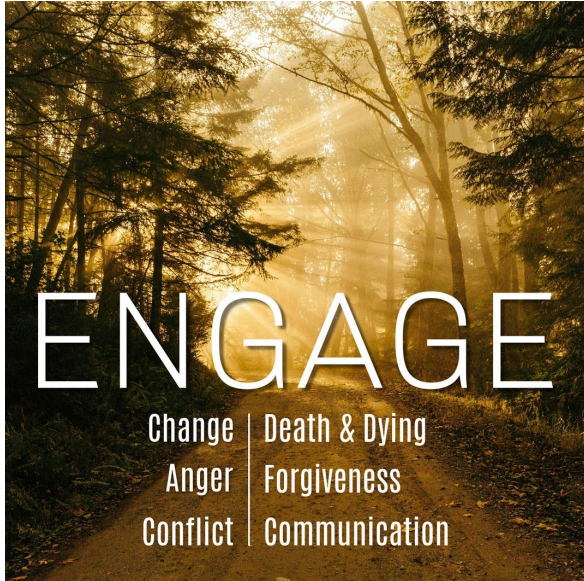


ENGAGE: ANGER

September 8, 2019

Michael Swartzentruber, Senior Minister



Genesis 4:1-16

Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, 'I have produced a man with the help of the Lord.' Next she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. The Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.'

Cain said to his brother Abel, 'Let us go out to the field.' And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Where is your brother Abel?' He said, 'I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?' And the Lord said, 'What have you done? Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground! And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it will no longer yield to you its strength; you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.' Cain said to the Lord, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear! Today you have driven me away from the soil, and I shall be hidden from your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who meets me may kill me.' Then the Lord said to him, 'Not so! Whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance.' And the Lord put a mark on Cain, so that no one who came upon him would kill him. Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

CONTEXT

The first children of Adam and Eve kickoff the long struggle between family members seen throughout Genesis. While privileged in ancient culture, in Genesis the first-born consistently loses out to the second or last-born: Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Reuben and Joseph, etc. The "mark" on Cain is not a curse, but a protection that shows God's mercy and grace.

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BIG IDEAS

1. Anger is not sinful, anger is a signal.
2. Anger is God's invitation for change.

GO DEEPER

Mindfulness: What About Anger?

9:00 AM, Historic Sanctuary

September 8 - 29

Email holly@southelkhorncc.org to join
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BOOK

The Dance of Anger by Harriet Lerner, PhD

A classic book that has transformed the lives of many readers. Anger is too often denied, ignored, or vented in a way that leaves us feeling helpless and powerless. This book teaches how to respect and embrace anger for growth and change.

QUOTES

"...we learn to fear our own anger, not only because it brings about the disapproval of others, but also because it signals the necessity for change."

- Harriet Lerner, *The Dance of Anger*

"...our capacity for anger is one of God's good gifts... though we can certainly sin with it, our anger also contributes to such life experiences as courage, hope, and intimacy."

- Andrew Lester, *The Angry Christian*

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase or image stands out to you?
2. What makes you angry? What about irritated or frustrated (shades of anger)?
3. Recall a moment when you were really angry. What was that like? How did you handle it? What did you think or feel after you cooled down?
4. Do you think anger is sinful? Why or why not? What do you make of Cain's anger and God's response, "sin is lurking at the door" (v.7)?
5. How might anger be a sacred signal that something needs to change? How might anger be constructive?
6. Cain didn't cool off or deal well with his anger and dejection. How do you cool down or deal with anger? How is God challenging you to grow in your experience of anger?

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