

"Dealing with Anger"

Numbers 20

Introduction: Tonight, as we return to our study of Moses, we are going to see that Moses was human and he too struggled with weaknesses in his life. Moses was the greatest leader Israel ever had. He was a man who sought after God's will. He was a man of sacrifice and he made the choice to walk away from comfort and wealth to serve the Lord. The writer of Hebrews gives us insight into the heart of Moses.

Hebrews 11:24-29

²⁴ *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;*

²⁵ *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;*

²⁶ *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.*

²⁷ *By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.*

²⁸ *Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.*

²⁹ *By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.*

Moses chose eternal riches over worldly riches and was willing to suffer affliction to attain the riches of God.

But at the same time, we must realize that Moses was human and as a man he had weaknesses and one of his weaknesses was his temper. Moses struggled to control his anger and for the reason the cost was very high as we shall see tonight.

I. The Stages of Anger

Psychologists tell us that there are five stages of anger.

1. Mild Irritation

This stage is marked by some unpleasant disturbance. It can be the children fighting. It can be a slow line at the check out in the grocery store. Whatever the circumstance there is an irritation that begins to build.

2. Indignation

This is a reaction to something that is unfair or unreasonable. This stage can be manifest by violence of some sort. This would be seen at a sporting event when someone goes after a referee for a call which he has made. They may also choose to throw something at the man as this stage manifests itself with some sort of violence. This could also be seen in a road rage incident when one man punches another man.

3. Wrath

This stage never goes without being expressed. When anger reaches this level, the person has a strong desire to fight back in some way. They will seek to avenge the wrong that has been done.

4. Fury

When this stage is reached there is going to be violence. This stage will often result in a loss of control even possibly a loss of sanity. This stage is often seen in a domestic situation in which the end result is many times the murder of one those involved.

5. Rage

This stage is the most intense level of anger. When a person reaches this stage, they can do things without even being aware of what they are doing. Experts tell us that a person in this stage can commit murder without even realizing they did it. A person who allows anger to get to rage will often blackout during their acts of violence.

As we look at the life of Moses, we see that his problem with anger can be seen several times in his life. There is no doubt that Moses knew he had a problem but it was never dealt with and so it continued to be manifest in his life until the cost was irreversible. Let us notice the different times that Moses anger was manifest.

II. Anger that Resulted in Murder.

Notice Exodus 2:10-12

When Moses was about 40 years old, he went out of the palace to visit the Hebrews and as he did, he seen an Egyptian smiting one of his brethren and when he believed no one was watching he killed the Egyptian. Let us notice what is written in the book of Acts concerning this same event.

Acts 7:20-24

²⁰ *In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:*

²¹ *And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.*

²² *And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.*

²³ *And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.*

²⁴ *And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:*

There are several points we need to consider here.

- a. Moses sought vengeance against the Egyptian who was smiting the Hebrew. This tells us that Moses was in the wrath or fury stage. This lets us know that Moses' anger was something that should have been addressed long before this. We can be sure that this was not the first time his temper was manifest. No person lives to be 40 years old and then out of the clear blue they get angry and kill someone. This was an ongoing problem.
- b. Moses was a well-educated man. This tells us that anger is not just a problem for the uneducated or unlearned. It is a sin problem and advanced education will not give the person the ability to restrain their anger.

Application:

I want to pause here for a moment and say that if you struggle with anger please do not brush it off as nothing. Some people will say, "It is who I am. I inherited it from my father or mother. It is just part of the family line."

Let me remind you that if you are saved then you are a new person. You are not who you were before, and the old practices should be in the past.

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Romans 6:12-14

¹² *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

¹³ *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

¹⁴ *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

Jesus died to set us free from the power of sin and in this case, He died to set us free from uncontrolled anger. If you struggle with anger, then you need to deal with it. If not, it will eventually cost you far more than you desire to pay as we shall see.

III. Anger that was Unnecessary

When Moses returned to Egypt after meeting God at the burning bush, he had roughly nine encounters with Pharaoh before the tenth and final meeting. It was at the tenth meeting that we read of another account of his anger.

Notice Exodus 11:4-8

At the end of verse 8 we see that Moses went out in a "GREAT ANGER". Moses was getting very frustrated with Pharaoh. He had warned him over and over and still Pharaoh refused to submit and so Moses left his presence in great anger. The meaning of "GREAT ANGER" means he went out in "FURY". Moses was boiling because of Pharaoh's refusal to submit. The words "GREAT ANGER" are the strongest words there are in the Hebrew to express this anger. Moses was "BOILING"!

But he should not have been angry. For God had foretold him how Pharaoh would respond.

Exodus 4:21

²¹ *And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but **I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.***

God had told Moses five times at least that Pharaoh's heart would be hardened. So, Moses knew this was going to happen. So then, why was he so angry?

Moses was not content to just deliver the message, but he longed to see results. He should have been content to just speak the Truth and the results with the Lord.

Application:

I just want to briefly remind you that when we have an opportunity to speak the Truth into someone's life, we need to remember two things:

1. We cannot force anyone to accept the Truth. They must make the choice.
2. It is God and only God that can change a heart and turn a life around.

Here are some wonderful verses to hold to as we speak the Truth into the lives of loved ones or friends.

Isaiah 55:10-11

¹⁰ For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

¹¹ So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

IV. Anger that was Destructive

Moses' destructive anger showed up at Mount Sinai. While Moses was in the mountain receiving the Tablets of the Law, the people grew weary of waiting. They convinced Aaron to make a golden calf for them to worship. At the pinnacle of this sin Moses came down the mountain with the stone Tablets.

Exodus 32:15-16

¹⁵ And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written.

¹⁶ And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.

Moses should have been angry at what was happening for that would have been righteous anger. But his anger was out of control.

Exodus 32:17-20

¹⁷ And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp.

18 And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear.

19 And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

20 And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.

Moses broke the Tablets that God Himself had made and wrote on with His finger and he ground the golden calf to powder and made the people drink it

Application:

I have seen people exercise this type of anger many times. They lose their temper, and they start breaking things up. I knew of a man who was working on his car and could not get a certain part to connect. He became so frustrated that he laid on his back on the front seat and kicked the windows out. He then went in his house, retrieved his hunting rifle, and shot through the radiator into the motor several times. Then he called the local junk yard to come tow the car away.

There have been people who slammed doors and broke them, there have been others who have broken furniture, and others who have demolished dishes. I knew a man who carried his TV outside and shot it with a shotgun all because of a fight which he and his wife had.

None of this compares with what Moses did by breaking the Stone Tablets, however. This was the very first writing of God's Word.

Moses has a problem, and it is not yet surrendered.

V. Anger that is Rebellious

Notice Numbers 20:1-11

Moses was to only speak to the Rock. The Rock was Christ, and it was struck once before, and that first time pictured His death ONCE For all. When Moses struck the Rock, he ruined an Old Testament type of Jesus Christ.

VI. The Fruit of Anger

Notice Numbers 20:12

God announces to Moses that because of his uncontrolled anger he would not bring Israel into Canaan. Joshua would be the man who would lead them in after the death of Moses.

Moses would later pray and ask God to allow him to lead Israel into Canaan. Let us notice the conversation.

Deuteronomy 3:23-28

²³ And I besought the LORD at that time, saying,

²⁴ O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?

²⁵ I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.

²⁶ But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.

²⁷ Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan.

²⁸ But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.

Conclusion:

There is so much we could consider but for the sake of time let me just point out one main point.

Canaan was a picture of the rest which God has for His people today. Moses would not enter the rest because of his uncontrolled anger. The same thing is true today for those who do not surrender the anger over to the Lord. It will not keep you from heaven, but it will certainly keep you from enjoying the rest which God has for each of His children today. This is the cost of uncontrolled anger.

James 1:19

¹⁹ Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

²⁰ For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

