

Are You Making Jesus Angry?

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[0 : 00] Heavenly Father, we bow in your presence. May your word be our rule, your spirit our teacher, and your greater glory our supreme concern through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Anger and Jesus aren't two words we would readily associate with each other. Anger, compassion in Jesus, of course we would. Love in Jesus, also. But anger in Jesus, not so much, maybe. And yet, if Jesus was truly man and experienced the full range of human emotions, anger being one of them, it's not surprising that we would have him being angry. Likewise, if Jesus was truly God, we often read in the Old Testament of God being angry, again, it's not surprising that we would have Jesus being angry. Anger is one of the basic human emotions. We all get angry on occasions. Most of the time, our anger is unjustified, out of control, and sinful. In many ways, our world is characterized by anger. For Christians, especially young to middle-aged Christian men, anger can be a significant problem. But in Mark chapter 3, verse 5, we read that Jesus, the sinless man, the sinless man, God in the flesh, was angry. So there must be occasions when it's right for us to be angry.

When in fact, anger, and not apathy, is the most appropriate reaction to a situation we face. What did it take for Jesus to become angry? In Mark chapter 3, verse 5, we read, He looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, Stretched out your hand. He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

[2 : 21] There's four aspects of Jesus' anger from this verse we'll consider together. From where did Jesus' anger come, first of all? What caused Jesus' anger, second?

How did Jesus deal with his anger, third? And lastly, what did Jesus' anger cost him? How does the anger of Jesus compare with our anger? And can we learn how to control our anger by learning about how Jesus controlled his? Okay, first of all, from where did Jesus' anger come?

From where did Jesus' anger come? The anger of Jesus did not come from outside, but from within. It was prompted by his grief at the hardness of heart of the Pharisees.

We'll consider the topic of hardness of heart in a minute, but what I want us to notice is that Jesus' anger came from his grief. Emotional pain is always the source of anger.

And Jesus' emotional pain caused by the Pharisees' hardness of heart was what prompted his anger. From where does our anger come if it is not from our emotional pain?

[3 : 52] So let's take an example. Someone is denied a promotion at work. They're deeply hurt.

From our example of that person being denied their promotion at work, they're grieving over a shattered dream. So they become angry.

And Jesus' anger came from his grief, his emotional pain. So the question we want to ask is not therefore about what caused his anger, but what prompted his grief.

What caused him so much pain? Again, let's go back to that example of that person denied their promotion at work. What prompted that person's grief was that because they thought they had deserved that promotion, and that their personal pride had taken a hit.

Or let's say they failed an exam. Well, they thought they deserved to pass the exam. And their personal pride has taken a hit.

[5 : 24] They might be right. They might have deserved that promotion. But you know, when personal pride comes into the equation, our grief leads to unjustified, out of control, and sinful anger.

So it would be a really interesting exercise for us all. If when we get home tonight, we write down the last time we were angry.

And realizing that that anger came from our personal emotional grief, list the reasons for that emotional pain.

It might be that we became angry at our kids, or at a server in a fast food restaurant, or at something that happened at a church, or we became angry at ourselves, or whatever. What prompted our emotional pain and grief such that we became angry? If we are being brutally honest with ourselves, 99.9% of the time, our list of reasons will contain an element of pride. [6 : 39] Things haven't worked out the way I wanted them to. I did not get what I wanted in the way I wanted it, when I wanted it.

So when we write down those reasons, we're actually providing ourselves with grounds for repentance on account of our pride. Jesus' anger was prompted by his emotional pain. If Jesus wrote down the reasons for his grief, there would only be one, the hardness of the hearts of the Pharisees.

His grief was not prompted to any extent by his personal pride, that things hadn't worked out the way he thought they would, or he wasn't getting what he wanted, or what he deserved. It was prompted by one thing, and one thing only, the hardness of hearts of the Pharisees. Okay, that's where his anger came from.

[7 : 45] Second question. What caused Jesus' anger? What caused his anger? Jesus' anger was prompted by his grief, but having agreed that there was no personal pride involved in Jesus' grief.

What caused his grief was the hardness of the hearts of the Pharisees. The word hardness used here can also be translated as obstinacy or stubbornness.

It has a long history in the Bible. It's used to describe stiff... You know, you often hear of the Israelites as being stiff-necked, like an oxen who's stiff-necked.

He doesn't want to go where his owner wants him to go. He's obstinate. It would be an interesting exercise for us to spend time in the Old Testament going through each passage which speaks of the hardness of God's people to God's words and God's works.

And on each occasion, God expresses his anger at his people. And now in Mark 3, verse 5, confronted by the hardness of the Pharisees, Jesus does the most God-like thing possible.

[9 : 00] What else would you expect God to do when confronted by the hardness of his people's hearts? He becomes angry. It's their hardness, their stubbornness, their obstinacy, which causes his anger.

And the hardness of their hearts in this context consists of two things. In the first instance, they were hardened toward human suffering and pain.

Hardened toward human suffering and pain. The man Jesus was healing was suffering from a withered hand. As a result, he could neither work nor contribute to human society.

He was an outcast. Jesus saw the man's pain. Jesus saw his suffering. But as far as the Pharisees were concerned, this man wasn't worth bothering about.

They were completely insensitive toward the man's suffering. In our world of instant news, violent movies, and graphic social media, it's easy to become immune to human suffering.

[10 : 10] Like when we're told 2,000 people die in an earthquake in Morocco. So what? Recently, a sick internet circle, listen to this, a sick internet circle was uncovered where contributors paid to watch monkeys being tortured and killed online.

So these people took pleasure in paying for monkeys to be electrocuted, skinned, and drowned online while they're watching.

It's enough to turn your stomach, right? But that's what the Pharisees become. Far worse, because before them, it was a human being, not a monkey, made in the image of God and dearly loved by God.

And they couldn't care less. It's so easy to become insensitive to human suffering and human pain. But Jesus isn't. Every groan of a human heart reaches his ears and grieves his holy heart.

But in the second instance, Jesus became angry because the Pharisees hid their hatred for him.

This is the second aspect of hardness of heart. They hid their hatred for him behind a mask of false piety.

[11 : 32] They hid their hatred for him behind a mask of false piety. They pretended to be devoted to God. And by their religious exactness, they made out that they were God's representatives on earth.

But the reality was that their hearts were very far from God indeed. So these people had twisted the Sabbath regulations, the Sabbath that God had given for human good, and they had turned them to their own religious purposes.

They used these Sabbath regulations that God had given for our good, that God had given to give rest to the exhausted. They used these regulations to oppress this outcast man.

Hiding behind the mask of piety and religiosity, the Pharisees were the biggest hypocrites in the world. They were always droning on about how the Messiah would come, but now the Messiah is standing before them, and rather than follow and worship him, they hate and reject him.

Jesus had already given them countless reasons to believe and trust in him, but they were always hardening their hearts against him so that whatever he said and whatever he did, they would not believe.

[12:57] So I'm learning to play the guitar. Right? For the first few weeks, it was really painful because holding down the strings to the frets digs into your fingertips.

But after a while, your fingertips, your pads on your fingers become hardened and you're able to hold down the strings without any pain. Doesn't mean to say I'm any better than I was, but in the same way, the first time we hear the offer of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we maybe wrestle with it, but then we reject it.

The second time we hear it, it becomes easier to reject. The hundredth time, we hear it. We just stop listening altogether.

Our hearts have become hardened to God and his great love for us. So this is why Jesus became angry. The hearts of those who pretended to know God best couldn't have cared less about the suffering and pain of this man and even more seriously had become immune to God's call to repent and believe the gospel.

Jesus' anger didn't come out of nowhere. It wasn't selfish. It wasn't proud. It was born out of a sincere love for this man and a sincere love for the glory of God.

[14:22] Can we say the same about our anger? That it's born out of a love for others and out of a love for God? As we said earlier, if we're being honest, it's probably got more to do with self-love.

That feeling of not getting what we deserve, how we want it, when we want it. But not Jesus. His anger had nothing to do with personal insult.

It was all about the hardened attitudes of the Pharisees. Third question. How did Jesus deal with his anger?

How did Jesus deal with his anger? In James 1 verse 20, James, who's Jesus' brother, says, The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. There's something about human anger which is unrighteous. In the previous verse, James has said, Let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.

[15:32] Our anger is often displayed in being slow to listen and quick to speak. We stop listening to that other person's point of view.

we start to speak over them. Our voices become louder and louder and louder until we're both shouting at each other. We stop seeing things from the other person's perspective.

We become wholly focused on ourselves. We often deal with that anger by uncontrolled rage. This uncontrolled rage is either outward or inward.

If it's outward, we lash out at other people. If it's inward, we let that anger burn within and we lash out at ourselves, leading to depression and other kinds of inward turmoil.

Even if we try to deal with that anger by meditation, I've got quite a few of them on my phone, the meditation apps, all we're doing is papering over the cracks.

[16:36] We're still angry. The anger remains hidden beneath, ready to come out at some other time in some other way. The history of our nation is full of anger.

The wars we rage against each other as nations are all caused by anger at actual or perceived slights. The fractures in our relationships are all caused by anger.

But Jesus dealt with his anger in an altogether different way. Look at the text. He channeled it by calling to himself that man with the withered hand and he healed him there and then.

He dealt with his anger by doing something good. By saving life, not taking it. Jesus had every right to wipe these Pharisees off the map but he didn't.

He focused his attention not on taking but on giving and expressing his love, not his anger. He controlled his anger.

[17:50] He did not express it in fury. Rather, he met their hardness of heart with love and salvation. There's the essence of how we are to deal with our anger.

Not by taking but by giving. Not by destroying, tearing down but by redeeming and saving. You know, there's a very, very good reason that Jesus commands us to love our enemies. Not just because God loves his enemies but because loving our enemies is actually really good for us. It heads off anger at the pass. The best thing we can do to someone who has hurt us is not to hurt them in return but to do them good.

To pray for them, to give thanks for them, to love them. This is a really hard teaching from God's word. You all know it is.

[18 : 57] But it does work. Think of that court case in America a couple of years ago where a woman was found guilty of murdering a man.

That man's younger brother gave an impact statement in court where acknowledging his grief, he then spoke directly to his brother's killer.

And he told her that in the name of Jesus he forgave her, loved her, and he pled with her to find forgiveness in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Maybe some of you have seen the YouTube video. He then asked permission from the judge to embrace his brother's murderer. The guilty woman who until that point had shown absolutely no remorse at all.

suddenly broke down into uncontrollable weeping and she cried out in the court, I am so sorry for what I've done to you.

[20 : 04] What an example of Jesus teaching here in Mark 3 verse 5 that rather than allow his anger to fester and seek revenge, that grieved and angry young man forgave his brother's killer.

He did what was right. He did what was good. He did what was Christ-like. It is not good for us to allow our anger to fester.

If we're angry with someone today, I would virtually guarantee that there's someone you can think about that you're angry with. let me suggest that a good first step is to start praying for them.

And then to ask ourselves the question, how can I do that person good? Not tear them down, but build them up.

Fourth question, what did Jesus' anger cost him? What did Jesus' anger cost him? Again, Jesus had every right to insist upon his own personal rights in this situation, to say to the Pharisees, don't you know who I am?

[21 : 19] I'm your Messiah. I deserve your worship, you disgusting, hypocritical creeps. Hashtag Nate, not cool. That's the kind of thing you would say.

But Jesus didn't insist upon his own rights. He allowed himself to be slighted. to be accused. We read in the next verse that having watched Jesus heal that man with a withered hand, with their own eyes, the Pharisees went out and immediately held council with the Herodians, who were natural enemies, the Pharisees and Herodians.

How they might kill Jesus. Tragic, isn't it, that having been given another opportunity to believe in Jesus, by watching Jesus heal that man with a withered hand, they further hardened their hearts against him and conspired how they might kill him.

The cost of Jesus' anger at their hardness of heart ultimately led to the cross on which the Pharisees, the Herodians and the other hardened leaders of Israel killed him.

Jesus had every right to annihilate them there and then, but rather than destroying them, he allowed them to destroy him.

[22 : 40] From a worldly perspective, let's face it this way, from a worldly perspective, Jesus got a raw deal, right? He came out the loser. But who did God exalt to the highest place?

The Pharisees or Jesus? To whom did God give a name that is above every name, the Pharisees or Jesus? And at whose feet shall all heaven and earth bow, the Pharisees or Jesus?

An eternal perspective, a Christ-like perspective, will serve us well when we let our anger get the better of us. Releasing our anger in a torrent of abuse might seem like the best way to deal with those who have hurt us, but doing the costly thing, loving those who have hurt us rather than hurting them in return, this is what the gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to do.

Because if Jesus had not born with my hardness of heart, if Jesus had not died as my substitute on the cross, I wouldn't stand in front of you today as a forgiven, justified, and redeemed Christian.

As we close, I want to do so with three very brief applications, a word of comfort, a word of challenge, and a word of conviction. A word of comfort, first of all, to all of us.

[24 : 15] We are truly blessed to have this passage in our Bibles, a passage that tells us that Jesus doesn't condone merciless and hateful living, but that he gets angry because he's on the side of the weak and the outcast and the condemned.

What would it look like to have a God who cared so little about our pain that he was willing to take the side of the Pharisee, of the one causing the pain?

What would it look like to have a God who didn't become angry with sin? The word of comfort here is twofold. The first is this, God sees our pain and suffering.

God sees it. Christ saw this man's suffering. God sees our pain and sympathizes with us.

We are not alone. He knows and we can tell him all about it when we pray. We will always find a listening ear, a sympathetic heart, even though we might find that he'll change our perspective on things.

[25 : 30] But the second word of comfort is, you know, things will not always be this way, with the oppressor and the tired coming out on top and the rest of us crushed under the weight of their egos.

A day is coming when Jesus himself, the Jesus who was crucified by these Pharisees, will come to judge the earth and he will judge with all righteousness, righting all that was wrong and vindicating the innocent.

As hard as it might be for us when we've been so badly hurt, ultimately, let's leave the judging in God's hand and just get on with loving our enemies and doing them good.

Be comforted in God's judgment. Second here, there's a word of challenge. A word of challenge.

Dealing with our anger against those who have grieved us in a Christ-like way may well be the hardest challenge any of us face in the Christian life.

Let me say that again. Dealing with our anger against those who have grieved us in a Christ-like way may well be the hardest challenge we face in the Christian life.

[26 : 42] We've all been hurt by other people and if we're being honest, there's times, I'm sure, when we've all hurt other people. The challenge for us is to channel our anger in a Christ-like way.

We need to remember that the Lord had every reason to be angry at us for all the years of our hardness toward him, but he died for us instead. We need to look forward to the future and see things from an eternal perspective.

We need to entrust judgment to God who sees all things and one day will right all wrongs. And we need to draw close to the heavenly Jesus who knows exactly how it feels to be grieved and to become angry.

As Christians, when we become angry, and we all do, let's face it, it's not enough to count to ten. Rather, when we feel our tempers are rising, yeah, by all means, count to ten and pray for God's calming spirit to work in our hearts.

Worse still, let's never allow our anger to turn in upon ourselves and screw up our minds and our hearts and our lives. Let's lay it all out before the Lord, casting all our anxieties upon him, for we have the promise that in transferring our cares to Christ, the peace of God which surpasses all human understanding will guard our hearts and our minds in him.

[28 : 15] That's the word of challenge. And then lastly, the word of conviction. Word of conviction. Let every one of us here pray that we never harden our hearts against the gospel.

There may be many who, even though they have heard the gospel preached for many, many, many years, have become calloused like my finger pads with the guitar strings and the fret to Jesus' voice and call.

May that never be said of any of us. Psalm 95, we sung it together. The writer counsels those of us who have sat under the ministry of the word for many years but have not yet responded in faith and trust to Jesus.

He says, today if you harden, if you hear his voice, he says, today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. it is a terrifying prospect to grieve and anger our Lord.

In Revelation 6 verse 16, God's judgment is described in this way, it is the day of the wrath of the Lamb.

[29 : 32] Revelation 6, 16, the day of the wrath of the Lamb. Terrifying and horrific shall be the eternal fate of any on that day who have hardened their hearts against the gospel of God's grace in Christ.

That day of judgment has not yet come but none of us know when it shall. How awful it shall be if there should be any on that day among us who still have hardened hearts to the gospel.

For on that day and forever more, the wrath of the Lamb shall rest upon them. So you see, the message of Mark 3, verse 5 is, today is the day of salvation.

Faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ which changes us on the inside is God's answer to our anger.

But depending upon the help of the promised Holy Spirit of whom Kirk spoke this morning, we shall all follow in Jesus' example of returning good for evil.

In the next week, I guarantee, I guarantee that every single one of us in this building tonight and all of us watching online, every single one of us in the next week will have the opportunity to put tonight's teaching into practice.

[30 : 54] Every single one of us will get angry about something. By God's grace, let none of us be found wanting. Let us pray.

Lord, we thank you for your goodness to us in giving us a passage like this that reminds us that you don't take the side of the oppressor and the tyrant, and that a day is coming when you will right all wrongs and you will vindicate the innocent.

We also thank you, Lord, for bearing with us for so long. There are some of us here who weren't believers until maybe at old age. And for years and years and years perhaps we heard the gospel being preached and we hardened our hearts against it.

And you were patient with us until finally we heard and we accepted Christ into our lives. We pray that would be the story this evening. That there would be one here even, one, who having recognized the truth of the gospel would soften their hearts and accept Christ as Savior here and now.

In Jesus' name, Amen.