

INTRODUCTION

We're going to be talking about anger in this message. When I was a kid, I enjoyed reading Marvel comic books. I can remember when they were only ten cents. Of course, Superman and Batman were my favorites. But I also remember reading about The Incredible Hulk. Cartoonist Stan Lee created The Hulk character in 1962. Since then it has spun off into a television series and several Avenger movies. The Hulk's alter ego was the mild mannered scientist Dr. Bruce Banner. He had been exposed to radiation so whenever he became stressed or angry he was transformed into a giant green monster. Asked why Hulk was green, Stan Lee reported that it was because green didn't suggest any racial or ethnic group. In the television series, Dr. Bruce Banner, played by Bill Bixby, used to say, "Don't make me angry. You wouldn't like me when I'm angry." That's what destructive anger can do. It can transform people into monsters.

You don't have to teach kids to get angry. It comes encoded in their DNA. If you take a child's bottle or toy away from them, they'll pitch a temper tantrum. Sometimes kids learn that temper tantrums are a way to manipulate their parents. One of my best friends growing up was Jimmy Dean—no, not the Sausage King. On day I was at Jimmy's house and he asked his mother for some money so he could walk a block away to buy us some candy. She refused. That's when I witnessed my first temper tantrum. Jimmy got down on his belly and started kicking his legs and punching the air with his fists crying, "Pleeeeeease Mommy. You never let me buy candy. You must hate me. I want some candy!"

To my amazement, Jimmy's mom walked over and said, "Stop crying. Here's some money, no go get your candy." I was eight or nine years old at the time, but I realized I had just discovered the golden trick about how to control my parents. I walked home that afternoon and found my mom raking leaves in our front yard. She said, "David, go get another rake and help me." I didn't want to rake leaves, and now I had a secret weapon. I started fake crying and fell down on my belly and started kicking my legs and beating the ground with my fists. "You treat me like a slave! It's just not fair! Why aren't Judy and Dan raking leaves? I don't want to rake leaves."

By this time my mother had moved so she was directly behind me and she took her rake in both hands and started beating me with it like she was trying to kill a snake. This rake wasn't one of the new plastic ones; it was one of the old metal rakes. As she continued to whale away she said, "Don't you ever pitch a fit like that again." Now you take this rake and finish raking this yard before your dad gets home. I said, "Yes ma'am." That was my first and last temper tantrum.

Jesus never had a temper tantrum, but we're going to see that He becomes angry. He's good and mad. Let's read about it in

Mark 3:1-12. "Another time he went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, 'Stand up in front of everyone.' Then Jesus asked them, 'Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?' But they remained silent. He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to

the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored."

Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus. (The Pharisees and Herodians didn't get along. The Pharisees were ultraconservatives and the Herodians were the liberal friends of the Romans. It would be like the KKK and NAACP joining forces. That shows how much they wanted to kill Jesus.)

Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. When they heard all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." But he gave them strict orders not to tell who he was.

In this one passage we see two sides of the personality of Jesus. He was good and mad. We all know Jesus is good and we see that in way He cared for the sick. But some people are surprised to learn that Jesus also got mad.

First, let's talk about how Jesus got angry, and then we'll discuss how He demonstrated goodness.

I. JESUS WAS MAD AT THE HARDENED HEARTS OF THE PHARISEES

Some people think all anger is sinful, and they have a hard time justifying that Jesus got angry, because Jesus was supposed to be sinless. He was. You must understand that the Bible talks about different kinds of anger. Some anger is harmful and destructive. But there is a kind of anger that is holy and just. Let's look at two different kinds of anger.

A. *Thumos*

One kind of anger is *thumos* in the Greek language. It's best translated, "furious rage." Think of it as harmful anger. The Bible says, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage [thumos] and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." (Ephesians 4:31)

The Pharisees and Herodians allowed this kind of anger to grow in their minds until they plotted to kill Jesus. The word literally means a blazing fire. This kind of anger is harsh, explosive, and arises from an uncontrolled temper. We have many phrases to describe someone who loses their temper. Have you ever said, "That makes my blood boil?" That's thumos. "I get all hot and bothered!" That's thumos.

In the 1980s Americans coined the phrase "rageaholic" to describe a person who struggles with this kind of anger. In 1997 the Oxford Dictionary made the term "road rage" an official English word.

The National Institute of Mental Health has developed a term for this anger. It's called IED, which stands for "Intermittent Explosive Disorder." They estimate that 16 million Americans suffer from IED.

I think it's ironic that these are the same initials as the IEDs that killed and wounded our troops in Iraq. It stood for Improvised Explosive Device. Both IEDs can cause a world of hurt for others. This kind of rage strikes out and hurts others.

Alexander the Great was a great military genius, but he had a volatile temper. One of his closest generals was Cleitus. Cleitus was a childhood friend and had once saved Alexander's life in battle. During a banquet, the two men got into an argument. Alexander became so enraged he grabbed a nearby spear from a guard and threw it at his friend. He intended to scare him, but the spear killed his friend. Alexander fell into a deep depression for many days calling for his friend. One historian wrote: "Alexander the Great conquered many countries, but he failed miserably to conquer his temper." The Bible says, "Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city." (Proverbs 16:32)

You may know a rageaholic. You may work for a rageaholic. You may be married to a rageaholic. You may be a rageaholic, but you don't want to admit it. Most rageaholics are blinded by their own anger. With God's help, you can control your temper. A few years ago I was playing in the Eisenhower golf tournament here in Tyler. The pro golfer for our group was Don January. He was playing on the senior tour at the time. He was a really nice guy, but his mouth was pretty nasty. Every time he'd miss a putt or a shot wouldn't go where he wanted it, he would drop all kinds of profanity bombs. On about the fourth hole Don asked me what I did. I told him that I'm the pastor of a Baptist church here in Tyler. You should have seen the shock on his face. He said, "Preacher, I'm so sorry. Please forgive my dirty old mouth. But I just can't control it." But, he was able to control it because he didn't utter another profanity for the rest of the round. Give your temper to God and ask Him to control it for you.

B. *Orgé*

There's another word for anger: *orgé*. It means "settled indignation." The Bible says, "In your anger (*orgé*) do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry." (Ephesians 4:26) Rage is harmful anger. This is holy anger. Jesus wasn't a rageaholic. But He got angry. But in His anger He never sinned. He was good and angry.

So, we should identify what made Jesus mad because that same thing should make us good and mad. Jesus asked the Religious Mafia a question. "Which is lawful on the Sabbath? To do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they refused to answer Him. They weren't interested in truth they were interested in catching Jesus breaking the Sabbath rules. That's when the Bible says Jesus looked at them in anger and deeply distressed by their stubborn hearts.

Jesus was angry at their hardened hearts. They cared more about the Sabbath rules than the needs of a man with a withered hand. They were like those old, rigid wineskins Jesus had mentioned earlier. Their attitude made Jesus good and mad. Jesus is still angry when people display a hardened heart. Sometimes the most "religious" people have the hardest hearts.

When I was in high school in Lower Alabama I worked one summer at a sawmill. I worked on the green chain, where the freshly cut lumber rolled out. We had to pull the lumber off the chain and stack it up according to its size. This was green lumber that hadn't been planed to a smooth surface yet. It was rough and splintery. I wore thick canvas work gloves called White Mule gloves. That lumber was so rough, I wore through a pair of those gloves about every two weeks. But there were some old men that had been working on the green chain for years. They didn't even wear gloves. When you shook hands with them it was like shaking hands with a lobster. They had handled that lumber for so long they had built up thick calluses on their hands.

That can happen spiritually also. You can handle the truth of Bible over and over again until you build up callouses on your heart. God's Word no longer pricks your heart. Have you developed a hardened heart?

Can you recall another time when Jesus was good and angry? He went into the temple and saw how the crooked merchants had set up their shops to cheat the pilgrims who came in and needed money changed, or an animal for sacrifice. Jesus made a leather whip and went through the shops disrupting their business. He said, "My Father's House should be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves." This wasn't an expression of rage. He was demonstrating a righteous indignation against that kind of religious extortion.

So how can you get good an angry? Let me give you two marks of righteous anger.

1. Righteous anger never attacks a person

Jesus didn't attack the Pharisees. He was angered by their stubborn attitudes. He didn't attack the merchants in the temple. He was angry at their crooked practices and turned over their tables and drove out the animals.

I recall being in a pizza place years ago waiting for my takeout order. Another man was already there waiting. In a couple of minutes they called out my name. As I was paying the other man became enraged. He said, "I was here first! Why is he getting his pizza before me?" The cashier was a teenage girl, and she tried to explain that I had called my order in earlier. But he was too blind with rage to even think about that. Before I could step in and try to calm him down, he yelled at the girl and said, "You can just keep your stupid pizza." And he stormed out the door. I asked her if she was okay. She said, "He's come in before. He's just a jerk." Then she smiled and said, "And now we get to eat his pizza."

You may become indignant over the way someone treats you. But if you want to attack them verbally or physically, then you're not practicing holy anger.

2. Righteous anger always addresses a problem

When you find an injustice or a sinful problem, it's right to be good and angry. We should be angry about the fact that our country has killed 57 million unborn babies since 1973. I'm not angry with the women who make the heartbreaking choice; I hurt for them. But I'm angry that our country legalizes it.

We should be outraged about how pornography has enslaved so many men. We should be angry that our nation is legally changing God's original definition of marriage. We should be angry that human trafficking and slavery still exists in our world.

Like Jesus, we should be good and angry with issues. We should be mad enough to M.A.D. Make a difference. In 1980, thirteen-year-old Cari Lightner was killed by a drunk driver. He had just been released from jail for a previous DWI. Cari's mother, Candy, was outraged at the light sentence the driver received. But rather than direct her anger at the driver of the car, she decided to address the problem. She started an organization called Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Today MADD has over three million members and over 600 chapters around the nation.

So Jesus got angry—in the right way. It's time that we got good and angry as well.

II. JESUS WAS GOOD TO THOSE IN NEED

In the second portion of our passage, Jesus demonstrated His goodness in three ways.

A. He healed the man with a deformed hand

Jesus was attending synagogue on the Sabbath and there was a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees were watching to see if he would try to heal on the Sabbath and break their rules. Dr. Luke is the only writer to point out it was the man's right hand. In the Jewish mind, the right hand was a symbol of power and strength. The Bible even speaks of God sustaining us with His mighty right hand.

The right hand was used for greetings and to bestow blessing. The right hand was the "clean hand" so a good Jew only ate with his right hand. With apologies to all you southpaws out there, the left hand was considered the "unclean hand." Since this man's right hand was withered, he was handicapped physically, spiritually, and psychologically.

Jesus called the man to come forward. This wasn't a private healing. It would be a public in-your-face healing for the sake of the Pharisees. But then Jesus irritated them because He didn't DO anything. He didn't apply oil, or touch the man. He just spoke. He said, "Stretch out your hand." His hand was shriveled into a deformed fist. Stretching out his fingers was the one thing he couldn't do! Jesus told him to attempt the impossible. And the man trusted the Word of Jesus and before his very eyes he watched as his fingers stretched out.

Have you noticed in many of Jesus' miracles He simply told the person to DO the very thing they couldn't do? When the four men brought the paralyzed man to Jesus and lowered him through a hole in the ceiling, Jesus didn't touch the paralyzed man. He simply said, "Stand up, pick up your bed and walk home." The man could have said, "Look at me! I can't do it! That's my problem!" But instead, He trusted the word of Jesus and tried it. He found He could walk! Jesus told Peter to walk on water, which was totally impossible. But it wasn't until Peter stepped out onto the impossibility that he found he could stand on Jesus' Word! It is only when we trust the Word of Jesus to believe we experience His healing power. Salvation is impossible for us, but God's power makes it possible. The Bible says, Jesus said, "With man this is impossible, but

with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26)

What is Jesus telling you to do today? Is your response, "That's impossible?" Don't worry because God specializes in the impossible.

B. He received the crowds who came to Him

There were times when Jesus tried to escape the crowds. He often sought solitary places to pray. But we see in this passage so many people crowded around Him he had to use a boat to create some separation. In Luke 5 we read that it was Peter's fishing boat, and after Peter rowed out a few feet Jesus sat down and taught the crowds.

The actual area where Jesus ministered on the Sea of Galilee was pretty small. 90% of what He did and said took place along a section of the shoreline that is less than a mile. Those of you who've visited Galilee with me have seen the remains of an old fishing boat that carbon dates back to the 1st Century. Some fishermen from the Nof Ginosar kibbutz discovered the old boat preserved in the mud during a drought. It was meticulously removed and preserved and thousands of people have seen it. We can't say for certain it was the boat Jesus used, but knowing the sense of humor of the Lord, I wouldn't be surprised to get to heaven and discover that it was His preaching boat. Jesus is still receiving the crowds today.

C. He demonstrated authority over demonic spirits

When we get to Mark 5 we'll be talking a lot more about demons. For now, just know that demons are real. Their goal is to keep us from knowing God and serving God. Like their master, they have come to steal, heal and destroy.

But notice that even when the disciples didn't fully understand who Jesus was, the demonic spirits recognized Him as the Son of God. They fell down before Jesus and confessed that He was the Son of God.

That reminds me that the Philippians 2:10-11 predicts that one day at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, those in heaven, in the earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the father. Every angel will bow down and confess Jesus. Every demon will bow down and confess that Jesus is Lord. Every Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and non-religious person will bow down and confess that Jesus is Lord.

You may be asking, "Does that mean that all of those people will be in heaven?" Absolutely not. Only those of us who have professed, "Jesus is MY Lord" in this life will find His forgiveness and salvation. To announce, "Jesus is Lord" is to acknowledge He is the creator and sustainer of the universe." To profess Jesus is MY Lord is to claim that you know Him and He is the ruler of your life.

CONCLUSION

So, the two take-aways from this message are: (1) Learn to practice righteous holy anger instead

of explosive harmful anger. (2) Put yourself in the sandals of the man with the paralyzed hand.

We all have things in our lives that create shame. Jesus deals with us the same way He dealt with that man. Charles Spurgeon was a great Baptist preacher in London in the late 1800s. He preached to thousands of people in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, using the flowery oratory that was popular at the time. I love reading Spurgeon, but I don't often quote him because of his verbiage. But his comments on this miracle bear quoting. He compares what this man did in stretching out his hand to what we do when we allow Jesus to save us.

Spurgeon says: "It must, indeed, have been a very beautiful sight to see that poor, withered, wilted hand, first clenched tightly and then stretched out before all the people in the middle of the synagogue! Do you not see the blood begin to flow, the nerves gaining power and the hand opening like a reviving flower? Oh, the delight of his sparkling eyes! As at first he could only fix them upon the little finger and the thumb to see if they were really all alive! Then he turned, looked at that blessed One who had healed him and seemed anxious to fall down at His feet and give Him all the praise! Even so, we cannot explain conversion and the new birth—but we know this—Jesus Christ says, 'Believe,' and we believe! By our own power? No! But as we will to believe (and He gives us that will) there comes a power to do according to His good pleasure. I look around me, wondering where is the man or woman with the withered hand, today. To you I say, in my Master's name, 'Stretch out that hand of yours.' It is an auspicious moment. A great thing shall be done unto you. Believe now! You have said before, 'I can never believe.' Now trust Jesus. Sink or swim, trust Him—and you can be saved!" (Message delivered on May 22, 1879 at the Metropolitan Tabernacle)

OUTLINE

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Ephesians 4:31

B. Orgé—settled indignation

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Righteous anger

1. Never attacks a person.
2. Always addresses a problem.

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- B. He received the crowds who came to Him.
- C. He demonstrated authority over demonic spirits.

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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes



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