

October 24th, 2021

Love Is Not Easily Angered

1 Corinthians 13:5c

Love does *not* carry a sharp knife

Last Lord's day, we saw that love "...does not insist on its own way." Self-centeredness is the deepest root of all our loveless behavior. This morning, we see one of the poisonous fruits of self-centeredness: an angry spirit. Paul says in our verse: love "...is not irritable." The Greek word παροξύνω paroxynō has two parts: para "alongside" oxys "a sharp edge." So being irritable¹ or *easily angered* as the NIV² puts it is to carry with you a sharp knife that cuts and wounds others.³ It is the opposite of true Christian love. True Christian love acts like the good Samaritan who binds the wounds of others, but an angry spirit's sharp knife is what causes the wounds. An angry spirit has sharp words and sharp looks. It slashes and cuts with irrational and impulsive responses. It is the chosen weapon of a selfish heart. Therefore love does not carry a sharp knife.

The Big Idea...

Sinful anger is exposed when it is a greater sin to offend you than God,
 when your kingdom is a greater concern than Christ's,
 when your response is a work of the flesh rather than the Spirit.
 Therefore sinful anger is contrary to true Christian love.

¹ 1828: Very susceptible of anger or passion; easily inflamed or exasperated; as an *irritable* temper.

² NIV: "it is not easily angered"; KJV "is not easily provoked"; CEV: "quick tempered"; DRB: "is not provoked to anger"; ISV: "ever gets annoyed"; NET: "it is not easily angered"; WNT: "nor blaze out in passionate anger"

³ cf. Acts 15:39 "there arose a sharp disagreement"

★ Our Doctrine

★ Our Duty

★ Our Delight

I. Our Doctrine

3 types of anger

For our purposes, there are only three types of anger⁴: **1)** The righteous anger of God. **2)** The righteous anger of humans and **3)** The unrighteous anger of humans. Let's take these one at a time.

1. The righteous anger of God

We know that anger considered *in itself* is not evil, because God is called an angry God. **Psalm 7:11** “God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation [*anger*] every day.” **John 3:36** “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath [*the anger*] of God remains on him.” Even gently and lowly Jesus is described as having inconceivable anger. In **Revelation 6:17** we read of the reprobate who are hiding at the return of Christ, they call “...to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath [*the anger*] of the Lamb.’” One author rightly said “God is both the most loving and the most angry person on our planet.”⁵ I remember exactly where I was driving on Milwaukee Street 20 or so years ago, when I listening to the Bible Answer Man broadcast and I heard him mention Jonathan Edward’s most famous sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” As an immature Christian I was so offended at the thought of a loving God being angry. But I would say now, that you will never understand God’s love rightly if you don’t

⁴ Certainly angels can have a righteous anger, and demons can have an unrighteous anger.

⁵ Robert D. Jones, *Uprooting Anger: Biblical Help For a Common Problem*, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing, 2005), pg. 18

begin to understand His anger.⁶ Why is God angry? Because He is holy, holy, holy and altogether opposed to evil. **Romans 1:18** “For the wrath [*the anger*] of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress *the truth*.” What truth? That God made us to glorify Him and to enjoy Him forever. When men suppress that truth that everyone knows through the medium of creation, God is furious.⁷ And He is right to be so. This is His world. We are His creatures. He is Master and Lord. He is the Potter, we are the clay. To rebel against Him is the greatest evil, and therefore God’s anger against sin is a righteous anger.⁸ But Paul is *not* talking about that kind of anger here.

2. The righteous anger of humans

Since we are made in God’s own image, then we must also have a righteous anger that reflects God’s holy anger. Clearly the Bible teaches this. Paul says in **Ephesians 4:26** says “*Be angry and do not sin.*” That is a command. We are commanded to be angry. Over what? Iniquity, and transgression and sin. Righteous anger is a Christian duty. As one author put it: “The absence of

⁶ There are several hundred references to God’s anger in the Bible. cf. Jones, pg. 18. Additionally, A.W. Pink says here: “A study of the concordance will show that there are *more* references in Scripture to the anger, fury, and wrath of God, than there are to His love and tenderness. Because God is holy, He hates all sin; and because He hates all sin, His anger burns against the sinner (Psa 7:11).” Source: <https://comingintheclouds.org/christian-resources/evangelism/the-wrath-of-god-by-arthur-pink/> Accessed October 23, 2021

⁷ And He will use His knife to cut down the wicked. Deuteronomy 32:41 “If I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me.”

⁸ If someone asks: ‘how can God be loving and wrathful?’ I would ask: ‘Are you able to be loving and wrathful?’ If you are loving to your children, that love will manifest itself in wrath towards the robber who breaks in and threatens their lives. If someone rebuts: ‘but how can God be eternally wrathful.’ The classic Edwardsian answer is the penalty rises in proportion to the one who is sinned against. An assault on a homeless person carries a smaller penalty than an assault against the President. But God is Infinite in His person, therefore a sin against Him is infinite in nature. James 2:10 says “For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.” Though the sinner might only sin for 70 years, it would not follow that he should be punished for only 70 years. The murderer does his ghastly deed in a few seconds, but we don’t suppose that his punishment should be just as brief. The problem is on our end. We don’t see the infinite worth of God, yet. But on that Day we will see it and we will rejoice at God’s eternal punishment of the wicked and we will affirm that it is altogether lovely and right. cf. Revelation 19

righteous anger when it is appropriate is...sinful."⁹ Whenever a person loves the things that God loves and hates the things that God he will have righteous anger.¹⁰ Paul had a righteous anger in **Acts 17:16**, and same Greek word from our text is used: "Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked [παροξύνω paroxynō: *angered*] within him as he saw that the city was full of idols." Paul was angry that God wasn't be worshipped and adored and praised in Athens, instead wickedness was being exalted. Why is our country in such bad shape today? One reason is because our citizens have lost this virtue of righteous anger. We are not longer angry at sin like God is. But Paul is *not* talking about righteous human anger here.

3. The unrighteous anger of humans

It's this last category that Paul has in mind in our passage when he says love "...is not *irritable*." Though I prefer how the NIV puts it: "[love] is not easily angered." Being *easily angered* includes being *irritable*, but I believe Paul has a broader definition in mind then our normal English usage of the word *irritable*. So then, what does it mean to be *easily angered*? Puritan Richard Baxter has an excellent definition, allow me to paraphrase:

*It is the rising up in the heart in passionate displeasure over anything that crosses us or prevents us from gaining some desired good.*¹¹

A couple illustrations. The first record of sinful anger comes in **Genesis 4:4-5** "...the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵but for Cain and his offering

⁹ "The absence of righteous anger when it is appropriate is as sinful as the presence of sinful anger." Jones, 42

¹⁰ Jesus who being God, is also fully human. And as a human He had righteous anger at times. Mark 3:5 says "And [Jesus] looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart." Ecclesiastes 3:8 says there is "...a time to love, and a time to hate." 2 Corinthians 7:11 "For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter."

¹¹ Baxter's original quote reads that anger is "the rising up in the heart in passionate displeacency an apprehended evil, which would cross or hinder us of some desired good." Jones, pg. 17

he had no regard. So Cain was *very angry*, and his face fell.” Because God didn’t approve of Cain’s sacrifice on Cain’s terms he became angry because he wasn’t accepted. Or we could think of Esau. When Jacob received the blessing instead of Esau, Rebekkah sent Jacob away, **Genesis 27:44-45** “...until your brother’s *fury* turns away—⁴⁵ until your brother’s *anger* turns away from you.” Because Jacob was blessed with the right of the first born—the desired good that Esau wanted—Esau hated his brother and planned to kill him (v.41). So the main difference between righteous anger and unrighteous anger is that righteous anger is God-centered while unrighteous anger is me-centered.

Principle: Being easily angered shows who is lord of your heart

And so we arrive at our **main doctrine** which is our Big Idea: *Sinful anger is exposed* ...

*when it is a greater sin to offend you than God,
when your kingdom is a greater concern than Christ’s,
when your response is a work of the flesh rather than the Spirit.*

Three distinct attributes of sinful anger, so we’ll take them one at a time.

1. Sinful anger is exposed when it is a greater sin to offend you than God

Please turn with me to **1 Samuel 20**. David doesn’t come to Saul’s feast because he knows Saul is trying to kill him. Jonathan (Saul’s son) is not yet convinced so he goes to the feast to see if he can uncover his father’s intentions. Picking up in **v.27**

But on the second day, the day after the new moon, David’s place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, “Why has not the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?” ²⁸ Jonathan answered Saul, “David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem. ²⁹ He said, ‘Let me go, for our clan holds a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. So now, if I have found favor in

your eyes, let me get away and see my brothers.' For this reason he has not come to the king's table."

³⁰ Then Saul's **anger** was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? ³¹ For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established. Therefore send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die." ³² Then Jonathan answered Saul his father, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?"

³³ But Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death. ³⁴ And Jonathan rose from the table in **fierce anger** and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had disgraced him.

Now both Saul and Jonathan are angry, but Saul's anger was unrighteous while Jonathan's was righteous. Why was Saul so angry at David? Jonathan asks him that question at the end of v.32 "What has he done?" Jonathan's is asking: 'What is David's sin? Has David done evil in God's sight?' In essence, he's asking his father to justify his anger. But Saul can't accuse David of sinning against God. The only offense of David's is that he had more success than Saul. Remember the saying "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands?" (**1 Samuel 18:7**). Saul became angry at that saying, because David received more honor than he.¹² That was David's 'sin.' On the other hand, ask yourself, *why* was Jonathan angry? Was it because Saul threw a spear at him Jonathan v.33? Or was it because Saul was plotting the murder of God's anointed king, David? Clearly, Jonathan's anger was *primarily* focused on his father's sin against God more than his sin against himself.¹³ Saul's anger had

¹² v.8-9 And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?"
⁹ And Saul eyed David from that day on.

¹³ v.34 says "...he was grieved for David, because his father had disgraced him.

nothing to do with God. It was Saul-centered. Sinful anger doesn't get angry when God is offended or dishonored or sinned against. It only gets angry when self is slighted or offended or dishonored.

2. Sinful anger is exposed when your kingdom is a greater concern than Christ's

Whose kingdom was Saul chiefly concerned with? His own. Look at v.31, he says to Jonathan "...as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established." Now clearly he's not concerned about Jonathan's kingdom since he threw a spear at him. He's only concerned about his own name being remembered, the greatness that will be attributed to Saul for having his family on the throne. On the other hand, whose kingdom was Jonathan concerned with? God's. Even Saul knew that. He accused him in v.30 of choosing the David to his own shame. Saul knew that Jonathan was happy to have David take his place as the heir to the throne.¹⁴ Jonathan cared more about the advance of Christ's kingdom than his own. But Saul was entirely focused on his own kingdom. That's how sinful anger works. It doesn't get angry when Christ's kingdom is hindered, only when the kingdom of self is hindered.

3. Sinful anger is exposed when your response is a work of the flesh rather than the Spirit

How did Saul's anger manifest itself? We've already seen. He hucked a spear at his own son. His fits of anger only produced those works of the flesh as seen in **Galatians 5:20-21** "...enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹envy." His anger never subsided. He only stopped seeking to kill David when he met his own terrible death. On the other hand, how did Jonathan's anger manifest itself? Recall that v.34 says "Jonathan rose from the table in *fierce anger...*" He anger was clearly controlled by the Holy

¹⁴ 1 Samuel 23:15-17 David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. ¹⁶ And Jonathan, Saul's son, rose and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God. ¹⁷ And he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Saul my father also knows this."

Spirit. v.34 says he fasted and grieved. In the following verses, he meets up with David and gives him the necessary information to save his own life out of Saul's hands. Jonathan's righteous anger produced righteousness. But Saul only produced more wicked works of the flesh. That's how sinful anger works. Its responses are impulsive, irrational, selfish, and fleshly.

Therefore sinful anger is contrary to true Christian love

Therefore in these three attributes of sinful anger, we see how contrary it is to true Christian love. Clearly, many in the Corinthian Church were *easily angered*. One clear example is in their taking each other to court! How angry do you have to be to take another Christian to court? Paul tells them “To have lawsuits at all with one another *is already a defeat for you*” (6:7). Why was it *already a defeat*? Because of those three attributes we just considered. 1) They were more concerned over private offenses, than sins against God; 2) They were more concerned with the advance of their own private kingdom than Christ’s kingdom; and 3) Their responses to each other were the works of the flesh rather than the fruits of the Holy Spirit. That’s **our doctrine**. Love is not easily angered.

II. Our Duty

We have three duties.

1. Informatory Use

Our **first duty** is just to *consider* specific examples of sinful anger.¹⁵

1.1. When a person is angry at their circumstances, it is sinful anger.

When the Israelites were in the wilderness, they became *angry* at their

¹⁵ Much help from Jonathan Edwards here in *Charity and Its Fruits*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2013), pg. 189-196

circumstances, *angry* that they had to leave Egypt, *angry* that they only had manna to eat, *angry* that it was taking so long. But grumbling about their circumstances was grumbling against the Lord. **Numbers 14:27** “How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I have heard the grumblings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me.” It is impossible to grumble against our circumstances without grumbling against God, because He is the One who establishes our steps (**Proverbs 16:9**). Therefore being angry over our circumstances is contrary to love.

1.2. When a person is angry at someone who is doing them good, it is sinful anger. You might say ‘Why would anyone be angry for someone doing them good?’ It happens all the time. When Jesus confronted the Pharisees for their sins, oh how furious they were. But confronting someone who is caught in sin is an act of love, an act of friendship. **Psalm 141:5** “Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil for my head.” Therefore if someone gets angry for receiving reproof for their sin, they war against love.

1.3. Being angry when God shows mercy to sinners who don't deserve it is sinful anger. This was Jonah’s anger. Jonah wanted to see his enemies get judged by God. But when God showed them mercy, he became angry, and God asks him “Do you do well to be angry?” (**Jonah 4:4**). It’s clearly rhetorical. Jonah has no right to be angry. It against the spirit of love to be angry when God shows mercy people to you hate.¹⁶

1.4. Being angry at the small faults of others is sinful anger. Our verse directly opposes being angry over small things. Paul says love is not easily angered (or irritable). **Ecclesiastes 7:9** “Be not quick in your spirit

¹⁶ A subpoint here: When a person desires revenge, it is a sinful anger. Romans 12:19 says “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.”

to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools." Being angry over trivial things in others is opposite to a spirit of love.¹⁷

1.5. When a person has anger that surpasses the offense, it is sinful anger.

Balaam was so angry at his donkey for not obeying him that he beat her three times. He was so blind with rage that it didn't even shock him when God gave the donkey the power of speech. **Numbers 22:28-29**

"What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"

²⁹ And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have made a fool of me. I wish I had a sword in my hand, for then I would kill you." Balaam's anger clearly exceeded the 'offense.' Having an anger that surpasses the offense is against the spirit of love.

1.6. When a person holds onto their anger against another person, it is sinful anger.

Holding a grudge, or ignoring or snubbing or withdrawing from others is sinful. God has a time limit on anger that we are not allowed to exceed. **Ephesians 4:26** "...do not let the sun go down on your anger." If someone is holding a grudge when their head hits the pillow, is against the spirit of love.

This isn't an exhaustive list by any means, but these are manifestations of sinful anger that are contrary to the spirit of love.

2. Experimental Use

That brings us to our **second duty** is just to *examine* ourselves for sinful anger. Robert Jones in his book *Uprooting Anger* has some heart searching questions.¹⁸ So let's test ourselves:

¹⁷ Related to this is Edwards' category of being angry when no reason is present or the wrong reason is present. Edwards, pg. 194

¹⁸ Jones, pg. 40. I'm intermixing some questions from David Powlison as well that Jones quotes on pg. 30

Do you get angry about the right things? Are you angry because of what the person did to you, or what he or she did to your Savior?¹⁹

Do you get angry when Christ's kingdom is not advanced? Or do you only get angry when your kingdom suffers?

Do you express your anger in the right way? Are the expressions of your anger, controlled by the flesh or by the Holy Spirit?

Do you get angry at your circumstances? Have you forgotten that the Lord establishes the steps of man (**Proverbs 16:9**)?

How long does your anger last? Do you hold grudges and go to bed angry?

Do you get angry when God shows mercy to others?

Does your anger exceed the offense given to you?

Do you get angry at trivial things?

Do you try and justify your anger? Do you say things like: 'If so-and-so didn't do such-and-such then I wouldn't be angry.' Do you realize that nobody is responsible for your anger except for you?²⁰

Children, boys and girls, I remember being a small child and many times I got angry at my parents for spanking me or disciplining me. But that was sinful anger because they were trying to lead my soul away from evil and towards Jesus Christ. Do you get angry when your parents spank you or discipline you

¹⁹ Does your anger arise because God's name is dishonored, or because your pride has been hurt?

²⁰ God will hold other people accountable for their sins against us, but He holds us accountable for how we react.

for your sin? Is it right get angry with them when they are trying to lead you to the Savior?

Citizens, are you angry at what you see happening in the country? For what reason? Are you angry because Jesus Christ's Lordship is being denied, or because you will possibly lose some of your freedom or buying power?

Dear congregation, in what areas are you manifesting sinful anger?

3. Admonitory Use

That brings us to our **third duty**, we must *rebuke* ourselves. **First**, let's address Christians.²¹ Dear believer, if you are no longer waging war against your anger, if you are choosing anger as a regular habit in your life then consider, three things:

1. **Your sinful anger unfits you for other people.** Your anger actually becomes a snare for other people. **Proverbs 22:24-25** "Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man,²⁵ lest you learn his ways and *entangle yourself in a snare.*" Your sinful anger lays a trap and entangles all the people you love: at home, at work, and at church.
2. **Your sinful anger robs you of communion with God.** Sinful anger places a barrier between your soul and the Father. Which is why Jesus said in **Matthew 5:23-24** "...if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." Likewise Paul commands us to free of anger when we pray **1 Timothy 2:8** "I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling."
3. **The Father will not let you continue in your sinful anger but He will discipline you.** **Hebrews 12:6** "For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,

²¹ 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.

and chastises every son whom he receives.” He is jealous for you loved one, and He will not let you continue in your anger forever. Do you want the Father to handle you with the rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?²² If the latter, then turn from it. Seek a brother or sister to help you. Confess your sins, find freedom.

Now if you *don't* belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, then please consider soberly your own anger for a moment. You've never had a righteous anger. Because you've never been angry for God's sake. You've never been angry at sin because it is wrong in God's sight. You've never been angry because Jesus' kingdom is not being advanced. Your anger has never been controlled by the Spirit by dominated by the flesh.²³ And God threatens terrible things against you.

Proverbs 19:19 says “A man of great wrath will pay the penalty.”

Matthew 5:22 “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother^[c] will be liable to judgment.”

Galatians 5:19-21 “Now the works of the flesh are evident [*Paul then lists 14 things, right in the middle he mentions*] fits of anger...I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Friend consider how long your soul will live. You will never stop existing. Consider that the God who made Heaven and Earth is warning you to flee from your anger, because if you don't you will face his Divine anger on the last day. But you only have one hope of rescue. His name is Jesus Christ. He alone can take your crimson red stains of anger and make them as white as snow. If you

²² 1 Corinthians 4:21

²³ This is the anger of a fool. An irritable man is known at once to be a fool - Proverbs 12:16; A quick tempered man acts foolishly - Proverbs 14:17; A hasty spirit exalts folly - Proverbs 14:29; A hot-tempered man stirs up strife - Proverbs 15:18; 30:33; A fool's provocation is heavier than stone - Proverbs 27:3; An angry man causes much sin - Proverbs 29:22

say, ‘But you don’t know how angry I’ve been, you don’t know what I’ve done, I’m too wicked to come to Jesus, it’s too late for me.’ Dear friend, you are in the same predicament as every other human being. Nobody is righteous. Nobody is clean. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”²⁴ But this Jesus that we preach was crucified, and buried and raised again on the third day in order to rescue people just like you from the penalty of sin. “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”²⁵ Receive Jesus Christ as Lord and He will set you free from sin and death and hell. For if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.²⁶ Trust Him, put your hope in His soul-cleansing blood.

III. Our Delight

The ‘innocence’ of a baby

So we’ve seen *why* we have sinful anger—because we exalt ourselves above others. But *when* did this sinful anger begin? *When* did sinful anger take hold of your heart? At conception. **Psalm 51:5** “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Augustine in his *Confessions* illustrates this most powerfully speaking about little babies. He speaks first of his own infancy:

“...little by little, I became conscious of where I was and began to express my wishes to those who could [satisfy] them...so I flung about at random, limbs and [cryings], making the few signs I could...[for] what I [wanted]. And when I was not immediately obeyed, my wishes being [either] harmful to me

²⁴ Romans 3:23

²⁵ Romans 6:23

²⁶ John 8:36

or unintelligible, then I was indignant with my elders for not submitting to me...for not serving me, and avenged myself on them with tears."²⁷

And then he makes this amazing insight. Robert Jones paraphrases: "What makes us call an infant 'innocent?' It is his inability to rise up and punch there person who doesn't feed him on demand, not his innocent heart. An infant's heart would throw a right hook if his arms were strong enough."²⁸ A baby's innocence is found in the weakness of his limbs *not* in his will. Why is that vital to see? Because the secular psychologists are *wrong* about the origin of your anger. Your anger wasn't *caused* by childhood trauma, or present sufferings, or unmet emotional needs, or even Satanic attacks.²⁹ Certainly those things are real and painful, and the Bible doesn't dismiss them as inconsequential. But those things never *caused* you to be angry. You were born angry.

Has your soul been troubled?

I've spoken with several of you these past few weeks about this love chapter. I would bet that if we were to take a vote in our church or in any church whether we should preach through the 10 commandments or the love chapter most evangelicals would the love chapter. And yet, now we're here and some of you have been devastated about what you are discovering in your own heart. My prayer is that all of us would be deeply troubled by what we see in our own hearts. If you are walking away from these messages thinking: 'man I'm really nailing this,' then you are deceived. 1 Corinthians 13 is not a picture of your love towards others. It's a picture of Jesus Christ and His love towards you. This is how you should be walking away every Sunday: I am more impatient, more cruel, more proud, more selfish, than I ever thought or imagined. And the Lord Jesus Christ is an infinitely more patient, infinitely

²⁷ Jones, pg. 53

²⁸ *Ibid*

²⁹ Jones, pg. 47

more kind, infinitely more humble, infinitely more generous than I ever thought or imagined.

The law of love

Beloved don't you understand how God designed even His law of love? The law *of love* came in to increase the trespass. Meaning, this law of love is meant by God, designed by Him to increase your awareness of your sin, to see that it is far blacker, far deeper, far more damning than you have yet understood.³⁰ Many of us are Calvinists in our heads, but we are not yet Calvinists in our hearts. You are not theoretically bad. You are really bad. And this law of love came in to increase your knowledge of how bad you are. Are you surprised as if something strange were happening to you? Are you surprised that when the perfect law of liberty is held up like a mirror, you see a monster staring back at you? Loved ones, this is the turkish delight of preaching: that where sin increases, grace abounds all the more.³¹ The gospel is this that God saves us in spite of who we are.³² You weren't good enough to be a Christian *before* Jesus saved you, and you aren't good enough to be a Christian *now*. But Jesus is faithful still.

God executed His wrath

So let's talk about your sinful anger loved ones. God *was* angry with your anger. He *was* infinitely furious at your sinful anger, and my sinful anger. And Father *already* did something about that anger. He cursed His only begotten Son for you and me. **Galatians 3:13** "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us." God set Jesus on the altar as a propitiation—a wrath absorbing sacrifice—for our sins. Just as the burnt offering was burned up in the OT signifying that the fire of God's anger has been exhausted, so the

³⁰ As Spurgeon said "He who thinks lightly of his sin, thinks lightly of the Savior."

³¹ Romans 5:20

³² Seeing how corrupt you actually are allows you to see how compassionate Jesus actually is. Your sin invites a deeper understanding of the gospel.

Father poured out His fiery wrath on His Son for us. There's no fire left. There's no curse left. There's no wrath left. It's gone. "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins."³³

How Should We Then Live?

What does that mean *now*? It means you cannot fix yourself. You never could. Moralism will not fix your sinful anger. It's true that we are told to put away our anger. **Colossians 3:8** "But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth." How do you put away anger and wrath? You go to the root. Sinful anger is just the fruit. The root is your sinful desire to be served, to be at the center, to play God. That's what our big idea is pointing to. King Saul was awful because he saw offenses against himself as a greater evil than sin against God; he saw his own kingdom more important than Christ's, and as a consequence his anger was a work of the flesh rather than controlled by the Holy Spirit. So beloved I exhort you go to the root with your sinful anger.

Repent that you count offenses against yourself as greater evil than sin against God. Be angry over the right things. Be angry that God is not worshipped and loved as He ought to be. Let that righteous anger drive you to godly grief and prayer.

Repent that you treat your own kingdom more important than Christ's. Beloved what is your kingdom compared to His? "...seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." He wants to bless you more than you want to be blessed.

Repent that your anger is controlled by the flesh instead of by the Holy Spirit. Beloved what good has ever come of your fleshly anger? That is a terrible

³³ 1 John 4:10

bondage. Submit to the Holy Spirit. His fruits are the fulness of joy in this age. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control...”

May God give us grace through His Son Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit to put off sinful anger, so that our love will more and more reflect His infinite love for us.