

Genesis 4

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[0 : 0 0] this chapter. Now Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, I have acquired a man from the Lord. Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time, it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought the firstborn of the flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but he did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. So the Lord said to Cain, why are you angry? And why is your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted?

And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door, and its desire is for you, but you should rule over it. Now Cain talked with Abel, his brother, and it came to pass when they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, where is Abel, your brother?

He said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, what have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.

And Cain said to the Lord, my punishment is greater than I can bear. Surely you have driven me out this day from the face of the ground. I shall be hidden from your face. I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me. And the Lord said to him, therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him. Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch.

And he built a city and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch. To Enoch was born Enoch. And Enoch begot Mehujael. And Mehujael begot Methusel. And Methusel begot Lamech. Then Lamech took for himself two wives. The name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah. And Adah bore Jabal, and was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all who played the harp and flute. And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal, Cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And his sister, the sister of Tubal, Cain, was Nema.

[3 : 1 6] Then Lamech said to his wives, Ada and Zillah, hear my voice. Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech. For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold. And Adam knew his wife again. She bore a son and named himself. For God appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.

And as for saith to him also a son was born, and he named him Enosh, then men began to call on the name of the Lord. Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. And just as we turn back to God's word, let's again ask for his help in prayer.

Heavenly Father, we do pray that you would help us now as we focus on this passage of Scripture. We thank you that the same Holy Spirit who inspired this passage to be written as the one who is with us and who promises to be our teacher. Without his work within us, we cannot see, we cannot hear, we cannot respond to what you would have us see and hear and respond to. And so we ask, Lord, that we may know the help of the Holy Spirit. And we ask that you would speak into our lives and help us to know your work in us.

We thank you that Jesus has done the work of salvation. Everything that is needed for us to be saved is freely offered to us in Christ. Give us the faith, we pray, to take hold of it. But Lord, we acknowledge that the work of sanctification, the work of making us more like Jesus, is something that continues.

[5 : 24] And it continues for as long as we are in this world. So work within us, we pray, that we may know the saving and the sanctifying touch of Jesus. And we pray these things in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

Well, if you can have your Bibles open before you, that would be helpful. I want to just step through this passage in the time that we have this morning.

Sometimes we can have high hopes, we can have great expectations in different areas of life, high hopes and great expectations that never actually materialize into anything positive.

Think about a football manager who comes into a club that are struggling. They come into a club in a blaze of publicity. And the fans within the club say, this new manager or this new player that's being brought in, he's going to change, he's going to turn this club around, he's going to give us the success that we've been looking for for so long.

Great expectations. But in two seasons' time, nothing's changed. It didn't materialize. There are other times we can hear that kind of talk in respect of a politician.

[6 : 57] A nation may be struggling and say, well, if only this politician would be removed, if only another politician would be brought in, they would bring change, they would bring the country back around to a good place.

But then in five years' time, so often the same people are saying nothing changed. Our hopes were real, but our hopes didn't materialize into anything good.

And if we look back from Genesis 4 into Genesis 3, these are familiar passages for most of us, I think. And as Genesis 3 finishes, we see that things are bleak.

It's the passage where we see the reality of man's fall. Things are broken. Sin has come into the world. And there's that sense of dread that accompanies that.

But as the chapter comes to an end, there's a note of hope. God had promised. He promised, if we look back to Genesis 3, 15, that a saviour would come.

[8 : 05] That was the first promise of the Messiah, the saviour of sinners. And that saviour would come through the line of Eve. It would come from her seed.

That's why Eve was called Eve, which means life giver. And so as we move from Genesis 3 into Genesis 4, in verse 1 we see that Eve, she conceived and she bore this son.

She receives a child. Adam knew his wife Eve. And she conceived and bore Cain and said, I have acquired a man from the Lord.

And that exclamation that comes from Eve, it's an exclamation that's full of hope. And the question that we ask as we look at this and as we listen to Eve is, is this son that she's been given, this child that she now carries in her arms, could this be the saviour?

That's what's in Eve's mind. Could this be the life giver? Eve had high hopes for this child. She has great expectations for Cain, but sadly these expectations, these high hopes, they don't materialise.

[9 : 25] And the reality that we know from this chapter is that Cain would not be the life giver. Cain would not be the one through whom life would come.

The sad fact of this chapter is that Cain would be the first life taker. Cain is the first murderer that we see in the history of this world.

You know, we've been remembering in the course of this week the reality of war and violence. And we are thankful, as we must be, for those who laid down their lives so that we could know protection and peace and freedom.

But we are sorrowful as we are reminded of something, of the horrors of war and the suffering that goes with that, the loss of life that goes with that.

And we actually see the beginning of war and violence in Genesis chapter 4 in the life of Cain and Abel.

[10 : 46] And I think perhaps at this point, you know, we should pause and pause long enough to hate sin when we see the consequences of it.

I mean, think about this. The first baby born into the world, an occasion that should have been so joyful, becomes a tragedy because of sin.

how much we, as a fallen people, are in need of a Savior. How much, as we see Christ, we should rush in faith to the Savior who came, as was promised, to undo the damage that sin brought.

So today, I want to look briefly in the time that we have at this story, this sad story, this historical account of Cain and Abel.

The first point that we come to, the first point that we have in this story is we see a rocky family. We see a rocky family situation.

[12:16] Sometimes we have a crossing on the boat. It can be a rocky one. It's not calm, but the wind is blowing. The seas are turbulent and the boat's rocking about on the waves.

And if you've got sea legs like mine, which are not very good, you very quickly feel the ill effects of that. And the first family that we see here in Genesis 4, they're being rocked about now.

They're beginning to feel the ill effects of sin. Sin has only just come in, but already they're being shaken and they're being tossed around by the consequences of that sin.

We've seen verse 1, the fact that Cain was born. And Eve exclaims in that verse, I have acquired a man from the Lord.

And then in verse 2, it says, she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now back in Old Testament times, names weren't chosen in accordance with the fashions of the age.

[13:29] Baby names were not picked out of a current fashionable baby book. Names meant something. And Cain meant to possess, which speaks into the expectations and the hopes of Eve that she longed for and she now possessed this man from the Lord, this man that she thought could have been the life giver.

John MacArthur says, some have suggested this is a reference to the promised redeemer of mankind that Eve anticipated Cain would fulfill the promise of God concerning the seed of the woman.

So Eve had high hopes for her firstborn. She clung on to this firstborn. And that comes through in the name that she gave to her firstborn, Cain.

Then she bought again. There's a second child. So what would she call the second child? Well, she calls the second child Abel.

And what does Abel mean? Well, the scholars tell us that Abel means nothing. Abel means vapor or breath or something very close to nothing.

[14:54] So we see the contrast in how Eve regards these two children. The first child, she possesses him with such affection.

Cain. Second child, nothing. And maybe I'm making too much of this. But it seems worth noting that Eve appears to show much more interest and give much more attention to one son, Cain, over the other son, Abel.

And that may well have fed the ego of this son, Cain, and instill a pride in this son, Cain, that would explode into violence.

And we see that kind of pattern repeated also in the story of Joseph. Remember, Joseph was shown such favoritism by his father, Jacob, and it caused all kinds of trouble in his life, made for a very dysfunctional, a very rocky, a very turbulent family situation, and the reality is this is what sin does.

It infects everything, and especially the home. So let's always be repenting of sin as we see it in us.

[16:28] Let's always be confessing sin. Let's always be alert to the destructive consequences of sin. I think we see the first roots of it in the family.

There's the rocky family situation. That's the first point, a rocky family. The second point we come to as we go through this account of Cain and Abel is we see a rejected offering.

That's point number two, a rejected offering. Verse two, now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time, it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord.

Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but he did not respect Cain and his offering.

I think the big question that comes to our minds as we read through that is why is it that God rejects Cain's offering but accepts Abel's offering?

[17:41] Because that's made very clear. One offering is accepted and another offering is rejected. Why is that? And some speculate that it's to do with the quality of what was offered.

Abel brought the firstborn of his flock but Cain just brought the fruit of the ground, the ordinary fruit of the ground. And some say, well, that shows that Abel's offering has the edge over Cain's because it's a higher quality of offering.

And that might be something in that, but I don't think we can be sure. Others speculate that this has to do with their hearts. That Cain, as he offered this sacrifice or this gift to the Lord, his heart was

grudging.

His heart was dark. But Abel, as he brought his offering, his sacrifice, he was a cheerful giver. That's what some would suggest, but I don't think we can know that because we're not told that. We don't know how their hearts were when they stepped forward with these offerings. So to get a clear answer on why Cain's offering was rejected and Abel's was not, I think we have to step into the New Testament.

[19 : 06] And it tells us in Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 4 that by faith, Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.

faith. So what does it mean to have faith? Well, it means that we are believing in and acting on what God says.

And in the previous chapter, Genesis 3, God had made clear that for Adam and Eve to be covered, for Adam and Eve to be able to come before him, they needed to be covered in more than the fig leaves that they had stuck to themselves.

There had to be sacrifice. So an animal was killed and they were clothed with the skin of the animal. That was God's way.

God provided the covering, God's way. And it involved blood, it involved sacrifice. Hebrews 9, 22 says, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.

[20 : 18] And so we see here that Abel, as he makes his approach to God, he came God's way. He came as one who was acting in faith in God's word.

And so blood was shed. A lamb was slain. A sacrifice was made as he made his approach to God. And it's all pointing forward to Jesus, the Lamb of God, whose shed blood makes us acceptable. We sometimes sing a hymn that says, what can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Nothing can my sin erase.

nothing but the blood of Jesus. Not of works, it's all of grace. Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

[21 : 28] That's God's way. And we have the first signpost to that way here, back in Genesis. And that's the way that Abel came.

Blood sacrifice. But Cain, well he came his own way, didn't he? He brought his own good works and God rejected them.

And the reality is that God still rejects those who seek to come to him. Not by faith in Jesus, but their own way, through their own good works.

When we stand before God, if we think that God will accept us on the basis of who we are in our own name, or what we have done in our own lives, then we will be as disappointed as Cain was. God did not and God does not respect or accept our works as currency for salvation.

[22 : 53] The only way that we can be saved, the only way that we can be made acceptable to God, the only way that we can have our sin forgiven is through the finished work of Christ.

He died for us on that cross in Calvary. His blood was shed. He rose from the dead.

He ascended into heaven. He's at the right hand of the Father just now, and he promises that it is only by faith in him, it's only through the power of his shed blood that we can come to God.

There's no other way. Jesus said in John 14, 6, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. So we see a rocky family situation.

[24 : 05] That's what sin caused. We see secondly, a rejected offering. As Cain came to God, seeking to negotiate his own terms and not come God's way.

And thirdly, here, we see that Cain, who is now furious, at the rejection shown to him, he's given an opportunity to repent. Verse five, and Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

And we can picture him in this situation. He's humiliated, he's furious. He's rejected by God.

And to make it worse still, his little brother has been accepted by God. So Cain is furious and his pride is stinging.

And I don't know, maybe there's someone here today. Maybe there's somebody watching online and your pride is stinging.

[25 : 21] And a message like this makes you angry. I remember a woman who rushed at me after a sermon one day, not here in a different place.

And she was furious. I could see it in her face before she came anywhere near me. And she said to me, listen laddie, if I believe what you say, even I'm a sinner, not even I'll get into heaven.

And look at all the things that I do, she was furious at the thought that God would not accept her for who she was.

And on the basis of all the good works that she did in the community. And that's where Cain is at this point. He's furious. But God doesn't leave him there.

God comes to him. So the Lord said to Cain verse 6, why are you angry? And why is your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted?

[26 : 30] Do well means have faith, follow God's way. And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.

God's need to need to do well. And the verse that comes to mind is the verse from Psalm 95. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart.

And Cain, at this point, he can clearly hear the voice of God challenging him as to why he's angry, and encouraging him to repent of his sinful rage, to stop going his own way, to turn around, to go God's way.

The Lord, in his dealings with Cain here, he shows him how to be accepted. He warns him of the danger of that sin that's crouching at the door, waiting for him.

He's given this opportunity to repent. And this is what God does for us in the gospel. This is how he deals with us.

[27 : 37] he tells us the bad news about how who we are and what we do is not good enough. It misses the mark as I was saying to the children.

God calls us in the gospel dealings to stop going our own way, to stop trying to make ourselves acceptable on the basis of our good works and our religion.

and rather to come to Jesus whilst there is time before sin masters us eternally.

So here is Cain. He's at a crossroads. God didn't leave him with that sinful rage.

He comes to him. He challenges him. He extends the hand of repentance. He extends an offer to Cain. He says, if you repent, you can be saved.

[28 : 52] He has opportunity to repent and so do we if we hear the voice of God. And if we see our need of God as those who are sinners, we have opportunity to repent.

So what will Cain do? Well, that takes us to our fourth point. We see here in Cain a rejection of God.

It says in James chapter 1, Blessed is the man who endures temptation. For when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love him.

Let no one say when he's tempted, I am tempted by God, for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own evil desires and enticed.

Then when desire is conceived, it gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death. Now, although we don't see the enemy at work here in Genesis 4, in the same way that we see him at work in Genesis 3, we don't see in Genesis 4 a talking serpent.

[30 : 16] But the enemy is present. He is crouching at the door. He is tempting Cain, even though Cain at this point perhaps doesn't know it.

Satan's tactic with Eve in the garden was to use discontent to cause her to sin. Satan's tactic with Cain is to use his wounded pride and this inner rage to take that and to feed it and to fuel it so that it grows into something explosive.

That's how he attempts to take down Cain. And at this point, as we see Cain, he's under severe temptation. He has opportunity to repent.

The Lord has spoken that to him. But now the devil is speaking. And Cain is listening. And there's a murderous desire that is growing within Cain.

And it's about to give birth to violence and death. death. In verse 8, we see that. That Cain talked with Abel, his brother.

[31 : 37] And it came to pass when they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and killed him. So we have the first cold-blooded, brutal, calculated murder.

And we actually see the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' warnings in picture form here. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5, verse 21 and 22.

He said, You have heard it said, You have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, says Jesus, that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.

Remember that Rolling Stones song from probably the 70s, I don't know. The chorus in it was, Don't play with me, because you're playing with fire.

And that's a good line to have in our minds when the devil is tempting us. Don't play with him. Don't play with the sin that he is handing out to us, because we are playing with fire.

[33 : 01] Whether it's lust for a forbidden fruit of some kind, or whether it's rage towards a brother or sister, these temptations, when we play with them, when we entertain them, they don't remain in the mind.

They catch fire. they explode into sinful action, as they did with Cain and Abel. And so the Lord comes to Cain after the crime has been committed.

The Lord said to Cain, verse 9, where is Abel, your brother? Now, why does God ask this question? Is it because he doesn't know? Well, it's not because he doesn't know.

He knows everything. He sees everything. So why does he ask this question? Well, the reason he asks this question is he's giving Cain yet another chance to confess his sin and be saved.

And you might say, what do you mean a murderer can be saved? A cold-blooded, brutal murderer of his younger brother can be saved? And God makes clear in his word, yes, he can, if there's repentance.

[34 : 26] The vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives, even Cain, had he repented.

1 John 1, 8 and 9, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, even murder.

So Cain did have opportunity after opportunity to repent, but he refuses it, he rejects God. Then the Lord said to Cain, verse 9, where is Abel, your brother?

And Cain said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? So Cain lies. He knew exactly what his brother was, and yet he lies to God.

It's the first lie to God. Adam and Eve, when they were challenged about their sin, they squirm, but they don't lie. under pressure, they confess.

[35 : 45] They say, we ate the fruit, but Cain, he lies. And we sense the attitude in him as well.

He's trying to be smart with God. Abel was a keeper of sheep, we're told, and Cain sarcastically replies to God when God asks him the question. He says, am I a keeper of the keeper?

So is Cain able to trick God with a smart answer? No, he's not. Because God is the all-seeing, he's the all-knowing God. And God says to Cain, verse 10, what have you done?

The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. I know what you did. says God. And you will be punished for what you have done.

So now, verse 11, you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you.

[36 : 54] A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth. Judgment is pronounced. You know, perhaps Cain thought that he would somehow manage to escape God's judgment.

It seems madness. And yet we know that today there are many people who think that somehow they'll be able to escape God's judgment. Somehow they'll be able to cut a deal with God.

But Cain does not avoid God's judgment. And if there is no repentance for sin, if we reject the salvation God offers, we will not escape.

That's the truth. And when Cain realizes it, he cries out, verse 13, to the Lord, my punishment is greater than I can bear.

Surely you have driven me out this day from the face of the ground. I shall be hidden from your face. I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me.

[38 : 04] He's in panic mode. Is this last gasp repentance from Cain? No, it's not. This is a Judas Iscariot like remorse.

Because even when Cain is caught here, he has no thought of repentance. He doesn't even seem to have any thought about the life that he's taken. He doesn't seem to have any thought of what this is going to do within the family to his father and his mother.

All he can do is think about himself and his own skin. And so we see here in Cain, this comprehensive rejection of God.

We see this consistent resistance to the advances of God. And it causes Cain to come under the curse of God's judgment.

And let's just note that in application. If we reject God, if we persist in sin, there will always be consequences.

[39 : 23] Maybe not immediately, but there will be these consequences, this judgment. Note here that judgment didn't fall on Cain immediately.

God, in his common grace, he protects Cain. maybe he's given him another chance, and another chance, and another chance, day by day to repent. But Cain doesn't take it.

And ultimately, Cain's sin did bring judgment. And not just on him. This is not just about Cain. This is something that will run through his whole family.

And that's our fifth point here. just in a very brief word here, take a note here, take a look at the rebellious family of Cain.

Not only is this judgment something that hits him, it goes through his whole family, we see a rebellious family. We see this rejection of God in Cain's people.

[40 : 28] If you look at verses 16 to 24, I've no time to go there, but we see that Cain's family follow him down this track of rejecting God. That was their lifestyle, they reject God, they rebel against God.

And we see it particularly in the life of Lamech. You know, the first person to redefine marriage was not an LGBT activist, it was Lamech, in Genesis 4.

God said marriage will be between one man and one woman. Marriage, says Lamech to me, let's make it something different. I'll take two wives. Never mind God's way.

Lamech leads the way in polygamy. Then there's more murder that we see in Lamech's life.

Lamech's father, Cain, he murders but he tries to cover it up.

He knows he's done wrong. Lamech, on the other hand, murders and he boasts about murder in a song. If you look at verses 23 and 24, you see the difference in the structure of the text.

[41 : 40] It's a song. It's a dark, sinful song that Lamech composes to his wives. Lamech said to his wives, Adan, Zillah, hear my voice.

Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech, for I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me. If Cain shall be a voice, then Lamech, seventy-seven-fold.

It's like the first gangster rap lyric, as Lamech glorifies violence and glories in rejection of God. So let's see that.

Cain sets the course. As he rejects God, he relocates to the land of Nod, this place that's far from God, and his family follow him.

His family follow him. See, we must never make the mistake of thinking that our rejection of God stops with us.

[42 : 50] It's just about us. There are people, often the people who are closest to us, those that we love the most in our families, and they are following us.

In some cases, there are family members who are following us down the road to judgment, and they don't even know it. down the road to our lost eternity.

We see a rebellious family in Cain's family. finally, we need some light as we finish, because this has been a dark story, because Cain determines in his own will that he will follow a dark course.

So where's the light to finish? well, thankfully, there is light. We see finally here a return to God. We see a return to God.

Remember in the old houses? They're probably still in some of our homes as well. There used to be a barometer on the wall. It looked a bit like a clock, a barometer that would show you the pressure of the weather.

[44 : 18] I remember it being in my grandparents' house, and as I was past the barometer, I would just give the wall a wee knock underneath the barometer, and it would show you there would be a slight movement in the needle.

The pressure might be very low in bad weather, but sometimes you would go past the barometer, give it a wee knock, and the needle would start to go in the opposite direction, and you would say, well, it looks bleak outside, but thank goodness, there's a change coming.

And as this chapter finishes, there's a change coming. a new son is born. Abel has been killed in such brutal circumstances, but a new son is born, a son that would point forward to, all the way forward to, to the Saviour, Jesus, the life giver.

Verse 25, Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, for God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.

And as for Seth, to him also a son was born, and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the Lord.

[45 : 40] and that's when everything changes, as men and women and boys and girls began once more to call on the name of the Lord.

See, Cain had caused his family to turn away from God, but this new son Seth would be different to Cain.

and he would be like Abel. He would lead people to return to God. One commentator says, from among the offspring, it is God who chooses which one will carry on the family line leading to Christ. Adam and Eve's third son, Seth, was the one chosen. As Seth's descendants increased in number, they began to call upon the name of the Lord. That is to depend on the Lord, to believe in him.

This was in contrast to the descendants of Cain, who showed no such dependence or faith. faith.

So as I finish, how do we return to God if we are those who have wandered, even like Cain?

[47 : 09] salvation? How do we get salvation if we know the reality of our sin and the reality of our lostness?

Well, it's the same way that we're shown in Genesis 4. It's by calling on the name of the Lord.

Whoever, it says in Romans 10, 13, whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

So a chapter that took us deep into the darkness of sin finishes by pointing us to the light, to the salvation that is offered in Jesus.

Where we call upon his name. We'll pray. our heavenly father, we thank you for the wonder of your gospel, that even though we may stray far from you, we have the promise that those who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus shall be saved.

So help us, we pray, as we hear your voice, not to harden our hearts as Cain did, not to turn away from you and risk turning all those who follow us away from you.

[48 : 39] Give to us that repentance and that heart that will both hear and call upon the name of the Lord Jesus. We thank you that as we come to him, we will never be driven away, but we will be received and we will be given the way that leads to salvation.

Help us, we pray, to look to him. And now we pray that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit would be with us all, both now and forevermore.

Amen.