

Would you agree with me... if I were to say... “*Anger has become an increasingly prominent emotion in American life*”...?

Cases of road rage are **increasingly** common. And it is not just big-city driving that experiences it. Here in Central Oregon, we have it.

Also... the politics of our day is increasingly **dominated** by angry rhetoric... bringing about more **divisiveness**... than I have ever seen... Now... my own political views... at times ... arouse anger in me. ... I have thought along the lines of “...If those who are on the other side of the fence... would simply **stop** threatening to destroy *my* beloved principles... If they would only start using a little common sense... then I wouldn’t **have** to get so angry...” ... But I also know this: it is **wrong** to declare absolute hatred for those who are of our political opposition... and this seems to be at an all-time high in our culture right now... And where there is excess of it... on either side... it is justified as being a “Patriot.”

I read this week that bookstores now have sections that are titled “Wath Literature.” In these sections... the shelves are lined with books that are written **rants** on various topics.

So now... let me ask you this... “Is anger ever justifiable...?” ... We have all felt the pangs of guilt after we have expressed anger. ... We knew that God was **not** pleased with our outburst... even if no one was hurt by it. ... But... can there **ever** be a time... when we don’t need to feel that we are outside the will of God when we **vent** our anger...?

According to Ephesians, chapter four... not all anger is **sin**. ... But we are not to be **known** as angry people... it is *not* to consume us. In fact it is not

to remain beyond a 24 hour period. Otherwise we give a wonderful opportunity to the devil.

**Ephesians 4:26-27 (ESV)**

*Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.*

So we can see that not **all** anger is sin. ... But what sort of things is it **OK** to be angry over...? Can we be outraged over **political** struggles... and still feel that we are in right standing with God...? Can I be angry at **myself**... for not performing well enough on a responsibility that was given to me...? Is it proper for me to get angry when clear **rights** that are mine... get trampled on by others...? “...*No one should ever crowd ahead of me in line at the supermarket...*” If I am not respected by important people to me... if they ignore me... insult me... or hurt my feelings in any number of ways... can I be angry **without** sin...?

And let's be careful not to play games... by renaming our anger as something else... such as “frustrated”... “Annoyed” ... “a little miffed.” “*I wasn't angry... I was disappointed...*” ... Renaming our anger... so we don't have to acknowledge it as a possible sin... is dangerous to our walk with Christ. ... We won't confess it and experience God's cleansing.

Once we are **honest** about our own anger... by calling it what it **is**... we need to hold it up to a few principles that we learn from Christ's anger...

(Woe!... wait a minute... Did Christ ever get angry...? Yes... and from what we see in the clearest example of Christ's anger... we need to examine our own... and see if we **do** have need to confess it as sin... so that we can experience Christ's cleansing forgiveness.)

Our passage today... is the only clear example that I can think of in Scripture... where we can get a close enough look at an issue that angered Jesus. From our passage today... we want to discover a few discerning principles that will help us determine if our own anger is **righteous** anger... or an anger that we need to confess as **sin**. By the time we finish... I hope that God will have shown us all... where we need to be **less** angry... and other matters where we should have **more** anger.

So let's resume our verse-by-verse study though the Gospel of Luke. Today's passage is **short**. ... It is just four verses long. ... And having spent time in study of these verses... this past week... I have discovered that I am **NOT** off by a week... in matching the subject of our passage... with the day of the year. ... Last week... as we studied the passage dealing with the Triumphal Entry of Christ into Jerusalem... I told you that we are off by just **one week** from studying the events of Palm Sunday... with the very day we **celebrate** as Palm Sunday. Today is Palm Sunday... but we are studying an event that is an intricate part of that very day... when Christ clearly pronounced that He is the Messiah.

We will read the verses... then talk about the message Jesus was proclaiming in His anger... and then based on that... we will take up again the discussion of how we might discern a **righteous** anger from an **unrighteous** anger.

### **Luke 19:45-48**

The Triumphal Entry... which we studied last week... and **this** week's passage... the cleansing of the temple... were apparently **one** intentional notification ... and Jesus orchestrated them **both** with an eye to Old

Testament Scripture. ... We see this in the Triumphal Entry by His prophetic knowledge and divine seeing of an unriden colt of a donkey in the next town... His regal **assurance** that the owners would **loan** the donkey to two of the disciples... just by their telling the owners: "*The Lord needs it*" (Luke 19:34)... and then Jesus' royal ride into Jerusalem... with the crowd's enthusiastic approval ... Jesus was publically declaring that He was the Messiah-King prophesied in Zech. 9:9.

As Christ rode the animal... the crowds immediately caught on. ... They understood this messianic act and began to chant lines from the Hallel Psalms (Psalms 113-118)—principally, "*Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!*" And "Save us now!" ... Thinking that the Messiah was coming to overthrow Rome.

And in all of this... Jesus demonstrated complete **control**. He had deliberately arranged everything. ... and we see the **same** divine control in our verses for today... the temple cleansing.

The verse that the throngs had been chanting to Jesus, "*Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord,*" echoed the prophetic event of the Messiah presenting Himself to the Nation. But there is also... another Prophecy about the Messiah's presentation of Himself ... Malachi 3:1... which today's passage – the Temple cleansing - is fulfilled.

**Malachi 3:1 (ESV)**

*"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple;*

The Lord would "**suddenly**" come to his temple. ... This is why Jesus... in conscious prophetic fulfillment... entered the city on a donkey... and **ended**

**up** in the temple. It is all part of the same proclamation. Jesus is the expected Messiah!

By this action that Jesus took... Jesus suddenly established Himself as **sovereign** in His Father's house. ... Without going up the chain of command of priests and important people of the Temple... Jesus **suddenly** appears in the Temple... and **purges** it of worship-abuse and... in doing so... He prepares it for His own ministry of preaching.

After He cleared the Temple... He used it the rest of the week... for the purpose God **intended** for it. ...The area He cleared... Jesus boldly returned to every day... where He taught the people. ... He declared Himself to be the Messiah... and then sovereignly took control of the Temple... during the final week before He was crucified. ... Jesus was sovereignly in control of His every action and word.

Please go back and read with me again... verses 45 and 46 of our passage today...

### **Luke 19:45-46**

Luke describes Jesus' famous actions in a very **concise** sentence: "*Then he entered the temple area and began driving out those who were selling*" (Luke 19:45). ... This commercial **abuse** of God's house... had grown out of worshipers' need to obtain animals for sacrifice... which had absolutely **no** defect... which had to be verified as **suitable** by a priest. ... The abuse also evolved from God's command... recorded in Exodus 30:11-14... that each year... every male Israelite was required to pay a half-shekel as a temple tax.

A half-shekel was equal to nearly **two days' pay** for a working man. ... Most of these taxes were paid by the pilgrims in Jerusalem when they came to the Passover Feast. ... In Palestine all kinds of currencies were in circulation from Greece, Rome, Syria and Egypt. ... Basically they were all equal in value... however... the temple tax had to be paid in **exact** half shekels of the sanctuary.

The moneychangers would make a big profit from exorbitant charges to exchange the people's money into the proper coinage for the tax. Thus, the Temple court changed from being a place associated with **worship** to a market place that economically **gouged** the people.

Now... that was the racketeering business of the moneychangers... Remember... there was also the buying and selling of unblemished animals to be sacrificed.

When a person would bring their **own** animal to the Temple to be sacrificed... the priest would inevitably find some **flaw** with it... render it inappropriate... and then force the worshipper to buy an animal from one of the seller's... conveniently located around the court of the gentiles... there in the temple. ... Oh... by the way... guess who owned these booths where the animals were sold and the money was exchanged at high rates...? It was the High Priest! ... .. In order to get-in on this money-making scheme... and set up your own worshipper-gouging business... you had to pay a very high rent for your booth – to the High Priest!

These Temple shops were known as the Booths of Annas and were the property of the family of the High Priest. That is why Jesus was brought

**first** before Annas when He was arrested. ... Jesus had struck a blow at his evil monopoly. ... The Lord hit Annas in the pocket book when He drove out the corruption in the Temple.

Instead of praying **for** the people... the priests were preying **on** the people! ... The religious leaders were not only taking advantage of the poor... the needy... and strangers... but they were also implying in their transactions that Jehovah is a God who is **expensive** to worship.

A huge religious scam had been going on for years in "the temple area," specifically in the Court of the Gentiles... the **only** place in the temple where a non-Jew could go to pray and meditate. ... This showed such a disregard for Gentile evangelism!

The Temple was to be used for gentile evangelism. And this extremely bold force of action... which Jesus demonstrates... reflects other portions of God's Word that the priests were ignoring.

**Isaiah 56:7 (ESV)**

*"These" (Gentiles) "I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."*

Solomon... as he dedicated the temple... after blessing the people... Solomon spread out his hands toward Heaven and offered his great dedicatory prayer. Toward the end of that prayer... he included this:

**1 Kings 8:41-43 (ESV)**

*"Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name's sake (for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm),*

*when he comes and prays toward this house, hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.*

No one is to be excluded from God's people... if they were not born a Jew. All were to be received... if they come in sincerity of heart. ... Isaiah says this about Gentile who wanted to convert:

**Isaiah 56:3 (ESV)**

Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from his people"

This great welcome to foreigners was what the Lord's house was always meant to be. ... And here it was – audaciously - being ignored! This court of the gentiles was certainly not the place where a Gentile could go to meditate and pray.

The scandal Jesus attacked and abolished by driving the corrupted clerics from the Court of the Gentiles and preaching, "My house will be a house of prayer," was because of the exclusion of Gentiles from the grace of God.

Jesus threw over the tables and drove out the perpetrators for two reasons: 1) the honor of his Father's name, and 2) the complete disregard for others' spiritual welfare. The honor of God's name was diminished because of man-made theology.

Jesus' second brief quotation was from Jeremiah 7:11—"*but you have made it a 'den of robbers'*"



The situation in Jeremiah which Jesus made a parallel... was that God commanded Jeremiah to stand on the steps of the Temple and announce God's anger that the Jews had been treating the temple as a magic genie in a bottle. Jeremiah was challenging the assumption that the Jews could do whatever they want... as long as they properly carry forth their religious duty at the temple. ... God will protect us – it doesn't matter what you do. Pay Him homage at His temple... and live any way that you want. "*Lie... steal... and cheat one another!*" - Jeremiah announced "*You have made this place into a den of thieves!*" ... Jesus again announced "You have the wrong idea about this place. You contrived your own theology about this place !"

The Lion of the tribe of Judah... perfectly fulfilled Malachi's prophecy:  
*"suddenly the Lord... will come to his temple."*

It had to be the hand of God the Father... that enabled Jesus to cleanse the temple. What else could have disrupted the well-ingrained system of Jewish society... and kept the Roman garrison from intervening? The people had for a long time been scandalized by the misuse of the temple. And the people had to know it was wrong... but it had been going on for so long and had been controlled by the cultural power-brokers. ... The people gathered around Jesus every day in the Temple... and probably appreciated the stand that He finally took. Verse 48 ends by telling us that the authorities couldn't do anything because outright opposition to Jesus would have been unpopular. ... But as we know... His enemies would finally find a way to do away with Him... at least temporarily.

A glorious scene overtook the Court of the Gentiles. The tables were righted... but no money changed hands that day. The bawling livestock and fluttering birds were gone... and commerce ceased. ... For several days Jesus was sovereign in his Father's house. ...The temple was His.

After cleansing the temple and purifying it... Jesus possessed and taught there. ... From here to the end of chapter 21 the temple is Jesus' pulpit... as we especially see in two passages.

**Luke 19:47-48 (ESV)**

*And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.*

**Luke 21:37-38 (ESV)**

*And every day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet. And early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple to hear him.*

His temporary seizure of the temple and His exposition from within the temple's walls... is **one vast** messianic act. ... He was Sovereign in His Father's house.

Now... lets return to our original topic and examine the absolute **righteousness** of Jesus' anger.

In the only clear example we have of Jesus getting angry... it was caused because 1) His Father's name was being dishonored... 2) The spiritual needs of others were being abused and denied...

How much of our anger is due to these two causes? Of all the times you got angry this past week... was it **ever** due to the fact that God's glory was

being diminished... or because someone else's spiritual needs were being mistreated or altogether denied...? ... Isn't so much of **our** anger sourced in injuries that are done to **us**... or against **us**...? Isn't our anger far more self-focused... than the focus Jesus had on others...?

We can know for sure that we have a **righteous** anger... if it rises because God's glory has somehow been lessened... the spotlight... the fame He deserves... is placed on something else. Certain styles of worship... where there is a strong sense that a worshipper wants everyone else to notice THEM angers me. ... Giving glory to "Mother Nature" angers me. Seeing how the theory of evolution dominates our society... and the spread of **other** false religions... angers me.

We can also know it is a **righteous** anger... if it results from an unnecessary preventing... of others to have their spiritual needs met. ... When Mike Riffle told us about the thousands of orphans in Cartagena... who are being trafficked as sex slaves to pedophiles from America and other nations who go there "on vacation"... several of us had righteous anger. These poor children deserve a home environment... that can love and protect them... and nurture them in the ways of the Lord. Sacrificially many of you support Colombia Grace Foundation.

But in order to tell if we indeed have a righteous anger... we first need to distinguish if it is anger... or some other emotion. You see... we are **terrible**... when it comes to recognizing the actual emotion inside of us. Often... what we might think is "righteous anger"... isn't even **anger**. It is a fear.

What regularly passes for a righteous anger... over the decline of the society we live in... is actually a FEAR... that it will adversely affect us... or those we love. And actually it is... once again... a self-focus... a desire to protect ourselves from harm. *“I want the best future for myself and my family... and I fear that if such-and-such political party has it’s way... it will not happen.”* ... We need to be truthful and discern the difference between “anger” and “fear.”

We also need to discern the difference between “anger” and “pride” ... because so much of what upsets us is injury to our pride. *“I will not be treated that way!!!”*

Understanding the difference between a righteous anger ... and an unrighteous anger... will **not** transform us into people that only express righteous anger. Yesterday... as I was working on this message... every other paragraph I had to jump out of my seat and go bang on the wall... to scare away a woodpecker that is putting holes on our house. My anger at that little varmint is not a righteous anger. He is causing damage to my personal property.

Anger that we cannot label as “righteous anger” **will** rise within us. But when it does... and we recognize it... let’s be quick to confess it... and ask for God’s leading of our emotions and actions... in dealing with the situation.

So much of our anger is improper. ... But let me finish by asking... do we have **enough** righteous anger... that stirs us to bold... Godly... action...?

The story is told of Robert Mansfield... the headmaster of a white's-only school in South Africa... during the days of apartheid... a cruel system of racial segregation. ... When Mansfield's school was barred from competing against a black school... Mansfield finally had had enough... he took a stand against apartheid... and resigned his post. A friend said to him, "*You know you will be wounded. Do you know that?*"

Mansfield replied... pointing to heaven... "*When I go up there ... the Big Judge will say to me... 'Where are your wounds?' If I say I haven't any, he will say, 'Was there nothing to fight for?'* I couldn't face that question."