

Intro: Garrison. PIT. Psalm 94. **Pray.**

Inside Out. The pathway to be an emotionally healthy person is to know the definition of health, to do the movements that we've talked about, AND to have seen the Pixar hit movie Inside Out. I don't have Bible to back me up but I'm pretty sure I'm right. If you've never seen it, it's this awesome animated movie that frames the life of the main character Riley, an 11 year old girl, by looking inside of her mind that's being controlled by her 5 emotions. You've got Joy(who runs the show), Fear, Disgust, Anger and Sadness. It's wonderful and hilarious. One of my favorite parts is just watching the character, Anger. He's just hilarious. At the beginning of the movie, joy is narrating, giving a little insight into each emotion and she gets to anger, who's in the middle of a meltdown and she says, "**This is Anger, umm... he likes things to be... fair.**" Which you've got to remember, it's joy talking, she's too nice. But what she's saying is really insightful, just not the full picture. A better way to say it is: **Anger likes for things to be 'right'.**

Tonight, we're talking Anger. Quick definition for us on anger:

Anger- Opposition toward someone or something you feel has deliberately done you or others wrong. In short, you're hostile when you think someone isn't in the right.

Now with anger I think there's this tendency to think 'I'm not really an angry person.' Our category for anger is really one dimensional. So we think of the person that has a really quick temper, is really outwardly irritable. You just hate playing a board game with them, ya know? They're really harsh.

But Anger can look very different from person to person. For some of us, myself included, we show anger outwardly. We have a tendency to lash out, argue, complain, say things we shouldn't. But that's not true for everyone. For others, it's more inward. The anger fantasies run wild. Where you said the really cold, clever and cutting thing that totally put them in their place, just only in your head. Or you shut down. So you're not boiling over like others, but you're still simmering and if anyone steps near you they can get burned just as bad.

Sometimes it's both or somewhere in the middle, but what's happening with our anger is we're responding to something or someone that we perceive as wrong.

Now something we have to be on the same page about before we go any further is that anger can be righteous or unrighteous. It isn't inherently wrong to be angry. Anger can be healthy or unhealthy, righteous or unrighteous. It really comes down to two questions:

1. What is the 'right' we are angry over? Or what did someone do wrong?
2. What do we think the solution to fixing it is?

We can see how this plays out in the life of Jesus where we see righteous anger displayed. We see it in John 2

When the Jewish Passover was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts. He found men selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and money changers seated at their tables. So He made a whip out of cords and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle. He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those selling doves He said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn My Father's house into a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for Your house will consume Me."

Jesus shows up at the temple and sees men capitalizing on the Jewish sacrificial system. So in order to maintain a good standing with God, Jews would have to make animal sacrifices to appease God. So these men are sitting in the temple, a place that's supposed to be holy and worshipful, and trying to make a quick buck. It says Jesus sees this, goes and makes a whip, comes back and drives them out of the temple.

Jesus is not sinning here. He's responding in righteous anger over the things of God being twisted for selfish gain. The 'right' He's angry over is that God's temple is meant for worship, not profits. And the solution is to literally step in and stop it.

So there *is* a category where we can experience and feel these things righteously. But if we're honest, most of our anger doesn't look like this.

Anger is built on our perception of reality. Meaning its a response based on our perception of what happened to make us angry and our perception of what is right and good, ie what the solution should be.

And the problem is, many times our perception of what someone did wrong and what we need to do about it aren't right.

- Driver cuts you off. I'm angry because they're inconveniencing me and possibly putting me in danger, so they deserve for me to speed up and cut them off, or honk or yell.
- Friend makes a joke at your expense. I'm mad because I expected more from my friends but also because it makes me look bad, and what's right is for me to get even, make them look bad too.
- Person that gossips or sows disunity in the church, I'm angry about it, maybe they were gossiping about me. Well, I can play that game, and we try to get even by doing the same.

All those responses come from perceived injustices, the perceived severity of that injustice, the perceived correct course of action to deal with the perceived injustice. Which is why determining whether it's unrighteous or righteous anger is so complicated. Though if you look closely you can see the difference between the two.

It really comes down to how we've talked about emotional health. If you remember our definition:

Having the right emotion, at the right time, with the right amount, for the right duration, because of the right reason - namely, love.

So the way we determine what righteous anger is, is by looking at the definition. Being righteously angry looks like:

Being angry, at the right time, with the right amount, for the right duration, because of the right reason - namely, love.

If you get any of that wrong; right time, right amount, right duration, right reason, you're unrighteously angry. So I just want to take a look at Ps 94 and see what righteous anger looks like:

O LORD, God of vengeance, O God of vengeance, shine forth! Rise up, O judge of the earth; repay to the proud what they deserve! O LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked exult? They pour out their arrogant words; all the evildoers boast. They crush your people, O LORD, and afflict your heritage. They kill the widow and the sojourner, and murder the fatherless; and they say, "The LORD does not see; the God of Jacob does not perceive."

- Right Reason
- +
- Right Time

There's clearly anger and sadness going on in this Psalm. The writer is calling for God to avenge His people. To judge the earth and deal with the prideful. He's wondering how long must he wait before God will deal with the wicked and deal with evil.

The reason and timing of his anger is tied to the events he's seen. He's upset over God's people being harmed. He specifically says the widow, the sojourner and the fatherless are oppressed and even killed. He's angry for the right reasons and at the right time. This is the model for our anger. Very clearly:

Are we angry about the things God is angry about?

I think if we're honest, we're typically pretty angry about silly and selfish things:

- Kids/Spouse not doing what they should do or what I want them to do.
- Traffic jams and bad drivers
- Bad internet
- Jealousy/evny like we talked about last week.
- Others not meeting my expectations.
- Not respecting me as I think they should.

It usually has way more to do with it being an inconvenience to my life rather than something that angers God.

God is angry about much different things: Things like:

- People not knowing Him and living in sin
- Disunity and people in the church treating each other badly.
- Fatherlessness
- Racism and prejudice
- Oppression of the sojourner and the vulnerable.
- The poor going hungry and living in need.
- Christian leaders misusing their power to hurt rather than lead and shepherd.

Are we angry about the things God is angry about?

Now there's also some macro implications of this as well. Much of the division in our society and politics come down for the reason and timing of our anger. I think it's really interesting, what gives away what you believe and value is revealed by what makes you angry. And the reason we're divided is because we can't agree on what we should be most angry about.

So What makes you angry? What's the reason for your anger? It reveals a lot about you.

What we've got to see is that many of us have specific causes and passions that we care about deeply about that fuels some of our anger. Some of those causes are in line with what God is angry about. Some of them are not. And the tricky part is we're usually very unaware of our biases.

Every single one of us has been uniquely conditioned to be angry about specific things. Our culture at large, your family of origin, social media, experiences, race, gender and much more: all of these things shape you personally to be angry about certain things, and not angry about certain things. And it's going to be different person to person.

This is why it's vital for us to be shaped by the Bible. If you think that your perceptions, even the ones that are 'right' are pure and unbiased then you've in real danger of having some blind spots. Our angers have to be shaped by the Bible and what God says to be mad about, not your personally curated Tik Tok algorithm or Instagram reels of some rando ranting about the newest headline.

That's the danger. And if you blink, you're going to wake up mad about what an influencer or a biased news reporter told you to be mad about, not what the Bible says to be mad about. But you've spent hours a day being informed by a screen and 15 minutes being formed by the Bible. So we either miss what the Bibles saying completely or we end up totally unbalanced, really only caring for this one or two issues, that yeah the Bible says we should care, but I really only care because of what our culture says, while neglecting all the other stuff God says we need to care about.

Are we angry about the things God is angry about? That's got to be the reason for our anger. That will inform the timing.

Hop back in v 8

Understand, O dullest of the people! Fools, when will you be wise? He who planted the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see? He who disciplines the nations, does he not rebuke? He who teaches man knowledge— the Lord—knows the thoughts of man, that they are but a breath. Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O Lord, and whom you teach out of your law, to give him rest from days of trouble, until a pit is dug for the wicked. For the Lord will not forsake his people; he will not abandon his heritage; for justice will return to the righteous, and all the upright in heart will follow it.

- Right Amount

Anger is the correct response for the writer of this Psalm. He's seeing evil, oppression and injustice. What anger was designed to be is our emotional response to sin, injustice, to things not being as they should.

God designed anger in order to energize our passion to destroy sin. There are some things we should hate.

But another temptation in our anger is that we'll be too angry. Or not angry enough. Have you ever heard someone critique the way we use the word 'love'? Like how we'll say I love my spouse or family. And i loveeee Stranger Things. THose are different right?

The same thing applies to anger. We say we hate racism and we say we hate a certain line of clothing. We're angry about school shootings and we're angry our favorite celebrity couple broke up. What's up with those amounts? Are they the same?

Like lets get personal, poverty makes me mad but would you know it? Cause I don't think you would. I think if you spent any time with me you'd think that bad Star Wars content is the thing that makes me the most mad in the world, or how bad my favorite football team is.

I wonder if the same is true for you. If someone asked your friends, what makes them angry I wonder what they'd say?

GOtta be angry with the right amount.

Same is true with—>

- Right duration.

Instead of the wrong amount of anger, we'll let our anger sit or fester for the wrong amount of time.

On the small scale, we'll let the same silly stuff that we get too angry about ruin our day or week or month. We'll hold onto it for too long. We'll shut down because of a comment. We'll lash out and then dig our toes in, not admitting we're wrong. Or honestly, it'll just look dramatic. Why are we this upset about a show? Or a movie?

It can also be big. Holding onto anger for years. Maybe someone did something really hurtful to us. Maybe we've been really angry about the world for months or years. The danger of anger that we hold onto for too long is that we grow bitter. And despair starts to take over our hearts as the person or thing we're angry about doesn't change. There's no justice. Which only makes us more and more angry.

When we're angry at wrong time, with the wrong amount, for the wrong duration and wrong reason it boils down to this: We want things to be RIGHT, the way we define it now.

Which is the core of the problem with unrighteous anger.

Unrighteous Anger- a demand for a more tolerable world now, instead of trusting in God's redemptive plan and timing.

When we are unrighteously angry, we want change, or help, or something to fix the problem. We want heaven. Right? Underneath all the frustration, irritations and injustices that make us angry is a desire for heaven. For things to be right.

But the problem is we want it NOW. And we plan on being the one to make it happen.

And it doesn't work. The path of unrighteous anger leads only to despair. Because it never works out how we planned. It doesn't make us feel better when we get even or finally put them in their place. It doesn't work because we will only grow more bitter as we try to keep the world and everyone around us aligned with what is right.

We become impatient, cynical and hopeless. And we grow cold towards God because He's not doing anything to help me make things better!

Yoda was right. Anger leads to hate and hate leads to suffering. I know fear comes first, let me make my point. It doesn't work.

But we're still stuck with the injustices and the problems. So what do we do? I'm angry, but now I'm sinning and it's making it worse and nothings gonna change. People suck and God doesn't care. What do I do?

There's actually one last thing we have to get 'right' in order to have righteous anger"

Who rises up for me against the wicked? Who stands up for me against evildoers? ¹If the LORD had not been my help, my soul would soon have lived in the land of ²silence. When I thought, ¹"My foot slips," your steadfast love, O LORD, ²held me up. When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul. Can ³wicked rulers be allied with you, those who frame ²injustice by ³statute? They ⁴band together against the life of the righteous and condemn ²the innocent to death.³ But the LORD has become my ⁴stronghold, and my God ⁵the rock of my ⁶refuge. He will bring back on them their iniquity and wipe them out for their wickedness; the Lord our God will wipe them out.

Last thing we've got to see to be righteously angry:

- We have to have the right hope.

What hope do we have when we're angry at injustice? It's that God will "bring back on them their iniquity and wipe them out for their wickedness." Sit in that for a second.

God will literally wipe out all evil because that's what evil deserves. God isn't neutral about evil things. He deals with evil things viciously. Nothing is ignored or overlooked, not our own evil or evil done to us or the evil in the world.

For God's people, this gives us present comfort and a future hope.

Present comfort - "when the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul." God is our present stronghold and refuge. When my heart is overwhelmed by evil and I'm tempted to lash out in anger, God comforts me.

Future hope - I don't have to correct all wrongs now. I can't correct all wrongs. And I can be comforted by the fact that God will repay all wrongs.

Trusting in God doesn't mean you won't be angry anymore. It means you recognize a better reality. Look at what the Psalmist writes. God sees the wicked. He stands up against evil. He sees, yeah things are bad, but if God had not been my help, I'd be dead already! The wicked and unjust do not have a firm foundation but we do.

God sees and knows everything that is done to you and in this world. And He's promised to do something about it. In our unrighteous anger it's all on us. Nobody sees this but me so I've got to do something about it. I'm the only one that knows what to do. They better not treat me like this.

It's self centered. And a self centered hope is shallow.

A God centered hope helps us see that God is ultimately the one that will deal with the injustices big and small in my life and the in the world. What a better hope! Gosh how much of our lives do we give over to obsessing about what to do or say out of our anger? That's a self-centered hope.

God given hope remembers Romans 12:19: *Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."*

That hope leads to righteous anger.

Righteous Anger- a willingness to trust and struggle with God as we wait for His redemption both in the present and for eternity.

Where we wait for God to redeem us, those around us and the world. Where we struggle with Him in prayer, taking our anger to Him and community and graciously talking about our frustrations with others.

I hope you're picking up this pattern that we're getting at each with emotions. When we experience emotions, they get us going, we get consumed by them, all we can see is the fear, anger, jealousy, and then we look at God. That's the pattern! It's the same every week.

Gospel Conclusion: We can have that hope because of Jesus. It's an impossible pill to swallow that to deal with the things that hurt me and make me mad I've got to hope in God to solve them. But God is so committed to make things right in the world that He sent Jesus to die to make it a reality.

That's the hope we have. God cares for us and He cares for the world. We may not see it, definitely hard to see when we're angry, but on the cross we get the guarantee of God's love and care for us. We deserved to be crushed by God's righteous anger and wrath but instead He saves us by taking our place. That God promises to deal with all the injustices, big and small, personal and not personal. We trust in Him and hope in Him because He was faithful in His death and resurrection and He will be faithful to the end.

Practicals

So for now we wait and struggle. And we deal with the little things that provoke anger in us and the big things. Let's talk about a couple things we can do to deal with our anger well and righteously.

1. Be still.

One of the calls you see over and over again especially in the Psalms is to 'be still'. Sometimes it says 'and know I'm God'. Sometimes it says 'and wait.'

So we wait on God. We wait on God to move in the world, to remember who He is, what He's already done and what He will do. Pray.

2. Lament. Lament actually teaches our heart what to be angry about. It's why we do it often in the Gathering. We've got to intentionally go to the Bible, interpret our world through a Biblical lens, and grieve. If you've posted on sm about the badness of the world without talking to God, you've missed it. Go to God with your griefs.

3. Join God's Mission. First two lead to this. So we sit still and wait, we grieve, recognizing the right hope....then we do something.

- Let your anger move you to join what God is doing in the world. Do you realize God is mad about your neighbors and coworkers not knowing Him? Like that means they're moving towards eternal separation from God. That angers Him. Step in and be God's means of grace to those who don't know Him.

- Serve. Maybe you need to delete your news feed and social media and go help some people. It's a problem if everyone knows what you're mad about and you think that's the win. Our anger, even if it's about the same issue as what our culture and non Christians around us, should look way different. We have hope. We're not part of the angry mob. We're God's people, and we step in knowing and remembering what God has done and will do.
 - We've got options on who to partner with. God's mad about the orphan, He's mad about the poor and downtrodden, go step in and help.

Communion

Pray.