Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not "book" ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: **May 2, 2010**

Title: **"The Resurrection and Anger"**

Text: Ephesians 4:31, 32; James 1:19-25

Author: Patrick J. Griffiths ©2010

Understanding A Gospel-Driven Christian Life

Date: May 2, 2010
Title: "The Resurrection and Anger"
Text: Ephesians 4:31, 32; James 1:19-25
Theme: Only God's anger is without sin. You and I are never told to be angry nor can we justify personal expressions of anger.

Introduction:

- "A man is about as big as the things that make him angry" - Winston Churchill
- "Speak when you are angry – and you'll make the best speech you'll ever regret." - Dr. Laurence J. Peter
- "Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned." - Buddha

In Christ we now live in newness of life. His victory is our victory. In order to embrace our victory and speak to our failure we must recognize that our need is by His design. He created us with need and dependency. Yet our sin is because we seek the shadow rather than the one who casts the shadow. Our personal anger is a result of misaligned affections. We either assume a position that is not ours to fill or we think too highly of ourselves. This study seeks to unfold the issue of anger and how His resurrection defeats our anger.

We are always attempting to justify our own anger. We call it by various names.

- Righteous indignation
- Personal affront
- Self-vindication
- Loss of control; out of control
- Feelings of powerlessness
- Desire to control
- Rage
- Inability to cope

Yet the question remains?

1. How do we become "peace makers" (Matt. 5:9; Ps. 37:37) and not "war mongers" (Prov. 6:12-19)?
2. How do we avoid strife and quarrel (Prov. 20:3)?
3. Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, but any fool will quarrel.

The Storyline:

- All of our issues/problems are means God uses to show us who we are and who He is.
- All of our "weight and sin" are designed to push, pull and compel us toward God.
- Anger is one of our "issues".
- He alone and only is the one who meets our missteps, speaks to our sin, and corrects our corruption.
- **Seldom** does our anger show its **REAL FACE**.

- Only the triune God can be "angry" without sin (Heb. 4:15 "Yet without sin").
- Old Testament narratives cannot become normative as to justifying behavior.
    - Jacob toward Rachel (Gen. 30:2)
    - Moses toward Pharaoh (Exod. 11:8)
    - Moses toward disobedient People (Exod. 16:20; 32:19; Num. 16:15
- The Psalms often capture human emotion, but such expressions do not justify ours (Ps. 139:21, 22)
    - "Do I not hate those who hate You, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?" (Ps. 139:21).
    - "I hate them with the utmost hatred; they have become my enemies" (Ps. 139:22).

The Problem:

"If in Gk. Philosophy **orge** was at first a neutral or even positive quantity, people came increasingly to reject this idea. Maong the Stoics **orge** was a reprehensible passion, which befitted neither rational human beings nor gods."[1]

Questions:

1. "When does anger become sin?"
2. Why am I angry?
3. How do I speak to my anger?
4. How am I to respond to anger when it is directed at me?
5. What are the things we get angry about?
    a. Whether we are appreciated or loved
    b. Control of our lives
    c. Control of our money
    d. The "other" driver
    e. Our spouses
    f. Our kids
    g. Our boss
    h. Other peoples manners
    i. Things in our past/mistakes
    j. Bad health
    k. Unexpected changes to my plans
6. What do all of these things have in common?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know He is just and the execution of His judgment is perfect.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose to submit to Him in the correcting of injustice.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of submitting to Him and letting go of personal or corporal injury.

Outline:

I. Defining Anger

A. The Biblical words

- **Hebrew** = "Flaring of nostrils"
  - (strongly emotional)
- **Greek** = "Reaching froth, violent passion"
  - (strongly emotional)
- God is described as having anger
  - "God is a righteous judge and a God who has **indignation** every day" (Ps. 7:11).
    - Hebrew = "to foam at the mouth, i.e. to be enraged."

"It is a necessary part of moral character to abhor evil as well as to love good. God is actively and strongly opposed to all forms of evil; and the biblical writers express this opposition, in part at least, by speaking of the wrath of God."[2]

"People may, however, react to sin in the way that God does – in holiness and without desire for personal vengeance (Rom. 12:19-21)."[3]

It is inappropriate to use God's response of anger and wrath as justification for our response of anger and wrath. His is always without sin; ours is not.

Jesus as God had anger toward injustice and unrighteousness, but His anger is always without sin. The same cannot be said of our expressions of anger.

B. A Proposed Definition

- Anger is a response. Something or someone is perceived to be violated and an emotional response marked by "emotional heat" is **expressed**.
- There is a seething.
- It is a hostility that often seeks reprisal (Gen. 4:5, 6)

"Strong emotional reaction of displeasure, often leading to plans for revenge or punishment."[4]

C. Anger's Problem

- It affects the person who is angry
- It **will destroy** relationships:
  - husband/ wife
  - Parent / child
  - Friendships
- If you afraid of someone's "outbursts", chances are they have an "issue" with anger.
- Yet anger is widely excused and accepted.

Consider this . . .
"Anger is a HEALTHY EMOTION. **It is a WARNING SIGNAL that something is wrong**. Anger is very much like a loyal friend that comes by to visit every once in a while. Anger ALERTS US to potential physical or psychological trauma. It PROVIDES US WITH THE ENERGY TO RESIST EMOTIONAL OR PHYSICAL THREATS. It aids in our AWARENESS OF OUR EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES and HELPS US SET PROTECTIVE LIMITS."[5]

- Are they right? The Bible speaks differently as to anger's moral value.

LET US CONSIDER THE SCRIPTIRE . . .

II. The New Testament word for Anger (**orge**) and (**thumos**)

"The NT employed *thymos* to describe emotionally intense wrath and *orge* as the consequence of a moral judgment, but in the LXX the two terms were interchangeable."[6]

A. Paul's usage

- "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger (**parorgizo**), but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the lord" (Eph. 6:4).
  - "To come alongside of and provoke to anger"
  - It is possible to be the means whereby others become angry and this can be sin.

1. **God is wrathful toward the unbelieving**

– **"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against** all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18).

– "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath" (Rom. 2:8; see also Romans 2:5; 3:5)

– "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and **were by nature the children of wrath**, even as others" (Eph. 2:3).

– "Let no man deceive you with vain words: **for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience**. (Eph. 5:6; see also Col. 3:6)

Observation: we will see how John, like Paul, sees God as having wrath toward the unbelieving (Ps. 7:11; see also Mark 3:5; John 2:13-18). God in wrath never provides for us a platform to justify our wrath. His wrath is sourced in perfect justice and offense. Our wrath is sourced in pettiness and fallibility.

"If there is no wrath there is no salvation. If God does not take action against sinners, then sinners are in no danger and do not need salvation. Only when we take seriously the wrath of God against sinners do we put real meaning into the salvation that Christ wrought on Calvary."[7]

2. **The believing are saved from His wrath**

– "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:9).

– "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. (1 Thess. 1:10; see also 1 Thess. 5:9)

4. **Because God is wrathful toward the unbelieving His people are to put away wrath**

• **"Never take your own revenge**, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written" (Rom. 12:19).

• "Let all bitterness, and **wrath**, and **anger**, and clamour, and evil speaking, **be put away from you**, with all malice" (Eph. 4:31; see also Col. 3:8; 1 Tim. 2:8)

Question:

- What are the things we get angry about?
  - Whether we are appreciated or loved
  - Control of our lives
  - Control of our money
  - The "other" driver
  - Our spouses
  - Our kids
  - Our boss
  - Other peoples manners
  - Things in our past/mistakes
  - Bad health
  - Unexpected changes to my plans
- What do all of these things have in common?

B. John's usage

• "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but **the wrath of God abideth on him**" (John 3:36).

• "And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from **the wrath of the Lamb**" (Rev. 6:16).

- "For **the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand**?" (Rev. 6:17).

- "And the nations were angry, and **thy wrath is come**, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and **shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth**" (Rev. 11:18).

- "**The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God**, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (Rev. 14:10).

- "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, **to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath** (Rev. 16:19).

- "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and **he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God**" (Rev. 19:15).

Conclusion – John **ALWAYS** assigns **Orge/Anger** to God; **NEVER** to us. **The apostle of God's love** for the world in His Son becoming the propitiating sacrifice for sin also spoke of **God's wrath** (**Orge**) against the sin and sinner through His Son.

Observations:
- God's Wrath/Anger is **NEVER SINFUL**.
- Our Wrath/Anger is almost always sinful. Always work from this premise. Our anger is sin.

"Do not say, "I will repay evil"; Wait for the LORD, and He will save you" (Prov. 20:2).

Listen to the following two statements:

> "The Bible usually portrays human anger as sinful."[8]
>
> "In the NT anger is usually condemned (Gal. 5:19-21; Col. 3:8)."[9]

I would argue that anger is always condemned and sinful when exhibited by the individual. You and I might act because of anger, but our immediate response must be to put it off. To harbor anger in our hearts is to cultivate a "murderous" spirit/attitude toward something or someone.

- The government has divine right to execute wrath against the evil doer (Prov. 14:35; 20:2).
- **Fallibility mars finite expressions** of wrath/anger.
- The individual is to put away all expressions of wrath/anger.

III. Facing anger

A. Anger is . . . dishonorable, ignorant, foolish

- "Do not be eager in your heart to be angry, For **anger resides in the bosom of fools**" (Eccl. 7:9).

- **"A fool's anger is known at once**, But a prudent man conceals dishonor" (Prov. 12:16).

- **"He who is slow to anger has great understanding**, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly" (Prov. 14:29).

B. Human anger is the result of flesh and is never good

- 7 "Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. 8 **Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing**. 9 For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land" (Ps. 37:7-9).

- **"A gentle answer turns away wrath**, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Prov. 15:1).
- **"A hot-tempered man stirs up strife**, but the slow to anger calms a dispute" (Prov. 15:18).

C. Anger is the **OPPOSITE** of love.

Notice how anger is a work of the flesh and **NOT** a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:20, 23).

- **"He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty**, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city" (Prov. 16:32).

- **"A man of great anger will bear the penalty**, For if you rescue him, you will only have to do it again" (Prov. 19:19).

D. Human anger is the result of a perceived offense to ourselves or others. We cry out for vindication and we are angry toward those whom we perceive have transgressed.

- **"A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, And it is his glory to overlook a transgression**" (Prov. 19:11).

E. Anger characterizes the flesh, the unbelieving. We must distance ourselves from this "ugly" work.

- **"Do not associate** with a man given to anger; **Or go with** a hot-tempered man" (Prov. 22:24).

Those who lead in the church cannot be marked by anger (Titus 1:7).

F. Anger and strife are never wise. They must **ALWAYS** be put off.

- "Scorners set a city aflame, **But wise men turn away anger**" (Prov. 29:8).

- "For the churning of milk produces butter, And pressing the nose brings forth blood; **So the churning of anger produces strife**" (Prov. 30:33).

G. Anger sits on the same plane as murder (Matt. 5:21,22)

- 21 "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell" (Matt. 5:21, 22).

H. Anger deceives the heart

"At the same time, people may believe that their anger is warranted when it is not; such anger is usually rooted in a desire to justify oneself (Jonah 4; Matt. 21:15, 16)."[10]

"While it is true that human anger often involves passion and loss of temper, such emotions are out of place in a consideration of the anger of God. When we speak of God's wrath we must supply the qualification 'without the imperfections we see in human anger at its best'. In fact we must supply that qualification when we ascribe any quality to God, even love."[11]

IV. Handling anger biblically

A. **Remember** *THE STORY*

- That person or event that makes you "angry" is part of **God's One Story**.
  - Joseph (Gen. 50:19, 20)
  - Job (Job 1:20-22)
  - Paul (Acts 16:22-25)

B. Give thanks **FOR** and **IN** all things

– 16 "Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 5:16-18).

– "always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father" (Eph. 5:20).

C. Consider it **ALL JOY**

– 2 "**Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials**, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4).

D. **NEVER** avenge yourself

– "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God" (Rom. 12:19).

E. **Pray for** and **love** . . .

– 44 "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matt. 5:44, 45).

F. **Respond with** the **fruit of the Spirit**

– "put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love" (Col. 3:12-17).

Observations:

- Our anger is the **OPPOSITE** of love.
- Lacking **Self-Control** does not necessarily mean you are angry.
- Angry people **ARE** selfish people.
- Our anger cannot seek vengeance apart from God or government.
- We must always let go of anger expressed.

Bottom Line – TRUST GOD!

"Never take your own revenge, beloved, **but leave room for the wrath of God**, for it is written" (Rom. 12:19).

V. What About . . .

A. Ephesians 4:31, 32?

- Context, Context, Context . . . The principle is put off (v. 22), be renewed (v. 23) and put on (v. 24). The application of this principle is laid out for us in verses 25-32.

Put Off	Put On	Be Renewed
Falsehood (V. 25)	Speak The Truth	Member One Of Another
Anger (V. 26)	**Deal With It**	**No Opportunity To The Devil**
Stealing (V. 28)	Work	Share With One Another
Corrupting Talk (V. 29)	Build Up	You Are Sealed (V. 30)
Bitterness, Wrath, Anger, Clamor, Slander, All Malice (V. 31)	Be Kind, Tenderhearted, Forgiving (V. 32)	As God In Christ Forgave You

- **Permissive imperative, not a command to be angry**. Prohibition against sinning as the peril in anger. Quotation from Ps 4:4. Danger in settled mood of anger. **Parorgismos** (provocation), from **parorgizô**, to exasperate to anger, occurs only in LXX and here in N.T. See Further Ephesians 4:6. [12]

- He teaches us how to bridle our anger in such a way that, even though our anger is fierce, yet it does not break out, and that it is without delay quenched before we sleep. And this is so that Satan may not take occasion to give us evil counsel through the wicked counselor, and destroy us.[13]

- We can never suppose that the apostle delivers this as a **precept**, if we take the words as they stand in our version. Perhaps the sense is, **Take heed that ye be not angry, lest ye sin**; for it would be very difficult, even for an apostle himself, to be angry and not sin. **If we consider anger as implying displeasure simply, then there are a multitude of cases** in which a man may be innocently, yea, laudably angry; for he should be displeased with every thing which is not for the glory of God, and the good of mankind. **But, in any other sense, I do not see how the words can be safely taken**.[14]

Perhaps . . .

- Although I do not believe this provides justification for anger, it is possible to be angry over the same things that angers God. How do we do this without sin?
- Deal with it immediately. When left unaddressed, then you will sin. The devil will find opportunity to make you bitter and self-vindicating.

B. The kings, priests and judges of Israel -- They often appeared ANGRY over the sins of the nation.

- Moses (Exod. 16:20; 32:1-20).
- David (2 Sam.13:21).
- Paul (Gal.)
- Nehemiah (Neh. 5:6)

Observations:

- Notice they were primary mediators for God over larger groups of people. They were not "us". Remember, the "government" has divine right to execute wrath.
- I would be very careful in the justification of personal anger. If and when I am angry, I am to put it off. Whether anger is right or wrong the outcome is always destructive to someone or something.

Shepherding the Sheep: (What's the NEXT STEP?)

1. Why am I angry?
2. How do I speak to my anger?
3. How am I to respond to anger when it is directed at me?
4. Why do I think so highly of myself as to be offended?
5. Who do I need to forgive? Forgiveness does not always demand reconciliation. God does not have to forgive anyone; we need to forgive everyone.

A FINAL WORD

19 "This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and **slow to anger**; 20 **for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God**. 21 **Therefore**, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, . . ." (James 1:19-21).

---

[1] *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol. 1:108.
[2] Leon. L. Morris, "Wrath of God," in *New Dictionary of Theology*, 732.
[3] Gary Steven Shogren, "Anger," in *Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 24.
[4] Gary Steven Shogren, "Anger," in *Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 23.
[5] http://www.enotalone.com/article/4219.html
[6] R.K. Harrison, "Anger," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 48.
[7] Leon. L. Morris, "Wrath of God," in *New Dictionary of Theology*, 732.
[8] Gary Steven Shogren, "Anger," in *Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 24.
[9] R.K. Harrison, "Anger," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 48.
[10] Gary Steven Shogren, "Anger," in *Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 24.
[11] Leon. L. Morris, "Wrath of God," in *New Dictionary of Theology*, 732.
[12] A.T. Robertson *Word Pictures*
[13] 1599 Geneva Bible
[14] *Adam Clarke's Commentary*