

IS IT RIGHT FOR YOU TO BE ANGRY?

Text: Jonah 4:4-11

INTRO: God gave Jonah the assignment to deliver to Nineveh a message of doom--40 days & Nineveh will be overthrown. But Jonah was an Israelite. What did he care if an Assyrian city were overthrown? And besides, God was so merciful & gracious. What if they repented & God spared them & the doom did not come as Jonah had foretold?

So Jonah tried to flee from the responsibility God had given him--but that's another story. Eventually, Jonah went to Nineveh & preached. The people of Nineveh believed & repented, from the king on his throne to the lowest peasant on the dirtiest street. And God relented & Nineveh was spared. And Jonah was angry.

I. AT LEAST PARTLY BECAUSE OF HIS UNWARRANTED ANGER, JONAH IS PROBABLY THE LEAST LOVED & LEAST RESPECTED OF THE HEBREW PROPHETS.

Anger probably does more than any other sin to destroy friendships, promote discord in families & in general, produce attitudes & deeds that will keep folks out of heaven.

II. THE FIRST CASE OF SUCH ANGER WAS CAIN.

Gen 4:3-8, And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel & his offering, but He did not respect Cain & his offering. And Cain was very angry, & his countenance fell. So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

- A. In the heart, anger.
- B. In the face, countenance fell.
- C. In deeds, murder, vs. 8.

III. JONAH WASN'T THE FIRST PROPHET TO BE A VICTIM OF HIS OWN ANGER. ANGER WAS THE DOWNFALL OF MOSES.

Num 20:1-4, 7-11, Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses & Aaron. And the people contended with Moses

and spoke, saying: "If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we & our animals should die here?... Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Take the rod; you & your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, & it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, & give drink to the congregation & their animals." So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock; & he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; & water came out abundantly, & the congregation & their animals drank.

- A. Once before Moses had exhibited great anger, but God did not rebuke him, perhaps because his anger on that occasion stemmed from righteous indignation.

Ex 32:19-20, So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing. So Moses' anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. Then he took the calf which they had made, burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder; and he scattered it on the water and made the children of Israel drink it.

- B. But this 2nd time, Moses allows his anger to lead him to sin in 2 areas.
  - 1. He failed to honor God with his lips.
  - 2. He failed to honor God with his deed.
- C. We see the results of his sin in Num. 20:12, Then the LORD spoke to Moses & Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."
- D. One of the saddest scenes in the Bible is DEUT 34:1-7, Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the LORD

showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali & the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the South, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. Then the LORD said to him, "This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there." So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished.

- E. This was not the first time--nor the last, that a land of promise & happiness has been lost because of uncontrolled temper.

IV. ONE OF THE CLEAREST EXAMPLES OF HOW OUR ANGER CAN SHUT OURSELVES OFF FROM BLESSINGS & JOYS IS THE CASE OF THE OLDER BROTHER, LK 15:25-28.

- A. This young man could have eaten as much of the fatted calf as anyone else. He could have party-ed as vigorously as any. He could have experienced reconciliation with his brother, fellowship with his father... But on what should have been the happiest day of his life, he was miserable & wretched & extremely lonely.
- B. Was he right to be angry? READ VERSES 31-32. Luke 15:31-32, And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry & be glad, for your brother was dead & is alive again, and was lost and is found.'

CONCLUSION: In secular history one of the saddest cases of anger is that of Alexander the Great. Alexander had a boyhood friend by the name of Clitus, who had risen with Alexander & had become one of his generals. Clitus had once saved Alexander's life. But at a banquet in which Alexander was being highly praised, Clitus reminded him of how much he owed to the Greek military, & mildly

rebuked him for surrounding himself with only those who said what he wanted to hear. In a fit of anger, Alexander grabbed a spear & thrust it through Clitus. Before he had time to think about it, his childhood friend, his life companion, his rescuer & general, was dead. Alexander removed the spear. For days he squirmed in bitter remorse, calling out the name of his friend. Alexander had conquered the world, but he had not been able to conquer his own anger.

- A. Anger isn't always wrong. But it is always dangerous. Eph 4:26. Jesus & the money-changers.
- B. When you are angry--pause--ask yourself the question God asked Cain: Why are you angry? Selfish? Hurtful?
- C. Ask what God asked Jonah: Is it right for you to be angry?
- D. Ask what the elder brother should have asked: Is it my right & duty to punish my brother, or to forgive him? Am I right to be angry? The loving Father said, "It is right that we should make merry..."

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