

“The Anger of God”
Exodus 4:14
(Preached at Trinity, September 3, 2006)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we have seen, God was not ignorant of the affliction of His people. He knows and cares about His people.
Exodus 3:7 – “And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;”
 - A. He told Moses that He had come down to deliver them.
Exodus 3:8 – “And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians”
 - B. He told Moses that *he* would be the deliverer.
Exodus 3:10 – “Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.”
2. Moses, of course, was filled with many doubts and fears. Moses was overwhelmed at God’s call.
 - A. He had no confidence that any would listen to him – he was just a lowly shepherd
Exodus 4:1 – “And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.”
 - B. He had no confidence in his ability to stand before the people and speak
Exodus 4:10 – “And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I *am* slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.”
 - C. Moses’ response was, “Please send someone else.”
Exodus 4:13 – “And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of *him whom* thou wilt send.”
3. God doesn’t need mighty men. God is unimpressed by our vain claims to greatness. There are no great men. God works with weak helpless men – He alone receives all glory and honor. What God demands from us is obedience.
 - A. Moses’ primary problem was not a problem with his ability to speak or anything else – it was a problem with obedience
Moses just didn’t want to go. He wasn’t willing.
 - B. God demands a willingness to serve Him
God will overcome every weakness but is angered by our disobedience
Exodus 4:14 – “And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses,”
4. The word for anger is אַף (aph) - nostril, anger, wrath
It appears in the OT 276 times.
Before we move beyond the God’s call of Moses I want us to pause here to examine the anger of God. This is one of God’s attributes that is covered with much confusion. The lost man does not have an adequate view of God’s anger to his own peril. The believer doesn’t have a proper view of God’s anger to his own paralysis.

- I. God's fierce anger is kindled against all of lost humanity
Psalm 7:11-12 – "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry *with the wicked* every day. ¹² If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready."
- A. Few believe that God is angry with them
1. Most people think God is well pleased with them or at least indifferent but God is never indifferent about sin
 - a. The lost man doesn't believe he's done anything worthy of God's anger -- He is just living his life
 - b. Besides, most people in the U.S. think they are religious
Most believe that God isn't angry at religious people, or people with good intentions, or people trying to do the best they can.
 - c. Christianity in America often gives a false image of God
As long as you've joined the church or made a profession of faith you are OK with God.
Most church members are exactly like those outside the church
Morality is generally the same inside and outside the church
The divorce rate is the same inside and outside the church
The unwed pregnancy rate is generally the same
 2. Because of our depravity we have a keen ability to appease our conscience
We measure ourselves by one another. We aren't bad people.
 - a. We find it easy to soften sin
 - b. We hide from God's holy hatred of sin, His vengeance against sin.
We gossip, we lie, we cheat, we allow all manner of evil words to drip from our tongue, we harbor lust in our heart – and we pretend it is a small thing.
- B. God is holy
1. God's perfect holy nature demands a holy hatred of sin
 2. God is not indifferent towards sin – His holy anger burns against sin
Hebrews 12:29 – "For our God *is* a consuming fire."
 3. The law requires two things:
Either you must obey it perfectly without a single fault – which is impossible
Or, you must bear the penalties of the law
Galatians 3:10 – "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."
- C. If you are not a Christian God is angry at you
1. Remember, God is not indifferent towards sin. He detests all sin.
God is also not indifferent towards the sinner. The modern statement, "God hates the sin but loves the sinner" is a lie. The Bible does not teach that, the Bible teaches the very opposite.
Psalm 5:4-6 – "For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. ⁵ The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. ⁶ Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man."

2. If you are not following Christ God is angry with you
If you are not bearing the fruit of righteousness God is angry with you.
His holy vengeance is kindled against you.
- D. The anger of God upon the lost is the same thing as His wrath
1. The Bible uses the same word interchangeably
 2. The OT word used here is also translated wrath
Exodus 32:9-10 – “And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it *is* a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath (same word) may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.”
Psalm 2:9-12 – “Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. ¹⁰ Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. ¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. ¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.”
 3. The NT Greek word ὀργή can also be translated either way
Ephesians 4:31 – “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:”
Romans 1:18 – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness”
Ephesians 5:6 – “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.”
- II. God’s anger against the redeemed has been satisfied
- A. Jesus bore our sins and satisfied God’s wrath
1. He became a curse for us
 2. God poured His wrath out upon Jesus in our stead
We will never know the extent of our Lord’s suffering
 3. We will never know God’s wrath. We will never know His fiery anger.
1 Thessalonians 1:10 – “And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”
 4. Believers are free from the curse of the law – Jesus has brought freedom
Romans 8:1 – “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”
- B. Although the Christian shall never know God’s wrath he can come under His displeasure.
1. We might refer to it as God’s holy displeasure.
 2. Since all of God’s thoughts toward us are in love, His anger towards us can be described as love displeased, or love offended

3. In this passage we find that Moses angered God
 - a. This doesn't mean Moses kindled God's wrath against him
 - b. The lost man is poised for God's destruction. He is subject to total ruin. He is cursed of God and under His condemnation
 - c. God's anger toward the redeemed must be seen in love – He chides them, rebukes them, corrects them, withdraws from them – but all in love. Rather than penal, they are medicinal.
 4. The Christian has been adopted as God's own child
 - a. God loves us with an everlasting love – there is nothing we can do that will change that
 - b. God is working all things for his good
 - c. Every action of God towards the elect is motivated by love
Samuel Bolton: "God has thoughts of love in all He does to His people. The ground, the manner, the end in all His dealings with them is love, that He may do them good and make them partakers of His holiness and hereafter make them partakers of His glory."
- C. Pardon for sin does not mean we do not come under God's chastisement
1. God will not have His beloved child wallowing in sin or following after that which might lead to his ruin.
 - a. He loves us too much for that
 - b. Just as we chasten our own children – We are not dealing with them as enemies but as our beloved children. We want the very best for them.
 2. God often uses chastisement to awaken our consciences and set our sins before us. He uses adversity to humble us and to know our weakness.
 3. God is teaching us to despise our sin more and more.
The Christian weeps over God's displeasure
- D. God's chastisements may be severe, but they are not His wrath
1. We are chastened severely, yet we are dealt with entirely differently from the world. The world is condemned – we are chastened so that we will not be condemned
1 Corinthians 11:32 – "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."
 2. Hear David's prayer as he suffered under God's chastisement
Psalms 38:1-6 – "O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. ² For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. ³ *There is* no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither *is there any* rest in my bones because of my sin. ⁴ For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. ⁵ My wounds stink *and* are corrupt because of my foolishness. ⁶ I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.
 - a. David knew the chastening arrows of God
 - b. But David also knew the overwhelming love of God, the comfort of God, the compassion of God
Psalms 17:8 – "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,"

3. The 23rd Psalm is a Psalm of the Shepherd's provision
 "The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. ³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."
 - a. The Shepherd's rod is used as a tool to keep the sheep from straying
 - b. Matthew Henry: "The best saints are sensible of their proneness to *go astray like lost sheep* (Ps. 119:176); they miss their way, and turn aside into by-paths; but when God shows them their error, gives them repentance, and brings them back to their duty again, he restores the soul; and, if he did not do so, they would wander endlessly and be undone."
4. Moses would later understand clearly the nature of God's overflowing love even in the midst of His displeasure
Exodus 34:6-8 – "And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, ⁷ Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*. ⁸ And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped."
 "goodness" - רַחֻּם - a word to describe God's electing love

Conclusion:

1. If you don't know Christ you know nothing of His love. You are under the wrath and curse of God. God is angry with you. He will forgive you if you forsake your sins and turn to Christ.
2. If you are a Christian you are one of His beloved. There is no spot or stain upon you. God will not allow you to become rebellious or self-willed. He will continue to humble you, breaking you and conforming you more and more to the image of Christ.