

Hope

**has two beautiful daughters;
their names are anger and
courage-**

Anger

**At the way things are
And**

Courage

**To see that they do not remain
As they are.**

Author unknown

For as long as I can remember, I have been instructed to “control my anger.” Outbursts of anger were said to be sinful and need to be repented of. The world is certainly filled with anger that is ruinous to us and those whom we come in contact with.

Harmful words and actions fill the nightly news, and reports of divorce, child-molestation, kidnapping, and all sorts of evil surround us. Every human being recognizes anger when they hear or see it. Sometimes this anger emanates from ourselves, but often we are the recipients of another person’s anger.

Very often, we feel justified in our anger, but incensed when anger is directed at us. Our anger is believed to be “righteous anger” meant to correct another person’s transgressions, while anger leveled against us is misappropriated and meant to cause us harm.

In her book, “Angry Like Jesus; Using His Example to Spark Your Moral Courage,” Sarah Sumner examines the biblical record of Jesus’ anger.

She writes beautifully about how the type of anger which Jesus displayed, an anger of love, based on His faith and intimate knowledge of the Father, enabled Him

to face the evils of this world. Jesus knew that the Father wanted what was best for His children, and this wisdom gave the Son the courage, the moral courage to confront the evil caused by the presence of our adversary, Satan.

God’s righteous anger is protective and holy. In a sense, you can say that His anger comes out of, or is a product of His characteristic of love. He loves those created in His image and likeness, so intensely that he cannot stand by and watch harm be poured out on us.

Because Jesus had perfect faith in the Father, He never doubted what God the Father wanted for His children on earth. Jesus’ anger set the example for us to follow. On the other hand, because we have been led to believe that all anger is wrong, our tendency is to neglect our responsibility to take a stand against the evils of this world. We think wrongly that these things are better left to God.

This thinking relieves us of the need to intervene and protect our brothers and sisters. After all, am I my brother’s keeper? Therefore, we are willing to stand by and allow evil to take place.

Although it has become fashionable in our society and culture to deny the existence of evil and even Satan himself, reasonable people readily acknowledge how detrimental and harmful evil is in the world in which we live. Evil comes in many forms. It is, in its most aggressive models, very easy to identify. But in the more subtle forms, greed, jealous, envy, and selfishness, it is harder to spot.

These hidden forms tend to cause us not to be sensitive or caring toward our neighbor’s needs. This type of evil is dangerous simply because it is not perceived as being evil. But since they are so closely tied to the sin of pride, they corrupt our souls and destroy our desire to serve and glorify the Creator.

The antithesis of pride is humility, a trait that we as humans find hard to produce in our daily walk. Dr. Sumner points out that humility is derived from the Latin word *humus*, earthy. Salt is earthy. “Salt is gritty. It’s an irritant, yet medicinal. Jesus’ anger was medicinal. It was irritating and gritty precisely because it was salted by truth. Salted anger makes people well enough-spiritually healthy enough-to stop denying the truth. The salt of righteous anger is needed in this

world because the world is a dangerous place.” Sumner, “*Angry Like Jesus*,” (pg. 21.)

Jesus said, “**You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.** (Matt. 5:13.) ESV

So, when salt loses its characteristic of saltiness, it has lost its true nature. Truth has disappeared. There is no grittiness no irritation, and therefore no medicinal effectiveness. We as Christians will be unable to provide healing to a sick and evil world unless we remain salty, dedicated to God’s truth.

What then do we make of Scripture that seems to forbid us from being angry? **Psalm 37:8 (ESV) Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!**

Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

The Apostle Paul quotes this verse in the book of Ephesians. Ephesians 4:26 (ESV)

²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

The key here seems to be that Paul tells us we can be angry as long as we do not sin. His reading of the Psalm is that while anger based on human emotion and reasoning leads to evil/sin, godly anger, like that which Jesus demonstrated, does not lead to sin.

Paul understood that anger that is salted with the truth can accomplish God’s will. That His children be protected from evil. But Paul also understood that humans could be harmed from godly anger unless they rested from its powerful nature, “**do not let the sun go down on your anger.**”

Paul doesn’t say we should not resume our godly anger the next day if the initial reason for our anger still exists. (God’s creation being threatened in some respect.) But to hold on to that anger overnight opens the door for Satan to use the power of anger to gain a stronghold against us. *Ephesians 4:27 (ESV)* ²⁷ **and give no opportunity to the devil.**

The next day we can take up the full armor of God and resist the schemes of Satan being rested and secure in the salted truth of God. This would demonstrate our moral courage which we have gained through the

equipping of the Holy Spirit when He poured God’s truth into our enlightened souls at our rebirth.

Once the battle is over, and God has given us victory over the evil that we faced we must be ready to lay down our anger. The power of anger can be somewhat intoxicating and perhaps addictive. Hanging on to old anger can be corrosive and can keep us from recognizing the truth. We become blinded by rage.

The solution here is forgiveness, one of the hallmarks of Christianity. Forgiveness sets us free from our struggle and clears our mind to take in God’s revealing truth.

Forgiving does not mean that we forget about wrong behavior on the part of those who have abused God’s people or creation. There are consequences for irresponsible actions that must be borne by the offender. Otherwise we become enablers allowing people to continue transgressing God’s way.

Take away points.

1. God’s anger is righteous because it is protective of His creation.
2. Jesus’ perfect faith and obedience to the Father was the guarantee that His anger was godly and righteous.
3. Because of our sin nature, our anger is often tainted by greed, jealousy, and selfishness. Therefore, we must guard our hearts and examine our thoughts and actions before allowing our anger to cause others harm and sin against God.
4. When we allow the Holy Spirit to have control of our lives, and transform our hearts and minds, our anger can be used by God to serve His purpose. (Without the leading of the Spirit, our thoughts, words, and actions tend to be self-serving, not God-serving.)
5. If we know God and have faith we are to act with moral courage to stand firm against evil.
6. We must never forget that forgiveness is part of God’s plan for our lives.

In our next Bible study, we will continue looking at the biblical record of Jesus’ anger.