

Unshakeable: Colossians 3:8-10- Out with the Old, In with the New, 4/30/17

Read passage.

Start with a question what do people do when they see an explosion? What I find so interesting about this video I want to show you because that's not what happens and particularly pay attention to what the lieutenant says at the end. (insert video)

He said, he started as a victim, his training kicked in and he saved someone's life. When the explosion happened he ran toward the danger to remove another from the danger. And this morning I'm equating anger with explosions. Because for some of here much of our lives can be characterized by anger- explosive ways of dealing with challenges. Maybe you've lost relationships because of anger. Friendships that went south when things escalated and words that came out of your mouth. Dating or marriage that ended because things got out of control. Churches that split because of congregational meetings that exploded. Some of us, maybe it wasn't our anger but someone else's and you know firsthand why *Proverbs 22:24 Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, with one easily angered.*

The bible says, there is a better way, a redeeming way that saves instead of explodes. So today we want to be **trained in biblical anger management.**

Colossians 3:8-11 Paul addresses putting off the old self, with corrupted anger and putting on the new self that redeems and we will see Three things:

- 1) The Dangerous Progression of Anger
- 2) The Deeper root of anger
- 3) The Redeeming solution to anger

1) The dangerous progression of anger

in verse 8 I believe what Paul is doing is putting together a progression of anger, levels or the outworking of anger when it goes unchecked so that we see it's danger.

8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

- "Anger" the emotional state of anger, something sets off your emotions. Maybe it's the pharmacy line and what appears to be incompetent employees as you are waiting to get your prescription filled. Or you wait one second too long at a green light and the person behind you lays on their horn...Or more personal- your spouse is late for dinner...again.
- "Rage" in this context is the outward expression in response to the emotion of anger- road rage (ride someone's tail, honking, flipping the bird), comes out in words, in facial expression, slamming doors, kicking furniture, yelling... or inner rage, passive rage- in storming off and silent treatments, denial of anger as a means of self-defense... which often can be even worse

- "Malice" intent on doing harm- this is saying, I'm going to make them feel miserable about themselves, I'm getting my revenge, they will pay for this, I hope they suffer.

One theologian says this about this progression- *"We have three generations of sin here: anger cherished begets rage and rage if not judged begets malice."*

Proverbs 30:33 For as churning cream produces butter, and as twisting of the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife.

Paul continues and provides two additional expressions of anger in this progression:

- "Slander" refers to speech about others that is designed to cut someone else down, mostly behind their backs.
- Filthy language- Abusive speech directed at another person.

We don't have to look very far to see that this progression is exactly how this world so often operates. If we don't deal with the progression of anger in a Biblical way in our lives the more destruction comes into our lives. In order to stop this dangerous progression of anger we need to get at its root.

2) The Deeper Root of Anger

The problem of anger is actually not the emotion of anger itself. There is a good anger.

Good anger is described in two ways-

1) slow to anger.

Proverbs 16:32 Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty.

As Tim Keller says, "Not NO anger, not BLOW anger, but rather SLOW anger. There is an anger that is not sin."

Why is this true?- because this is how God is.

Character of God- Exodus 34- Show me the essence of who you are! I am the Lord, slow to become angry.

2) Righteous Anger

Ephesians 4:26 Be angry but do not sin.

Sometimes we should be angry. God has given us this emotion to move us to righteous action instead of indifference.

Early church father, John Chrysostom- He that is angry without cause sins, but he who is not angry when there is cause sins. For unreasonable patience is the hotbed of many vices.

If God is this way....But I thought God is love? You can't have a God of love, without a God who gets angry. Because when something he loves is threatened, if he was indifferent, that's not love.

Righteous anger is energy aroused in defense of something good and released against something evil. **Anger in its pure, uncorrupted form is love in motion from a threat toward that which you love.** This was the kind of anger displayed by Jesus. Jesus got angry with the money changers, the tomb of Lazarus, the Pharisees oppression...at the sin that threatened those he loved.

If there is a good anger, how does it get corrupted? See much like there is righteous sexuality that gets disordered (v.5), there is righteous anger that gets disordered. **Augustine said the ultimate problem of our hearts that leads to all other sins is disordered love, we love good things more than God.** We turn good things into ultimate things. And so here's how it works, we get most angry when the things that we love, cherish, worship most are threatened.

Ex: The other day running late and it seems when I'm running late I always seem to get behind the slowest person in Delaware. And I'm on this person's tail, I saying, what is wrong with this person, do they have nowhere to go? I'm thinking bad things in my heart toward this person that I want to speed around them and just look at them... I'm angry. And this was the same day as the gas attack in Syria that killed many people including children. And yet I was far angrier at this slow moving driver than I was about this horrific attack. Why? Because I didn't plan my day well and I didn't want my reputation to be damaged by being late. Disordered love- I loved myself and my own reputation too much, which led to disordered anger. When I should have experienced appropriate, righteous anger because of injustice done to humanity. Look at the things in your heart that get you most angry, you will find it is the things you love the most. This is the deeper root of anger that corrupts this emotion.

3) The redeeming solution to anger.

Paul tells us that while disordered anger is inescapably linked to our old, corrupted man, which is the source of strife and hostility among one another, that there is good news. We can exchange the old self, the old disordered anger with the new self.

10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

v.11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Paul is saying that the new self, empowered by the Spirit in us, is fashioned after Christ. While we may not have had the choice before but to experience disordered anger, we now can exchange it. When we enter into a relationship with Christ through faith, the Spirit gives us new desires that reflect Christ and a new power. And in this context it means that we can exchange disordered anger that comes from disordered love, for righteous anger that comes from the love of God. If what we love

and cherish most is God, not our ego. If we love his sense of justice, his goodness, his will for our lives more than our own. We can redeem the emotion of anger and use it as a tool in the redeemer's hands- it leads as Paul implies to unity, equality and love where there used to be division, inequality and hatred.

How do we do that? How do we put on the new man. Let's get real practical.

1) Admit it. The biblical word for that is confess. This anger is from a corrupted source in me called sin. AA- rigorous honesty. It's not someone else's fault, it's not your Irish roots, you aren't just a passionate person, your passive anger is not acceptable. Say the truth for what it is. If you don't, if you try to deny it or rationalize it as something else, you are just feeding your anger. And roots become shoots, become trees become forests... it will just grow. If you aren't sure, what you be so brave to ask your spouse, kids, a friend "Do you think I have an anger problem?" Maybe for some of you that's as far as you get today...

2) Examine it. (Meditate) David says search me o God to see if there are any wicked ways. We need to be willing to go deeper into the roots of our hearts to see what we find. When we are experiencing anger ask yourself, "What is this big thing that's so important to me that I'm defending?" "What is this big thing that I'm willing to clobber anyone around me to get it or keep it?" If you examine it, you will most of the time find you are embarrassed, because the thing that you are defending is most often your own ego, your pride, self-esteem. When you ask that question it gets to the roots of your soul.

3) Exchange it. This is the continual process, not one time step of repentance. The daily, moment by moment decision to put Christ back at the root of your affection, worship, love instead of yourself. I'm no longer going to live according to the old, corrupted self, I'm claiming the victory in Christ to not live in NO anger, BLOW anger...but to slow anger. Patience, fashioned after Christ, motivated by love.

Example:

Parenting is tough. You basically sacrifice yourself, how you would want to live, spend your time, money for your kids because you love them, you pour so much into them...and then at some point they become a teenager. And you tell them they can't do something or have something that is you know is self-destructive and they respond- You don't care about me, you only care about yourself, you don't love me, I hate you! Explosion just happened...and you feel like the victim. How do you respond?

If you respond with NO anger, which is really passive anger- you will punish them with silence, aloof and withdrawal, bitter toward them, emotionally disconnect from them. You lose, you add to the dysfunction and you lose your child.

If you respond with BLOW anger- pour more gas on the fire- blow up at them, you fire things back at them, harsh word. You lose, your child too.

The hardest thing to do- and the only way to save your teen at that time... is to not allow your woundedness and feelings as a victim to rule your anger... and but if you perform surgical strike-not on your teen, but on the heart of your teen that is self-centered.

Proverbs 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Draw in close, meet them gently, absorb the rage, and you say, I know you don't like this, and I'm unfair, but I'm doing this because I love you, and this is going to be the way it is.

Doesn't this sound like it's fashioned after Jesus? When you see Jesus absorbing our hatred, our anger and rage and rebellion toward him on the cross and paying for it. He hated the sin and loved the sinner. When he says the gentlest of things to us, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." This is the ultimate surgical strike on our hearts. We love him because he first loved us.

MLK Jr. quote

Of course, this is not practical. Life is a matter of getting even, of hitting back, of dog eat dog. Am I saying that Jesus commands us to love those who hurt and oppress us? Do I sound like most preachers—idealistic and impractical? Maybe in some distant Utopia, you say, that idea will work, but not in the hard, cold world in which we live. My friends, we have followed the so-called practical way for too long a time now, and it has led inexorably to deeper confusion and chaos. Time is cluttered with the wreckage of communities which surrendered to hatred and violence. For the salvation of our nation and the salvation of mankind, we must follow another way. This does not mean that we abandon our righteous efforts. With every ounce of our energy we must continue to rid this nation of the incubus of segregation. But we shall not in the process relinquish our privilege and our obligation to love. While abhorring segregation, we shall love the segregationist. This is the only way to create the beloved community. To our most bitter opponents we say: "We shall match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We shall meet your physical force with soul force. Do to us what you will, and we shall continue to love you. We cannot in all good conscious obey your unjust laws, because noncooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good. Throw us in jail, and we shall still love you. Send your hooded perpetrators of violence into our community at the midnight hour and beat us and leave us half dead, and we shall still love you. But be ye assured that we will wear you down by our capacity to suffer. One day we shall win freedom, but not only for ourselves. We shall so appeal to your heart and conscience that we shall win you in the process, and our victory will be a double victory."

Isn't this what our world needs to see? Isn't this what your home life needs to experience? Isn't this what our cities need to experience? May we, through the power of the Spirit take off the old self with it's old disordered anger, and put on the new self with a love-motivated righteous anger that leads to redemption.