

Series: Exodus

Title: God's Anger and Love

Text: Exodus 4: 13-17

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Exodus 4: 13: And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. 14: And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses,

Our subject is: "The LORD's Anger and Mercy." God's anger is sometimes kindled against his chosen child but it never changes the love of God toward his elect in Christ.

The anger of the LORD against his chosen child is not the same as the fierce fury of God's wrath toward sinners outside of Christ. Toward those outside of Christ, we read of God's fury:

Psalm 7: 11: God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry *with the wicked* every day.

Proverbs 21:4: An high look, and a proud heart, *and* the plowing of the wicked, is sin.

Romans 8:8...they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

John 3: 36: 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.

God's anger toward his elect is not the same as his fury toward those outside of Christ because the fierce wrath of God, which his people deserved for breaking his law, Christ our Substitute bore for us on the cross.

Isaiah 53:5: But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Isaiah 51: 22: Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God *that* pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, *even* the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:

Before God, in Christ, every child he has called to faith in Christ has this promise from God, we have no record of sin—past, present or future. God will not impute sin to us because we have no sin to impute because Christ put it away. God will only impute righteousness to us because Christ has made us the righteousness of God in him.

Yet our disobedience to God displeases God. When Moses expressed his inability and insufficiency and personal unworthiness it was commendable. But anytime we are unwilling or hesitant to serve God or obey his will it is blatant disobedience to our heavenly Father the same as idolatry or adultery or any other flagrant sin. Then God's anger is kindled against his child. We read of God's anger being kindled against Aaron and Miriam, for speaking against Moses. Against David, Solomon, and others, for sins committed by them.

But God being angry with his child is not at all inconsistent with the everlasting, unchangeable love of God unto us. Anger is not opposite to love. There may be anger in the nearest and dearest relative where there is the most affectionate love. You father's may become angry with your son and chasten him for a fault. But it does not change your love for him.

In a judicial sense, we shall never be charged with or punished for sin. But God, as our heavenly Father, is grieved by the sins of his people. As a grieved Father, full of love, he takes out his rod to correct his erring sons and daughters (Hebrews 12:5-11). Our heavenly Father will not allow his children to live in rebellion to him. He will sharply reprove our consciences by his Word and his Spirit. If we persist in disobedience, he will chasten us in providence.

Hebrews 12:5: And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7: If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8: But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9: Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10: For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness. 11: Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

RIGHT TO BE DISPLEASED

Consider how right God is to be displeased when we will not believe on him so as to serve him in whatever he has put in our hand to do for his people.

The LORD was giving Moses the high privilege of serving the LORD by serving his people in Egypt. When the Father gave his Son that high honor, Christ delighted to do the will of his Father—even when it meant coming down from heavens glory and taking the form of a servant in the likeness of sinful flesh. God has not called us to go live amongst lepers in order to serve him. But Christ took the form of a servant amongst us stinking, rotting, contagious lepers. So is he not right to be displeased with us when we will not serve him in a far lesser capacity?

Forty years before, Moses was zealous to serve God—at a time and in a way that Moses wanted to serve him. Now, God calls Moses to serve him but Moses does not want to go because it would not be easy or convenient and would require sacrifice. We would serve God if we can do it on our terms in our time. But serving God is to serve on his terms. That is what Christ did for us! We don't mind serving God if it does not cost us. But it is not serving God if it costs us nothing. It costs Christ separation from God on the cross to serve us! We would serve God when it is convenient for us. Was anything convenient for Christ about bearing the shame of our sin on the cross on our behalf! We would serve God if we felt sufficient in ourselves to do so. But true service to God is having no sufficiency in us so that all we can do is trust God to provide! Listen to the one who served us:

Isaiah 50: 5: The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. 6: I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. 7: For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. 8: *He is* near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who *is* mine adversary? let him come near to me. 9: Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who *is* he *that* shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

Christ gave Moses the high honor and privilege of being his servant to minister to the Lord's people as he does to us. And in all our pretty, painted excuses, are we not saying, "*O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.*" "*And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses,...*"

OUR LONGSUFFERING GOD

Notice how long it took before the anger of the Lord was kindled.

Christ, the Angel of the LORD, revealed himself to Moses and declared he had come to deliver his people out of bondage and Moses was the one he honored as being his choice servant. Moses said, “Who am I?” Christ said, “I will be with thee! And here is a token, you shall serve God upon this same mountain.”

The LORD had just told Moses his name. Moses said, “When they ask your name what shall I say?” Christ told him again.

Then the great I AM told him all that he would do and that his people would hearken. Moses answered, “They will not believe me!”

The LORD showed Moses three signs and said this how I will make them willing to believe me. Moses said, “Lord, I am not eloquent, I am slow of speech!”

The LORD said, “I made your mouth Moses and I will be with your mouth and teach you what to say.” *“And Moses said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.”* Only after all this do we read, *“And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses.”*

Psalm 145:8: The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

TURNED TO OUR ELDER BROTHER

Oh, what great mercy! Immediately when the anger of the LORD was kindled, he turned Moses to his elder brother—**Exodus 4: 14: And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, *Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.***

When we pine away in our unbelief, the LORD’s remedy is to turn us to Christ our Elder Brother.

God says, “You say you desire me to send someone else whom I will, is not Christ, the High Priest, thy Brother? I will send him to be with you. Is not Christ thy only Wisdom? Is not Christ thy only Righteousness? Has not Christ fully provided for you from the day you were in the ark of bulrushes in the river until now? And are you not now just as helpless? I will send Christ thy Elder Brother to be with you.”

God says to us, “You say you cannot speak well? *I know that he can speak well.* You say you are not able—*I know that Christ can!* You say you can’t provide for yourself—*I know that he can!* You say you can’t serve me—*I know that he can* and he can make you willing.”

God chastens us by saying, “You won’t go to your elder Brother in Egypt? *Behold, he cometh forth to meet thee in Midian.* You won’t serve him?—*behold he cometh forth to serve thee!*”

God says to us, “In this little service I’ve called you to do for Christ your Elder Brother, you are bitter in your heart?—but *when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.*”

When our Father turns us to Christ is that not the greatest chastening stroke of his rod? When we behold Christ’s faithfulness toward us, it sheds light on our unfaithfulness toward him. We look upon him whom we have pierced and mourn—“Lord, after what you suffered for me, how could I call this anything except reasonable service for you!”

GOD'S CHASTENING IN LOVE

Then by what we know of Aaron, the man, he too, was a sort of a chastening to Moses.

Moses could have been the one instrument in God's hand by which God delivered Israel, but Moses forfeited that privilege. God basically said to him, "I'll use you two to make one good man. You be his brain and he will be your mouth. *You put words in his mouth and he will be to you instead of a mouth.*"

Moses could have trusted God and been amazed at God's all sufficient grace providing over and above his speech impediment. Now Aaron would do the talking for him. Yet God said, "*I will [still be the one making my word effectual] I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth and shall teach thee what to do.*"

Instead of having only good memories of trusting the Lord fully, later on, when Aaron is mocking him for marrying an Ethiopian woman, Moses will remember the only reason Aaron is with him is because of Moses unbelief. When Aaron is making a golden calf for Israel to worship, Moses will remember the reason Aaron is there is his own unbelief.

God said, "*And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.*" When God commanded Moses and Aaron to get water out of the rock, judging from God being angry with both Moses and Aaron, it seems Aaron was the spokesman who said, "*Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?*" (Num 20: 10) So Aaron might have instigated Moses enough that Moses used the rod to strike the rock twice. And for that God did not let them enter Canaan.

I do know this, on God's word, we would be utterly amazed at how much God would do above and beyond what we ever imagined, if we trusted God! And how much we give up by not trusting him. Jonah said, "*They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.*" (Jo 2: 8)

Isaiah 48:17: Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I *am* the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way *that* thou shouldest go. 18: O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: 19: Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me."

Amen!