

Ruled

Genesis 4:1–16

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question:

When you're upset, which are you more likely to do: **talk about it, ignore it, or dwell on it?** Why?

Introduction

Pastor Mark began the series with a simple truth:

What you feel is real, but it's not meant to rule.

God created us with emotions. We can't always control what we feel, but we can choose what we do with those feelings.

In Genesis 4, Cain shows us what can happen when an emotion is allowed to become an impulse, and an impulse is allowed to become a destructive action.

Discussion Questions

1. Feel It, Don't Fake It

Read: Genesis 4:5–7

Cain was angry and disappointed, and God asked him, "**Why are you angry?**"

God wasn't asking because He didn't know how Cain felt. He was inviting Cain to honestly examine what was happening inside him.

- Why do you think it's sometimes difficult to be honest with God about what we're feeling?
- What is the difference between **feeling an emotion** and **being ruled by that emotion**?
- What might have happened if Cain had honestly confessed his jealousy, anger, or disappointment to God?
- Why is it important to ask, "**Why am I feeling this way?**"

Key Thought

Feel it. Don't fake it.

We don't have to pretend our emotions aren't real. We can bring them honestly into God's presence.

2. Don't Feed It

Read: Genesis 4:6–8

God warned Cain that sin was "**crouching at your door**" and that he needed to rule over it.

Pastor Mark described the danger of **feeding** destructive emotions through dwelling, rehearsing conversations, complaining, or continually exposing ourselves to things that fuel our anger.

- What are some ways we "feed" anger, resentment, jealousy, or bitterness?
- How can replaying a situation in our minds make our emotions stronger?
- How can the people we surround ourselves with either help us process our emotions or make them worse?
- What role can social media play in feeding emotions like anger and outrage?
- What's the difference between **processing an emotion** and **feeding an emotion**?

Going Deeper

What is one emotion you need to stop feeding? What would it look like to walk away from it instead?

3. Don't Follow It

Read: Genesis 4:8–16

Cain allowed his anger to move from an internal feeling to a destructive action. Abel became the target of something he had not caused.

Pastor Mark reminded us:

You can feel it, but don't follow it.

- Why is there often such a short distance between an emotion and an unhealthy decision?
- How can our emotions cause us to treat innocent people as though they are the problem?
- Have you ever taken out frustration from one situation on someone who had nothing to do with it?

- What are some warning signs that an emotion is beginning to **rule** you?
 - Why do we need God's wisdom rather than simply trusting our emotions to tell us what to do?
-

4. Let God Rule

Read: Jude 20–23

Pastor Mark pointed us toward Jude's instruction to build our faith, pray, remain in God's love, and show mercy to others.

We don't have to navigate our emotions alone. God is both **safe enough for us to process our emotions with** and **strong enough to correct us when we're wrong**.

- What does it look like to process your emotions in God's presence?
- How can prayer help us respond differently when we're angry, hurt, disappointed, or jealous?
- What does it mean to "**keep yourselves in God's love**" when your emotions are running high?
- How can showing mercy to others change the way we respond to difficult people?

Key Thought

God doesn't ask us to stop feeling. He teaches us how to respond to what we feel.

Personal Reflection

Take a few moments of silence and ask:

What am I feeling right now?

Then ask:

Why am I feeling this way?

Am I feeding this emotion?

Where is this emotion trying to lead me?

What would it look like to let God rule this instead?

Closing Prayer

Pray together:

- Ask God to help us be honest about what we're feeling.
 - Ask Him to show us the emotions we may be **feeding** instead of surrendering.
 - Ask God for wisdom to recognize when an emotion is leading us toward a destructive decision.
 - Thank Him for being safe enough to bring our emotions to and strong enough to guide us.
 - Ask God to help us respond with wisdom, mercy, and self-control.
-

This Week's Challenge

Feel It. Don't Fake It.

When you experience a strong emotion, pause and ask:

"Why am I feeling this?"

Don't Feed It.

Pay attention to what you're allowing to strengthen that emotion.

Am I dwelling on it, rehearsing it, or talking about it in a way that makes it worse?

Don't Follow It.

Before acting, ask:

"Where is this feeling trying to lead me?"

Then choose to bring it to God before you respond.

Remember:

What you feel is real, but it's not meant to rule.