased with my son. He was well pleased with the humility with which Jesus sat for 30 years in those boring synagogues till the time came.

And in three and a half years, He had such an anointed ministry, such as the world has never seen, what other people can't do in 3,000 years. Learn from Jesus. He wasn't going to move till His Father told Him.

He was humble. He submitted to imperfect Joseph and Mary. Submitted to listening to boring sermons.

And it says in Isaiah 53.10, It pleased the Lord to crush you. Has it pleased the Lord to crush you? Have you allowed the Lord to crush you? Ask the seeker of authority. God cannot use a man or a woman who has not been broken.

Sisters, God may use a difficult husband as an authority over you to crush you. And you rebel. You fight back.

You don't join the women's liberation movement, but if people saw you at home, they'd think you're a part of that. You don't have a badge. Women live, but they're in your attitude.

What's the result? What's the result today? You're a vagrant and a wanderer. No fellowship, no spiritual authority. And long, long ago, you could have become a woman of God if you had learned submission.

I see young people who think they know more than their parents, who will not submit to the authority of their parents. I've seen lots of people like that. Where are they today? Vagrants and wanderers.

Don't waste your life, young people. Submit. Don't expose the nakedness of your parents like Ham did.

There'll be a curse on you and your children for the rest of your life. Okay, maybe they're naked, maybe they're drunk. Let God deal with that.

Love covers a multitude of sins. Be like Shem and Japheth who went backwards and covered the nakedness of their parents. That's submission to authority.

But we have a smart generation today, unfortunately, who think they know so much, who think they know more than their parents. They're smart, they're educated. Parents are not so educated.

God doesn't bear witness. What's the use of all that knowledge if God doesn't bear witness to you? Where's the fire? Where's the fire? Plenty of knowledge, but where's the fire? We can imitate anything. We read that the whole pattern of the tabernacle is in Exodus.

You can make one like that today, you know. You follow the pattern of the tabernacle in Exodus, you can make one exactly the correct size, correct material and you can make it like that in your yard. There'll be only one thing missing there.

You know what? The fire. You can't reproduce that. The glory from heaven.

You can never reproduce that. And that's the mark of God's presence, not the pattern. Don't think the pattern of a church is the main thing.

I've never believed it. I've seen a lot of churches which don't follow the New Testament pattern fully, but there's a fire. Like a tabernacle with one board missing or one of the curtains missing over it, but the fire is there.

I see that's the main thing. I don't go looking for the ramskins dyed red. I look for the fire.

What are you looking for? Is the ramskins dyed the right color of red? I couldn't care less. Is the fire there? You can go counting the board. I don't go counting the boards of the tabernacle.

I want to see if the fire is there. Is the fire there in your church? Is the fire there in your ministry? Does God bear witness to you? That's the important thing. That was the thing that made Abel stand out.

Is there a jealousy in your heart because God is using somebody else? God's bearing witness to someone. And you say, how in the world can God bear witness to that person? He's got this doctrine wrong. Well, God doesn't think that doctrine is so important as you think it is.

Obviously. You know, I've had to learn lots of lessons. A lot of things which I thought were important, God didn't think were so important.

And a lot of other things which I thought were not so important, God thinks important. He considers humility very important. Fundamental.

He considers freedom from the love of money very important. Those are the doctrines God wants. Freedom from the love of money, humility.

Which doctrinal statement has got freedom from the love of money? Have you ever seen a denomination which has got freedom from love of money as one of its doctrines? Freedom from jealousy. Is that one of the fundamental doctrines of any denomination? Those are the things God looks weak and glory in being correct in a doctrine. I think of the book of Numbers, chapter 16.

It says here about Korah, Dathan and Abiram and on. I want you to notice something here in Numbers, chapter 16, verse 1. Please read very carefully. There were four people here.

Korah, Dathan, Abiram and on. You got it? Korah, Dathan, Abiram and on. Four people who took action, rose up before Moses.

They were jealous just like Cain. They couldn't bear God bearing witness to Moses time after time after time. They couldn't bear it.

They got into the way of Cain. That's why Jude in his letter combines the rebellion of Korah with the way of Cain. It's the same way.

They couldn't bear God bearing witness to Moses that he always had the word of God. They said, You've gone too far. He said to him.

Everyone is holy. We believe in the priesthood of all believers. The Lord is in the midst.

Why do you exalt yourself? And Moses, this is the man who never wanted to exalt himself. When God pulled him out of the wilderness, he said, please God send somebody else. I'm not the man.

He didn't exalt himself. He had no intention. It was God who took him up, saw his faithfulness and exalted him.

So what did Moses do? Verse 4, he fell on his face. Good thing to do when other people accuse you. Don't defend yourself.

Let God do the defending. Fall on your face. When people question your authority, fall on your face.

If God doesn't defend you, no use your defending yourself. God can deal with the Korah. God can deal with the Dathan's and the Byron's and all much better than we can.

Long, long ago God said to me, when people accuse you, question your ministry, fall on your face. And that's what I've done for 25 years. God can do a better job than me.

And Moses said tomorrow, the Lord will show who is holy. And so they came along tomorrow. Who were the four people? Korah, Dathan, Byron and on, verse 1. The next morning they come along and Moses warns them.

I don't have time to go into all that passage. And then Moses says in verse 24, the Lord spoke to Moses saying, verse 23, here's what the Lord is saying, please read carefully, speak to the congregation saying, get back from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Byron. What happened to Owen? He got some sense that night.

And he pulled out. He went to Korah and said, brother, I am not joining in this at all. Please count me out.

He saved his life. He saved his family. Because he pulled out of that spirit of rebellion that he sensed in these people.

He was a sensible man. Are you sensible? Do you join with others who have a spirit of rebellion? Are you jealous? Pull back. Learn from Owen, the son of Philip.

And Moses arose and said, get back, verse 27, from the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Byron. They came out and said, and Moses said, now the Lord will show you. The Lord will bring about a new thing, verse 30.

And as he finished speaking these words, verse 31, it says in verse 32, the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up. And their households, they suffered, their children suffered. It's sad when a father is rebellious and his children have to suffer.

Just like heaven opened and took two people alive into heaven, Enoch and Elijah. This is the one place in the Bible where earth opened up and people went alive into hell. They went alive, verse 33, into hell.

The one place in the Bible where people went alive into hell was when God saw jealousy of a ministry which he had endorsed. The fire fell on Abel. The fire fell on Moses and it was on Moses.

Others were jealous. And God taught them a lesson. 3,500 years later, people still haven't learned that lesson.

To recognize those whom God recognized. I don't mean numbers. I'm not impressed by numbers.

The cults have numbers. False religions have more numbers than any of us. The anointing of God is not known by numbers.

Jesus had only 11. Not talking about numbers at all. It's to me, I say, I'll know whether the anointing of God is upon my life, not by thousands of people coming in through my ministry.

No, not by thousands of churches and fantastic report. It's by the quality of people whom I can gather. Godly people.

If I can gather 11 people like those apostles in my life in India, I would say, Lord, let us now thy servant depart in peace. For mine eyes have seen your salvation. It's not numbers.

It's the quality of people. The thing that encourages me most in the 25 years of ministry that we've had in India is not 30-40 churches that there are or the hundreds and thousands of people there. It is the quality of some of those elders whom God has raised up in to lead those churches.

Some whom I know them. Some of the godliest people in the land. To me, that's what encourages me the most.

The quality of people, sacrificial, devoted. God can bear witness to your life. You are a sister.

God can make you such a tremendous blessing. Even if you can make one or two sisters godly. Christ-like.

She'll never make them godly by slaying other people with your tongue. So the earth opened up and swallowed. Now I want you to see something.

Turn to Numbers and chapter 26 where this is reported further. Numbers 26. It says here about these people in verse 9. The sons of Elie Abnimeel, Dathan and Abiram.

Dathan and Abiram were called by the congregation who contended against Moses in the company of Korah. Numbers 26.10 The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up along with Korah. But, verse 11 the sons of Korah however did not die.

How would that happen? They were standing there outside the tent. The sons of Korah. And when Moses gave them a final warning.

He said, Dad, we're pulling out of this. They ran away from their dad and stood with Moses. They escaped at the last minute.

You know you can escape at the last minute? Have some sense. Those sons of Korah did not die. Now I want you to turn to Psalm 46.

Psalm 46. It says at the top of the psalm. A psalm of the sons of Korah.

What's the psalm? God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear.

Though the earth should change. Though the earth should open up and swallow and the mountains slip right in. Verse 4. There's a river whose streams make glad the city of God.

Verse 8. Come behold the works of the Lord. What desolation He has wrought in the earth. Verse 10.

Be still. Let go. Cease striving.

Relax. All of that is implied in that verse. And know that I am God.

I will be exalted among the nations. Those sons of Korah wrote that with meaning. They knew they would not have been alive if their fathers had not pulled out at the last minute.

These are probably the descendants of those sons of the original sons of Korah who wrote this. Or perhaps the original sons of Korah themselves. I don't know.

But whoever it is. They knew they wouldn't have been alive. And those wonderful psalms.

Read it sometimes. Psalm 42. The sons of Korah.

Psalm 44. Psalm 45. The bridal psalm of Jesus and His bride.

Psalm 47. Psalm 48. Psalm 49.

Some wonderful psalms written by the sons of Korah. Who pulled out at the last minute. And you'll find meaning in those psalms when you read it and understanding the background of it.

I want to turn you to another passage. In 2 Samuel. In chapter 15.

2 Samuel chapter 15 it says. This is referring to the, to Absalom, the son of David. David had been very good to Absalom.

David had forgiven Absalom. He had nurtured him. I don't want to go into all the story before that.

But it says here. In the last part of verse 33 of chapter 14. The king kissed Absalom.

He loved him. Chapter 15. Absalom took advantage of David's goodness.

And he used to rise up early in the morning. Verse 2. And stand beside the way of the gate. And it happened that whenever a man who had a suit to come to the king for judgment.

Absalom would call that man. Put his arms around him. And say What city are you from? Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel.

And Absalom would say. See, you know I really believe your claims are very good and right. Verse 3. I think you really need justice.

But unfortunately there is no one to listen to you. The king hasn't appointed anybody to take care of your needs. And he would say, you know I really wish somebody would be appoint me as a judge.

I tell you I would sort out these problems in no time. Verse 4. If anybody had a suit or cause. I would give him justice.

And it happened when a man verse 5. Came here to prostrate himself before him. He would put out his hand. He said don't.

I am only your brother. Don't humble yourself to me. He would kiss him.

And in this manner it says in the last part of verse 6. Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel from the man whom God had anointed. That happened many times in 3000 years since then. To steal the hearts of people away from God's anointed man.

Because Absalom couldn't bear God's blessing. He was his father. I have seen people who have been spiritual fathers.

And when their spiritual sons grew up who were nobody. But now they have become somebody. Neglect and ignore their spiritual fathers and seek to steal the hearts of people away from their father.

You think God doesn't see it? He sees everything. Ok. He stole the hearts of people and gradually in a few verses you read.

He became king. David had to flee. The man after God's own heart had to flee for his life.

And Absalom sat on the throne. Who wants you sitting on the throne if God doesn't back you up? It's just a matter of time before God destroy them. And I have seen that happen again and again and again and again.

The apostle Paul told the elders in Ephesus in Acts chapter 20. He says, I know what's going to happen after I leave. From among your own selves men will arise who like Absalom will draw disciples after themselves.

Men who speak perverse things. What are those perverse things? Those perverse things are not wrong doctrines. Perverse things are to draw people after themselves.

They've got their own private agenda. They've got their own program and that is to promote themselves. And they have forgotten from whom they received.

Absalom forgot his father's goodness. And I've seen people who forget where they received all their goodness from. Where they received even a ministry from.

And they are jealous. They want to exalt themselves in the eyes of the congregation. And God sees it all.

Jealousy. Jealousy. Unable to bear God blessing somebody else.

What was the end of Absalom? Hanging in a tree by his hair. Stabbed to death. How terrible.

David was a man after God's own heart. Jealousy. You find it again and again and again and again and again.

Turn to Matthew chapter 27. Matthew 27. Pilate was a heathen man who didn't know anything about the Bible.

He didn't have the Holy Spirit. He didn't know God. He was a heathen man.

And when Jesus stood before him, he could recognize Jesus was innocent. What those people who study the Bible couldn't understand. Pilate understood it clearly.

And it says here, Pilate asked the crowd. Matthew 27 verse 17. Whom do you want me to release for you? Barabbas or Jesus? Listen to verse 18.

Because he knew that it was because of jealousy that the Pharisees had delivered Jesus out. You see how this thread, this green thread of jealousy goes all the way through the Bible. Starting with Cain through Absalom.

Saul was also in that line. Jealous of David. Absalom and Korah was also there.

Now even the son of God himself. Jealous. The Pharisees were jealous because the people appreciated.

The Pharisees were 60 years old. Jesus 33 years old. They were accepting this young man.

They were jealous. Get rid of him. Kill him.

The way of Cain. Not from atheists. Deeply religious people, the Pharisees.

This atheist, Pilate, he could see through the whole thing. He had enough discernment to see this is just jealousy. This is pure jealousy.

Do you know the jealousy of one Christian brother to another, even an atheist like Pilate would be able to discern and see. But you are not able to see it in yourself. I want to ask you brothers and sisters.

Are you jealous because God has blessed somebody materially? I think Job's three preacher friends were jealous of him. Because they couldn't stand that a man could be spiritual and also wealthy. I mean if he was poor and spiritual, ok.

And if he was rich but not spiritual, ok. But he was spiritual and he was prospering. Oh, they burned with jealousy.

They were his friends. They visited him now and then, but they never revealed that jealousy. And one day they heard it's gone badly with Job's children.

Ah, at last, children are killed. His business is destroyed. Let's go and comfort him.

You think they really came to comfort him? They were thrilled in their hearts. And they came there, pretended to be sorrowful, sat with him and did all the actions of throwing mud on their heads and weeping and all that. And kept on saying, sin in your life, sin in your life.

You know what God said to them at the end of the end of Job? He said, My wrath is kindled against you, three of you. And I'll consume you if you don't get Job to come and pray for you. And Job, good man that he was, he prayed for them.

Lord, don't judge them. Forgive them. They don't know what they're doing.

They got into the way of Cain. Preachers, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, read it. They never said one wrong thing about God.

But jealousy burned in their hearts and God was almost ready to consume them. You see this green thread of jealousy running right through. God blesses a man and somebody else can't bear it.

God blesses a man materially. Why can't you bear it? Because money means so much to you. You think money is such a big thing.

That's why. Otherwise you'd be happy. Lord, I'm so happy that my brother is prospering.

I'm so happy that he's got a house ten times bigger than mine. I'm happy that he's got a good car. Maybe he's got five of them.

And I've got a broken down old one. That's fine. Perfectly happy.

That's one who's understood that God determines the boundary of my life. I thank God that I've discovered that God draws the financial circle around me. He's decided what the size of my financial circle should be.

That's no man. It's God. And I'm happy.

When I ride my two-wheeled scooter in India, because the price of gas is high, and I see all these preachers who make money in the name of religion going by in their huge vehicles, I rejoice. I'm not jealous of them at all. I'm happy.

I say, Lord, I'm supremely happy. You have drawn the size of my circle around me. I rejoice.

Can you rejoice? Do you think material things mean that much? When you get into glory, you'll see it doesn't mean anything. Godliness with contentment is a great thing. Not godliness with prosperity.

Have you got godliness with contentment? Or have you got godliness with jealousy? Are you happy that another can prosper, spiritually and materially? Let me ask you, my brothers and sisters, do you really rejoice when it goes well with somebody else's children? And your own children are struggling. Is there jealousy there? Is there a longing to see one of that brother's children fall in some way? I'm not inventing stories. Perhaps I'm speaking of what dwells in your heart.

And God exposes you like He exposed Cain and said, if you intend well, your face will be lifted up. You will also be accepted. There will be a fire upon your life too.

But you don't intend well. You're trying to show that you're better than someone else. You're waiting for some calamity to hit that brother.

You, like Job's preacher friends, you act very nice, visit his home, and act as though you're very interested in him, but you're not. You're walking the way of Cain. Are you jealous because somebody else's ministry prospers, his church prospers, and you don't think he should because he's wrong in this, and he's wrong in that, and he's wrong in the other thing? But God doesn't share your opinion, unfortunately.

What to do? God doesn't share your opinion. He doesn't agree with you. What shall we do then? We shall humble ourselves, say, Lord, I'm wrong.

Let God be true, and every man a liar. So the Bible says. So I say, Lord, I could be totally wrong.

Are you jealous of some other sister for whom everything seems to go smoothly, and for you it is pressure upon pressure upon pressure, and you're just hoping that some calamity will hit that sister? In this, the children of God and the children of the devil are made obvious. We are called to lay down our lives for our brothers. How far the Christian church has come from that spirit of Christ, and think that they've got God with them because their doctrines are right, or they speak in tongues, or their praise and worship is so beautiful.

No, these are not the marks. Jesus never said, all men will know you're my disciples when your doctrine is right. He never said, all men will know you're my disciples when you break bread every week, or when you speak in tongues, or when your songs are so melodious.

All men will know you're my disciples when you love one another. That's all. That we don't belong to that evil one king, and we don't walk that way.

I want to invite you to repent. God has shown you something in your heart. The spirit of Cain, the spirit of Korah, the spirit of Absalom, repent.

Spirit of the Pharisees, repent. The spirit of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, repent. There is forgiveness with God, that He may be feared.

Let us humble ourselves. God is almighty. We are nobodies.

Let's humble ourselves under His mighty hand. Let's bow before God. Heavenly Father, help us.

We are a needy people. Our flesh is so corrupt and evil. We don't even realize how easily it leads us to the sin of jealousy.

That we cannot rejoice over your blessing upon another's life. Please help us. That we shall see our need and repent.

We know that if we intend well, our faith too can be lifted up. Your fire can fall upon our life too. Save us from spending our days as vagrants and wanderers on this earth.

Help us to build fellowship. Lord, help us to set things right quickly. Lest it be forever too late.

Have mercy upon us, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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