

Christ Lutheran Church

127 N. Spring St., Klamath Falls, OR 97601
(541) 884-1635 www.lutherankf.org

September 2018

How easy it is to let ANGER rule our life. Someone has treated us badly, and we are fuming about it, imagining what we might say or do to get even; or maybe we are just giving them the cold shoulder. Something is not working out right for us, and we are grinding our teeth in frustration and rage, even lashing out in a temper tantrum, hitting, throwing, yelling, cursing. Life has treated us unfairly, and we are moping in discontent and self-pity; and yes, that slow-burning anger that is eating away our heart.

Sometimes, a person has harbored anger for many years over what someone did. The offender may be long gone, even dead, and at this point completely harmless. Yet the offended may go on seething, day after day, year after year, constantly bringing up the memory of what happened, unwilling to forgive, complaining to others, letting the anger affect daily decisions and actions. He is letting unresolved anger rule his life – and to some extent, the lives of others around him who must feel the dictatorial effects. Perhaps others know him as the one with a "short fuse." Maybe it is explained away as something he inherited from a parent who also had a temper. "It is in his blood, you see; and we must just give him his space."

How often we feel we have a *right* to be angry and stay angry. Indeed, at times we *want* others to see how angry we are, so that no one will mistake us for the kind to be tread upon. We *want* others to see how angry we are against the system, against the wrongs of the world, against whatever, so that others will see how strong our convictions are, and how right we are. That is, we feel righteous in our anger. So we give free reign and vent to our anger.

But the Bible makes a distinction between righteous anger and unrighteous anger. Note these verses:

- James 1:19-20 – *"So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."*

- Colossians 3:8 – *"But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth."*
- Ephesians 4:26-27 – *"Be angry, and do not sin': do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil."*
- Galatians 5:19-21: *"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are... hatred... outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions..."*



These verses rule out much of our knee-jerk, "see red" reactions in life as evil. They rule out those unforgiving attitudes that stew under the surface. They are not justifiable, God-pleasing acts of righteousness, but selfish, hateful acts of our sinful nature. They give the devil his foothold and rule in our life.

There is such a thing as righteous anger. God's anger burns against sin (Joshua 23:16). Surely Jesus was angry as He spoke woes and condemnation against hypocritical false teachers (Matthew 23). Surely He was angry as He drove merchants out of the temple with a whip, pouring out their coins and overturning their tables saying: *"Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"* But far from being a selfish temper tantrum to vent His feelings, Jesus' words and actions fulfilled all righteousness, as it is written: *"Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up"* (John 2:14-17). Far from being man's sinful kind of anger that gives the devil a foothold, His was the anger of God against sin and the devil's work. Far from being the kind of anger that continues to hold a grudge and go unresolved as the sun goes down, Jesus acted today to achieve God-pleasing righteousness.

Yes, there is such a thing as righteous anger, when it moves us to stand up for God's Word and His will. But how often is anger so pure and righteous as that of Jesus? Especially as we see how, when it came to enemies hurting Him, He did not respond with anger and retaliation, but with perfect forgiveness and love (Luke 23:34; 1 Peter 2:23).

So how do we get rid of our unrighteous anger? How do we get rid of those unloving attitudes and feelings we have been allowing to stew under the surface that whisper hatred and harm? Obviously, holding it all in our heart is not the solution; for there it will continue to boil like lava, just waiting for some trigger event to provide the excuse for an eruption. Nor does the world's advice work when we are told that we need to learn how to vent our anger. Sure, we can hit that punching bag as many times as we want, we can talk out our feelings as many times as we like and get people on our side, we can try diversion with hobbies and relaxation techniques; but all we may accomplish is to put off the problem temporarily. Anger is like fire, hungry to feed on more. Pretty soon, thoughts spark and flare in our heart, and the fire burns hotter and hotter all over again. And the fire spreads to others.

The first step in dealing with our unrighteous anger is that we must stop making excuses for it. There is no excuse for sin in any form. No matter how someone has hurt us, no matter how unfairly life has treated us, we have no right to hold angry grudges, or to go around with bitterness in our hearts. It only shows that we do not trust God to avenge all wrong and make things right for us (Romans 12:19). When we do not trust Him to act righteously for us, we try to make things right the wrong way. Psalm 37:8 warns: *"Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret – it only causes harm."* There is no excuse for our lack of faith.

So the second step in dealing with our unrighteous anger is that we confess it as a sin. We stop pointing the finger at people and things we cannot change. We stop saying, "I'll forgive as soon as he *acts* sorry!" Instead, we start dealing with the one whom we can change with the Lord's help – ourself. We take responsibility for our own sin. We confess that we have been harboring wrong attitudes, and that this has been affecting our relationship with God and people. We confess this knowing *"He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). We confess our sins knowing that God already has vented all His righteous burning anger on His Son on the cross. In exchange, He gives us His soothing forgiveness. He counts us with the perfect, sin-free life of Jesus Himself.



This is where true healing begins. This is how we start moving forward in life in a healthy way. Instead of holding anger in, instead of venting it, we give it to God. As we live in His grace, day by day, His healing begins to show in our lives. He empowers us to turn

around and share His grace with those we have been holding anger against. Empowered by His grace, strengthened by His Spirit, we can do as Ephesians 4:31-32 says: *"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you."*

And as we live in God's grace, we can let go of the anger we have been holding onto concerning circumstances in life that have felt so unfair. If we have suffered some injury, loss, or sorrow that others don't have to go through, we need not chew on a bitter root day after day. After all, we know that we are in good hands. God is calling us His dear children in Christ. As a good heavenly Father, He has never forsaken His children and never will; nor will He allow anything truly to harm us. Even in this, He is working His gracious will for our eternal good, or else He would not allow it. In heaven, we will rejoice forever in His loving plan.

With God's gracious healing at work in us, He will bring out more and more of *"the fruit of the Spirit,"* including *"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control"* (Galatians 5:22-23). Like a cup filled to the brim, God fills our heart with the joy of His forgiveness and salvation in Jesus Christ. Jesus says: *"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things"* (Matthew 12:35). Abrasive personalities and unfair circumstances may still jolt us as long as we live this side of heaven. But instead of anger, what can spill out of our cup is confident joy in our Savior's loving care, and an overflowing desire to share His forgiveness and love with others.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>2 <i>Pentecost 15</i></p> <p>Worship with Communion 9:30 AM</p> <p>Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Happy Birthday Mandy Hunter</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Labor Day</i></p>	<p>4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Circuit Pastors Meeting Myrtle Creek</p>	<p>5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Youth Catechism 4:00 PM</p>	<p>6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CLWMS Ladies Meeting 3:30 PM</p>	<p>7</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Happy Birthday Gabriel Smith</i></p> <p>Jesus Cares Ministry for Special Needs 2:00 PM</p>	<p>1</p> <hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/> <p>8</p>
<p>9 <i>Pentecost 16</i></p> <p>Worship 9:30 AM</p> <p>Voters Meeting and Meal After church</p> <p>Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM</p>	<p>10</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Happy Anniversary Richard & Margaret Howard</i></p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Youth Catechism 4:00 PM</p>	<p>13</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Happy Birthday Andrew Hunter</i></p> <p>Outreach Activity at Rogue River Place 2:30 PM</p>	<p>14</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Happy Birthday Philip Smith</i></p>	<p>15</p>
<p>16 <i>Pentecost 17</i></p> <p>Worship with Communion 9:30 AM</p> <p>Sunday School & Bible Class 9:30 AM</p> <p>Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Youth Catechism 4:00 PM</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Women's Missionary Society – "<i>Greet, Encourage, & Meet</i>" at Faith Lutheran Medford 6:00 PM</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Women's Missionary Society Rally at Faith Lutheran, Medford Registration/ Breakfast – 8:00 AM Opening – 8:45 AM</p>
<p>23 <i>Pentecost 18</i></p> <p>Worship 9:30 AM</p> <p>Sunday School & Bible Class 9:30 AM</p> <p>Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Happy Birthday Susan Reeder</i></p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Youth Catechism 4:00 PM</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>
<p>30 <i>Pentecost 19</i></p> <p>Worship 9:30 AM</p> <p>Sunday School & Bible Class 9:30 AM</p> <p>Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Happy Birthday Sara Shepard</i></p>	<p><i>"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:31-32</i></p>					

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