

East of Eden

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[0 : 00] So what's happened so far is in Genesis 1, we have seen there is one true God and he has created the world and it is good. He's created the world good and the crowning jewel of his creation is man and woman, created in his image.

Their work is good, he's tasked them, be fruitful and multiply, have dominion, and they're supposed to find joy in serving the Lord and reflecting his goodness into the world.

They've been created for community so that nobody's an island. And not only that, but he's given them marriage for the purpose of fruitfulness and joy and we see at the end of chapter 2 just this love poetry between man and woman.

But then the saddest page of the Bible comes in Genesis chapter 3. The serpent enters into the garden and man and woman believe the serpent's lies and they do what God commanded them not to do.

And that brings death and sin. There's this great fall that happens. It's so sad, it's tragic. And yet in the midst of that, God who is a God of mercy comes to them and finds them.

[1 : 15] And you might be thinking, if you had never heard this story before and you're going through it, you're going, does it end? Is that just it? You know, God could have come in and said, whoops, messed up, hit the reset button, let's scrap our plans.

But he's a God who redeems and restores. And so he has a plan for the world. And now because of sin, there's a restoration that has to happen, a redemption. Man and woman, God provides for them.

He covers them and he sends them out of the garden to the east. See this throughout the book of Genesis. Moving to the east is away from God's presence and purposes.

Where does Cain move at the very end of our passage? To the east. East of Eden. It's sad. It's tragic. And in our passage then, you see how sin begins to kind of devolve and twist and goes down and down, brother against brother, one rising up and killing the other.

In order to talk about our passage in Genesis 4 this morning, I thought it'd be good just to look at it through the lens of one simple question. One question. And it's this.

[2 : 28] Why does God have to judge? Can God be a good God and be the God of judgment who punishes sin?

If he's so loving, how is he also just? Those don't seem to go together in our minds in today's world. You know, kind of you look at Genesis 3 and you're like, was it really that big of a deal?

They messed up once. Why doesn't God just shrug his shoulders and be like, hey, you know, no big deal, you silly goose. Let's just keep going. Why does judgment come?

Why does God judge? I know you were driving here this morning and you were hoping, you were just praying in your heart. I hope Nate talks about judgment this morning. Well, you're welcome.

We're going to do that. But seriously though, because here's the thing. This is a topic, God's judgment, that a lot of people wrestle with. People outside of the church, a lot of times they don't want to come in because they feel like, hey, there's this judgment thing going on and I don't judge.

[3 : 28] Nobody should judge, right? God who punishes? Ah, no, I don't like that. But it's not just outside of the church, right? People inside the church too. We too can read different passages in the Bible and kind of go like, ah, what am I supposed to do with that?

We can ask the same questions that people outside of the church ask. And so you see, we can err by kind of going through the Bible. Let's just avoid that topic.

Let's just skip over that portion of the Bible. And what you're left with is kind of a watered down version of Christianity that starts to take the heart of the cross out of it.

We can also err if it's like the only things that churches talk about and the preacher gets red in the face and it's all fire and brimstone and you're leaving the church every single Sunday trembling and wondering if you're actually saved, if there's actually mercy for you.

We need to talk about this and that's what we're going to do. And I think in this passage, what you're going to see is the seriousness of sin, but also a hope for the world that's full of it.

[4 : 34] So let me pray for us and we'll get to our outline. Father, we ask that you'd speak a word to our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit that we may see Jesus and know you as the just and the justifier.

We ask this in Christ's name. Amen. Let's tackle this question of judgment by talking about four different things that we see in this passage.

First off is the necessity of exile. Secondly, the cry of justice. Third, the trajectory of the heart. And then lastly, the word of mercy.

Necessity of exile, the cry of justice, the trajectory of the heart, and then the word of mercy. First off, the necessity of exile. And this first point, actually, it's a little bit more conceptual.

It has to do with the context of how we got here. And then the second point we'll drill down more into the text that we read. Remember, what did we say in the context of this? Genesis 3, something big and sad has happened.

[5 : 40] Sin has entered into God's good creation and a curse has fallen on the world. I think I'm being fair in saying this. To the atheist, this is just the way the world is.

You cannot like it. You can try to make it better. But it is literally just, this is just the way the world is. To the Christian, the way the world is, is not the way the world is supposed to be.

It's not how it was created to be. Life in the garden is supposed to be heaven and earth together.

God is walking in the cool of the garden with Adam and Eve.

They are enjoying perfect communion with him, each other, and the rest of creation. And sin separates. Right? Sin separates things. Things.

And what was a feast in Genesis 1 and 2, now we see that Adam and Eve are exiled from the feast. Sin is this cosmic treason.

[6 : 41] It's an alien intruder. There's no explanation for why sin shows up in Genesis 3. It is irrational. It doesn't belong to God's good creation.

It is death. And to turn away from God what the claim is, who is life eternal, is to turn towards eternal death. And so Adam and Eve, they're exiled from the garden.

Remember he said, eat of that tree and you will surely die. So God exiles them. He says, lest they eat of the tree of life. And it seems, I'm not exactly sure what that means, but it seems they would keep them in this perpetual state of death.

So unless we, in order to have mercy and God to restore and to redeem exile has to happen. And here's the first thing that we see in the Bible and it's this.

Love and justice are not at odds. Love and anger are not always at odds. Give a little example.

[7 : 41] Anybody have a green thumb? Any good gardeners here? Tried in a past life? Not so great anymore? Just imagine you're a very passionate gardener.

You love your garden. You've poured into your garden. And all of a sudden, one morning, you go out and you see one of your most beautiful plants. But now, wrapped around it is this weed with thorns on it.

And it's starting to choke your plant that you love. What do you do? If you're a good gardener, what's the thing that you do? Well, first off, you put on your gloves, right? So your fingies don't get hurt by the thorns.

But then you go and you grab that intruder, that weed, and you exile it from your garden. You take it away in order to save the thing that you love.

It's an instinctive thing to do as a good gardener. You see something that is set on destroying what is good and what you love. And your love moves you to grab it and to exile it.

[8 : 43] Because you love it and care for it, you exile the things that threatens which you love. There's this guy named E.H. Gifford, and he once said this. Human love offers a true analogy.

The more a father loves a son, the more he hates in him the drunkard, the liar, the traitor. You know, love is not at odds with anger. Anger, what anger is, it's the response of love.

Moving towards saving that thing which you treasure. What's the problem, though? Because a lot of us, I don't know about you, most of my anger is not righteous anger. The problem is we love the

wrong things in the wrong way, right?

And so what is anger? All of a sudden, you know, somebody slights you. What do you love most? Do you love your reputation so your anger lashes out in order to protect the thing that you love? Right? Anger is not at odds with love. People say that a God who judges cannot also be a God of love. That those two things are incompatible.

[9 : 45] But they're not. Right? God is angry at injustice and evil because it threatens the thing that he loves. His creation includes those who bear his image.

And so he's moving them east of Eden. And it's this merciful exile that's happening. And we've got to understand this, too. Because a lot of times you come in and you read the Bible and if it says anything about God judging sin, calling sin, sin, God interceding, we tend to think that it's just capricious and unfair.

Right? But the purpose of God's judgment, there's always a purpose in it. And it's this. The purpose of judgment is restoration. Restoration. Right?

The purpose of God's judgment is the same purpose of his grace, restoration. And maybe that sounds odd to you. So let me say it again. The purpose of God's judgment is restoration.

So from Genesis to Revelation, God is seeking to restore his good creation. You have a creation account in Genesis 1 and 2. Then you flip to the back of your Bible, Revelation 21 and 22.

[10 : 54] It's a re-creation account. Right? God's judgment is the destruction of all that destroys. Anything that comes against God's good creation, God intends to judge that.

It's not God's arbitrary mood. It's his resistance against everything that destroys. The Bible says repeatedly, God doesn't take pleasure in death and judgment.

He would rather what? People turn and live. Look at Ezekiel 18 and 33, 2 Peter chapter 3 for that. He doesn't want people to go into exile, but he is so committed to his creation, to seeing it restored, that he must.

So you can think about it this way. If, you know, you get to the end of all things and God creates the new heavens and the new earth, this new creation that he creates that's perfect, that's joyous, that we're longing for.

If God were to let Nate Taylor into the new heavens and new earth without doing something about my sin, it would ruin everything.

[12 : 03] If he let me in, it would ruin his new creation. Okay? Okay? So God deals with sin by exiling that sin, not letting it into his perfect creation.

We're all in life as an exile in the Bible. We're longing to get back in. There was this TV show in the United States 15, 20 years ago, I think. It was a cultural phenomenon.

I don't know if it made its way over here. It was called 24. 24 hours. There was a counterterrorism agent named Jack Bauer. Tough guy.

And he, every single season, would work. There was some threat by the terrorist, and he had 24 hours to end it. Each episode was one hour, and somehow there was a cliffhanger at the top of every hour.

You'd think Jack Bauer would have noticed if he was a really good agent. Anyways, one of the seasons, the threat that the terrorists bring is they have this virus that they're going to release in Los Angeles, and if you catch it, you die quickly, and it's super contagious and spreads to everybody.

[13 : 12] Like, this is, but this is like the prophetic television show. This is before COVID. So it's super bad, and these counterterrorism agents, at one point, they find that somebody has the virus at this hotel, and so they have to quarantine.

quarantine the hotel and everybody in it. They don't know who has it, but it's too big of a risk to let them go out into Los Angeles, because what would happen? Spread it, and tens and tens upon tens of thousands, maybe millions would die.

Maybe it would be the end of the world. And so they're there. I can't remember for how long. Maybe just a couple hours or something like that. And one guy just starts to go stir crazy being quarantined.

Some of you are like, wimp, quarantined for two hours. I missed Christmas, right? And he starts to go stir crazy, and he just can't take it, and he wants to bust out of the hotel and run out.

And one of these agents, she has to pull her gun on him and say, uh-uh. Don't go out. If you go out, if you try to do that, I'm going to have to shoot you.

[14:20] Why? Well, because she's saying, we can't, if that person to go out, for that virus to go out into the world, it will spread, and it will bring death. And so she threatens him to shoot him.

I can't remember if she does or not. It's awful. There's nothing fun about it, but most of us can kind of understand, at least at a conceptual level, why the agent is warning that person not to go out. If she lets this guy out, this virus, like sin, would go out into the city and destroy everything. And so to stop the destruction of all things, this sort of exile, but in this case, this quarantine, has to occur. We don't struggle, really, with the idea that things that destroy and harm what's valuable, something needs to be done about them. The reason we struggle is in that illustration, Adam and Eve and you and me are the weeds, right?

We're good with God getting rid of the things that would destroy the world, but we hate this notion of sin and what it deserves, and specifically our sin, which leads to our second point, the cry of justice.

[15:29] So we'll come back to what preceded Cain killing Abel. For now, I want you to look at this interaction that God has with Cain after Cain takes his brother's life.

He comes in verse 9 and he asks Cain, where is your brother Abel? And what does Cain say to him? It's one of the most chilling responses in the whole Bible.

Zero remorse. I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper? Cain sins against Abel.

God says to Cain in verse 10, the voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.

What was the cry of Abel's blood?

It's a cry for what? For justice. For vengeance. His blood is crying out from the ground. And to whom is it crying? It's crying to God.

[16:31] Hmm. His blood cries out to the creator God who created all life to do something about it. And this is the claim here early in the Bible and what you will see going through the rest of your Bible.

It's this claim. Every single sin, whether it's against God or against another person or against his creation, is a sin against God.

And it cries out to him for justice. If you get to the New Testament in Mark chapter 2, Jesus is about to heal a lame man.

And people don't like that. His enemies are against him. And he says, which is harder? To heal a lame man or to say his sins are forgiven? And I'm going to show you that the Son of Man has the power to forgive sins and to heal.

He says to this man, your sins are forgiven. It's kind of interesting. Maybe you can skim over that. Maybe you've heard that a thousand times. But here's the interesting thing. You can only forgive sins that have happened against you.

[17:34] So, you know, you leave after you've fellowshiped and eaten a frutella or two. And you walk back to your car. And after the service, and you're watching somebody reverse park.

And they're doing a terrible job. And they just smash and scrape your car up. And they stop and freeze. And they lock eyes with you. And you're just looking at them like, what?

What were you thinking? And then Nate walks along and goes, hey, it's cool. And I look at the driver in the car and say, I forgive you. Carry on.

What would you say? What? You don't get to do that, Nate. It was my car. The person harmed my property.

The only person who can forgive that guy who's reverse parking the car terribly is me. When Jesus says, I forgive your sins, he is claiming to be God.

[18:33] And he's saying that every single sin is a sin against him. You know, if you watch the news lately at all, if you read the news, what you'll see is just a lot of senseless violence.

It's everywhere. And what's interesting, too, now with technology and cameras and mobile phones that can take videos is we see so much of it. It's easy to kind of distance yourself from it.

If you ever see one of these videos, it is horrifying. There's one sense to step back to see it in a movie or to just read about it. But then you see it.

The injustice. You know, you see videos when the Ukraine war was starting of Kiev at night and the sky is lighting up like fireworks from these missiles being shot from Russia.

It's chilling. I think it was in December. There was a gang of five men in Glasgow who attacked a man and they all were carrying machetes. People caught it on video.

[19:36] I haven't seen. I think most news outlets wouldn't even show it. People probably found it other places online because it was too chilling to see this violence.

A few years ago in the United States, there was a lot of, still is, but it was really heightened. A lot of racial unrest. You can see videos of this young black man named Ahmaud Arbery who was hunted, basically, by four white men.

Ended up in prison. They ended up taking his life. In my city that I lived in, in St. Louis, there was all these protests and riots. And people, and it just turned into violence.

They were looting stores and this one man tried to stop it. He was retired police chief of the city of St. Louis named David Dorn. They captured it on video. People shooting him and taking his life.

If you've ever seen that, the gut response. Stop! Make it stop this injustice. Whatever it takes, please stop.

[20 : 42] It makes you want to throw up if you see it. It's awful. Even in the Bible, even an accidental death had a punishment to it that so valuable was a human life.

Even if you didn't mean to. Even if it was an accident, there was a punishment attached to it. And what our passage says is that all of this blood, all of this injustice, it cries out to God.

Nowadays, people, they really want to be for justice. That's the thing that they want to be known for. We're for justice. We want to right every wrong. Right? That's a good thing.

But imagine what the Bible is telling us is that our commitment to justice is akin to a little child dressing up in a police uniform compared to actually like a Supreme Court justice.

Compared to the justice of God. There is this man named Miroslav Volf. He's a theologian and he's from Croatia.

[21 : 40] And he lived there when the Yugoslav Wars were happening in the 1990s. All of these awful atrocities were happening. Ethnic cleansing. Cities burned. Women abused.

And Miroslav Volf, he wrote a book reflecting on these things. And he said the only thing that gave him comfort in the face of such atrocities was this.

The justice and judgment of God. And Volf asks, how does one when seeing such awful violence not descend into vengeful vigilante violence yourself?

And his answer was, a God who judges sin. He writes this, it takes the quiet of a suburb to believe that the idea that a God who doesn't judge leads to a more peaceful world.

If God were not angry at injustice and deception and did not make a final end of violence, that God would not be worthy of your worship.

[22 : 41] Did you know International Justice Mission estimates that there are currently today 27 million men, women, and children in modern day slavery? You should never shrug at unpunished evil.

These injustices cry out to God to do something. And if injustice is a daily existence for you, then you want a God who is going to actively judge and set things right.

But the hard truth, right, in the midst of that is that every misdeed calls out to God for justice. But wait, you object. I'm no war criminal. I didn't murder my brother.

I ain't no cane. Which leads to our third point, the trajectory of the heart. What leads to the tiff between Cain and Abel? Well, Cain is angry at God for accepting Abel's offering but not his.

And the question then is, why did God accept Abel's offering but not Cain's? There's lots of different answers that have been put out there. Some say it's because Abel's offering was an animal offering and Cain's was just produce.

[23 : 55] Well, I don't think that's a good answer because if you get to Leviticus and Deuteronomy, there are animal offerings and there's produce offerings. Right? God accepts both of them. Different purposes, different slightly, but God likes them.

Maybe it's because in the passage it says that Abel gives the firstborn of his flock. I think it's probably getting closer to it, but it's not explicit in the text.

It's just an inference that we might make from it. You see, it helps if we understand, if we remember that the original audience of Genesis would have been ancient Israelites who would have made a lot of different offerings.

And you see, in those offerings, like I said, there was peace and produce offerings. Animals and produce, right?

And both of those were called dedication offerings. They weren't asking for God to forgive sin.

There's different ones for that, right? They weren't asking for forgiveness.

[24 : 58] What they were were dedication offerings. What that was is you would give a portion of what you had as a symbol of giving your whole self to God. We've got things like that.

When you get married, you give a ring, right? People say, I give this ring as a token and pledge of what? My whole self. With you, I marry.

With this ring, I marry you. With all that I have and all that I am, I honor you. You're giving a small token as a sign that you're giving your whole self. And that would be the point of bringing these offerings, these dedication offerings.

So what gets exposed in Genesis 4? Cain's heart. First we meet Cain. He's not killing people, right? Cain's going to church.

He's bringing an offering to God. But what his killing shows, his murder shows, is the trajectory of his heart, what's hinted at earlier. His heart is not right.

[25 : 59] God doesn't regard Cain's offering because of his heart. Why does this matter? Because again, we say things like, I haven't killed my brother, so why should I be judged?

This is my gripe with God. He's capricious and unfair. But the Bible says we've missed the fact that our hearts are warped. Just think about it this way.

What if all of a sudden every single thought that you had was broadcast for everybody to know and to hear and to see? Like everything. Every little bit of judgment.

Every lustful dream. Every eye roll of the heart at somebody else's plight. Every selfish desire. Didn't stay inside.

It just got broadcast right out there. Would anybody be your friend? Seriously. Would you be able to? Even in marriage, right, we're supposed to, you know, we're practicing transparency and confession and authenticity.

[27 : 03] But sometimes what might well up inside you is an eye roll of the heart. But you see it, sense it coming, you stop, you don't actually do it with your eyes, and you are patient and listen. But what if everything was just put out there?

There's an aspect to our relationships can only be sustained because there's some sort of hiddenness because of sin. Hmm. And if your mantra is just be true to yourself, then I hope that you see how that trajectory plays out with someone who does awful deeds like Cain.

Cain was just being true to himself. There's this issue of the trajectory of the heart. You know, the claim of the Bible is that every single misdeed and injustice stems from our heart.

That the rot goes deep. And this is a stumbling block for many people, that there's something in the human heart that necessitates rescue. People think they're bad people. It's just not them.

But what if your heart was exposed? What if your heart was exposed? Would you be thinking that? There's this Russian author named Alexander Solzhenitsyn who lived in the early Soviet Union, and he wrote against the oppressive injustices of Stalin's Soviet regime.

[28 : 20] And guess where they put him? Prison. For eight years into hard prison and forced labor camps, he ends up in the gulag system. And after being released, he wrote some different books.

And he wrote this one book about the atrocities that he saw committed by human beings against human beings in the gulag. It's called the Gulag Archipelago. And there's this famous quote in the book where he says, The line between good and evil runs not through states nor between classes. Interesting thing for somebody to say in the midst of communist Russia. It's not between states or classes nor between political parties either. The line between good and evil runs right through the human heart.

Why does Cain kill Abel? Because of his heart. And in verse 7, God says to Cain, Sin, it's crouching at the door.

Sin, Cain, it's not for you. It wants to destroy you. It is ready. It wants to pounce. The Hebrew word there gets used for animals that hunt others, like a leopard out in the safari.

[29 : 24] God said that sin is predatory. It has this presence where if you commit the sin, it's not over. It takes shape. It begins to affect you. Sin begets sin.

And when he describes it as crouching, it's this idea that sin wants to hide, right? Hide among the tall grass to catch its prey. Imagine that leopard seeking to devour its prey.

It crouches and it hides. And if you don't know it's there, you're in danger. You're toast. To not admit sin, the Bible says, is to go to your own destruction.

So if you're busy rationalizing sin, it's to your peril. And God's judging of sin is completely just and fair. You get what you want. A life that rejects and sees no need for the mercy of God, right?

And you say, what about tiny sin, right? Like, hey, come on. And the Bible does differentiate between larger sins and smaller ones. But you say, what about tiny sin? That doesn't deserve

anything. Not that you need to know all about the affairs of the United States, but I think it was international news.

[30 : 31] It was a little bit humorous. Some years ago, the president of the United States was George W. Bush. And he was having a press conference and a reporter was there who threw a shoe at President Bush.

I think he actually threw two shoes. You can go look it up on YouTube. Bush ducks on the shoes coming at him. Do you know what happened to that guy? Do you know where he is? Prison. Now, here's the thing. If you don't like something that I'm saying, and currently, right now, I see somebody slip off their shoe and you throw it at me, you might be kindly escorted out of the church building.

But you're not going to go to prison. I don't know the laws of Scotland. That was super well. But I'm guessing you probably wouldn't go to prison. What's the difference? I'm not the president of the United States.

One writer says this, If I sin against an ant, who cares? Maybe some people do, but who cares? If I sin against a gerbil, you'd wonder about my sanity.

[31 : 35] A human? That's very serious. The creator God, repeatedly sinning against majesty of all majesty, greatest glory, noblest reality, name above every name. What does that deserve?

It deserves punishment and judgment. And there's this aspect to God's punishment and judgment that's active. Think of, you know, he intervenes in Noah's flood, right? He sends judgment upon the world.

There's also an aspect of God's judgment that's passive, where he pulls back and just says, Hey, I've been restraining sin. I'm just going to let it take its course. It's kind of like what Paul talks about in Romans chapter 1, that he gave them over the evil desires of their heart.

There's an aspect to, in God's patience, he waits and he waits and he holds it back and he holds it back and he lets it go. And if you're going to say, instead of saying, Thy will be done to God, you say, My will be done, eventually he will let that happen.

And that's just what his judgment is. People getting exactly what they want. The heart's trajectory played out to eternity is simply God giving people what they want.

[32 : 42] Whew! Heavy, right? Alright. Need a Frutellus break right now? No. Let's go to the last point. The word of mercy. The word of mercy.

God comes to Cain. He says, Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. That's a pretty strong statement.

What would you expect if somebody says, Hey, you know what they've done and your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. What are you expecting? Smiting. Lightning bolt.

You're done, Cain. Instead, what's God doing? He's giving Cain every single opportunity to repent. And Cain wanders off. Wonder about his future.

You'll see that next time we get to Genesis. Here's my question. What about us? What about our sins that cry out to God for justice?

[33 : 40] Well, there's good news. There's a word of mercy. And we actually read it in Hebrews 12. It says that the blood of Christ speaks a better word than Abel's.

What did we say Abel's blood was crying out for? Justice! Do something about this, God. Jesus' blood cries out saying something has been done about this.

The God of justice punishes sin in the cross. And so the cry of Jesus' blood is one of mercy. People want to jettison judgment to make God more loving.

But when we do that, we actually make him less loving. Is there a gracious judge at the end of all things? The religion of Islam says you can actually have no assurance.

Atheism says it doesn't matter. It's just death at the end. It's very democratic. That's what we all get, right? Hinduism says, well, there's karma. It depends on the number of good deeds and bad deeds that you've done.

[34 : 52] That kind of makes me a little bit nervous about what my future might look like. Only Christianity can say, yes, there is a judge who will make right every wrong.

But this judge is one who offers himself to be judged in your place. Back to that TV show 24.

Imagine they're quarantined in this hotel and people are going stir crazy.

Do we have the virus? Imagine if one of the agents had an antidote. Wouldn't it be unloving of them to not tell anybody? They would offer it to everybody.

Say, look, take this. If you go out there, the virus will destroy you and everyone else. And if the person said, forget it. I don't want it. I don't believe you. I'm going to try to leave. Would you let them leave?

No, you would plead with them. We don't want this virus to destroy you and those out there. Can you see how God loves the gospel? The gospel is the antidote that we take by faith.

[36 : 00] If you want to stay in the hotel, that's your call. But there's a rescue. There's hope. I think it was in 1984. I read about it in a Sinclair Ferguson book. 1984, there was a large automobile accident outside of London in December.

It was cold and it was extremely foggy. The fog was so thick that you could only see like 10 to 15 feet in front of you. And there was this lorry that tipped over.

And what ends up happening is like a domino effect where one car crashes into the next. And I think 10 people ended up, at least 10, maybe 12 people, ended up losing their lives.

All these cars are getting into accidents, all these injuries. And the first people on the scene are these police officers. And they told the story. They were interviewed afterwards.

And they said they got there. And they could see the wreckage and the devastation. And so what did they do? They started running towards oncoming traffic, waving their arms.

[37 : 01] And they started to grab these orange cones that were at the side of the road, throwing them at vehicles, warning them, Stop. Stop. Don't come. It's to your peril.

Stop. Turn around. Don't come. How will people believe unless they've heard? How will they hear unless we will speak?

What are we afraid of? What do we have to lose? Face? You see, the call, there's good news in the gospel. There's this badness. There's this badness.

That our sins deserve to be judged. But there is good news. There's an antidote. There's a word of mercy in a world where everybody wants to cancel each other and is fighting for justice, trying to say, Hey, listen, all of you are the problem out there.

And we're just killing each other. Killing reputations. Angry. It's breaking people apart. In the midst of that, there is a word that speaks.

[38 : 02] There's a better word. It's Jesus' blood, which cries out from the grave. That it's finished. That it's been paid for. You don't have to be afraid. Will you receive this?

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, Jesus, we thank you that on the cross that you took judgment for us. That you actually experienced the full judgment that is due to sin from God.

And we can actually have that if we will do the simplest thing. If we will bend the knee and say, Thy will be done. And cling to it by faith. We feel so powerless in this world to sin in our life and to the violence in this world.

We cry out to you to come meet us in our questions. Show us that the love of Jesus is not small or trite or insufficient.

But that it's sufficient, Lord. His blood cries out not just for justice, but it pleads for mercy. And we plead for mercy for ourselves and our neighbors, Lord.

[39 : 12] We pray all this in the name of Jesus. Amen. Amen.