

## WHY IS GOD SO ANGRY?

Why is God so angry about sin? Does God need a course in anger management? Friends, God **IS** a course in anger management!

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ.

Is there such a thing as "justified anger"? Every human being believes that some anger is justified! But, you know, there is also unjustified anger! Justified anger grows out of Great Love! It says that "we care". But Unjustified anger grows out of selfishness or jealousy! Unjustified anger says I care only about myself! So, are these principles of anger also true of God? Is God's anger justified or unjustified? Why is God so angry about sin?

God's anger springs from His Great Love, His Great Jealousy for His people! That's right! Jesus' apostle John wrote that "God is love." (1 John 5:3) There is no greater motivation for anger than love for someone who is hurting. Every human knows this is true. You are going to make me mad if you hurt the ones I love. Furthermore, you will also make me mad when you hurt a cause that I care deeply about. And if you hurt the ones I love, then you would be able to understand my anger. In fact, you might say that I have a "right" to be mad at you!

God is angry because of sin. Sin cripples His people, His creation. God is jealous for His creation! "God judges the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day." (Psalms 7:11 MKJV) Another Psalm asks, "LORD, how long will you be angry with us? Will it be forever? How long will your jealousy burn like fire?" (Psalms 79:5 NIV) God is an expert at anger management. He patiently waits for repentance. "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." (2 Peter 3:9 ESV) No human being can love like God loves! Could anyone be as longsuffering as God? God's anger is a justified anger, because it is motivated by His extreme love for His creation.

Jesus' apostle Paul wrote about justified anger. He wrote "Be angry and sin not; do not let the sun go down on your wrath and give no opportunity to the devil." (Ephesians 6:26, 27) Paul knew that there is such a thing as "justified anger." A person can be angry and sin not! However, Paul also knew that even "justified anger" could turn into sin! Paul commanded, "Do not let the sun go down on your wrath and give no opportunity to the devil." Here is the way justified anger

must be managed. This is anger management! You see, lingering anger becomes wrath that gives Satan an opportunity to destroy you! It's no wonder then that the Apostle Paul wrote in the next minute commanding, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice." (Ephesians 4:31 ESV)

Paul tells us here how justified anger can turn into sin, if we harbor it.

"Bitterness" is sin against our own hearts. It is something that we carry around in our hearts, in our emotions, and it surfaces in our behavior. Bitterness is like cancer. Bitterness can eat us alive! But notice that Paul says that bitterness, wrath, and anger can turn into "clamor" and "slander" and "malice". Clamor is loud talk! Clamor is shouting! This loud talk turns into "slander". The Greek word is "Blasphemy." Slander is evil speaking. It is to speak evil of someone whether it's true or not. Jesus said that all kinds of blasphemy can be forgiven with the exception of one kind of blasphemy. When a person speaks evil of God's Holy Spirit, the messenger of truth, Jesus said it cannot be forgiven. (Matthew 12:31 ESV) "Malice" is at the end of Paul's list of sins that begins with justified anger. Malice in the heart is the desire to injure someone. When even justified anger turns into shouting and evil speaking and finally the desire to injure, anger has become sinful. No wonder then that the apostle commands: , "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice." (Ephesians 4:31 ESV)

Paul continued by giving us the remedy for our justified anger: Not only should we get rid of it before the sun goes down, but we are to replace it with kindness. Paul wrote, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32 ESV) Friends, if you cannot wish for others what God has done for you, then you are in trouble. Your heart is taken over by sin. Satan is ruling in your heart. Satan has taken hold of the opportunity you gave him through your anger.

Notice that Jesus' apostle Paul said "God in Christ forgave you." Indeed, God, through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, condemned sin in the flesh. All sin was condemned and punished at the crucifixion. "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, [God] condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, [that is in those of us]

who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." (Romans 8:3-4 ESV) God has forgiven the sin of the world; that is something that God **could not do** by or through the law. God's forgiveness was justified by His Son's sacrifice for the sins of the world. Why then are people still LOST? Because they are not walking according to the Spirit; they are still living according to the flesh, following the desires of their flesh. You see, the invitation to forgiveness must be **accepted**. The forgiveness must be **received** by the sinner and demonstrated by living in the Spirit. Jesus illustrated this principle in His parable about the king who gave a wedding feast for the king's son. Jesus said,

"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.'" But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. [Their punishment was justified; their wickedness was rewarded.] Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:2-14 ESV)

You see, friends, God has invited the whole world of sinners to the feast of forgiveness. Forgiveness is the wedding feast. God invites you to His Son's wedding feast. His Son Jesus paid the penalty for your sins, and not for yours only, but the sins of the whole world, and now you are invited to share in the feast of forgiveness.

However, there is the wedding garment! To enter the feast of forgiveness, you must put on a wedding garment. The garment represents God's conditions for receiving forgiveness. The wedding garment is made from faith. The unbelieving cannot remain at the feast, because faith in Jesus Christ and His requirements are part of the King's conditions. Also, the wedding garment is made from Repentance. Repentance is a heart-condition. It is a sorrowful regret for sin. "Unless you repent you will perish," said Jesus, recorded in Luke 13:3. Furthermore, the wedding garment is made of boldness, boldness that will confess to believing in God's Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32-33 ESV) Friend, you cannot be forgiven while hiding your faith.

Furthermore, to put on the wedding garment our spiritual bodies must be washed in pure water says Hebrews 10:22. This is a reference to Jesus' command to His apostles that they baptize people in water. Jesus' apostle Paul refers to this when he contrasted the old life of sin with a Christian's new life. Referring to their former sins Paul wrote, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:11 ESV) Paul also wrote, "He (God) saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit...." (Titus 3:5 ESV) The "washing of regeneration" is what Jesus called the New Birth. It is our baptism into Jesus Christ. (Romans 6:3) These conditions compose the wedding garment that we wear to the feast of forgiveness. Remember what Jesus said? The king found some in the feast without the wedding garment. Judgment begins inside the king's banquet hall. Peter wrote, "It is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" (1 Peter 4:17-18 ESV)

Friends, God's anger burns against sin because sin hurts those whom God loves. The God of Love has a justified anger against Sin. But God wrote the book on anger management. In fact, He demonstrates His own anger management by providing a way for His beloved creation to escape sin and the final condemnation. Have you accepted God's invitation to believe in His Son's

execution for your sins; do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God? Are you sorrowful for your sins; will you leave them behind? Have you repented? Have you confessed your faith in Christ and been buried with Christ in a watery grave, so as to be raised with Christ to a new life, the Christian life?

Or, are you content to wait for God's wrath to come against your sin? How long will you allow God to be angry with your sins? The wages of sin that you have earned is death. But the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, His Son. (Romans 6:23)

Find a church of Christ near you, obey the gospel of Christ and come out from under the wrath of God!