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SPEAKER

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Grace Unleashed:
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PART

17

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Wrestling With Anger

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Ephesians 4:26-27



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It's so good to see each of you of Providence, if you're in this venue here, or all the other venues, the Fellowship Hall, [inaudible 00:00:07] welcome, we're really glad that you're here, or it may be that you're at home, and as well as to all of our guests, we're thrilled that you have joined us, I'm sincere about that, we really are glad that you are here as a church family. It's the love of our life to seek to honor the Lord in what we do. He's told us that how we do that, it's to introduce all peoples to Jesus Christ, and to grow them up to love and worship him. As a church family, one of the ways that we seek to do that is to plant churches around the world. You see, one of the neat things that you read about in the bible is that God has this, He's got this affection for the local church.

You and I know that she's broken because we're here, so it's broken partly because of us. But, you look around, what you see here, and you may think of more glorious things that you can see in the world, and yet what He looks is a group of people that have been rescued out of darkness to brought into light to worship His son. He loves to see this, and He loves to see this happening all around the world. Yet, there's a lot of places where there's literally no church.

As a church, what we pray about, what we love to think about doing is how do we partner so that local churches can be formed, planted, mean that we go to places, share the gospel there, people come to faith in Christ, and then they begin to meet and to grow, so that they can be like in their own community, in their own city, in their own place in the world.

We love doing this, and one of the ways that we seek to do that is actually to identify people in those places, in those countries like India, this is one I want to show you, and where you find people that have graduated from some sort of bible school, and then they go out and they try to plant a church.

As a church family, about a year ago, we partnered with 10 different church plants. Pastor George, who's overseas over the last several weeks, and he sent us a picture, just a few days ago, that I want to show you right here.

George is obviously on the bottom right, next to him, to his right, is a man, his name is [Kamlesh 00:02:21], and [Kamlesh 00:02:22] from India is a church planner that we as a church family actually support. What that means is that we pray for him, we also send him some funds each month to help with his needs, and what he's doing over the next three years is seeking to plant a church.

There's four guys in the back, right? The two guys on the far left, the guy on the pink shirt, and the brown jacket, [Kamlesh 00:02:49] led this two men to Christ this year. He then began to train them on how do you lead their friends to Christ, and they led the two guys standing up on the far back to Christ.

This year, this local church has seen 19 people come to faith in Christ and be baptized, which is just a miracle in this culture. There's another 50 people who have trusted Christ, and they're waiting to be baptized.

Why I showed that to you, and shared that with you? One is to just rejoice that God is doing some amazing things, and all around the world, but also to commend you, because He uses your faithfulness, He uses your faithfulness to pray, and to give, and to be connected to this body, so that we can make partnerships like this with people around the world. So I just want to thank you, I wanted you to be able to celebrate, that it really did my heart good seeing these brothers in the Lord, new brothers that have been added to the kingdom, I'm incredibly, incredibly grateful.

If you are a guest here, we love the bible here. We love the bible really for two reasons. One is the word of God, and it offers us instruction, but even more so than that is it points us to Jesus Christ, who's the savior of our life.

We love to work through a book, we're in Ephesians, and so if you brought that one, we're up to chapter four. If you don't have one in your hands, then there's lots of bibles in the chairs near you, and in that bible, chapter four, where we will be starting in verse 26, it's on page 978.

The two verses that we want to look at are on something that's really pertinent to all of us, and that is anger. We want to ask God to help us. If you would, let's bow, and let's pray together.

God, we confess to you that anger is a part of our life. When we think back not only to the days when we were angry, and maybe we're angry right now, and we don't know what to do with that anger, we don't know how to deal with it.

We look to You, we ask You to help us today. Also, pray Father for those in the room who think back on days, maybe when they were angry and they acted on that angry in a way that brought to them, and now brings to them repeatedly just memories of guilt and regret of what they did in anger.

God, I pray that You'd use this text to not only bring healing to our hearts, but also that You'd give us instruction, instruction on how to manage, and leverage, and even wrestle with this anger and turn it into redemptive ends. God, would You be our teacher, would You speak to us, would You help us to believe what we read to understand it and then to apply it to our life? We need Your help now, I pray in Christ's name, amen.

This week I had a little story that I was reading about life in Cambodia. Really a tragic story that's sort of related to the idea of anger. I want to share it with you.

Back in the early '70s, almost 50 years ago, in the early '70s, there was a civil war. One of the ways that they sought to fight each other was to actually plant, or bury, landmines. All right? A bomb that was planted underground, you couldn't see, in the hopes that the other side, that they would step on it, it would ignite and kill a lot of people without them having to be there.

Millions of these landmines were planted, were buried in Cambodia. Today, 48 years later, it's amazing thing, 48 years later, there's four different groups seeking to find, because they're not marked, they're just out there, so they're not marked, they're seeking to find them, and then to remove them. The four different groups say that still to this day, there are in-between 4 and 6 million active landmines in the ground.

They go around in villages, in places that are not inside the city, and they put little red flags where a landmine has been identified, where it's still active. What this has done to the culture is actually terrifying.

For every single year, many of these are accidentally set off by unsuspecting people. It even says that some 80% of the victims of these landmines, still today, are boys and children out playing in the villages. It's a terrible thing. What it's done is it's actually left a mark, which is hard to imagine, that there, what they now believe, are 40,000 amputees in Cambodia.

People who are the victim, that lost some limb, some part of their body because they were in or around one of these landmines. It's also, as you can imagine, created a culture of fear. I don't fear my kids when they go out to the backyard, of what they're going to find, maybe a snake or something like that, but not a landmine. You can imagine just the terror if you lived in one of these villages of sending your kids out to play.

All of this tragedy, this real tragedy, it does illustrate a crisis in the human heart, and that is anger. It's very similar to it in the sense that anger is like an explosive, it's the dynamite of the soul. If you think about it, anger, it lies underground, it can't be seen, but once it's set off, it obliterates, it pulverizes, it destroys.

When you think about the different things that anger does to destroy. One of the first things it does to us is it actually destroys us, it actually pulverize our body. This is what happens when you get angry, really angry, your brain signals to the pituitary gland to actually secrete, and then release, a lot of cortisone and a lot of adrenaline.

As that starts to flow through your body, what happens is the heart starts to speed up. Your blood starts to speed up. Your body temperature begins to rise. The fact is this, this is something that God created the body to do to rescue us from danger.

If you're in the road, and you look around and suddenly there is a truck, and that fear, it actually does the same thing, it actually works through to where you have adrenaline, and it gives you immediate energy to move out of the way quickly.

The problem with anger is this, is that it sits for a long period of time. That sustained anger over time, we now learn a lot of doctors now are saying that it's more erosive to our physical health and even our actual heart than anxiety, and fear, and sorrow, that anger left unchecked, anger that just allows to reside within the heart will destroy your heart.

It also destroys community, you know that. Proverbs, Chapter 15, verse 18 says that "a hot-tempered man stirs up strife." Everyone of us knows that when we get angry, we're more inclined to throw our words, or to throw looks, or our fist, or our remote control like a weapon.

If you think about your life, I know in my life, most people wouldn't say ... if you could find five words to tell a friend about who I am, most people in the world, who'd known me, wouldn't say "Man, he's just this violent temper kind of guy, he's just over the top temper." That's not how most people ... Yet, when I think about some of my greatest regrets, in particular, with my children, it's happened when I was angry.

Most of us, if you think about some of your regrets, things that you said, facial expressions that you sent upon somebody, what you did with your hands, or what you did with things, it's oftentimes it's motivated by anger. That creates a third destruction, and that's the destruction of our character. You think about your life, you think about people that you know that have been angry, what we do when we're angry is often very memorable.

You can have 50 days of gentleness, and kindness, and love, and where you just, you know, and all of a sudden you can erupt one time and do things in your anger, because there's just no control of that, to where 50 days of a certain characteristic can literally be obliterated in your life, and people will only remember that point when "Man, do you remember though when that happened?" Anger can be exceptionally memorable.

Paul is in prison, and Paul is not angry. He's in prison because he's a believer in Jesus Christ, and he wants the people in Ephesus, who are outside of the church, who don't know Christ, to see Jesus Christ as consequential to everything in life. Yet, he's in heaven, so what he wants them to do? Is he wants the church to be his representative.

What he's doing in chapter four, after three chapters of saying "This is what the gospel is, this is how we've been saved." He says "Now, I urge you then, as a church, to [inaudible 00:12:16] worthy of the calling," [inaudible 00:12:18] of each of you have been called. We've been called to represent Jesus Christ, who'd never sinned with his anger.

What He wants us to do is to represent him. What we saw from verses 17 to 24 was sort of the, it was the key, it was the paradigm of how God helps us change so that these areas of our life, that they can change, we can change.

Then, what He does, is He takes that key, and He applies it to several, very basic, areas of life. Last week, we looked at verse 25, which is all about being honest, and now we get to 26 and 27, which is about anger. Let's read it together.

It says "Be angry, and do not sin, do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil." What I want to show you here, even before we take the Lord's Supper, three things that God is going to do, that God does for us right here in this text to help us with our anger, and then we're going to end with three applications of how you and I can actually leverage this anger and move it toward redemptive ends.

The first thing that we learn here is this, is that God affirms the basic goodness of anger. Some of you would say "Wait, I think he just went back to [inaudible 00:13:34] again." No, I didn't, actually, God affirms the basic goodness of anger. He says two words "Be angry." It's an imperative, which means it's not a suggestion.

What that means is there are times when it is the right thing to do to be angry, and the wrong thing not to be angry. Some of us have a hard time with that, and yet that's exactly how God is, and that's why He's the test of what is right, and ideal, and righteous.

We learn in Psalm Chapter 7, verse 11, some things about God. There we learn that God is a righteous judge, a God who feels indignation or anger every day."

Think about this, here is God, your Creator, we're created in His image to be like Him, we relate like Him. It says that He is righteous in all that He does, He is upright, never sitting, and yet it says He feels indignation, or anger every single day.

There's people in this world, maybe even in this room that will say "No, I just don't believe that. I believe in a God of love, and not a God of anger." But friends, you have to understand that a God who never gets angry, can't be a God of love. Because anger is the protective arm of our love.

Anger, God's and yours, it literally rises within our heart when what we love is threatened. That's why you don't get angry when something is threatened that you don't care about.

We get angry when what we love is threatened. That's why you get angry when your kids are mistreated. If you thought about it, you probably get angrier when your kids are mistreated than when my kids are mistreated.

How many of you have ever lost sleep because one of your kids was mistreated? Probably somebody. How many of you have lost sleep because my kids were mistreated? Probably not many of you. Why? It's not because you don't like them, it's because you have a special kind of love for your kid. When your love, what the object of your love, when that is threatened, anger rises within the heart.

There's a lot of people that think that the opposite of love is anger, it's not, it's hatred. The [inaudible 00:16:00] of hatred is indifference. The thing about God is, He's just not indifferent, He loves perfectly, He loves all of us absolutely perfectly. He feels anger when that which He loves is threatened.

Let me show you a great example of this. It's Jesus. The bible takes great steps in order to show us that Jesus was without sin. Yet, this happened in his life, we find it in Mark, Chapter 3.

The day was a Sabbath day, there was a man who went to the synagogue, the church at the time, to worship, and Jesus was there, and he went there and he had a withered hand, I don't know exactly what that means, but in my mind, I sort of image that his fingers, and maybe his wrist were sort of withdrawn like this, and he couldn't open up his hand.

He went to Jesus because he heard that Jesus could do miracles, that he performs healings, so "maybe he could heal my hand." He goes on the Sabbath, and Jesus is there. We're also told that there's some Pharisees who were there. Some religious leaders. They were just swallowed up with legalism, and they had created some rules.

Now, first, you need to know something about these guys, they don't love Jesus, they don't respect Jesus, and we're told that they were hoping to accuse Jesus, they're threatened by Jesus, some they loved was threatened, so they were angry with Jesus.

They had made a bunch of rules in what you could do and what you couldn't do on the Sabbath. They weren't God's rules, they were their rules. The fact is that anytime somebody did something that they had never thought about being in the rule book, they just said "Well, it's on the outside, you're not supposed to do that."

Because nobody sits down and says “Now, where should we put healings? Because none of us really can do that.” They didn’t have healing on the Sabbath as part of the rules. Certainly, Jesus Christ comes and he has authority over all things, he can do miracles. They look and it actually says that they look to see if he would do a miracle on the Sabbath day in order to accuse him of breaking the law.

Jesus asked them a question, he says “Guys, let me ask you something, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good?” It says that they were silent. Why were they silent? Because they didn’t want to authorize his behavior, they wanted him to authorize his behavior so that if he broke their law, they could say “He’s a rule breaker.”

Notice what it says, it says “Jesus looked around at them with anger, grieved at the hardness of heart.” Why was Jesus angry? It was because Jesus loves. He loved the man with the withered hand, and he wanted healing, a good for him. He also loved the Pharisees, each of those individuals who he created to worship him, to know them, for them to know him, and yet they did not respect him, they didn’t want to be near him, they hated him.

They were wrapped up in all kinds of legalism. They weren’t happy as people, and Jesus loved them. They were threatened by the sin of legalism that they had wrapped around themselves. But then there’s another thing I think that he really loved, and that was the Sabbath. He created it, he’s the lord of the Sabbath.

He made it not to be a prison for us, but to be a gift for us. He said “Hey, here’s the day, why don’t you take a day to rest?” A gift. They had taken that gift, and they had manipulated to the place to where they just said “You know what? Let’s make it a prison.” Anytime you love something, and it’s threatened, anger rises in the heart, including in the heart of Jesus.

All of this to say, is that when truly lovely things are dishonored, we should get angry. When you see somebody created in the image of God, and they are mistreated, when you see a child mistreated, you should get angry. When you see terrorism, you should get angry. When you see assault, you should get angry.

Why? Because God gets angry. He looks down and He sees things that He loves, people He loves, His word being violated, and it causes anger to rise in His heart. When you see these things, the protective arm of love should rise. That’s why He says “Be angry.”

But He makes a really quick turn, we’re only two words in. The first thing we see is that God does affirm the basic goodness of anger, because goodness originates with Him. He gets angry. The second thing it says though is that God warns us of anger’s potential damage. That’s when He says “But do not sin.”

Be angry and do not sin. The reason, you see, is obviously sin separates. Anger is an explosive, it's the dynamite of the soul. [inaudible 00:20:45] to take a dynamite, it can do good, and they can do evil. It can move a mountain, so that you can build a road, but it can also destroy a village, and all the people therein.

He cares about us, He cares about what it can do. It's interesting that God is able, because He's perfect, to hold this explosive called anger with a pure heart, and with very steady hands. But the bible says that we can't. The reason is because we have trembling hands, because we have an impure heart.

Anger comes to Him, anger comes to us. He's able to manage it really well, but there's two reasons that we don't. Why is it that it is so dangerous for us, this anger? I think there's two things. Number one is, we get confused about what to love. We get confused about what's lovely in the world, about what we should love.

Let me show you. What we learned of in verse 17, 18 and 19, is that you and I, we all have cravings in the heart that only God can satisfy. When we are far from God, when we're distant from him, and our heart is not being satisfied in God, the heart gets hungry, and thirsty, it still has those cravings.

But it says, when we're far from God, it says that our understanding is darkened. It's sort of like being in the kitchen, and we know there's lots of bottles of water around, some of them have poison in them, and some of them are pure water, and yet the lights are off, and you can't distinguish one from another.

What it does is, when our heart is thirsty, and we're separated from God, and the only thing that can satisfy our heart is God, and the lights are off in our understanding, well, what it says is that we tend to ask good things to become God things. We ask good things to do what only God can do. The bible calls these idols.

Where we set our affection, our hope, that maybe if I had enough of this, or more of this, then I would be satisfied within my heart. It's interesting what this does, you see, let's just say, what's a good thing? A good thing might be something like encouragement. You have friends who encourage you.

You do something, you serve in a church, and then people come up and encourage you, and you think that's good thing. But what if you make encouragement a God thing? What if you make it an idol? I have to have the approval of people in my life. What happens is this, is if what you love, approval, is threatened because people don't say thank you, or they don't say "That was awesome, great job," then anger rises in the heart.

A lot of us, after a long day, we like peace at night. Some of us, we make peace, which is a good thing, into a God thing. We say "you know what I want? I'm out of words, I'm out of energy, I'm out of everything, I just want to sit, I want to sit on my couch, I don't want anyone to talk to me, I don't want to have to do homework, I don't want to do nothing, this is a me night. I'm going to eat what I want, I'm going to do what I want." So we turn peace into an idol, peace into a God thing.

This is what we love. When you get home, and your wife says “Hey, let’s have a conversation.” You can get angry. Why? Because what you love is now threatened. The kids may get into an argument, and you may get angry not because you see something in them that stirs your heart, it’s they’re interrupting my peace.

I have to discipline, and now I’m mad because you’ve intruded on my idol. We see this in all kinds of ... Tonight, there’s going to be literally people that are mad because their team lost. Angry. You don’t know a single person out there, they’ve never done anything for you, and they never will, and yet you can be angry at the other team, you know why? Because they’re a threat to what you love.

In other words, we can get angry at a lot of things that aren’t even that noble. This is where there’s a problem. We can be as angry when we see a child being assaulted, as when someone pulls out in front of us, because it’s my space, I want my space on the road. What happens is, our love is so spread that there are so many things that we love, because we made so many good things, God things, that now we get angry more often than we need to, because we just love so many things that aren’t even all that good.

The second reason I think that we have these shaky hands with anger, and why it’s such a risk, it’s because even when it’s noble anger, we don’t always manage it well. In other words, you can see a child being assaulted, and then we still respond in a sinful way. You see, what we’re going to see here is God’s plan literally for us to leverage our anger into a fuel that’ll make a surgical strike on the evil that’s threatening what we love.

Let’s just say your child is sinning, let’s just say that one of your kids hits another one of your kids, or something, lies, or something. Godly anger, meaning that if we respond to this sin, I’m like “That’s not right,” and I’m going to respond to it in a healthy way, what you’ll do is you’ll seek to target surgically strike the sin, but not the kid.

But here’s what happens when our flesh is at the realm, whether it’s unrighteous anger, or righteous anger. We tend to be like a B-52 bomber that just carpet bombs not only the sin, but we also tend to carpet bomb the kid. We come in, and we just guns blazing, we just drop bombs in anywhere they land because we’re angry.

What you find is this, is that when you or not slow the anger when you carpet bomb, everything that we talked about in terms of the dynamite of the soul, it occurs, it breaks up the family, it breaks up relationships, it breaks up your peace, it breaks up your character, it breaks up your reputation. People begin thinking “this is how he behaves, this is how she behaves.”

God warns us of this potential damage. The third thing is that God directs us to wrestle our anger towards redemption. Towards redemptive ends. He says to us “Do not let the sun go down on your anger.” He’s not giving us six-month pass to Eskimos living up in the north pole when the sun doesn’t go down, okay? Those living on the Equator, they only got 12 hours, that’s it. Get angry, get out of anger.

That’s now what He’s saying there, because sometimes you get angry after the sun has gone down. It’s not literal, it’s metaphor. What He’s saying is this “let the day of your anger be the day that you [inaudible 00:27:48] your anger, and press it, and push it towards redemptive ends.” Don’t just let the sun keep coming up and going down, and that root of bitterness begin to grow.

He says “Give no opportunity to the devil,” and the reason is because the devil is looking for one. He’s looking in order to disrupt the unity of the body. He is looking to sow a crop of bitterness, and he’s looking to make the cross look weak.

What does that mean? In chapter 4, verse 32, He says “Forgive others as Christ has forgiven you.” Here’s how this works. When you trust Jesus Christ because of what he did on the cross, and he forgives you, and then you take that, if someone harms you, and you forgive them because you’ve been forgiven, you are showing how consequential and powerful the cross is, not only in your relationship with God, but your relationship with other people.

But, if however you’re harmed in conscious of the cross, you don’t even care about it, you don’t think about it, and you refuse to forgive somebody else, and you let the sun keep going up and going down, and there’s still that root of bitterness, Satan in that moment has made the cross look weak in your life.

He says “Don’t let the sun go down, give no opportunity to the devil.” What can we do? I want to show you, how does the three things that we’ve learned from verse 17 to 24, how does it apply here? How do we actually practice this? How do we leverage or wrestle our anger into redemptive ends? Three things.

First, let’s slowly examine the source of our anger. I know that your anger, just like mine, it feels paramount when you’re angry, but I want you to know, it’s only the symptom, and not the source. If you do not find the source of that anger, there will be no healing, none.

The ideal you need to understand is to be slow to anger, not to have no anger. Why? Because God is slow to anger. This is what James 1, 19 says “Let every person be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger.” This is what I mean, tracing the symptom of your anger to its source. The next time you get angry, just back up just for a second and ask this question “What is the big thing that I’m seeking to defend right now?”

What love in my life is being threatened that's causing me to get angry? You could also ask in this way "Am I angry because God's word is violated or because my word? Am I angry because God's will is violated or because my will is violated?" Very often, what you're going to find is a little bit of shame and the reason is because the majority of times that we're angry it's because of our ego.

We're going to find that it's not because God's been violated, it's because we have been violated, our pride, our ego.

I want to encourage you to find the source, do not let the root of bitterness grow, and the reason is because roots become shoots, and shoots become trees, and trees become a forest. Trace it to its source.

The second thing is let's ask God to renew our imagination as we repent and obey. Whether you find, so you traced it back on, so okay "This is where I am at." Whether it is a righteous or just a selfish reason that you're angry you still need God's help to manage that. In that very moment, that's when you go back at the verse 22 when He says "Look, put off the old self, and the old manner of life, how you would normally deal with this anger, without the spirit of God, without the word of God in your life, and put on the new self, that's available to you because of what Christ has done."

You see, when you do that, you put on the new self. Now, all of a sudden, you have the power to hold this anger with very strong hands. That gives you the time, if you're slow to anger, to pray. What do you pray? You pray at that moment verse 23, "God, would you renew the imagination, the spirit of my mind?"

The reason this is important it's because whatever captures your imagination will govern your behavior. Let me show you how this works in a real life example, let me just tell you upfront if I forgot one time.

This has not happened in my family. You're going to say that "Oh, he's got three teenagers, this is going on." It really isn't. It could, we're not above it, but it's not. Let's just say you have a teenager, and your teenager wants something. You say "No." This is the person that their entire life you've sacrificed for, this is also a situation to where literally the rest of the human population would affirm that what they want to do is destructive to them, they're the only one in the whole world that doesn't know that this is destructive. But they want to do it. You say "No," because you love them, you want to protect them.

Suddenly, they're anger ignites because they didn't get what they want, their love is threatened. Suddenly, they say things that feel like daggers. Your teenager says "I hate you. You always say no. You've never done anything good for me." Suddenly, your anger ignites.

Now, listen to me, whatever you vividly imagine next will determine your next step. Three possibilities. If you vividly imagine the depth of your wound because of their words, it's a possibility that you developed a pattern of withdraw from them, where you lose the child, but you save yourself from further insult and injury, so you pull away.

If you vividly imagine retaliation, you may go at them, and because you have 20 or 30 years more practice in verbal abuse, you may win, and still lose your child.

But there's another way. That is if you can sit slowly under God, and vividly imagine redemption, what could take place in this moment if the sin was removed, if the folly was removed? You would be able, at that moment, to make a redemptive surgical strike where you draw near to the child in love, you'd calmly speak the truth in love, and therefore striking the sin, without striking the child.

Your imagination becomes critically important at that moment. But if we're not slow to anger, we will never pause to allow our imagination to get past immediate retaliation.

The third thing that we need to do, which is so critically pertinent to what we're about to do with the Lord's Supper is keep one eye on Jesus as we wrestle with our anger.

You see, as you look at your situation, I want to encourage you to keep one eye on Christ, and the reason is because he, and he alone, is able to navigate you out of the prison of your anger. When you read the story of Jesus, you see something taking place, and that is the humanity, including you and me, we sinned against God, and God became angry because of our sin.

He says that He vividly imagine what could happen next. He didn't vividly imagine the wound causing Him to withdraw from us, nor did He vividly imagine retaliation causing Him to carpet bomb us. No, it says that He vividly imagine redemption.

Instead of withdrawing, or instead of hurting, He sends His son. Jesus Christ came to this earth, he lived a righteous life, and yet we hated him. We spat upon him, we mocked him, and we crucified him. Jesus calmly took our undeserved anger.

But on the cross, we're also told that Jesus took the anger we deserved. Jesus had prayed "Let this cup pass through me, but not as I will, but as you will." The cup that Jesus was praying about was the cup of God's wrath that was stored up against all of humanity. It was His anger towards us. It was His indignation being stored every single day against sin.

Jesus, on that cross, not only did he drink our anger, he also took the cup of the Father's anger that was directed towards us. He took both cups and emptied both of them. Why did he do this? Because he loved us, and he made a surgical strike not on us, but on the sin that threatened us.

In Providence, if we, as a people, be melted by this knowledge, then when other people wrong us, we will receive fuel to imagine doing the same thing.

God has given us this gift to remember and proclaim what He's done, that's called the Lord's Supper. For those who will be serving us, elders and deacons, if you want to go and stand up, and head to the back as we prepare to take this, I want you to think about this for a moment. Jesus told his followers to take it. He told us to do this. He told us to do it so that we would remember what he's done, so that we would proclaim to one another that we believe what he's done.

If you've never trusted in Christ, we would humbly ask you to let these things pass, but if you do know Christ as your savior and lord, we invite you, we invite you to take of the cup, and of the bread, which is symbolic of his blood and his body.

We ask you that while this is being passed, that you take these moments just to ask God "Is there any sin in my life that I need to confess," so that you can do this with a clean and clear conscience. Okay? Let's pray together.

Father in heaven, we thank you for your kindness to us, and we thank you for the mercy that you pour out to us in Jesus Christ. We thank you God, we thank you Christ that you took the cup. Not only did you take our cup, you took the Father's cup, you drank it all so that we didn't have to.

We thank you Father for showing us the way through your son, Jesus, and I prayed now, God, that You would Your heart to test us and see if there's any grievous way in us. Help us to confess any sin in our life, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.



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