

Manly Emotions:

The Anger and Joy of Jesus (Part 4)

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Brothers, I want to thank you again for the privilege of being with you, and the privilege of speaking the Word of God to you. This has been just a great time. No doubt most of us have not had our typical devotional times in the morning, am I right? Because of the schedule, because of the circumstances. And yet, we've been in an atmosphere of grace. God is dwelling among His people. And so the absence of those personal devotional times, which I haven't had to the degree I've had, I don't feel because we've been swimming in an atmosphere of God's presence and grace. And that's been wonderful.

But I do want to encourage you as you return home, to make sure you get back on schedule with your usual pattern of morning meeting with God. One of the signs of life within us is that we can't really flourish without that. I'm a different man if I miss my time in the Word and prayer on any given morning. And so as this has been disrupted a little bit by these days together, make sure you get back into that rhythm of seeking the Lord. But it's been wonderful to be together. It's been just a joy to be with you.

Brothers, one of the strongest and most passionate emotions is that of anger. It is also one of the most destructive. To quote David Powlison, who wrote an excellent book which I read recently, entitled "Good and Angry," - and if you want a good book on anger, that's a good one - David Powlison says, "anger is the reaction that incinerates marriages and disintegrates families. It energizes gossip and guns down classmates. It divides churches, turns friendship into enmity, and erupts in road rage. Anger is also the basic DNA of complaining, brooding, irritability, and bickering."

He goes on to say that we all experience anger. Some of us explode. Some of us simmer. And some of us seem dormant. Anger can be explosive like a volcano. It can be cold like an iceberg - calculating and vengeful. And I don't doubt in a group this size that some of you men grew up with anger in your home. You may have had an angry mother. More likely, an angry father. And that anger with which you grew up has had an impact on you - an impact you've had to live with for years and perhaps even decades. The likelihood is if you grew up with an angry father, you have become an angry person yourself. Proverbs 22 warns us, "Do not associate with a man given to anger or go with a hot-tempered man, or you will learn his ways and find a snare for yourself." You may find that your own anger is damaging your marriage, oppressing your children, alienating your friends, and maybe even causing problems at work.

Anger is so destructive and so painful in its effects, that many people when they talk of anger, or think about anger, they think of all anger as sinful. But I think you know that that's not the case. The simple proof is that Jesus Christ got angry. We can construct a little logical syllogism. Major premise: Jesus Christ was without sin. Minor premise: Jesus Christ felt and displayed anger. Conclusion: All anger is not sin. Plus, we have the command given through the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:26, "Be angry, but do not sin."

Well, that presents us with the challenge of trying to sort out what is good anger and what is bad anger. What is righteous anger and what is unrighteous anger? There's no better way to answer that question than to look at the anger of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And the first thing I want us to see is what I'm calling the gradation of Jesus' anger. As I surveyed the Gospels, looking for all of the emotions of Jesus, but in particular the expressions of displeasure in Jesus, I found that His displeasure is on a continuum. There are degrees of anger. And I've chosen three words: exasperation, indignation, and then full-out anger. Now those are not inspired words. You may use different words. And you may put different things in different categories. But I think you will agree with me that there's a gradation in the anger of Jesus, in the displeasure of Jesus.

And I'm going to quote a lot of texts. Oftentimes, it's not wise for a preacher to do that. Sometimes they ought to use just an epitomizing text - one that captures the point - and not weary the people with a lot of texts. But in this case, I want to multiply texts because I want you to feel the cumulative effect of how often Jesus felt this displeasure. Not just take an isolated verse. And I'm not repeating verses from various synoptics, okay? These are all different incidents. So, we feel the cumulative weight of Jesus' exasperation, His indignation, and then His full-out anger. The holy exasperation of Jesus.

Matthew 8:26 The disciples are afraid in a great storm. "Why are you afraid, O men of little faith?" (Incomplete thought) Matthew 14, Peter walks on water until he sees the wind and he begins to sink. Jesus: "You of little faith. Why did you doubt?" Matthew 15, Peter asks Jesus to explain a parable. "Are you still lacking in understanding also?" Matthew 17, The disciples come down from the Mount of Transfiguration. And they meet with some disciples who are unable to cast out a particular demon. Jesus' response: "You unbelieving and perverted generation. How long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you?" Matthew 26, the disciples are falling asleep in the garden at the time of Jesus' agony. He's yearning for companionship. So, "you could not keep watch with Me for one hour?" Mark 8:12, the Pharisees arguing with Jesus, seeking a sign to test Him. "Sighing deeply in His spirit, 'Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.'" We saw the sigh of compassion. This is a sigh of exasperation. Mark 8:17, Jesus warns about the leaven of the Pharisees, and the disciples are thinking carnally. Oh, we forgot to take bread! And Jesus says, "why do you discuss that you have no bread? Do you not see or understand?" Do you have a hardened heart? And then the resurrected Jesus appearing incognito to those two men on the road to Emmaus, and they're downcast. And He says to them, "Oh, foolish men and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." And of course He opened up from the Law and from the Prophets all about Himself. What a biblical theology lesson that would have been, right? John 14 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you and you've not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" Do you agree with me? Exasperation in Jesus.

Let's put it up a notch to what I'm calling the indignation of Jesus, or maybe irritation or the annoyance of Jesus. It's a little bit more, or a little hotter up the thermometer in terms of His displeasure. Mark 10:13-14, People bring children to Jesus for Him to touch them. The disciples rebuke them. But, "When Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, 'Permit the

children to come to Me. Do not hinder them. For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Matthew 21, Jesus is questioned by the chief priest and the elders about His authority. He counters with a question of His own. "I will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John was from what? From heaven or from men?" They recognized that this was a trap, and they bowed out saying, 'we don't know.'" So Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." I don't know about you, but I hear some indignation.

Jesus: You're going to question Me? I'm going to question you. I'll answer you if you answer Me. And He silences them. He's pushing back with some holy indignation. Matthew 22 The Sadducees take a whack at Jesus. They come to Him and ask Him a question about the resurrection, which ironically, they did not even believe in. And Jesus answers, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God." I'm not a King James guy, but I love the King James at that point. "You err, knowing not the Scriptures or the power of God." You want to be ignorant? Be ignorant of the Scriptures. You want to be knowledgeable? Know the Word of God.

Matthew 26, A woman pours perfume on His head. And the disciples are indignant and said, "Why this waste?" Jesus said to them, "Why do you bother the woman? For she has done a good deed to Me." Matthew 26:50, Jesus is being arrested. Judas leading the pack with a treacherous kiss. Jesus' words to him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Indignant sarcasm. Friend. Matthew 26:55 Jesus' indignation toward the arresting crowd. "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me." Jesus is indignant at the indignation being shown to Him. They're treating Him like a criminal when He did everything out in the open.

I love this, Matthew 26:63. The high priest grills Jesus about the testimony of false witnesses. And it says, "But Jesus kept silent." Have you observed the holy silences of Jesus? An indignant silence. What is He saying? You don't deserve an answer. You're not really seeking the truth. And I'm not going to answer you, because you don't want the truth. And Jesus was silent. In Matthew 23, likewise before King Herod, who was hoping to see Jesus put on a show, He was looking for a sign for Jesus to perform. "And He questioned Him at some length, but He answered him nothing." A holy, indignant silence. And likewise before Pilate. An indignant terseness. Pilate says, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And Jesus said to him, "You say." An affirmation, but with some indignation. Again, another man not really seeking the truth. He's the man who said, "What is truth?" And so Jesus, indignant toward those who really don't want the truth.

But now, let's move to what I'm calling the flat-out anger of Jesus. We're moving up the scale. I think His anger is seen in the woes that He pronounced on His enemies and staunch unbelievers. Matthew 11, "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." Matthew 15, "You hypocrites! Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me.'" Matthew 23 as you know is a litany of woes, where 8 times, Jesus pronounces woes upon the hypocrites. "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees! Hypocrites! Woe to you..." Eight times. In Matthew 18, "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a

heavy millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. So we see His anger expressed in His angry woes. We see His anger in some of the strong language He uses. In Luke 13, He calls Herod, "that fox." He calls the Pharisees "blind guides, whitewashed tombs, brood of vipers, children of the devil, a wicked and adulterous generation." And He calls false prophets "ravening wolves."

I think His anger is seen in the cursing of the fig tree. You know, somebody looking at that superficially or trying to find things against Jesus would say was He just having a bad morning? He was just passing a fig tree and curses a fig tree? Was He just ticked off and took it out on a poor plant? No. The fig tree was a picture of Pharisaic hypocrisy. It was all leaves and no fruit. And He cursed the fig tree.

His anger is seen in His rebukes of Satan and demons and demonic activity. Mark 1, A man in the synagogue with an unclean spirit, "Be quiet! And come out of him." Mark 9, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him, and do not enter him again." Luke 4, He rebuked the fever and it left Peter's mother-in-law. Luke 4, later, demons were also coming out of many, but rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak.

And John 11, remember I said I was going to refer to that again. In John 11, Jesus wept. There was holy grief. There was holy compassion. But the words used indicate that that grief and compassion was mixed with anger. You see, the emotions of Jesus often can not be isolated. They are mixed together. We have to isolate them somewhat for the purpose of study, but they're mixed together. And when it says at the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus was deeply moved in spirit, maybe I told you that, that that word in the Greek means to be very angry - to snort like a horse. And it says He was troubled - to agitate, to cause inward commotion, to take away calmness of mind. He is angry at that point with death and its author Satan. B.B. Warfield says, "Jesus approached the grave of Lazarus in a state - not of uncontrollable grief, but of irrepressible anger. Jesus wept, but the emotion which tore His breast and clamored for utterance was just rage." He raged in Himself is what the Greek indicates.

It's also seen (His anger) in the angry judgments pronounced in the parables. The parable of the vine growers where the land owner sends one servant after another, and the vine growers kill the servants. He says I'm going to send my son. Surely they will respect my son. But they kill the son to seize the inheritance. Jesus then asks His detractors, "When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine growers?" And they answer rightly. He will bring those wretches to a wretched end. And of course, that's true. And He is the land owner there represented as the One who will bring wretched unbelievers to a wretched end. Jesus' anger is surely seen in His violent cleansing of the temple. And I want to read it at some point.

So let me just read it now. We'll refer to it later. But we'll read the John 2 account. There's more than one account when Jesus cleansed the temple. But in John 2, just reading 13-17. "The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers were seated at their tables, and He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple with the sheep and the oxen, and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. And to those who were selling the doves he said, 'take these things

away! Stop making My Father's house a place of business.' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for Your house will consume Me.'"

And then His flat-out anger is seen in the only place, I believe, where His anger is explicitly mentioned by name as such. In John 3, He's entered the synagogue. A man was there with a hand that was withered. And they were watching Him to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. He said to the man with the withered hand, 'Get up and come forward.' And He said to them, 'Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath? To save a life or to kill?' But they kept silent. After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, 'stretch forth your hand.' And he stretched it out and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out immediately to be conspiring with the Herodians against Him as to how they might destroy Him." Jesus looked at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart.

So we see the degrees of anger expressed by Jesus. You're free to use different terms. You're free to put them in different categories. But do you see something of a gradation? From the exasperation of Jesus to the indignation and irritation of Jesus to His flat-out holy anger, even expressed physically in the temple. What are the grounds of Jesus' anger? What gave rise to it? Well, we saw that the sorrow and the compassion of Jesus was born of His observation of the effects of the fall upon man and upon the world. As He walked among the wreckage of a fallen world, He saw crippled limbs, and blind eyes, and deaf ears, and leprous skin, and sicknesses and diseases and the emotional anguish caused by death, and unshepherded sheep, and people dead in their sins and hardened in their hearts, and it broke His holy heart with grief and He was moved with compassion. The compassion of Jesus was born of His observation of the effects of the fall.

Regarding His anger, I would say this. His anger sprang from His recognition of the sources of man's fall: sin and Satan. Now to be sure, He gets angry with death. And death is an effect of sin. But for the most part, His anger is directed at the source of that fall: Satan and sin. Man's sin. He looked at them with anger in the hardness and uncompassion of their hearts, the sinfulness of their legalistic hearts - He looked at them with anger because sin angered Jesus. The devil: He (Jesus) saw demonized people and angrily rebuked them. He rebuked the wind, ultimately under the control of His Father, but when the wind comes with destructive power, immediately it is under the control of the god of this world. And He rebuked the wind. He rebuked the works of Satan, Satan himself, and demons. Jesus is angry at the devil and demons and demonic doctrines. And He is also angry at death which is the effect of sin.

But now, let's consider the goodness of Jesus' anger in contrast to ours. What is it about the anger of Jesus that makes His anger good and so much of our anger bad? His anger righteous and so much of our anger unrighteous. There is so much to be said about anger. Like I said, I read recently a whole book on it, which is very rich, and I was trying to distill - how can I get across to the men and to my own heart the essence of the matter, because I only have a short time.

What is it that makes Jesus' anger good and ours often not good? It is this: The motives of Jesus' anger were pure. Jesus' anger proceeded out of two basic motivations: His love for God His Father and His love for His neighbor, which is the essence of true religion, isn't it? To love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. Not

surprisingly, Jesus perfectly practiced true religion. And His anger was born of love for God and love for His neighbor. His love for God is seen in His cleansing of the temple. Zeal for His Father's house consumed Him. Zeal in Greek is the same word for jealousy: *zelos*. It's just transliterated. He was jealous for His Father's honor and glory and name and cause.

And what did the temple represent? The temple had been ordained of God as the place of His manifest presence. It was the place of worship. His house was to be a place of prayer. It was a place where God's holy law was stored, right? In the holy place; in the ark of the covenant. The Ten Commandments were there. It was the place where, let me say, the Gospel was contained. How so? Because it was the place of sacrifice. All of those animals sacrificed, sacrifices which typified and prefigured His ultimate effectual sacrifice for sin - the sacrifices were made in the temple. So the temple was the place of God's presence. His holy presence, His holy worship, His holy law, and His holy Gospel, represented by the prefiguring sacrifices, right? And He saw these religionists choked with their tradition - man-made tradition - taking advantage of the people, charging them exorbitant prices. They had come from a distance. They have to offer animals. They jack up the price and get what they want for it. And they're making it a greedy business. And zeal for His Father's house consumed Him. Love for God His Father - His honor, His name, His law, and His Gospel consumed Jesus. That's what gave birth to His anger. Interesting that when they crucified Jesus He said, "Father, forgive them." But when they trampled upon His Father's house, He turned over tables and drove out the money changers.

And then what was the other occasion we saw when Jesus got angry? In the synagogue. A man with a withered hand, and Jesus is looking with compassion on this man suffering the effects of the fall. Crippled hands, withered hands weren't in the original intention of God in the Garden of Eden. But the fall had brought these things on. And Jesus looks at that man with pity and compassion and love for this man. And remember, His love was one of action; not just "I feel your pain," but "I'm going to do something about it." And He looks at these Pharisees totally indifferent to this man in this crippled condition. Only concerned to guard their man-made traditions and their reputation in the eyes of men. And His anger toward them was born of His love for His neighbor. Because I love this man, and I want to relieve His hurt, I am angry with anything that is contrary to serving Him and meeting His needs. And so love for God and love for others was the driving force behind the anger of Jesus.

Holy anger, brothers, is the flip side of love. (Incomplete thought) If you love your wife, you're going to protect her. You're going to be jealous of her, right? You're not going to let anything happen to her. It will be over your dead body that anything happens to her, because you love her. And you will get angry with anything that threatens her at any level. Jesus loved God, so anything that threatened the honor and glory of God His Father made Him angry, because He loved His father. He loved His neighbor and was bent on doing them good. So anything that threatened them, that abused them or oppressed them, or hurt them made Him angry. So, the anger of Jesus sprang from love. Love for God and love for His neighbor.

Now, our anger also usually springs from love. But not love for God and not love for neighbor - but love for self. Right? Here's the difference. Our anger often springs from self-love. Jesus was jealous for the honor of God His Father and the good of others. We are jealous to protect some selfish interests. What makes us angry? What makes us angry is when some need

that we think we have is not being met. I need to be respected by my wife. And she's not respecting me, so I'm angry.

Beware of need theology, brethren. Need theology says God commands your wife to respect you, therefore you need to be respected. No. She needs to respect you. I say my need is not to be respected by my wife. My need is to love my wife. There's a subtle difference, but it's a huge difference. I focus on my duty, not my rights. I have a need. I have a need to be respected, and I'm angry because my need that I think I have is not being met. We get angry because our pride or ego is being stepped on. Somebody comes to bring us a correction that we need, but because of our pride, it wells up and we get angry and we get defensive and resentful. Why? Because we're trying to protect God's honor? The good of our neighbor? No. Our own pride and our own ego. We get angry because my opinion isn't being weighed as heavily as I think it should. We get angry because some right I think I have isn't being granted. I should be promoted at work. I have a right to be recognized for the service I'm doing for the Lord. I'm angry because I'm not being praised and recognized as I think I ought. We get angry when circumstances aren't falling out as we think they should. I get angry, I confess, when the driver in front of me isn't driving as quickly as he or she should because I need to get to my appointment. The problem is I didn't leave early enough. And I'm being driven and angry because of things not going my way. So often then, our anger does not spring from love for God and love for neighbor, but it springs from love of self. It is self-centered. Our anger so often has to do with what I want. I want what I want, when I want it. And if I don't get it, or if you don't give it to me, or if you stand in my way of getting it, I will be angry.

So brothers, what are we to do? How can my self-centered anger be transformed into a Christ-like, holy anger? Number one, we need to be converted to Christ. Our big need is that we live for ourselves. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, "The love of Christ constrains us, having concluded this, that One died for all, therefore all died. He died for all that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him Who died and rose again on their behalf." One of the major changes that happens when we put our faith in Jesus, is we are transformed from a predominantly self-centered person to a Christ-centered and thereby other-centered person. Now, that doesn't destroy all self-centeredness. We are mopping it up for the rest of our lives. But at that point, the backbone of a predominantly self-absorbed life is broken by the grace of God in conversion. You will never be freed from self-centered anger until you're freed from the root of your self-centered anger which is self-centeredness. And only the Gospel, only Jesus Christ can free you from that self-absorption and living a life of self-hyphenated words. Self-gratification and self-indulgence, and self-will and self-this and self-that. You need to be converted to Jesus. Don't hope to really have a holy anger until you first come to the Holy One Who can break the backbone of your native self-centeredness.

But then, secondly brothers, we need to be properly suspicious of the anger that arises from our hearts. So much of it is either purely selfish or laced with selfish concerns. To discover the selfishness of your heart, David Powlison suggests we ask ourselves several questions when we are angry. These are good diagnostic questions. If you can pause, step back, and look objectively, and ask these questions, it will keep you from selfish anger. What do I want in this moment? What do I believe I need and can't live without? What do I most fear? In this situation, what do I most love? What is the centerpiece of my hopes and dreams? You see, anger is not

caused by the situation. It's caused by what we believe, what we cherish, what rules me. Anger reveals the idols of our hearts. And so, when you're angry, ask is it because I have an idol of control? I need to control my circumstances and things are out of control. They're not in my control. I'm getting angry because I can't control it! And I'm trying to play God by controlling my circumstances and my environment.

Another idol is the fear of man, and the acceptance and praise of other people. Am I angry because I'm not getting stroked? I'm not getting praised. I'm not getting approved and accepted as I want. My idol of acceptance is not being fed, and so I'm angry. Is it an idol of pleasure and comfort and ease and health. These things are being threatened and so I'm angry because I've made an idol of comfort and ease. Do I have a lust for power over people? And that's being frustrated. I'm not being able to control people and their responses as I want to, and manipulate people, and so I'm angry. Have you ever seen a politician who lost an election and is angry and can't seem to be reconciled to the loss? Can't seem to let it go? Why not? Because something precious has been denied to them. And they won't let go of that idol.

And then, next men, we need to progressively die to selfish desires and wants. As we recognize more and more the self-centered idols - and our idols will vary. The thing that I would tend to idolize may not be the thing that you tend to idolize. Idols vary. Flesh comes in different varieties. You need to recognize what you tend to idolize. What are your God-substitutes? What are the things that you tend to love, trust, and obey rather than God? They vary from person to person, but we all have them. And we need to progressively die to selfish desires and wants. You can do that by tracing your anger back to its source in some idol. And as you discover that idol, "Oh God, I love this too much. I love that too much. I love the praise of men more than I love Your favor. I love to be in control more than I do to submit to Your control." As those idols are exposed, cry out to God in repentance and cry for grace to help to put to death that selfish motive that is at the root of your unrighteous anger.

But another step. You know the dynamic of sanctification is not just put off - it's not just: stop doing this. It's not: just say no. It's put off and put on the righteous alternative. So, we need to progressively put on the righteous anger of Jesus. Be angry, but do not sin. And let me say here that the solution to sinful anger is not: no anger. Somebody says, you know, nothing ever makes me angry. I would say, well, that's too bad. I'm sorry to hear that, because that's not like Jesus. Because Jesus was provoked to anger. I'm sorry to hear that nothing ever makes you angry. You know, they're boasting in their placidity and the fact that they're just unflappable and unmoved. No, the answer to sinful anger is not: no anger. It is righteous anger. As we confess and turn from our self-centered anger, we need to grow in our anger for the things that angered Jesus.

And again, men, no easy solution. You don't flip a switch. There's no formula. Immerse yourself in the Word of God. Here's where the prophets can help. We realize that the New Testament is the fulfillment, but don't neglect your Old Testament. Don't neglect the prophets. Boy, you hear the heart of God. You hear some of the holy anger of God, and the mercy of God coming through the prophets. We learn of God Who doesn't change. I talk to some of my Anabaptist friends who are these pacifists and I say, now, wait a minute, the God of the Old Testament is still the God of the New Testament. He's the same God.

Anyway, that's a whole tangent. But don't neglect the Old Testament. And as you learn more of the nature of God and the things that anger God and the things that anger Jesus, hopefully, you will come to be angry with the same things. The things that rob God of glory and honor ought to make you angry and me angry. False religion ought to make us angry. Paul walked down the streets of Athens and he saw all those idols. And the Greek word is the word from which we get paroxysms - he went into paroxysms. This tumult in his soul as he saw those idols. He was jealous for the honor of the one true God, and he proclaimed it to them. And as we see religions where they're worshiping cows and people are starving and they're worshiping cows or they're worshiping ancestors or they're representing God as only a cruel judge and God of law and not a God of mercy and compassion as Islam represents Him. It ought to make us angry. When we see the cults denying essential truths, perverting Christianity, it ought to make us angry.

And we see all the nonsense being promulgated in the name of Christianity today. We see the Joel Osteen's filling a stadium or the Rick Warren's and all of these heretical representations of Christianity, distorting the Gospel, distorting our God. It ought to make us angry, because it would make Jesus angry. I deal often these days, I'm privileged to counsel some abused young women in a ministry that we have in the National Guard. But these young women sometimes think, well, it was my fault what happened. And I try to get them to be angry. And when they are angry, I take it as a good step in the right direction, because progress is made when they are willing to recognize - I don't care if it was your father, your brother, your uncle - what happened to you was wicked and evil. It was wrong. And God is angry. And Jesus is angry. And as I hear about it, I'm angry. And you ought to be angry. Now, we don't stop there. We work to make sure it's not a vengeful, hateful anger. And we work toward forgiveness, but she's not going to get there unless she first says this is wrong, call it what it is - it's evil, and it makes me angry. Because it makes God angry.

The evils propagated in the world because of man's sin - oppression of the poor and helpless and the needy by ruthless, power-hungry, greedy men. Deceit, hypocrisy, racial prejudice, lies and deceptions of our politicians and the deceit in our media. It ought to make us disgusted and angry. You ought to be angry with the natural creation as Satan has utilized it to do damage in hurricanes and earthquakes and forest fires, etc. And we ought to be angry as Jesus was at the enemy of death and the heartache that it brings to us and to our loved ones. We have reason then to mourn over, repent of and come to Jesus for forgiveness for our unrighteous anger that is rooted in prideful selfishness. And to learn from Jesus to cultivate a holy and righteous anger.

And especially, men, if you are one who struggles with anger, I urge you to deal with it by the grace of God. If you don't, it will run the risk of destroying your marriage, ruining your children, polluting many around you, and perhaps even destroying your own soul. The good news is there is a Savior Who forgives. No matter what you've done, how intensely, how often you've done it, how long you've done it, there is a Savior Who can wipe the slate clean of all your past and future sins by His death upon the cross on behalf of sinners. And not only does He forgive, He cleanses and transforms. You can change. Jesus can change you.

Well, men, I know that's a sermon in itself, but I can't send you off angry. We have to end on a note of joy because we want to consider, I think more briefly, the joy of Jesus. I enjoy doing

this study on joy, because many people don't think of Jesus as joyful. And there are reasons for that. He's called the "Man of Sorrows." We see Him walking through, seeing the destruction, being grieved, being moved with compassion. We see Him angry. We don't see Him laughing out loud and yucking it up with His disciples. And as a result of that, some people have thought that the prevailing disposition of Jesus is not one of joy. It's one of somberness and it's one of melancholy. But nothing could be further from the truth. And in a few minutes, I want to try to prove to you that Jesus was the consummately joyful man.

Number one, wasn't He filled with the Spirit without measure? Well, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy... So Jesus had unbounded joy. We struggle to be being filled with the Spirit, right? And our love waxes and wanes. Our joy waxes and wanes. But not Jesus. He was constantly, perpetually filled with the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit was joy. So He was perpetually joyful just by clear inference. John 15:11, He says to His disciples, "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full." If He wasn't a consummately joyful man, He couldn't have filled His disciples with joy. No doubt they took that as a blessing. They asked Him to teach them to pray because they saw Him praying, and they said I want to pray like Jesus. No doubt they beheld His joy. And when He said I want My joy to be in you, they would have taken that as a great blessing because they saw Him as so perpetually joyful. (Incomplete thought)

His lifestyle points to joy. Luke 7 tells us, "For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine and you say He has a demon. The Son of Man has come eating and drinking and you say, 'behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.'" Jesus' lifestyle was contrary to John. John was given as that last Old Testament prophet, a lifestyle of austerity. He's dressed in camel's hair. He's eating, as one of my inner city people said, honey-coated cockroaches out in the wilderness. And it was very austere, somber. Not Jesus. He's eating. He's drinking. He's enjoying the amenities of life. Different lifestyle. And when He explains why, He gives this reason. He says, "The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast." And He talks about the fact that He's come to bring new wine. In other words, this isn't the time for fasting. This is the time for feasting. The Bridegroom is here! Jesus has come! He's come to bring in a new order. He's come to declare good news and set the captives free. The fullness of time has come. God has sent forth His Son. This is feasting time. This is not fasting and mourning time. So His very lifestyle - for which He was wrongly criticized by His enemies - was one of joy.

In John 4:32-34, He's dealing with the rich, young ruler. The disciples have gone into the city to get food; they come back. And they're concerned that He got His share from McDonald's or Wendy's or Chick-fil-a. Chick-fil-a. Sorry. And what does He say? My food is to do the will of Him Who sent Me. Food is a delight, isn't it? We've enjoyed wonderful food here. Men, you who prepared, thank you. Wonderful food. Food is not like cardboard to us. We enjoy food. And God has given us taste buds. He didn't have to have it that way, right? He could have put it here like we fuel up our gas tank. But He gave us taste buds, so we not only get nourished, but we enjoy it. My food, He said, "My delight is to do the will of Him Who sent Me." And what was that? I've come to seek and to save that which was lost.

In Luke 10:2-21, Jesus' disciples return from a missionary trip. And remember how they're rejoicing because the demons are subject to them? He corrects their perspective. "Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this - that the spirits are subject to you - but rejoice in..." what? That your names are written, recorded in heaven. And then it says, "At that very time, He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit." I think that's the only time where it says specifically that Jesus rejoiced, and He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit. And why did He rejoice? "I praise You, oh Father, Lord of Heaven and earth that You've hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. For so it was well pleasing in Your sight." He breaks out in praise to His Father. What is He delighting in? The Father's purposes to save those who are humbly dependent upon Him.

In Matthew 25, Jesus tells a parable about a man who goes on a journey and trusts talents to his servants. When he comes back, and the servants have done well with those talents, what does he say? Enter into the joy of your master. He's the Master. He's the One Who has gone away. He's going to bring them into His joy because He is joyful. One more, Hebrews 12:2. Some of you have quoted it to me this week. "Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross..." despising, thinking little of, the shame. And that joy, brothers, was not only the joy of being relieved from His earthly suffering; it was the joy of being rewarded with what God had promised Him. Isaiah 53 - He will see the travail of His soul and be satisfied. I didn't do this for nothing. I did this to be the mediator between My holy Father and sinful men. I did this to purchase a people. And the joy He anticipated would have included, as a result of My suffering, a multitude that no man can number will be brought with Me to enjoy My presence forever.

So, Jesus was a man of joy. What was the source of His joy? Brothers, focus on this. The source of Jesus' joy had everything to do with the salvation of sinners. His time was a time of feasting because He had come to set sinners free. He delighted to do the Father's will which was for Him to seek and save that which was lost. He told His followers to rejoice that their names were written in Heaven. He rejoiced in the Father's sovereign, good pleasure to reveal saving truth to those who like infants sought help from God. Oh, I didn't mention this, but He identifies with the lost sheep and the lost coin and the lost son of the parables of Luke 15, right? He was rejoicing in the salvation of sinners for which He was being accused. And He tells those parables. A man lost a sheep, and he rejoiced when he found it. A woman lost a coin. She rejoiced when she found it. A man had a lost son. And oh, did he celebrate, when that son returned. Guess who the celebrating woman, shepherd, and father is? It's Jesus! Who rejoices over the salvation of that which was lost. And He anticipates the joy of being glorified in Heaven. The joy of Jesus springs from His contemplation and anticipation of the solution to the fall which He came to bring.

Do you see why I'm saying that the emotions of Jesus have everything to do with biblical theology? His grief and compassion was due to His observation of the effects of the fall. What is, in light of what was. His anger was born of His recognition of the source of the fall: sin and Satan. His holy joy was born of His contemplation and anticipation of the solution to the fall that He came to bring. And so, not only was He grieving and compassionate; not only was He angry, but He was filled with joy, because as He came and as He witnessed the ravaged landscape and the effect of sin upon the hearts of men, He said it's not going to stay that way. I've come to

change it. It's going to be different. It's going to be made new. I've come to bring a new order. He came to bring it incrementally.

First, by initial salvation - justification, progressively by sanctification, but one day, there's going to be a new heavens and a new earth in which only righteousness dwells. Where there will no longer be any mourning and any tears and any grief and any death. The first things will have passed away. And so, He had joy, because He knew, what was and what is is not going to stay that way. I've come to change it. And so brothers, the only question that remains is what joy is expected of us? If that was the joy of Jesus - everything swirled around His Father's plan of salvation.

Did you catch that? Every time He had joy, it had something to do with salvation. What does that tell us? That if we are to grow in Christlike joy, our joy in the things of salvation needs to increase. There are many things to give us joy and pleasure. And we are not ascetics. We are to enjoy every good gift our Father gives us. Enjoy a happy marriage if God has given you one. Enjoy a loving wife. Enjoy your children, especially when they obey. Children, make your parents happy by obeying them. A fulfilling job brings us joy. A favorite hobby brings us joy. Some of you guys really get into shooting. Some of you love hunting. I love fishing. All kinds of hobbies we're given to enjoy. We can enjoy music, whether you play or just listen. We enjoy good friends. We enjoy good food. But brothers, increasingly, what should be our greatest joy? The things of Christ and His salvation. Regeneration. I don't know about you, but nothing brings me greater joy than to witness the new birth.

As I've heard some of your stories - out of darkness into light. And you know, if you're not a Calvinist - I use that word here. I don't use that in Lancaster County. But I use it here because it's shorthand - we know what we mean. Unless you believe in the sovereignty of God, you're going to rob yourself of joy. I meet with an elder from a church, and he said his church needs reform. He said 10 or 11 years ago, I gave my testimony, and it was a glorious testimony. The people kind of just sat there. If it's a matter of, well, good, I'm glad you made your decision for Jesus. That's nice. But if we understand that salvation, regeneration is a supernatural work of God; that the lightning of God's grace has struck down in this place. I want to take my shoes off. I'm on holy ground when I hear a testimony. God has visited you. The eternal God has chosen you. Jesus died for you, and the Spirit of God has come and regenerated you. That's a work of supernatural grace! Some of us were there. Many of us were there for the birth of our children. That's wonderful. But there's nothing like the joy of the new birth. The miracle of God's regenerating grace. That ought to rejoice our hearts supremely above everything else.

And then, to see our brothers and sisters grow. Remember what John says? I have no greater joy than this, than to hear of my children - his spiritual children - walking in the truth. And then the joy of anticipating eternal joy. No matter what heartaches and what sorrows we have in this life, they should never crush us. Because Paul has said all the suffering of this present time is not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us. How will it be that our joy more and more comes to be in the salvation of God? Again, as we immerse ourselves in the Scriptures. And you see this amazing plan of salvation begun with that little glimmer in Genesis 3:15. Continued as God chooses Abraham and makes out of him a great nation. And then, raises up prophets to announce this coming time.

Then you come to the new covenant, and you see the fulfillment of all of that in Jesus Christ. And you see all the dimensions of His salvation. Salvation accomplished on the cross. Salvation applied. And you study the various doctrines of redemption and propitiation and regeneration and justification and sanctification and adoption... and you understand more and more of the many facets of God's salvation. You marvel in it. And it becomes the most marvelous thing and the source of our greatest joy.

And so brothers, to grow into the joy of Jesus, we need to be in the Word and we need to be learning more about this great salvation, and we need to be praying to God, "Lord, help me. Help me to enjoy all of your good gifts, but help me supremely to enjoy the things connected with Your salvation." One parting word, and I just thought of it earlier. Where are you going to find that growing enjoyment of God's saving work? Not likely as you're off isolated as a Christian, but as you're gathered in a body in the church. Doesn't Psalm 11 say in God's presence is fullness of joy. Where is God specially present now? He's omnipresent. But where does God hang out, if I can say that reverently? The church. The local church is the household of God. That's the place where God wants to manifest His special presence among His people.

And it's in the church that you get the fullness of joy, because that's where the Word is being preached. That's where people are being converted. That's where people are growing in grace and encouraging one another in the grace of God as they anticipate the joy of heaven. So, if you want to maximize your Christlike joy, be part of the family of God in and through which the great work of salvation is taking place. Well, brothers, as I close, my hope is that we have been exposed this weekend to an area that is not given much attention. That was my reason for choosing this subject. I realize I'm talking to well taught men from well taught congregations. And I thought, well, what can I bring you that perhaps you haven't heard as much of, and not repeat things you've already learned.

And I trust that this has opened your eyes to a dimension of life we need to be concerned about. And I hope that as you read your Bibles now, you'll be looking more at the emotional life of Jesus. When I went to seminary, I worked to support myself at a post office delivering mail through my seminary years. And I'd never noticed mailboxes before. But after working at the post office, all of a sudden I'm noticing mail boxes all over the place. And having been exposed to this theme of the emotions of Jesus, hopefully the emotions of Jesus will jump out at you on the page more so than in the past. I'm going to close with a benediction from 1 Thessalonians 5:23, which calls us to whole-souled sanctification, which includes our emotions. So brothers, why don't we stand. Unless there's anything else, Michael, I'll dismiss us with the benediction. There may be some instructions. "And now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul (including your emotions) and body be preserved complete without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He Who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass." Amen.