

Daily Living – Sinless Anger Eph. 4:26-27

Thesis: To help us control our anger and refrain from sinning by it.

Introduction:

- A. The Bible is very clear: We can be angry and not commit sin.
 - 1. Our text says, “Be angry, and do not sin” (Eph. 4:26a).
 - 2. Ps. 4:4-5 - Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. {5} Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.

- B. The question is simply, “How?”
 - 1. How can we be angry and not commit sin?
 - 2. Today, we will notice what Paul says about this subject.
 - 3. As we conclude our lesson, we will notice the examples of righteous anger that we see in God and Jesus.

I. We must understand that anger is a universal sin.

- A. Many people throughout the Bible became angry with others.
 - 1. Gen. 4:3-7 (Cain) - And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. {4} Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, {5} but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. {6} So the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? {7} 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.”
 - 2. Ex. 32:19 (Moses, when Israel made the golden calf) - 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.
 - 3. Num. 22:27-30 (Balaam) - And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam’s anger was aroused, and he struck the donkey with his staff. {28} Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?” {29} And Balaam said to the donkey, “Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!” {30} So the donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since I became yours, to this day? Was I ever disposed to do this to you?” And he said, “No.”
 - 4. There are numerous other examples that we could notice.

5. The point is that people throughout the Bible became angry, whether it was justified or not.

B. From time to time, we are going to become angry.

1. The fact of the matter is that people become angry.
2. Paul did not say, "Do not become angry;" he said, "Be angry, and do not sin."
3. If some of the most holy men in the Bible became angry, then we can expect to become angry as well.
4. The sin is not in our anger; it is what our anger leads to.
5. The question is: What will we do with our anger?

II. Paul tells us that there are two things that we must do when we are angry to avoid committing sin (4:26b-27).

A. When we are angry, we should "not let the sun go down on [our] wrath" (4:26b).

1. The point that Paul is making is that we should not hold on to our anger.
 - a. Throughout the Bible, we are warned of this principle
 - b. It is true about those that are angry with us.
 - 1) **Mt. 5:23-24** - Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, {24} leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.
 - 2) **Mt. 18:15** - Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.
 - 3) The point is that when we know that someone has something against us, or we have something against another, we do something about it by going to them and telling them the problem.
2. We run into a problem when we tell others how angry we are and not the person that we are angry with.
 - a. Many problems could easily be solved if we would follow this command of Paul.
 - b. If we are angry, we should dispel that anger before the sun goes down.
 - c. Far too many times, we allow our anger to grow into a lifelong grudge against someone.
 - d. "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath."

B. If we allow our anger to continue, we will "give place to the devil" (4:27).

1. Satan is looking for an opportunity so that he can come in between us and God.

- a. **I Pet. 5:8** - Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.
 - b. Far too many times, Satan uses our anger to come between us and God.
 - c. If we are angry with someone, and refuse to have an attitude of forgiveness toward them, we are giving an opportunity to the devil.
 - d. **Mt. 18:21-22** - Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" {22} Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."
2. The point that Paul is making is that when we are angry with someone, we must handle that anger properly so that Satan will not have an opportunity to destroy us.

III. We can be angry and not sin when we are angry concerning righteous things.

A. God became angry with Israel when they disobeyed Him.

1. **Num. 11:1** (God gives Israel manna because they complained about a lack of food) - Now when the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp.
2. **Num. 25:3** - So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel.
3. **Jud. 2:11-15** - Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; {12} and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. {13} They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. {14} And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. {15} Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.

B. Jesus became angry with others when they were disobedient to God.

1. **Heb. 4:15** (In His anger, Jesus did not sin) - For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.
2. **Mk. 3:1-5** - And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. {2} So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. {3} And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward."

{4} Then He said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they kept silent. {5} And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

2. Mk. 11:15-17 (John adds that He “made a whip of cords” – Jn. 2:15) - So they came to Jerusalem. And Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. {16} And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. {17} Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’”
3. Mt. 23:1-36 – Jesus also spoke strongly to the scribes and Pharisees; calling them “hypocrites” 8 times.

C. Today, we should become angry when we hear and see others being disobedient to God.

1. We should be angry with the amount of sin in the world.
2. If it does not make you angry when you hear something false being taught, there is something wrong with your faith.
3. We cannot, however, allow that anger to lead us to sin.

Conclusion:

- A. One of the best ways to control our anger is to not be around those who get angry easily.
 1. One of the most humorous passages (at least to me) of scripture is Pr. 25:24 - It is better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman.
 2. While the image is humorous, the idea is simple: stay away from angry people.
 3. Pr. 22:24-25 - Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, {25} Lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.
- B. While anger is something that everyone deals with, it is not something that should overcome us.
- C. The key is not that we do not get angry, but rather that we control our anger by not letting “the sun go down on our wrath, nor give place to the devil.”