

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for December 2, 2018

Anger Issues
Ephesians 4:26-27

I. The command (4:26)

Be angry

- We are called to put on anger
- Definition of anger
 - “a strong feeling of displeasure and belligerence aroused by a wrong”¹
- Biblical depictions of anger
 - God Himself
 - Psalm 7:11 “God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day.”
 - Jesus
 - Mark 3:5 “And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.”
 - Mark 10:14 “But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.’”
 - Mark 10:15-19 - Second cleansing of the Temple
 - John 2:13-22 - First cleansing of the Temple with whip
 - Matthew 23 - Woes against scribes and Pharisees
 - Jesus’ return
 - Revelation 19:15 “From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.”
- Clear command
 - As opposed to NIV “In your anger do not sin”
 - Imperative “be angry”
- Angry at what?
 - Angry at sin
 - Based upon examples of anger from the bible
 - Based upon God’s own character
 - Based upon high calling of God’s people

¹ <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/anger>

- How could the Ephesians need to put on anger?
 - Context of Ephesians
 - Called to be unified (Ephesians 4:1-6)
 - Different backgrounds of Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:11-22)
 - For the Jewish believers there were temptations...
 - Temptations to stay separated from Gentiles
 - Temptations to stay superior to the Gentiles
 - Temptations to remain in partiality and prejudice
 - Walk no longer as the Gentiles (4:17)
 - For the Gentile believers there were temptations...
 - Temptations to walk in old sinful habits
 - Temptations to worship various idols
 - Temptations to foster hatred toward the elitist Jews
 - Should any of these sinful tendencies from the Jewish Christians or Gentile Christians be deemed as acceptable?
 - No way!
 - All of that erroneous thinking and living must be repented of
 - Imagine what would happen if those sinful tendencies were tolerated in the church?
 - There would be no hope for the concept of a united church
 - A united church will be impossible if sin is left unaddressed
- How could we need to put on anger?
 - We too have been called to be united under our one God
 - We too have been called to part from our old selves and sinful practices
 - What happens if we ignore our calling to be holy and sanctified?
 - What happens if we remain emotionless toward our sin and wrongdoing against God and others?
 - We will not be walking worthy as we have been called to do so
 - Instead, we will continue walking like the world and there will be no virtual difference between us in the church and those in the world
 - A necessary remedy to such indifference and apathy is to be angry at our sin
 - We must have a strong feeling of displeasure at the wrongs we commit
 - Romans 12:9 “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.”
 - Thus, at a minimum, we must hate the sin and evil that is still at work in our own heart
 - We must take sin seriously and seek to mortify any trace of it that surfaces in our own lives

- Furthermore, we must not respond with indifference or apathy if there is obvious sin and discord within the church
 - We must have a strong feeling of displeasure at the wrongs that we commit as a church
 - We must abhor and hate the evil that still surfaces in our midst as God's holy people and representatives to the world
 - There is no room for incorrect responses to sin in the church:
 - "Different strokes for different folks and to each his own"
 - "I'm glad I am not like them, I would never do that"
 - These are selfish and prideful responses to sin in the church!
 - Instead, we must be gripped, saddened and displeased at thought of sin among God's people
 - Our anger must be directed toward the clear and present outworking of sin in God's church

II. The concern (4:26)

and do not sin;

- We are called to be wise and balanced in our expression of righteous anger
- Thus, Paul says "and do not sin"
- As Scripture reveals, anger is emotional and prone to become sinful
- There are many verses that clearly mention anger as sin
 - Matthew 5:21-22 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire."
 - Exodus 20:13 "You shall not murder." (6th commandment)
 - James 1:19-20 "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God."
 - Ephesians 4:31 "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice."
- Since anger can be exercised and displayed in a sinful manner, Paul speaks this statement to provide a necessary warning
 - Make no mistake, according to Scripture there is no place for the anger of man
 - Man's emotional displeasure due to his pride being hurt
 - Man's emotional displeasure on account of not getting what one wants is NOT righteous anger
 - This is the anger of man and it is sin

- Thus, Paul warns sternly, “do not sin”
- In fact, most common tendencies toward anger probably are sin
 - The quantity of bible verses addressing sinful anger outweighs the quantity of verses addressing righteous anger
 - Odds are that our initial responses of anger in most given situations may very well be the sinful anger of man
 - This is why Scripture commands us to be slow to anger
 - Proverbs 14:29 “Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.”
 - Proverbs 15:18 “A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.”

III. The constraint (4:26)

do not let the sun go down on your anger,

- Time constraint
 - “Do not let the sun go down”
 - “Sunset was an ancient metaphor indicating that a sufficient amount of time had passed. Dusk was the time when wages were paid out or when reconciliation was to be effected.”²
 - Deuteronomy 24:15 “You shall give him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets (for he is poor and counts on it), lest he cry against you to the LORD, and you be guilty of sin.”
 - “It is essential to keep short accounts of anger, to settle the problem before another day begins. ‘The day of anger should be the day of reconciliation.’”³

IV. The contender (4:27)

27 and give no opportunity to the devil.

- Motivation stated as a command
 - Why must we be careful with our emotional displeasure at sin?
- Devil would love to turn us against each other and see our unity destroyed
 - How do we not give an opportunity to the Devil?
 - Leave it for God to deal with all unrighteousness perfectly in the end
 - Romans 12:19 (ESV) “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’”

² Grant R. Osborne, *Ephesians: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 151.

³ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 622.

- Romans 12:19 (NASB) “Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,’ says the Lord.”
- Seriousness of situation and what is at stake
 - Allusion to spiritual warfare
 - “Unchecked anger is a major weapon the demonic powers will use against us, so we must at all times ‘put on the full armor of God’ and refuse to allow it to gain power over us.”⁴

⁴ Grant R. Osborne, *Ephesians: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 151.