

Theme: Wrath is a disordered love that desires justice to be enacted in my time, manner, and degree rather than in God's.

## I. Intro - The Mission

- A. Jesuit Father Gabriel starts mission among natives
- B. Mercenary/slaver Rodrigo Mendoza - kills half-brother Felipe for sleeping with Rodrigo's fiancée
- C. Rodrigo acquitted, but spirals into depression; Father Gabriel comes and counsels penance - dragging armor through jungle, up waterfall
- D. Rodrigo becomes Jesuit, vow of obedience, pacifism
- E. Politics intervenes, soldiers come to destroy the mission, enslave the natives
- F. Rodrigo gives in to anger to establish justice, protect natives; dies in fight - while Father Gabriel leads mass (and is killed)
- G. What is wrath? Is it ever justified? How do we know? What virtues and practices oppose wrath?

## II. The Problem of Wrath

- A. The problem of wrath  
Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; James 1:19
  1. Note: I will use wrath - same word as anger
  2. We are called to be slow to anger - a key attribute of God's own character  
The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, Exodus 34:6 ESV

- a. Yahweh revealed His name and character - slow to anger, merciful, gracious, abounding in love
  - b. James is saying we are God's image - act like it!
3. The reason - man's anger does not work God's righteousness  
Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; <sup>20</sup> for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1:19–20 ESV
    - a. Juxtaposition: man and God
    - b. Human anger does not produce the righteousness of God
      1. The righteous life God desires (NIV 1984)
      2. The justice of God against sin
      3. I think full-orbed idea is in view - our wrath does not promote God's justice and righteousness in us or in others; instead, it almost always promotes sin in us and others

### B. Can wrath ever be righteous?

- Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; James 1:19
1. We are to be SLOW to anger, like God
  2. Not an absolute prohibition on wrath - but it is very dangerous, and usually sinful
    - a. The desert fathers thought it so dangerous and open to sin they just said never allow human wrath; it is certainly very difficult to control!
    - b. Anyone can become angry – that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way – this is not easy. - Aristotle

- c. Paul gave strict warnings about the danger of wrath  
Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and give no opportunity to the devil. Ephesians 4:26–27 ESV
  - 1. Anger is closely associated with sin - it easily gives way to sin
  - 2. Don't let the sun go down - keep it on a tight leash
  - 3. Don't give the Devil a foothold - wrath often opens the door for Satan to work

- 2. God has promised He will make all things right - in His time, manner, and degree
- 3. But God's timing, manner, and degree often do not match our own!
- 4. Wrath is ultimately our expression of frustration that things are not working out according to our will!

C. Discerning righteous anger from unrighteous wrath

<b>Type of Anger</b>	<b>Object</b>	<b>Expression</b>
<b>Righteous Anger</b>	Justice	Proportionate to the offense, Necessary for re-establishing justice
<b>Wrath</b>	Selfishness	Disproportionate, Ineffective or unnecessary

Table from Dr. Rebecca DeYoung

- 1. Righteous anger & sinful wrath have different aims
- 2. Righteous anger & sinful wrath have different expressions
- 3. The key: why am I angry (God's justice vs my hurt); how am I expressing it - proportionate vs disproportionate; it is effective?

### III. The Root Vice of Wrath

- A. Defining the vice of wrath (nature of disordered love)  
Wrath is a disordered love that desires justice to be enacted in my time, manner, and degree rather than in God's.
  - 1. The root issue is once again my desire to be God

B. Wrath's misplaced identity

I seek to find my identity in circumstances as I desire them, rather than in God's Providential ruling of the world and my life.

- 1. Wrath is a sign that we are not in true submission to God's Sovereignty in our lives or in the world
- 2. When God is not running things as we think He should - wrath expresses itself

C. A biblical example - Jonah

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it. <sup>4:1</sup> But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. <sup>2</sup> And he prayed to the Lord and said, "O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. <sup>3</sup> Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." <sup>4</sup> And the Lord said, "Do you do well to be angry?" Jonah 3:10–4:4 ESV

- 1. God shows mercy rather than judgment to sinners
- 2. Jonah is angry - he wanted them punished now!

3. He even quotes Exodus 34:6 on God's character!
4. He would rather die than see God delay judgment
5. See how he fits the definitions we have  
Wrath is a disordered love that desires justice to be enacted in my time, manner, and degree rather than in God's.

I seek to find my identity in circumstances as I desire them, rather than in God's Providential ruling of the world and my life.

#### D. How wrath is expressed (associated sins)

1. Wrath is usually expressed first in speech  
Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, [slow to speak, slow to anger](#); James 1:19  
  
A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1 ESV
  - a. Speech is often associated with anger/wrath
  - b. The relationship between wrath and words is symbiotic - wrath leads to harsh words, which serve to further fuel and spread wrath.
2. Wrath often leads to a loss of self-control  
A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control. Proverbs 29:11 NIV
  - a. Wrath occurs when we let our emotions fly at full force with no restraint. This is the practice of a fool.
  - b. A wise man learns to control his 'spirit' (literal) rather than giving full vent
  - c. Once again, there is a symbiotic relationship here - rather than dissipating, wrath tends to feed on its expression and grow.

3. Wrath often leads to strife and many sins  
A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression. Proverbs 29:22 ESV
  - a. Wrath creates strife and arguments, and destroys relationships
  - b. Wrath leads to many sins - in myself and in others as they react to me (remember Proverbs 15:1)
  - c. This is why when one person expresses wrath things often spiral downward quickly!
4. Wrath often leads to trying to get revenge  
If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. <sup>19</sup> Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. Romans 12:18-19 NIV
  - a. Note the distinction between our trying to express wrath to get revenge, and trusting in God's own justice
  - b. Wrath leads me to take matters into my own hands, becoming a vigilante in the name of justice
  - c. This passage leads to Romans 13 - God has appointed civil leaders to exact justice - so we do not take it into our own hands
  - d. The desire to see justice is good and right - but we must be willing to wait for God's time, manner, and degree, or wrath will take root and defile our hearts and actions
5. Wrath can lead to murder if left unchecked  
"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'<sup>22</sup> But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother,

'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. Matthew 5:21–22 NIV

- a. Jesus shows that the root of murder is often wrath
- b. Also, note the link with words - they express wrath, feed and inflame it, and suddenly it boils over into physical harm to the other person
- c. The ultimate end would be murder - but all sorts of physical aggression are the fruit of wrath

#### IV. Applying the Word

##### A. Exercise self-control

1. Wrath is complete venting of internal rage
2. Remember Proverbs 29:11 - fool vents wrath; wise keep self-control
3. Practice silence - do not verbally respond until you have calmed down
4. Practice a physical "time out"
  - a. Get away for a few minutes to let body & spirit quiet
  - b. Sometimes vigorous physical activity helps
  - c. Wrath affects body & spirit; both must be addressed

##### B. Practice forgiveness

1. Wrath wants our justice now, rather than mercy
2. Consciously confess your own sin and receive God's forgiveness
3. Offer forgiveness verbally in prayer

4. Release the person/situation into God's hands
5. This does not preclude taking situation to God's delegated authorities - but release the wrath & bitterness

##### C. Cultivate gentleness over time

1. The opposite of "hot" spirit of wrath is gentleness
2. Gentleness, meekness, and humility are all related
3. It is "enduring offenses with patience and restraint" and "strength under control" - opposite of wrath!
4. The goal is a spirit that does not boil over in wrath but is gentle, kind, compassionate, forgiving

##### D. The Table of God's Justice and Mercy

1. Bread - justice in the past
2. Cup - mercy in the present
3. Final prayer - Justice and mercy in the future

#### Wrath

James 1:19-20 (ESV)  
February 18, 2018  
Communion  
2 Timothy 1:2

Teaching keywords: Lent; anger; sin; character; sanctification; judgment; forgiveness; tongue and words

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 2 Timothy 1:2

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;<sup>20</sup> for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1:19–20  
ESV