

Slow to anger

Omdachi Oganyi

11th May, 2026

Sermon Audio file

We've been having a session and a series of going through this book.

Avoiding the Hall of Mirrors. Stephen Liston wrote this book, *Rescuing Relationship from Spiritual Darkness*. It's a lovely book, pink writing, but not for ladies only. If you haven't got a copy, I encourage you, if you can, please get one. We've got them around and it's really, really a book to have to read and to share.

I've been reading it and I'm still on it and I'll be sharing around chapter 4. Andy started last week to read the passage that I'll be reading from and we'll read that passage and further share on it. The title of this book is a metaphor which is a very interesting metaphor that represents a hall where there are mirrors designed to tweak images that are placed before them and to make a caricature of those images. While the image remains in this original form, what the mirror communicates is not the exact representation of the image.

And that was used to represent what happens in our relationship where things are tweaked, warped, and then we start to have a different image of the person whom we used to know or sometimes even of ourselves. Relationships are very critical to our spiritual and physical well-being.

when he introduced himself to us in Genesis, introduced himself as a God who has relationship. The project that is today have become man, when that project was initiated, the Bible did say, and God said, let us make man. He values relationship with

He appreciates relationship and when man was created, God comes down to have communion with man, to have discussion with man. Even when man fell, God still came to check on man. We have a God who appreciates and values relationship. The world is a better place where relationship thrives and thrives really well.

One of the things which the British Medical Association had to say is this: "One of the most cruel symptoms of the pandemic has been the physical separation and isolation of those infected by the virus from their family and friends. The very people whose love and support is most needed during times of ill health." The pandemic, which was just a few years ago, we witnessed people being isolated, people being separated from families, people who take ill and are diagnosed to have COVID are kept in an isolation world. And the British Medical Association, in retrospect, have this to say that it was one of the most cruel thing that happened during the pandemic.

The very people who you need around you in your time of ill health are kept away from you. It doesn't even give some people a chance to fight. You know what I mean? So when relationship fails, a lot goes down with it. A lot happens when relationship fails.

In Ecclesiastes chapter 4 verse 9 to 10, the Bible has this to say that two are better than one because they have a good and more satisfying reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow, but woe to him who is alone, for when he falls, has not another to lift him up. Jesus has this to say about relationship. I pray that we will all be one, just like

I pray that they will all be one just as you and I are one. In that oneness, in that smooth relationship between the Lord Jesus and God, a lot of blessing came to humanity. Where relationship is thriving, there is opportunity of communication of grace, of the blessings of God, of the goodwill that we can exchange amongst ourselves.

Unfortunately, we live in a time where words like toxic, dysfunctional, abusive, traumatic, these are very serious words, right? These words, which were rarely heard back then, and if they were heard at all, they would be heard in extreme circumstances. But now, they have become part of our lives, daily vernacular, our daily communication. Here people talk about toxic workplace, abusive relationship, and all kinds of things. People narrating their trauma from heartbreaks, from broken families, from broken ties with loved ones. The times we are in, one of the places where the enemy is putting pressure on humanity and getting things on the rough road is pressure on relationship. You know, when relationship fails, it does give him a lot of opportunity and a breeding ground that's conducive to breed things like bitterness, hatred, malice, and all kinds of things that do hurt people.

Broken relationship gives room for toxic things to really thrive. And our topic today actually is on that feeling which we are very familiar with, especially when you get a parking ticket. You know what I mean? You know, when people get a parking ticket, it's sometimes not the time to have a good smile and a laugh, because someone's just going to hit your pocket there. You know, we're talking about anger and how it plays out in relationship and how it imparts relationship and how we can, as children of God, be equipped and strengthened to, in the very face of offense, be able to find grace and to, you know, express our Christian stance, our Christian character, and our godly virtues. Praise the Lord. Genesis chapter 4. Genesis chapter 4, verse 1 to 8. Andy read it last time. I'll run through it quickly. Now, Adam had sexual relationship with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant when she gave birth to Cain.

She said, "With the Lord's help, I have produced a man." Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel. When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd while Cain cultivated the ground. When it was time for harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the Lord. Abel also brought a gift, the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock.

The Lord accepted Abel and his gift, but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry and he looked dejected. Why are you so angry? The Lord asked Cain. Why do you look so dejected? You will be accepted if you do what is right.

But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out. Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master. One day, Cain suggested to his brother, let's go out into the fields. And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him. That's not a good story. Praise God. That's not a good story.

The Lord had respect for Abel and then respect for his offering. That arrangement in the report of what happened between God and Abel, that order of mentioning, isn't a mistake.

If the Lord have no respect for a person, the Lord wouldn't have a respect for his offering. If God has not accepted a person, God does not accept their offering. And that's why the Bible went on to say, obedience is better than sacrifice. One endears us to God through obedience. Sacrifice is what we present to God.

If God had not accepted a person, God would not accept their sacrifices, their acts of worship, because God is much more interested in the relationship between him and that person, much more than what we've got to offer and to present to him. Cain didn't have any self-examination. He didn't sit back to reflect on why God didn't accept him and why God didn't accept his offering. There was no mention of Cain ever having a sit down with himself to reflect on what just happened.

The next thing we read about Cain after such an experience was the expression of dejection, the expression of a man who was angry at what just transpired. We saw Cain go on to commit what he would call a first degree murder. A premeditated act of murder of his own brother as a way of expressing or as a way of following up with that anger and with that feeling of offense.

Sometimes what to take our anger on and where to express our anger is only going to be a victim of a primary thing that we didn't resolve. Something primarily going wrong that wasn't addressed. And Abel, if you want to put it in everyday language, Abel just suffered a transfer of aggression for what he wasn't responsible for. It wasn't Abel's making why God didn't accept Cain. Abel had nothing to do with it.

Just that Abel in the same situation and circumstance gained God's acceptance and approval and Cain didn't have it. And Cain was so mad that he wouldn't see Abel live to enjoy the blessing of God's relationship with him. When anger comes into a relationship, it's like cancer.

And all it starts to do, if it is not contained, is to spread. It's to spread into areas and into things that you don't expect it to affect. Things sometimes that have nothing to do with it. Sometimes one spouse is angry with the other and the rest of the children in the house can't get a better good feeling and a good time with the angry person because they are just going to catch themselves in the crossfire. Anger is toxic. Anger is destructive. And anger is a breeding ground for many things that are unhealthy. Cain killed Abel as a result of his anger. He killed Abel because he was angry. He was rejected. He was angry about that.

Now, in discussing anger in scripture, the Bible broadly classifies anger into two groups. There is one which the Bible describes as the anger of man. In some older translation, it puts it as the wrath of man.

In James chapter 1 verse 20, the Bible, they say, the wrath of man, the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God. We are angry. The Bible looks at them in two lights. Is it the anger of man, which is the outworking of the fallen nature of man?

An anger that emanates and springs out of things that concern I, me, and myself. An anger whose root lies in your person and in the things that affect your person. Maybe someone didn't treat you as, you know, cautious with the courtesy that you think you demand. Or someone spoke to you in a way that you don't expect. Or someone said something about you, and you get told what they have said about you, the nasty things, the gossips, and the backbiting, and you start to feel very angry because you feel that your reputation is being chipped away, someone is misrepresenting you, someone is saying things about you that you don't deserve, you are the epicenter of that anger, everything about that anger has to do with me and myself. Everything that has to do with you. That is the anger of man.

The other kind of anger which the Bible talks about is the righteous anger, the kind that Jesus expressed in Mark chapter 3 verse 5. When he went into the temple and the temple had been turned into a place of money exchanges and all of that going on in the temple, he wasn't really happy. He was sad.

you know at that point the Bible did say that Jesus gentle Jesus did overturn the table of money changers he wasn't doing that because of himself because he did say to them my father's house should have been the house of prayer for all nations but you have turned it into a den of thieves it was an anger that he expressed because of God, Because of something that has to do with God. It's an anger that, you know, he expressed to promote the righteousness of God. To defend the glory of God. And that is the anger. If you read Steph in this book, Steph did say that anger is in very short supply in our days. And I think we do need some of that very much in this time.

people can go and speak truth to power. Hallelujah! So the anger we feel when people are pained, when people are going through difficult situations, when people are treated in a way that they don't deserve, that anger we feel about why should people not have peace in their nation, one country invading the other and making life miserable for people, that is a righteous anger. That's the kind of anger that drives

us to pray, that drives us to take steps for things like that not to happen. Now we live in a world where Jesus have this to say. Turn with me to Luke chapter 17 and verse 1. Luke 17 verse 1. In Luke chapter 17...

Verse 1, Jesus was speaking to his disciples and he was preparing them for the reality of this life. He said, one day Jesus said to his disciples, there will always be temptations to sin, but what sorrows await the person who does the tempting? In the King James Version, he said, it is impossible that offense should come.

It is impossible that no offense should come, I mean, it is impossible that no offense should come. We live in a world where offenses abound. The Bible said because of what will be happening in this end time, it said, Iniquity shall abound so much, and as a result, the love of many will wax cold. You don't need to look for an offense or put yourself vulnerable before offense comes. Jesus is saying, as a Christian, as a child of God, as a spiritual person bubbling in the Holy Ghost,

It doesn't insulate you against offenses. It doesn't put you in a position where offenses are scared of you. Rather, offenses are going to sneak and find a place in that space of yours which you have so Holy Ghost-filled protected. Offenses will find their ways to come. Your good intention can become a reason for offense.

Your gesture can become a reason for offense. Your sacrifices can become a reason for offense. We don't live in a world where our God has promised us that an offense will not come.

You live with people who are different from you. You interact with cultures which are different from you. You interact with people who are of a different upbringing than you. All of these are possible grounds of offenses. And sometimes even the church of Jesus, while in the midst of fellowship, lifting up holy hands and celebrating Jesus, offenses come right here.

Some people are not even offended out there. It is in here, in the house of God, amongst the people of God, that offenses came to them.

David said, if it was my enemy, I would have been able to just deal with it. But lo and behold, it is you, my brother, to whom we go to the same house of God and lift up holy hands. It is you who have caused me so much pain. It happens everywhere. In families, between father and sons, mothers and doctors, siblings, offenses come.

And we have a culture that is growing amongst us, which is very sad. A culture where people cancel easily. You know the social media apps? All of them have got something they call block. So if you go on someone's page or you make a comment in the comment section and they don't like it and they're offended, what they do is what? It's the cancel culture. And some of us have been canceled. Because he expressed an opinion someone didn't like you just can't suit and people are becoming increasingly unwilling to make relationships work I don't want to say this but sometimes we can't help it what some of our mothers and fathers went through and kept their relationship the younger ones and the people of this time wouldn't go through a quarter before they call it a quits. People are unwilling to make it work. Offenses will come. When offenses come, what should we do as Christians? Remember, Jesus taught the prayer. He said, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us. Offenses creates opportunities for us to exercise ourselves in forgiveness.

Sometimes offenses creates opportunity for us to express forgiveness. For us to show how much Christ has done a work in us. For us to showcase the person and the character of Christ. For us to express that Jesus is real and has done something in your life.

A man drove out his car on the road and someone bumped into him really hard. He cleared off the road, came down, didn't go to look at what was broken on the back of his car, went to the person and asked

him, "Are you alright? Are you okay?" and treated the person nicely and the person was like, "What do I do to make up?" He said, "Nothing."

I just want to be sure you are fine and now that you're fine I'll take care of the business you don't have to worry he entered his car and drove off and the person who smashed his car followed him and when he stopped where he went the person this is a real life story the person dropped down and asked him who are you what kind of a person are you why did you do that I was expecting you I was expecting you to be mad, to say stuff. He said, because Jesus has changed me. The person said, Jesus? He said, yes. He said, then I want to know about this Jesus of yours. I've seen other people who talk about Jesus, but this one of yours is a special Jesus. And that was the conversation that led this man to become a Christian. Because a Christian man, turned offense into an opportunity to express grace. And that's what God is looking at us to do in a world where revenge is common, in a world where revenge is celebrated. Jesus taught us in the Bible through the Word that offenses will come

How God treats the person who brings the offense is God's own side of the business. But we are taught to forgive. We are taught to express Christ. We are taught to be Christians in the midst of troubled and ruffled waters of offenses. In Romans chapter 12, the Bible taught the other side. When people have been so hurt, when people feel that

The harm that have been done to them, someone need to pay for it. What does the Bible say about situations like that? In Romans chapter 12, the Bible did in verse 17 to 19, the Bible did express something that was also mentioned in the Old Testament. It said, vengeance is mine. God has a way to pay people for every wrong.

It should be comforting to us as Christians that sometimes in the court of justice you may not get justice enough that compensates for the hurt and the pain that was meted out to you that you don't deserve. Sometimes justice don't take it away. It gives a form of peripheral closure but doesn't bring genuine healing.

The only thing that brings that comfort and healing in the midst of that pain is letting God take control. Imagine a parent who have lost their child in the hand of another child and of another person like what we have going on around the world. Young people being stabbed every day and killed.

A child is lost like that. There is no justice. There is no sentencing that can pay back and comfort the family that have lost a loved one in that situation. The only thing that can bring a lasting comfort is that confidence in God that God will take care of these things and God will take care of me. That's what brings a lasting comfort.

We're encouraged as Christians to find a place in our heart to let God take care of the people who offend us. Hallelujah. To let God take care of it. And I want to tell you as I wrap up, don't think God is going to take care of them in the way that you think. You might be disappointed. You might be disappointed.

It was Bob Marley who sang a song and said, is there any hope for a hopeless sinner who have hurt all mankind and eventually turns to God? Imagine the reckless sinner who have hurt all mankind and turns to God and God accepts him. I think some people will raise objections to that.

He's done so much disasters around the world. He deserves all punishment. And God welcomes him as a son and gives him forgiveness. Do you know what happened in Jonah, the book of Jonah? Jonah wanted God to destroy Nineveh.

He wanted God to come down and smash everywhere, destroy everywhere, because Nineveh was everything. The sins that were going on in Nineveh were so bad that the news went to heaven. And God sent Jonah to go and preach. Jonah didn't want to preach in Nineveh because Jonah wanted God to come

down and wipe them out. And when Nineveh repented, Jonah wasn't happy.

He sat under the tree and wasn't happy. God doesn't treat situations sometimes like we think, but he does handle things. Our confidence as Christians is to let God handle things for us. Commit it to God and trust God for grace and trust God for healing. Some people will ask me, "Do you think Christians should go to court?" I don't have an answer.

Did you pray about faith? Do you think Jesus would have gone to God? Look through the scriptures. Ask God questions. And let God guide you. He's always ready to guide. He's always ready. He's always ready. I pray God give us grace to make relationship work. One of the things this book aims at accomplishing is teaching Christians the skills, the grace to make relationships work.

As much as it depends on us to that extent to make it work. I pray God minister to us and I pray God strengthen us. If you're going through a hard time in a relationship that is broken, we will trust the Lord with you for healing. We trust the Lord with you for grace. We trust the Lord with you. Sometimes the point of forgiveness is not the easiest point to be.

It's a point where there is tears in the eyes of the person trying to forgive because it's so hard to forgive. Jesus wasn't forgiving us on the cross with a lot of excitement. He forgave us in the midst of cruel pains to himself. It was so heartening, yet he forgave us.

And it's scary how the Bible puts it. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly. We weren't even showing any hope of a change very soon. And some people say, if only he's apologized, then I'll forgive him. You don't need his apology for forgiveness. God help us. Shall we pray? Can you talk to God about your life, your relationship? Is there a point of struggle? Is there a point of difficulty? Can you ask God for grace?

Offenses will come. That's what Jesus tells us. He's also told us, forgive. Can we ask God for grace to walk in forgiveness? To be Christians in the midst of our troubles. Let's pray God for help. Some people have broken relationship because they were offended in the midst of it. Question is, did you try? Did you bring God into it? Did you do it God's way? Did the Lord lead you out?

or you just bolted down because you didn't see it as an opportunity to express grace. Some people have even quitted the assembly of believers because of offense. Can we ask God for grace? Can we ask God for grace? Father, we pray this morning for your grace. We pray for your help that will be Christians who can express Christ, will be Christians who can show the virtues of Christ.

in our relationship, even in hard times. We prayed, oh God, for strength for every one of us. It takes a lot of strength to do that, Lord. We ask you for that strength. We ask you for that grace. Grace to forgive. Grace to trust. Grace to mend fences. Grace not to just walk away when we could have showed forth Christ. Lord, give us that grace.

In the name of Jesus Christ. Thank you Holy Spirit. In Jesus name we are prayed. Amen. That brings us to the end of service. Coffee is at the back. Then let's have some time to chat. Thank you very much.

Application Questions

1) Jesus taught that offenses are inevitable in our relationships. How has this truth shown up in your own life, and how has your faith helped you respond to those moments?

2) The sermon distinguishes between 'the anger of man' (rooted in personal offense) and 'righteous anger' (rooted in God's justice). Can you think of a time you experienced each kind? How did each affect your relationships differently?

3) Cain didn't examine himself or seek God's guidance when his offering was rejected—he went straight to anger and murder. What does self-examination look like for us when we feel rejected or hurt, and how might it change our response?

4) The sermon shares a story of a Christian who responded to a car accident with grace instead of anger, which led his offender to faith in Christ. How might your approach to conflict and forgiveness be a witness to others' spiritual journey?

5) Forgiveness doesn't require the other person to apologize first. What makes this truth difficult to accept, and how does understanding God's forgiveness of us (while we were still sinners) help us extend forgiveness to others?