

“What To Do With Anger?”

Ephesians 4: 1, 26-32

Sunday, August 19, 2018

Video clip from Get to know your “Inside Out” Emotions: Anger.

Let us prayer!

27-year-old man pleaded guilty to assault after he was arrested for accosting a 59-year-old woman in St. Paul, Minnesota. They were waiting for a bus when he began yelling at her, “Why don’t you show me some respect?” When she took out a cell phone to call police, he hit her in the face. When a 63-year-old man intervened, the angry young man hit him with a folder, which fell on the ground as he fled. Police tracked the man down after finding his name in the folder, along with his homework from an anger management class, where he was headed when he lost his temper and hit the woman (*Flag Live* [March 6-12, 2008]).

It seems within each of us there is anger. Sometimes anger comes when someone cuts you off in traffic, gives you an ugly look, or throws you the finger. Oh, yes, there is that person who you’re your spot in the parking lot. Other times people get angry when their children or grandchildren at not doing well at school. Seasoned teachers know that they will be affronted by emotional parents of their students.

Then there is self anger because we did something “dumb” or unacceptable to ourselves. One day in a small town that shall remain nameless, I had an emergency need to get to the rest

room. I was walking as fast as I could to get to the restroom in the front of the store. I had a great fear that I was going to run into someone in the church and they would want to talk. Faster and faster I went, thinking what I would say to anyone who stopped me. At this point I had developed tunnel vision. All I could see was the open door and the stall. In I went and my business I did. Relief! Out I came with that same tunnel vision. While I was washing my hands, I turned my head to the right only to see a man standing at the urinal. I notice that there is not eye contact. Almost immediately there comes a man out of the stall that was next to the one I had used. He is a little wierded out by the woman standing out at the sink washing her hands. He just keeps on moving.

That is one of those times that being angry at myself came out in the form being really embarrassed. What do you do at that point?

People use anger to control their children, their spouse, their employees and even people at church. How many angry parents have you seen in or outside a store chiding their children? Often times, the parent is anxious about getting what they need, getting home, and getting things organized for a meal or bedtime.

There is this imagine of Christians that they never get angry, they are always nice to people, and they love their neighbor. I grew up thinking that Christian people didn't get mad or they kept it to themselves. They didn't get mad and they didn't get even.

The Greeks had a lot of words for our English word "angry." They had words that meant irritated, frustration, and a like. They also had words that meant anger with a great deal of venom.

When we look at our text this morning, we notice that Paul's words say to us "Be angry and sin not." This is almost identical to the words from Psalm 4: 4. "Tremble with anger and sin not" is good Hebrew translation.

The idea here is that not allowing your anger to boil over into vengeance or excessive reaction. Some Christians I have talk to tell me that they have a temper that boils over. They spout off and then it is over.

There once was a little boy with a bad temper. His father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, to hammer a nail in the back fence. The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Then it gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence. Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper.

The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say 'I'm sorry', the wound is still there."

Anger for most people is out about fear. Whether it fear about having an accident when someone is driving irratically. Fear being taken advantage of, fear of someone else's anger, or fear that

family will embarrass us in some way. Some people get angry in hopes that they can motivate themselves to be better or even perfect.

Jesus got angry. We remember the last week of Jesus' life. He say the money changers in the Temple. He turned the tables over and them God's house was to be house of prayer.

We know that Jesus got irritated at the religious authorizes. Once he told them that they make their converts twice as fit for hell.

Jesus did not get angry very often. Most of the times what he said sought to challenge people's thinking and to help people to understand the message of love from the Father.

When our text in Ephesians talks both about being angry without sinning and not to be angry in it is not contradicting itself. The Greek words here are not the same words. They just get translated in the same way. One can be angry about an injustice and someone being wronged. In Greek this anger has the understanding that something is thought out anger.

The second Greek word is about emotions. It is about that spouted out anger, like a volcano.

What we do about our anger?

First thing, remember that you are created in the image of God and that you are of sacred worth as is the person with whom you are angry.

James 1:19 Quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Our problem with listening is that we react to what is said, instead of hearing the person out. We don't know the circumstances from which that person speaks.

Spend some time praying or journaling about situation and your anger. Why do I want to express my anger? Too often we are instantaneous people, instead of thinking people.

There is a family with whom there is a lot of love between the husband and the wife and with the children. One difficult thing that this family has to deal with is husband/dad's outburst. One the way home from a wonderful day at the beach. While the husband is driving, the wife takes out a trash bag and begins to pick up the trash in the car. The husband yells at the wife. Everyone in the car freezes.

As the husband and wife seek counseling, the husband begins to remember criticisms in his growing about how messy he was. He felt guilty when his wife who works harder than he does at work, starts picking things up in the car.

Second, ask yourself what good could come from the conflict that has come up? Paul's says in Ephesians that we are to let words come out of our mouth that build each other up and imparts grace to the hearers.

What do I need to do to resolve that situation? How can I address the situation? How can words of grace come out of my mouth and at the same time look at the issues?

Having an autistic son, I learned to ask for things for my child. Summer school was an important part of his educational plan. I was told toward the end of the year that my son would not have summer school, that year in high school.

I was not happy. Very calmly, I said to the person that I know what she was saying. I also told her that I was going down to see the head of the special education department for the school system. I figured it would give her time to call the woman in charge. I had that conversation without anger and my son was in summer school as it was appropriate.

We know that Bible is full of places that tell us that God is slow to anger and much quicker to forgive. Can we do the same?