



RELEASE

Sermon Series: Release

Many people are walking around in self-imposed captivity. They have allowed certain thoughts and feelings to take root in their hearts and minds and, as a result, are seeing life slip away. They have become their own enemies. This 5-week series will walk through the healthy spiritual journey of letting go of some key unhealthy behaviors: pride, **anger**, lust, jealousy, and bearing a grudge.

RELEASE: Letting Go of Anger

Anger is an emotional fire that burns whenever life is not what we think it should be. And while God at times burns with a righteous anger, humans almost exclusively swing to unrighteous anger. As Christ ministers to our spirits, however, we find release from our anger, an ability to forgive, and a capacity to enjoy a life in which love replaces anger and reconciliation replaces animosity.

CONNECT WITH ONE ANOTHER

- 1) How did you see God at work this past week?
- 2) What has God been teaching you in his Word this week?
- 3) Recall the last time you were angry, the last time that emotional fire burned because life or someone in your life was not what you thought it or who they should be. Share if you are willing.

CONNECT WITH GOD'S WORD

Matthew 5:21-26

[Jesus said,] 21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. 23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny."

CONNECT WITH GOD

In Matthew 5, during the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus starts talking about murder and almost in the same breath, anger. It's a switch, to go from such a serious sin to such a relatively minor sin. Anger is nothing like murder. Do you think they even belong in the same conversation?

We live with this illusion of degrees of sin. In terms of the earthly consequences, there are degrees of sin. And on that scale, depending on how the anger is expressed, it is nowhere near murder. But, in terms of how sick our spirits are, murder and anger not only belong in the same conversation, they belong in the same sentence. And they deserve the same sentence. Discuss this concept that was presented in the sermon.

What if a person deserves your anger? Doesn't God even get angry at times? If God gets angry, it can't all be wrong. Can there be a righteous anger? What does Romans 1:18 say?

Having an anger that is completely righteous, justified, with no sin attached, is like juggling flaming machetes while blindfolded. How so?

What do you think of this definition of anger? Anger: The emotional fire that burns inside a person when reality, in a negative way, is in conflict with expectations, desires, or ambitions. Think about your anger issues and run them through the filter of this definition. Is this definition applicable?

Reflect for a moment on real situations in your life, in which anger came out, either your anger or someone else's, and something was said that cannot be undone. What kind of words have come out in anger?

The words themselves are not as important as the angry heart behind them. That angry heart is what belongs in the same sentence as a murderous heart.

Anger turned outward is like a blame missile looking for a target. We recognize this as anger. Anger turned inward disguises itself as what common psychological issue? Do you recall from the sermon some of the physical manifestations when anger is turned inward?

Angry people stir anger in others. Check yourself. Are you, in any way, unnecessarily exposing yourself to angry people? Is it infecting you?

Jesus is calling to you. "Let go of your anger. Release it. Get it resolved." Jesus, in our text, really presses the importance of reconciliation, of working through the anger issue. What direction does he give in Matthew 5 starting at verse 23?

Dealing with anger is urgent. What does Ephesians 4:25 say? When is the best time to deal with anger with another person? Who is your accuser?

The law of God is your accuser. To come to terms with your accuser might sound like this, "God, you're right. I have sinned in my anger. I am liable to judgment, to the hell of fire." Think about the situation you identified in the "Connect With One Other" section at the beginning of this study. What could you say to come to terms with your accuser?

Sounds like confession, doesn't it? What does God do when you confess your sin?

Should God be angry with you? Is God angry with you? Where did that anger go?

CONNECT WITH GOD IN PRAYER

Praise God for Jesus who experienced God's wrath, so that you don't have to.