



## **Before the Sun Goes Down**

Unresolved Anger (Part 1)

Unresolved Anger

Ted Cunningham

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Today we start a new series on anger and forgiveness, it will go for the next four weeks. It's called *Before the Sun goes Down*.

Today, we are going to talk about unresolved anger, so I will start by asking you, have you been angry lately? What has made you angry or probably the better question is who has made you angry? I want us to think through what makes you mad? Is it your sports team losing? Is it the other team cheating? Is it maybe bad officiating? How about the parents of the other team? How about when someone falsely accuses you or lies about you? Junk mail, scam phone calls? Should we get angry when a crime is committed? Yeah. Do you get angry when justice isn't served when someone who should be convicted and sentenced gets off. Do you get angry?

How about an employee ever takes advantage of you or steals from the company ? does that make you angry? A lot of times we get angry when we don't get what we want. I want something, I don't get it, this is what I expect, this is what I'm getting. A socially acceptable term for anger is often stress. I'm stressed, but really, you're just mad. You are not getting what you want. If you have ever laughed at your children while they are pitching a fit, raise your hand. Good parents, good parents. It's hard sometimes, but you can admit you've acted like this a time or two. I've been shrugged off by a lot of people but it's hard when it comes from a toddler.

Today, our main text is Paul's words in Ephesians 4: 26 – 27. We're going to get three warnings on anger. What to do about anger. He starts by saying, "Be angry. I love the King James version. It actually says "be ye angry." We're going to see

today that anger is actually a God given emotion. There are things we should be angry about. He says be angry and, but... and here come the warnings.

1. Do not sin. Even if it's righteous indignation, you don't get to be angry and cuss somebody out. You don't get to blow up on somebody. Your words and your actions matter when you are angry. Here's where we get the title for the series, and "And do not let the sun go down on your anger. Many of us were taught this passage inappropriately or incorrectly is a better way of saying it. We were told in premarital counseling that you should never go to bed mad. Stay up and fight. And they get it from Ephesians 4: 26, but that's not what Paul is saying here. He's not telling you to stay up and just go at it until things are fixed. He's saying, for the Christian, you're going to get angry and you shouldn't hold onto it too long. You should resolve it. whatever you are getting angry about, it shouldn't last in the heart of a Christian. If it does, that's the third warning and do
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3. not give place to the Devil. If you harbor unresolved anger, unresolved, uncontrollable, anger, maybe your translation reads it gives the devil a foothold, but we know what it means to have a foot in the door. A foot in the door means I'm going to take this opportunity and, in this case, your anger, Satan gets a foot in the door and he's looking for bigger opportunities, greater opportunities. And some of you can think back on your divorce and realize your anger played into it. You got fired from the job because you gave the Devil a foothold into your life. You don't get invited to family gatherings because you are a hot-tempered, quick-tempered person and nobody wants you around.
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So, what do we do with this anger? We spend a lot of time discussing what Christians should and should not be angry about, but today, we also want to discuss, "What do I do when I am angry?"

So, today, we are actually going to look at four warnings, three from this passage, and one beginning in James 1: 19

Here is the very first warning: be slow to anger. A Christian, should not be a hot tempered individual. We should not have terms we use fly off the handle, short fuse, hot hot-headed, hair-trigger temper, goes ballistic, flips out.

James 1: 19, we read this: My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this. Everyone should be quick to listen, and this is James first emphasis, He says, you need to be an eager listener, first and foremost of the word of God and then of one another. You should be slow to speak... don't run your mouth. And slow to become angry. We should not be easily provoked in our spirit. We shouldn't be hot tempered. And the bible has a lot to say about this.

In ecclesiasts, Solomon says Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit for anger resides in the lap of fools.

A lot of times, people see the word fool and they think of an unintelligent person. That is not the bible's definition of a fool. is someone who chooses to go their own way, not God's way. "I'm going to do it my way; I'm going to let my desires run my life. I'm going to choose my own path. It's the path of wickedness and you read it all throughout proverbs. This fool is choosing wickedness, unrighteousness.

And the bible says that anger resides in the lap of the fool. That's why Proverbs 20: 22 says, An angry person stirs up conflict. You may have that person in your family. They are always mad, always blowing up, ruining family functions. A hot-tempered person commits many sins. The bible goes so far as to say you shouldn't have association with this person because it's going to ruin, not only their life, but your life as well.

Proverbs 22: 24, do not make friends with a hot-tempered person. Do not associate with one easily angered.

There are things we should get angry about, follower of Jesus, and it's okay to get angry about. But we shouldn't be quick to anger. We shouldn't be easily provoked in our spirit.

So, here's what happens. A lot of times people are like, "I became a Christian and once I became a Christian, I no longer got angry. I have the fruit of the spirit, Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, gentleness, kindness, faith and self-control

And so, I'm pretty much like a monk walking around, right? I'm just always at peace and nothing bothers me.

So, what we think is I became a Christian so I no longer get angry, but here's a better way to think of what we are talking about today with unresolved anger. I became a Christian so now I know what anger truly is and what I should do with it, and how I should process it.

So, I want to go up for a little more context of Ephesians 4: 26 – 27 to Verses 21 – 23. Paul says When you heard about Christ, and were taught in him, in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. So, when you chose to go the way of Jesus and no longer yourself... he lays this out clearly.

You were taught, with regard to the former way of life, to put off your old self. It's not about you anymore. You don't get to call the shots, you are no longer no longer playing by your rules, which is being corrupted by it's deceitful desires.

Today, we want to know the difference between what would be called righteous anger or righteous indignation. And just your ego. Just my pride being wounded and me getting angry. There is a big difference. And many of the times we get angry, it's those deceitful desires that are leading us, and we want to be made new in the attitude of our minds. Paul said, "In the attitude of your mind." So, the first thing is we are going to be slow to anger, and second, be angry, it's okay to get angry, but do not sin. The second warning- Anger, in and of itself is not a bad thing. it's actually emotion given to you, designed by God, and given to you by God, and it's what you do with your anger that can negatively affect your spiritual, mental, emotional, relation and physical health. Many of you might be in here right now. You lost sleep last night because you're angry with someone. You left him or her at home, and you are here trying to work some things out. But you were angry and it affected your physical rest.

Here's what the Bible teaches about being angry and sin. If you cannot feel anger for evil, it stands to reason that you cannot love what is good. You should turn on the news and hear about things happening in our country and in our world, and it makes you mad. That's okay. There are things that should make you mad. There are things that should frustrate you and I know that leads to anger but, in other words there are some things right to be angry about, God wants you to be angry about social injustice. He wants you to be angry when people take his name in vain. He wants you to be angry when people try to divide or tear down or attack the church. He feels that anger too. But even when we get upset about right, constructive, purposeful things, we still have to make sure we handle our anger in an appropriate way. That even when the anger is for a good reason, we don't get to

choose to sin. I don't get to cuss you out because of what you said or did. And that's going to be week for as we guard the tongue.

Pastor Timothy Keller, who is with the Lord now, I love how he processes anger and how he defines anger. He defines anger as an energy release to defend something good and right, something you love or believe has been threatened. Righteous anger is revealed when God's glory is attacked or someone you love suffers injustice. Anger, in and of itself, is not sinful, but it can lead to sin when we get angry over self-centered desires, selfish desires, pride.

Think about it. God is always angry at sin. That's who he is. He has wrath. The Bible says in Romans 1: 18. Jesus got angry. He got angry with the pharisees when they weighed people down with their legalism. He got angry, the bible says, indignant, which means very angry with the disciples when the disciples tried to prevent the children from coming to him so he could bless them. The bible says Jesus grew indignant.

Pastor Keller says, if you never get angry, you are uninteresting and nothing like Jesus. And we are putting that on a t-Shirt.

I was sharing this with some guys on staff this week and they were like, "That totally needs to be on a t-shirt for the men's ministry at our church." I'm not mad, I'm just interesting. Think about that. Anger is a secondary revealing emotion. You always do something before you get angry. Gary Smalley taught that there were three primary emotions that led to anger – Hurt, fear, or frustration. You always felt a primary emotion first. You feel something. Anger is triggered by rejection, judgment, failure, control, or maybe lack of control, neglect, loneliness, shame, confusion, humiliation. If someone is abandoned or left out, they feel cheated or mistreated, overlooked or misunderstood, the result is often anger. No matter what the cost, when left, unresolved anger will lead to sin. When anger resides in your lap and you don't do something about it, it has consequences in your life. It will sprout jealousy, envy, strife, tension, bitterness. Grudges will come out of it.

So, the warning for us as we are be ye angry is sin not, is simply this right here. We often call it righteous anger when it is really wounded pride wearing a halo.

This takes some discernment for the follower of Jesus to really begin to process what am I angry about and that leads us to our third warning this morning.

When you are angry, don't stay up and fight. Be silent. Spend time with the Lord. You have some things to work out in your own heart and you are putting too much on your spouse or your children or your parents. And it's really needs be, first and foremost, you working things out with God.

A couple of weeks ago, we had a funeral for Ron Danner. I was pretty emotional leaving the funeral. It was 1:00 and I get back to my office here and I'm sitting at my desk and I get a phone call. I answered the phone with "This is Ted." On the other end, I hear "Hey Ted, this is Seargent Osif with the Tanney County Sherriif's department."

I said, "Hey Seargent, what's going on?" He said, "You were supposed to appear last week in Federal court in Springfield and you failed to appear. Do you mind telling me what happened?"

I said,  
this is the first I'm hearing about this. I have no idea what you're talking about. He said, "Well I have to let you know it's a case involving a minor. You were subpoenaed as an expert witness and you failed to appear. I didn't want to come down to the church and arrest you. I didn't think with your influence in this community... the more I think about this call and look back on it, I'm like I don't know... me getting out of here in handcuffs would probably grow this church by 20%. That seems to be the way the world is going these days. I said, "Seargent, I have no idea what you are talking about." He goes," back in May, you signed a document and received a 300 and some odd page subpoena explaining what your role would be in testifying before this judge. If you don't mind, I'm going to record the rest of this call, so don't hang up or mute the call. You are under a gag order, so you can't discuss this with anyone, but I'm going to put you on the phone with the judge...

So... I'm going to just work through my emotions on this 30-minute phone call. I'm confused like you have no idea because I signed nothing. I have no idea about it. but this guy had information about our community and the case he was talking about is details that I know that none of you probably know. I was just blown away and I was just like, "What do I need to do?"

He said that there are three "warrants out for your arrest" I said, "Well, that's not good.

Now, I'm confused and I'm frustrated because I start to process. I'm leaving the country in two days. From this phone call, I'm like, well there goes that trip. I'm not going to get through TSA. So I'm confused, I'm frustrated, and he said, we gotta get these bonds taken care of and then I'm sure the judge... you'll be able to give the testimony they are seeking from you. I said okay, let me know what I need to do. He puts me on the phone with a bail bondsman and this guy wants my PayPal account. I paused at the PayPal account.

Now, some of you are laughing others of you are thinking I'm still talking to a real Sheriff's deputy. We're going to get that. Oh, it's not real... this is what... okay, we are moving from my emotions... we are going to get angry here in just a real quick second. Be slow to anger. It took me about 30 minutes. And really more that night.

Tammy, who is new to our church, she's got about 25 years of banking experience. She is new to our church staff. She walked into my office because she heard the phone call. With a piece of paper, she walked right up to my desk and held up a sign. All it said was *this is a scam*. I went, no it's not. I'm getting arrested. And if you are new to our church, I have a guilt prone nature. I follow the law... most of the time. A good majority of the time. I go the speed limit except on those roundabouts. Anyway... I'm all worked up, I'm confused and I finally go, Listen, I'm getting in my truck and I'm driving to the Sheriff's department and we are going to take care of this.

He goes, I would recommend that, that's a great idea. So, I get in my truck and I'm driving and I'm talking to them about everything that's going to happen, still very confused with everything going on. He said, "Now Ted, I just need you know when you get here, I do have to put you in handcuffs and process you and that's going to take three to five hours. I pull into a parking lot. I stop my trip. And I'm sitting thing there going, "What?" yeah, it has to be done this way unless you take care of these bonds. I said, "I'm calling Sheriff Daniels. This is ridiculous. This is out of control. He goes, "I would recommend that. definitely take time to give him a call. And he goes, actually he's here, do you want me to patch him in?

Oh hush, let me get through my story. Quit working ahead. You weren't there. did I tell you I just finished a funeral. I was in a very vulnerable state and I have a guilt prone nature and I'm going to get arrested and the church is falling apart, there going to be no more... that's where my mind goes. You've got a real strong leader. Anyway, Sheriff Daniels gets on the phone. I said hey brad, he said hey Ted. And then at that moment... this is 30 minutes later. At that moment I know

the Lord was like Ted, you're smarter than this. At this point, they had answered every question I had asked just perfectly. I mean they knew stuff about our community and our church and things going on with organizations in this town. and there was just trauma I had dealt with in the past and it was all coming out.

I said, "Brad, I'm going to ask you a question and you've got one second to answer this question. And if you don't answer right, I'm hanging up this phone. He goes, "Alright." I said, "What is your wife's name? He gave me a wrong name and click. So, now, confused frustrated, I'm embarrassed because I have to come back to the office here where Tammy thinks I'm getting kidnapped. Kirk Maure who runs our books, he couldn't care less about what was going on. He's in there doing his thing and he's like oh, he'll be fine. I'm like no, I need petty cash right now. 7500 dollars. Get it on the table. I actually think he wanted to see me arrested if I'm looking back on this story.

Now I'm moved to humiliation. I dealt with like five emotions in a very short period of time. Ten minutes later, Sheriff Daniels calls me and he goes, "Hey Ted, It's Brad and I go, "No it's not" I go, what's your wife's name? I go, did we talk 10 minutes ago? He said, we did."

He started telling me stories about our community. I shared this at 8:15.. do you know how many people I talked to in our church who actually gave them money. Some of you are humiliated right now with me sharing this story. You haven't told anybody, including your children. I'm telling you.... by the time I got home and told everything to Amy, I was shaky pretty much the rest of the day because I quickly moved from confusion, frustration, humiliation, embarrassment, to anger like I haven't felt in a long time. I was seriously... Murderous thoughts were in my head. I don't think about murder a lot, but I was like, how do we get Secretary Hegseth a map of all these call centers and order some bombs to be dropped. I want to wipe them off the face of the earth. If that's the only time you amen this whole deal, you gotta problem. I was shocked at 8:15 how many of the senior adults were amening this part of the service where I'm like, I'm killing people. that's a problem. I don't want to go to bed with this anger. Oh, but I was ticked. There's a whole movie about this where the call center was burned to the ground. I'm like "Let's burn it to the ground. Take them out.

So, I laid down that night and I'm so fired up and so worked up. Let me give you this: When Paul says, do not let the sun go down on your anger, don't let the sun go down on your wrath, he's actually quoting from Psalm 4: 4. Here's what Psalm 4: 4 says for those of you that think you should stay up and fight... no. be angry and I

was ticked. And do not sin. Murder is sin. Can't do that. Ponder in your own heart on your bed.

It's interesting I'm not doing this at breakfast. How many of you know at night time, when you can't do the testing and the emails and the phone calls, it tends to work it's self up and how many of you know a good night's sleep tends to take care of a lot of stuff. So, when I ponder in my heart that night I'm taking it before the Lord. I go "Lord, I can't have murderous thoughts in my heart, but would you handle that. I think my anger was righteous. When we got to the murder part, it got sketchy. But what I was feeling was not good. Your hearts on your beds and be silent.

That's the opposite of stay up and fight. do business with the Lord.

I woke up the next morning refreshed, calling people and I think this is the part that got me most. I have warned so many of you, including my parents and my in-laws, about these scams and I fell for one. I didn't give them any money or get arrested, I started calling some people, letting them know.

To this day, I go out to mailbox and I pull out mail. Amy will tell you, I'm like "Oh, I got a jury summons... fake news. Oh, bank statement. It ain't a real bank statement. I'm throwing that out.

Oh, look at this, IRS tax bill, yeah right. yeah come and get me. I ain't going nowhere.

I'm still working things out. And this is what we are talking about today, working out your anger. And you're letting me do that for you a little bit. I so concerned about the next time I get pulled over. I'm like what does your badge, uniform, and car prove?

Sherrif Raider, I apologize.

Anyway, we have to resolve our anger. We have to do something constructive with it. and the emphasis in this passage is that we don't stay angry.

I don't believe I sinned with my anger. I had some moments where

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that I was confessing that I'm like Lord I can't have that. I have to get that out of there as quickly as possible.

Un resolved anger... you don't deal with it, it takes root and produces bitterness, resentment. It destroys relationships. And some in here and across the campus, you know you are hot tempered. You quickly get angry. You stay angry for long periods of time. You are still nursing a grudge. You still have bitterness and resentment toward a family member that did something to you 10 to 20 years ago and it's affecting you emotionally, relational, spiritually, and even physically.

So, what does it mean to ponder on your heart? Here are three questions that I took to the Lord that night.

Why am I mad? It's important to ask this question because if anger is a secondary emotion, I want to process through the primary emotion. I've already shared them with you.

Confused, frustrated, embarrassed, humiliated. It's why many of you won't talk to your family about it.

I had a lady come forward after the first gathering. She stayed on the phone with these people for three hours. This was a brilliant woman. I just want to tell all of you... I don't know what to do... get rid of your phones. Isn't that kind of where we are at? Like stop answering emails. Do you remember the movie the Patriot, when the pastor walks out with a gun and his whole flock is like, Where are you going? He says every now and then the pastor needs to protect the sheep. I feel that's a big part of what we are doing today. Some of you need to call your parents and ask if anything has ever happened and are hiding it from you because they are embarrassed.

So, why am I mad? The second question I asked while pondering. Who or What is making me mad? This is important because some of you will put a person's name on it and you need to go make amends. You've been harboring, letting this anger reside in your lap for too long and you need to go make amends. And then

the third question to ponder – What will I do with my anger? Well, one, I don't want to wake up with it.

Two in the morning, I'm going to call some people, I'm going to call my parents because they could get the call that their son is being arrested and he needs bail money. My dad would probably go back to that time I did a beer run at 18.

I didn't know I was doing it. My friends said they would take me to the gas station and they wheel out all these cases of beer.

Isn't it crazy all the stuff that comes up in your mind when you're dealing with things like I'm going to get arrested for something 40 years ago. Anyway, what will I do with my anger. I want to be constructive with it. if you are looking for a biblical epic, a biblical understanding of anger, it's this right here and I hope you take it with you. if you get nothing else out of the message today, for the Christian, be slow to anger and quick to get rid of it. for you, your walk with the Lord, your walk with your spouse, your walk with your children, don't be easily provoked, but slow to anger, be ye angry, there are going to be times you are angry, but when you are, be quick to get rid of it

And finally, if you don't, if you let it reside in your lap, you'll give Satan a foot in the door.

Don't let Satan get a foot in the door. That's why we want to resolve this.

Ephesians 4: 27 in a different translation says, and do not give the Devil a foothold. Unresolved, uncontrollable anger is an opportunity for Satan to get into your life and create greater problems. Resentment, bitterness, grudges.

So, that's where we are going with the rest of this series. We have three more weeks after today and next week we are going to talk about forgiveness, but unresolved, uncontrollable anger keeps us from forgiving other people. that's next week. The week after that, Shay is going to talk about how unresolved, uncontrollable anger causes quarrels and fights from James.

Let me just tell you, Satan wants you estranged from your family. He wants you to stop talking to your parents and to your siblings. He wants you to keep that anger inside toward them. He doesn't want you to have a relationship with them, he wants you to get mad at this church or the next church and the church you just came from. That's what I always loved about Gary Smalley. He would stand up here when we started this church and say, If you are coming to this church mad from something that happened at another church, I implore you, go back and make

things right. make every opportunity at peace. If you don't resolve your anger, you are going to show up here and you are going to love this church, you're going to love the staff, you are going to love the people of this church for 6, 12, 18, for maybe maybe twenty four months, but then you'll hate us just as much as that other place because the issue is unresolved anger in your heart. And you have to do something with it.

And in the final week, we are going to talk about remember what smoky the bear used to say. Only you can prevent forest fires. We will go back to James. Unresolved anger is on full display with that uncontrollable tongue.

James says the tongue is a fire and it doesn't take much to set a whole forest on fire. And some of you have done that in your relationships and we want to walk through that.

I want to end by sharing how all this comes together in the gospel.

In Romans 1:18, I have already spoken about it a little bit, but here's what it says. The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all godlessness and wickedness. That's the wrath of God is poured out against. He stands out against people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. But here's the good news. Whoever believes in the son has eternal life. John 3: 36. But whoever rejects the son, will not see life for God's wrath is on them.

If you are a follower of Jesus, and you place faith alone in Christ alone, the Bible says there is no condemnation for those who are in "Christ Jesus. The wrath of God is no longer on you, but if you've never repented of your sins, confessed that Jesus is Lord and believed in your heart that he has been raised from the dead, guess what? The wrath of God is on you. the Bible says you are of your father the devil. And today is the day that you repent of your sins. You're like what do I do with my anger? Start with salvation.

Above all else guard your heart, it's the wellspring of life and that wellspring right now is polluted. That's where all that anger is sitting. And everything you say and every thing you do is just an overflow of that unresolved anger that today would be the day you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, you repent of your sins, believe in your heart he has been raised from the dead that you will be saved.

Would you pray with me...

Father, I pray again for a blessing on this church. and I know all of us, from time to time, are going to deal with anger. That we would be slow to anger and quick to get rid of it. thank you that your wrath no longer rests on me, no longer rests on the follower of Jesus. Because of what Jesus did for us. I pray that many today would come to know Jesus as savior, place faith alone in Christ alone.

I'm grateful for what you continue to do. I pray in this moment a special blessing over especially our senior adults who can be very, very susceptible to these scams. I just pray protection over them that they will be wise, that they will give this information to family and friends to better protect them.

For the one who has given the money and is feeling humiliation and shame right now, to understand that a crime was committed against them and that they don't need to feel that, but they need someone to help them process through and work through that.

For the one who is angry right now that today would be a the day they seek to resolve this and ponder in their hearts tonight with you and be silent.

We pray all of this in the authority of the name of Jesus, and everyone agreed and said... Amen