**Learning from Anger**

**Day of Encouragement for Pastors and Wives**

St. John’s Wheaton, Friday 14 September, 2018

1. **You and Your Anger**
* What makes you angry, and why?
* What effects does it have on you?
* How do you deal with it?
1. **Anger as a Spiritual Challenge and Problem**
* Anger as natural reaction to injustice and abuse: self and others
* Worst anger with hurt from those who are closest to us: shame
* Anger as evidence that something is wrong in a relationship
* Righteous anger v unrighteous anger
* Warning in James 1:19-20: ***Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.***
* The problem of persistent anger
* Ongoing damage from hurt by fellow Christians, pastors and leaders
* Persistent anger as a weapon of Satan: bad conscience that sees what is bad in others and is critical of them
1. **The Nature of Anger**
* God’s anger at evil and injustice: aspect of his love
* Anger as neither good nor bad in itself
* Positive: index of hurt and abuse
* Negative: source of bitterness, hatred and vengeance
* Satan’s use of anger to attack us by the back door
* Front door of sin
* Sin ► guilt ► accusation ► bad conscience ► condemnation
* Attack on faith in Jesus by condemnation for sin
* Back door of abuse
* Abuse ► hurt ► shame ► anger with bitterness and resentment ► hatred with passion for justice ► payback by rejection
* Attack on love for fellow Christians by our condemnation of those who have hurt us
1. **Destructive Use of Anger**
* Emotional explosion
	+ Raging
	+ Losing temper
	+ Lashing out
	+ Anger ► bitterness ► hatred ►revenge: physical, verbal, emotional
* Emotional introversion
* Nursing resentment and brooding over hurt
* Bottling up
* Switching off emotionally
* Anger ► self-pity ►depression ►self-punishment
1. **Constructive Use of Anger: see** **Eph 4:26-27, 29-4:2**

***Be angry* but do not sin;**

**do not let the sun go down on your anger,**

**and do not make room for the devil…**

**Let no putrid talk come out of your mouths,**

**but only what is helpful for building up others according to their needs, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.**

**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,**

**with whom were marked as with a seal for the day of redemption.**

***Let* all bitterness and rage and anger and verbal abuse and slander**

***be taken away*, along with all malice.**

**Instead *be kind* to one another,**

**compassionate, gracious (pardoning) to each other,**

**just as in Christ God has been gracious to you.**

* Daily riddance of anger: 4:26-27
* Surprising advice: **Be angry.**
* Usual cause: verbal abuse or unjust treatment
* Danger: sleeping on our anger and opening a room for the devil to move in
* Replay of hurtful incident: increasing anger with memory of other hurts and slights
* Hurt from abuse ► inrage (victim status)
* Inrage ► outrage (moral high ground)
* Outrage ► outbursts with verbal and physical abuse
* Devil = slanderer in Greek
* Remedy: open expression of anger by the hurt person
* Avoiding angry rotten talk: 4:29-30
* Verbal punishment by gossip and slander
* Picture: something putrid that poisons the community
* Remedy: gracious speech that builds up the community and people in it as God’s holy temple (2:19-22)
* Danger of foul speech: grieves the Holy Spirit by destroying the holy, heavenly community that belongs to God
* Picture: wax seal on a letter or on a possession that is lodged in a secure place until it is reclaimed
* Surrender of bitterness to Jesus: 4:31
* Cause of anger: injustice and abuse that embitters a bitter person
* Cycle: bitterness ► rage (inrage) and anger (outrage) ► verbal abuse and slander ► malice that wishes and inflicts something bad on my enemy ► increased bitterness: drinking own vinegar
* Problem: nursing grievances
* Solution with passive imperative: **be put away**: handing the hurt over to Jesus to remove the cause of bitterness and deal justly with the evildoer
* See also Col 3:8: **But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and all obscene talk from your mouth.**
* Use of lament psalms about our ‘enemy/enemies’ such 13
* Copying our heavenly Father: 4:32-5:1
* Picture: loving Father with beloved children
* Congregation as forgiven, forgiving community
* Copying His kindness, His tender-hearted compassion and gracious forgiveness in our treatment of each other
* Forgiveness of the offender as the last stage of a process