

Don't Trip Over **ANGER**

Psalm 103 Eph 4:17-32 Matthew 5:21-26

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OK ... Let's start with a little quiz today!

Do any of these things make you angry?

- ⇒ Slow drivers?
- ⇒ Red lights?
- ⇒ Long lines?
- ⇒ Being put on “hold”?
- ⇒ Politics?
- ⇒ Untangling Christmas lights?
- ⇒ When they mess up your order in the drive-thru?

Honestly, I think ALL of those things make me angry! In fact, I'm getting mad just thinking about those things! ☺

Anger is rightly *illustrated* as a fuse ... something lights your “*anger fuse*” and if you don't handle your anger it will certainly lead to an explosion and cause a lot of damage!



Today we are starting a Lenten series on things that can *trip us up* in our Christian faith and life. **Anger is one of those things.** In fact, anger can be a big problem. *Maybe you know that all too well.*

- † Has your anger ever exploded and caused damage for you?
- † Have you ever been filled with bitterness, rage or malice?
- † Has your anger ever led to poor decisions, misplaced words, or broken relationships?

Anger can come from a lot of different places.

- ⇒ Maybe for you it's a “*learned response*” --- maybe you grew up in a home where anger was a knee jerk reaction and that is what you learned

- ⇒ Maybe you were mistreated, abused, or taken advantage of, and all those emotions have turned into an angry attitude or demeanor
- ⇒ Maybe your just plain impatient: you don't get what you want and your frustration turns into anger

Anger will consume you and fill you with all kinds of bitterness, rage, and malice. Anger in your spirit numbs your heart and shows itself in your life. It's seen in your **tone of voice, your body language, your hostile attitude, your sharp words, your broken relationships**. We even have descriptive words for anger: **"seeing red", "bent-out of shape", "cold shoulder", "short fuse", "hot head", & "chip on the shoulder"**. One webpage listed **45** different slang words for anger!

Ultimately, sinful anger comes from your sinful nature: it's the result of the fall into sin. To some degree or another, we all have to deal with anger. I suppose you could say, because of Original Sin, that **WE ALL HAVE "ANGER ISSUES"!**

Jesus warns us about anger; and the serious danger it poses.

"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is **ANGRY** with his brother will be subject to judgment. Matthew 5:21-22

Jesus puts anger in the same category as **murder** and says that it deserves the same **judgment**. That is strong language and a blunt warning! Jesus warns us that anger is a serious sin! Anger will tangle you up and disrupt every area of your life.

So what do you do with your anger?

First, you confess it.

Repentance is always the *proper response* to sin in our lives. We take Jesus' warning to heart and we renounce our sin, including our anger. In humility, confess your anger to God! In Christ, you will find forgiveness and renewal. Jesus came into the world to suffer and die for the sins of the world. His death on the cross included your anger, and the bitterness, rage and malice that comes with it.

In fact, one way to think about the Cross of Christ is in terms of God's Anger towards sin! If anyone had a right to be angry, it would be God Himself.

You have sinned against Him. You have disregard His Will, you have disobeyed His Word, you have neglected His Kingdom. God's anger burns against you and your sin. **God's righteous anger is called WRATH.** You deserve the full force of God's wrath because of your sin. This is the "**judgment**" that Jesus talks about in the verse we just looked at. "**The wages of sin is death**" the Bible says; another way to say that is "**The wages of sin is the full force of God's Wrath & Anger.**" If anyone had a right to be angry, it would be God – towards you!

But God spares you.

Here is the Gospel Good News: God's wrath is **not unleashed** on you, because it was **unleashed** on Jesus on the cross instead. He dies, paying the penalty that you deserved. He faced the "**judgment**" of God; He was "**paid the wages**" of your sin; even your anger (Mt 5:21-22). He dies under the fierce wrath of God towards your sin.

You are set free!

You are no longer under God's righteous anger or His fierce wrath.

Rather than **God's Wrath**, you received **God's Grace**. You are not treated as your sins deserve. Christ entered Jerusalem to suffer and die for you; He took your place and faced the full fury, wrath, and anger of God towards sin, so that you would escape and receive the grace, love, and kindness of God.

Theologically we say that God's Wrath has been "**propitiated**" by the suffering and death of Christ.

And He is the **propitiation** for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2:2

Propitiation means that the Wrath of God is satisfied by the suffering and death of Christ. **You are set free** --- you are no longer under God's righteous anger or His fierce wrath. There is **peace** between you and God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rather than **God's Wrath**, you received **God's Grace**. God's grace changes your life!

**If God sets you free from His anger,
you can set other people free from your anger.** 2x

That's the power of the Gospel in your life. You learn from God how to deal with anger. Just as God nailed His wrath and anger to the cross of Jesus; so too you nail your wrath and anger to the cross of Jesus. **Healing and wholeness** are found at the cross. **Peace and patience** are found at the cross. **Love and Kindness** are found at the cross. A **life of grace** is found at the cross!

**Just as God sets you free from His anger,
So too, you can set other people free from your anger.**

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

Ephesians 4:31

But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Colossians 3:8

Whether your anger is a learned response, or you have been hurt by other people, or you're impatient, or your sinful nature is out of control --- **repent of it, confess it to God, and find healing in the cross of Christ.** **Christ sets you free from anger.**

In Christ,

- † you can live a life of peace, love and joy
- † You can pray for your enemies
- † You can live a life of self-control & patience
- † You can be patient and kind: quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry
- † You can get rid of all bitterness, rage, and malice
- † You can **be a person of grace** rather than a hostile person of wrath!

A **person of Grace** is compassionate to others, patient and forgiving, just as God in Christ is compassionate with you, patient, and He forgives you all your sins. **Be a person of Grace!**

**God has set you free from His anger,
you can set other people free from your anger.**

Today, don't get tangled up in anger; rather live your life in the peace, patience, and grace of God. Christ Jesus makes you a **person of grace** ... not a person of anger! Amen!