

Sermon Series: “Facing Life’s Problems with God’s Hope”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—
1/30/2005

Title: “Handling Anger”

Text: Ephesians 4: 26-27, 31-32

Intro.: *Ills. Frustrated Traveler Vents His Anger*

Theme: Knowing that we always walk around with a loaded, lethal weapon called anger, we seek out Jesus to control it within our hearts so that we become instruments of grace rather than instruments of destruction.

Things that make us angry

- Passion for God’s honor
 - **Illus.: Jesus Cleansing the Temple (John 2)** “*Zeal for your house consumes me.*” John 2: 17
 - There are times when we must be angry enough against wickedness to take a stand but without sinning (vs. 26)
- Others’ sins
 - Many times we are aggressively sinned against by others and become “enraged” and “bitter” over someone else’s sin
 - Not letting another’s sin cause me to sin
 - Paul gives us the relieve valve for letting off the pressure caused by another (vs. 26b)
 - “*Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.*” Matthew 5: 23-24
- Our sinful selfishness
 - This is where sin comes into play in our anger
 - Justifying ugly selfishness to get our way or to get revenge
 - *For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.*” James 1: 20
 - Jesus elevates anger to the level of murder
 - “*You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' 'But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court. Matt 5: 21*
 - **Ills.: Story of Cain and Abel (Gen 4)**
 - *Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 1 John 3: 15-16*
- The Devil
 - Don’t live with the lion in your life(vs. 27)
 - **Ills.: Living with the Tiger**
 - *Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. 1 Peter 5: 8-9*
 - The danger of this kind of anger is not only might we lose the argument and relationship but also our soul (30)
 - Recognizing the characteristics of a Hell inflame anger (vs. 31)
 - Bitterness (“prickly” – *always have an edge/bite*)
 - Short fuse (*hot temper* – “*thumos*”) (Ills.: Mt. St. Helens bubbling under the surface of the lava dome)
 - Deep infection of sin (*rage*)
 - Loud arguing (*clamor*) – Ills.: “getting louder doesn’t help win the argument but it may get you a black eye”
 - Language unbecoming a child of God (*blaspheme*)
 - Getting even (*malicious retaliation*) — Ills.: “I don’t get mad I get even.”
- **Christ-like substitutes for the energy wasted on anger** (Print and read vs. 32)
- Turning the control of your life over to Jesus before you try to control your anger

- *For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Romans 8:13*
- Being “generous” with what you give as much as with what you expect to receive
 - *Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "* Acts 20:35
- Step inside of the other person’s life (*tender-hearted – splangna*) before you launch into wrath — Jesus did
 - **Print and read Hebrews 2: 14, 17,18**
- Forgive and let go just as you have been forgiven and release in and through Jesus

Frustrated Traveler Vents His Anger

Most of us could identify with Neil Melly's frustration. Air travel often involves delays, denials, and desperate circumstances. Melly was in Los Angeles International Airport, attempting to get to Australia. Problems developed when Melly was unable to purchase a ticket because he lacked a valid credit card. Most of us might slink away in embarrassment. A flight from LAX to the other side of the world is not small change, and without a credit card, most of us would just go home. Neil Melly isn't most of us. He ignored that little humiliation and went on to shatter the shame barrier. Hours later, Melly angrily stripped off all his clothes and returned to make a dash for the airport runway. Baggage handlers watched as Melly scaled a fence topped with three strands of barbed wire, fearlessly and without injury. Then Neil sprinted across the tarmac toward a jumbo jet and crawled inside the wheel well. Most of us might have simply been trying to hide, but Neil Melly picked a plane that was on the move—an Australian plane. The dangers were great. As airport spokeswoman Nancy Castles pointed out, "He could have been sucked up by an engine," or crushed when the landing gear was retracted. "And if not he very likely would have frozen to death during the 15 1/2 hour flight at 30,000 feet while wearing no clothes." Pilots stopped the plane, and Melly was coaxed from his hiding place and arrested. The official charge was trespassing. Apparently there's no law against poor problem solving, anger mismanagement, or being the butt of jokes. Most of us lose our cool from time to time. We might not pull a "Melly" and streak our way into the news. Instead, we may yell or point fingers or throw something or smolder with fury. It doesn't match getting naked and climbing barbed wire, but it's just about as useful. **Citation: John Beukema, Western Springs, Illinois; source: "Naked Man Climbs Onto Moving Jet," *Yahoo.com* (11-04-04)**

Living with a Tiger

The *New York Times* reported: His obsession began innocently enough, with the puppies and broken-winged birds many little boys beg to bring home. Over the years, Antoine Yates' taste in animals grew ever more exotic, neighbors said, and his collection came to include reptiles, a monkey or two, and a hyena. But when Yates' most exotic pet—a tiger he named Ming—grew to more than 400 pounds and let loose a fearsome roar, the trouble began. Terrified by the beast, his mother, Martha, packed up and moved to a suburb of Philadelphia earlier this year, neighbors said. Yates, increasingly hard pressed to control the tiger, apparently decamped too, to a nearby apartment. He continued to feed the tiger by throwing raw chicken through a door opened just enough to keep a paw the size of a plate from swiping through, neighbors said. On Saturday, police arrived, after being alerted by phone tips. They removed the tiger, and an alligator, after a sharpshooter shot them with tranquilizer darts. Police now are trying to determine where Yates, 31, got a tiger and how he managed to raise it in a public housing project for years. The story became even more poignant a couple days later. After a court hearing Yates was released without bail. Limping and with his arm in a sling, both injuries caused by the tiger, Yates continued to profess his love for Ming. Outside the courtroom Yates commented to the reporters, "I never feared him at all. He was like my brother. He was my best friend. He's my only friend, really." **Citation: "A Tiger Grows in Harlem," *New York Times* (10-6-03) and "Tiger Guy Charged, Tells of Devotion" *New York Times* (10-8-03); reported in the *Chicago Tribune***

Ephesians 4: 26-32

²⁶Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ And do not give the devil a foothold....

²⁹Let no rotting words proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for building others up according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. ³⁰Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day you will be set free from the world of sin. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, hot tempers, wrath, loud quarreling, and slander, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Hebrews 2:14-18

Since all of these sons and daughters have flesh and blood, Jesus took on flesh and blood to be like them. Therefore, he had to become like his brothers and sisters so that he could be merciful. He became like them so that he could serve as a faithful chief priest in God's presence and make peace with God for their sins. Because Jesus experienced temptation when he suffered, he is able to help others when they are tempted.