

Series: Ephesians
Title: Be Angry and Sin Not
Text: Ephesians 4: 26-27
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Ephesians 4: 26: Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27: Neither give place to the devil.

Here is another particular way in which we put off the old man and put on the new man.

In the context, we know the Holy Spirit is teaching true believers to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Our motive is that by the electing grace of God our Father, the redeeming blood Christ our Savior, and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, he has made us one in Christ's body, the church.

Our motive is that Christ has given us faithful preachers: to gather his lost elect through the gospel, to root us and ground us in the truth so that we are no more tossed by false doctrine, as Christ grows us up into him in all things through speaking the truth in love.

Our motive is that God has created in us a new man, we have been taught of Christ, have heard Christ and learned Christ by whom we no longer walk as unbelievers walk. So by these mercies of God, we are exhorted to put off the old man and put on the new man, to walk in the Spirit not in the flesh.

So we see the context has to do with the edification of Christ's body through the truth of the gospel. That is the end purpose for all of these exhortations. So we will stay with this context, as we look at today's exhortation.

Ephesians 4: 26: Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27: Neither give place to the devil.

Be ye angry—according to the context, if we are one with the triune God in Christ, then God is our Father, Christ is our Everlasting Father and the Holy Spirit of God dwells in us. In the inner man we will be (and should be) angry at evil, at sin, at false doctrine—at everything that is contrary to the truth of God. He says, **“Be ye angry.”**

“And sin not:” There are two sides to this coin—we sin if we are not angry toward falsehood and we sin if anger goes too far—both are sinful and both are giving place to the devil.

“Let not the sun go down upon your wrath:” Though anger against falsehood is just, we must quickly let it go or it becomes sinful.

Proposal: No believer obeys this exhortation in righteousness, Christ alone is our righteousness. So for his sake we should both be angry and run unto him quickly so that we do not continue in anger nor give place to the devil.

I. FIRST, AS WITH EVERY PRECEPT CHRIST GIVES TO BELIEVERS, WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT YOU AND I WHO BELIEVE HAVE FAILED TO DO THIS PRECEPT IN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS GOD REQUIRES, AS HAVE ALL MEN.

When we were dead in sins, in our old man of flesh, we did not have spiritual discernment. We did not have the love of God in us. So we never became angry at lies against God's glory, or against our sin, or against evil of any kind.

As believers, due to our old sinful man of flesh, there are times when we hear lies against God and have been lukewarm. That is sin. There are times we become angry too quickly. That is sin. Sometimes we hold on to anger too long. That is sin. We have not been nearly as angry about our own personal sin as we ought to be. That is sin. We have let anger bring forth ugly sinful thoughts, words or actions. That is sin. And we have been angry without a cause. Christ said this,

Matthew 5:22: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment...

In each of these cases, we sinned and we gave place to the devil. So not any one of us has fulfilled this exhortation nor any precept in the righteousness of God. There are no precepts given of God by which we can, or should attempt to earn a righteousness or make ourselves acceptable with God. Sin is mixed with all we do. So be clear on this point.

II. SECONDLY, BE SURE TO UNDERSTAND, CHRIST IS THE ONLY ONE WHO FULFILLED THIS PRECEPT, AS WELL AS ALL OTHERS, IN PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOLINESS.

The Son of God was sent of God his Father to fulfill the whole law of God for his people as our Head and Representative.

Isaiah 42:21: The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.

Galatians 4: 4: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5: To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Christ said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." (Mt 5: 17) Legalist say Christ means that the believer is still under the law given at Mt. Sinai. But Christ said he came to fulfill the law AND the prophets. If what the legalist says is so then believers are responsible to fulfill the word of the prophets as well. **NO, CHRIST ALONE FULFILLS THE WHOLE LAW OF GOD, JUST AS CHRIST ALONE FULFILLS ALL PROPHECY.**

The first commandment given at Mt. Sinai is:

Exodus 20: 3: Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God,...

All willful sin, all willful falsehood, is against God who is Truth, against the glory of God. It is to serve another god..

Psalm 103:8: The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

But,

Psalm 7:11:...God is angry with the wicked every day.

Romans 1: 18:...the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

God's Nature

This is important. God's anger is not a passion like the passion of man's flesh. God is Truth, Righteousness, Holiness, Justice, and Mercy. Anger against falsehood is the character of holy God. God's anger is not sinful like man's anger; God's anger is holy and just displeasure and indignation. God's wrath is against all ungodliness of men which is the breaking of the first table of the law which is against God. God's anger is against all unrighteousness of men which is the breaking of the second table of the law. God's anger is against those who hold the truth in unrighteousness. It includes those who have the light of nature and reject God, those who know the gospel and reject it, those who profess the truth yet are vain hypocrites, and those who know the truth but refuse to declare the truth.

We see God's anger and wrath in the destruction of the old world in the flood in Noah's day. God's anger is manifest in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. We see it in the plagues against Egypt. The storms and tempests in nature are God's wrath revealed against sin. There are many examples against individuals throughout the scriptures. Hell is the place of God's fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. (Heb 10: 27)

The GodMan's Nature

So in order for Christ to fulfill the law of God he had to have the same nature as God, the same character as God, to have the law of God in the heart so much so that he was justly, righteously angry at that which God is angry at. Christ is God and Truth. Therefore anger against falsehood is the holy nature of the GodMan.

Christ is the only one who loved God and kept his commandments perfectly, even being angry in perfect righteousness. It would be unrighteous for Christ not to be angry at falsehood, at sin, at evil, at those willfully attempting to rob God of his glory. So being angry at ungodliness and unrighteousness and at those who hold the truth in unrighteousness was necessary to Christ fulfilling all righteousness.

Examples of Christ's Righteous Anger

Let's see a few examples of Christ's righteous and holy anger, which was without sin, which gave no place to the devil.

First, we see Christ's righteous indignation against the devil.

Matthew 4: 8: Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them 9: And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10: Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Another example much like this is when Peter tried to prevent the Lord from going to the cross, "He rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." (Mk 8: 33)

Another example of Christ's righteous indignation against those who hold the truth in unrighteousness was with those who opposed him healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath day.

Mark 3: 1: And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. 2: And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. 3: And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. 4: And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. 5: And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. 6: And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway [on the very day they pretended to regard] took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. [Christ healed; they killed in their hearts; Christ was angry righteously, they sinfully] 7: But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples.

Why was Christ angry? The law of the Sabbath was a shadow; Christ is the Body which it shadowed. God's very glory is in sending Christ who is the believers Sabbath Rest. God in Christ makes his people every whit whole and gives us rest from our works through faith in Christ. But seeking to make themselves righteous by their obedience to the law, the Pharisee's hearts were hard: they refused to hear the law declare them guilty, they made gods of themselves, they showed no mercy toward the needy, they sought to kill God and to steal God's glory for themselves. That is what sin is, that is what it is to hold the truth in unrighteousness. But Christ in perfect righteousness served the true and living God, owning no God but the God of heaven and earth, partly by being justly angry toward them, jealous for the glory of God. Yet, he sinned not, he fulfilled all righteousness thereby.

Again, Christ was fulfilling all righteousness when Christ cast out the money changers in the temple.

Matthew 21: 12: And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, 13: And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Matthew 23:14: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

In God's temple, under pretense of glorifying God, they robbed God of his glory and robbed his people. Therefore, Christ was justly angry with them. Christ says those who rob God and his people under pretense of religion shall receive the greatest damnation of all in hell. Hell will be the just wrath and anger of Christ himself against sinners who rejected Christ—

Revelation 6: 16: And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Psalms 2:12: Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little...

Sin Not, Quickly Let Go of Anger

Yet, our text says, "**Sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath.**" Our Savior is the sinless one. He knew no sin. We see in the Psalms what our Savior did when he stood in sinless anger against his adversaries. The Psalms are primarily Christ speaking with God his Father. And the Psalms are Christ

instructing his people in the things of God. Psalm 4 is Christ speaking when he served God in this earth for his people.

Psalm 4: 2: O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.

I can hear the Master say these words as he cast those men out of the temple, as he looked upon the Pharisee's in anger. Christ Jesus is the glory of God. His works declare the glory of God—God's holiness, love, righteousness, justice, mercy, longsuffering—the glory of God. But sinners turned his glory into shame, love vanity and seek lies. But Christ did not sin in his anger against men. In the next verse Christ is communing with his own heart, speaking within himself, looking to God whom he served. And he is teaching us as well.

Psalm 4: 3: But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

Christ Jesus is the godly whom the LORD God set apart for himself before the world began. Christ knew God the Father had set him apart. He knew "the LORD will hear when I call unto him." In the next verse Christ still speaks in his own heart and teaching us how to be angry and sin not.

Psalm 4: 4: Stand in awe, [be ye angry] and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, [let not the sun go down upon your wrath] and be still. [neither give place to the devil] Selah.

Christ stood in awe—angered at the hardness of man's heart who turned his glory into shame. But he did so in perfect righteousness without sin. He communed with his own heart, looking to God who separated him and God who would hear him. So he was still; so he gave no place to the devil. The next verse is still Christ speaking with himself and teaching us who believe.

Psalm 4: 5: Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.

Psalm 51: 17: The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Christ teaches us the way he gave no place to sin, no place to the devil, is by pouring out his broken heart to God. Though he was angry, he was grieved for the hardness of sinner's hearts. Christ, as the servant of God whom he was sent to serve, put his trust in Jehovah who sent him to be his righteous servant. This is what Christ did and what we are to do quickly when we become angry over that which is against God or contrary to God both in ourselves and in others. He poured out his heart to God and put his trust in the LORD Jehovah.

Review: So we have seen that Christ fulfilled the righteousness of this precept. We have seen how Christ sinned not, how he quickly let go of his righteous indignation and gave no place to the devil by turning to God his Father.

But not only did Christ represent his people being righteously angry and sinning not, then Christ presented himself to the Father as the spotless Lamb of God and was made sin for us, who knew no sin. He was made the sin of his people in our not being righteously angry as we ought.

Then on the cross, Christ bore the righteous anger of God—the wrath of God—the eternal judgment of God which his people deserved. Thus Christ declared God just.

Therefore, having finished this work of magnifying and fulfilling the whole law of God in precept and penalty as the Representative and Substitute of God's elect

Romans 6: 6: our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed...

Hebrews 1: 3: Christ purged the sins of his people

Hebrews 9: 12: He obtained eternal redemption for us

Hebrews 10: 14: He perfected forever them that are sanctified

2 Corinthians 5: 18:...He reconciled us to God

Colossians 2: 14: He blotted out the handwriting of ordinances—[the dogma—the whole law]—that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Therefore, for every believer, God says,

Romans 10:4: Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Romans 6:14: For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Galatians 5:18: But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

So we see that Christ alone established the law of God—including being righteously angry as we ought to be at all times against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, against those who hold the truth in unrighteousness. He did so without sin, without giving place to the devil. Then he put away our sin for this very precept, as well as for all others. Our righteousness and holiness in this precept, as with all others, is Christ alone. He is the Righteousness of his people through faith. We establish the law of God in perfect righteousness through faith in him. So these exhortations are not to bring us under law, they are not for us to attempt to earn a righteousness or a reward above our brethren or any such thing.

III. LASTLY, LET'S UNDERSTAND THIS EXHORTATION—

Seeing how Christ has justified us and made us the righteousness of God in truth, seeing as how Christ has sent the gospel, sent the Holy Spirit and created within us a new man, therefore in the inner man, at every false way which is against our God and Savior—**Ephesians 4: 26: Be ye angry,...**

Someone said: "If we would be angry and not sin, we must be angry at nothing but sin; and we should be more jealous for the glory of God than for any interest or reputation of our own."

It is popular in our day for religious folks to speak of getting along with those who speak lies against our Redeemer and not letting points of doctrine separate us—they promote it in the name of love. This simply is not scriptural. Love is to speak the truth in love. Love stands with Christ and his people against all falsehood. The inner man has a nature like Christ, so our new man cannot bear lies being told against God our Father. And we are told plainly not to bear them. (Be ye not unequally yoked)

For the sake of Christ our Righteousness, when a believer sees or hears sin and falsehood and is not angry with it, we sin through not being angry. We should be angry: at our own sin, at the ungodliness of men, at the unrighteousness of men, and at those who hold the truth in unrighteousness

A believer that is never angry at these things has no strong convictions in him. And if a man is not angry at evil how can he rejoice in that which is good. **Be ye angry.**

Why? One reason is so that we might teach those nearest to us the error of sin and falsehood. Another reason is to be true to the body of Christ. Another reason is to be a witness to those yet lost who Christ shall call by his grace. Here is a very important reason: to not let our silence be a commendation of sin and falsehood.

But catch the next part **Eph 4: 26: and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27: Neither give place to the devil.**

Be not angry without a just cause and be not quick to anger.

Ecclesiastes 7:9: Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

And let anger go quickly. Follow Christ. **Psalm 4: 3: know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him. 4: Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. 5: Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.**

The one way not to let anger rest in the heart is to turn to Christ even as he turned to the Father. Remember God set you apart in Christ and God will hear us for Christ's sake. Sin and falsehood makes us angry but it also breaks our heart. So commune upon your bed—offer up the sacrifices of righteousness—go to Christ with your broken heart quickly. Put your trust in Christ our Sovereign Head. He is able to turn the hearts of men whichever he will. The only way to be angry then let it go and sin not is this:

Proverbs 3: 5: Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6: In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. 7: Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. 8: It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

So understand, we have not kept this precept in ourselves in righteousness. But Christ did and he paid our sin for not doing it as we ought. We have done it perfectly in Christ our Righteousness and his obedience is ours through faith. So with Christ as our Righteousness, our Motive and our Refuge from sin and the devil.

Ephesians 4: 26: Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27: Neither give place to the devil.

Amen!