



## Wrath

Rachael Suddarth for November 14, 2010

*Note: Tim Suddarth was originally slated to speak this morning, but due to sickness, Rachael stepped in to introduce Rob Bell's Store from the Nooma film series.*

Tim and I have been married seven years and have been a couple for 10. I have learned a lot of things about him, and me, and what we need to do to be successful roommates. Since Aurora died, Tim gets angry, a lot and for no good reason. He is working on it, but he still has a way to go. One of the most important things I can do as a wife and friend is ask Tim what is actually wrong. I know that he is not enraged because I didn't rinse out the glass, or that Ryan just texted, or that a car just made an illegal right turn. I know there is something else that happened during the day that has hurt his heart and I need to help him figure out what it is so that we can talk about it, and so that we can heal together.

Tim and I work well together and I have learned to respond to him with love. However, there are a whole lot of people in the world who do not have someone to ask, "What is actually the problem?"

Instead there are these angry, angry people who drive around blasting their horns, and who stand in the checkout lane and cuss out the cashier, and bosses who take the slightest mistake from an employee and blow it out of proportion. No one stops to find out what the truth is, what the hurt is. Instead, one angry person, makes another angry person, makes another angry person.

We live in a culture of anger. Anger is justified. Anger is necessary. Anger is part of letting people really know how you feel.

Unfortunately our anger is out of control and unjustified. Our anger is about selfishness and our agenda.

When our self-love edges out our love of other people, anger becomes a sin.

And when we stop loving people, God gets angry.

In Mark 3:1-6 we see Jesus angry. He runs into the religious leaders of the day, they set a trap for him.

*Again [Jesus] entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.*

So Jesus can get angry. You know what, I know angry people, but few are angry like Jesus.

We all know angry people. We all know people who have rage bubbling under the surface, keeping them from truly loving others, Speaker Rob Bell will help us examine the anger we all feel from time to time. By looking at the root of our anger, we can learn to channel it towards something constructive - something bigger than ourselves.

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### **Discussion**

What are some situations where people easily get "under your skin"? Do you let these people know? If so, how?

What was the last thing you got angry about? Why did this make you angry?

What are some things in the world right now, some larger issues, that make you angry? When you think about what you want to do with your life, are these things part of your consideration?

Lets look at Mark again:

*Again [Jesus] entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.*

What is Jesus angry about?

Jesus is angry at the religious leaders lack of love for another human being.

Jesus is angry that they care more about rule-keeping than about restoration.

Jesus is angry that they value the maintenance of their own reputation and status more than healing and compassion.

The religious leaders' anger had everything to do with self-interest and nothing to do with justice towards God or their neighbor.

The religious leaders were keepers of the letter of the law, but ignored the justice and love that inspired its commands.

"What is the law really about?" is Jesus' real question to them. Is Sabbath-keeping about honoring God, or is it about your own honor?

The teachers of the law stood before Jesus in stony silence. It is not that they were dumbfounded by his wisdom; rather, they stubbornly refused to give him the satisfaction of an answer. They refused to be moved by love.

Jesus is angry because he loved the man with the shriveled hand, and because he sees that the religious leaders did not.

Jesus is angry because he loved the religious leaders and was frustrated—in Mark's words, "grieved at their hardness of heart"—because they wouldn't let God's love reach them.

As deeply angry as Jesus was at their stubborn refusal to love, how does he respond to them? By lashing out with words or whips?

No, Jesus does not retaliate or do harm. But he doesn't back down either. He simply heals the man. He loves; he restores the man to wholeness; he does what is right—according to God's justice.

Anger, when it is a *holy* emotion, has *justice* as its object and *love* as its root. Both love and justice are focused on the good of others.

We can let our anger be about our own situation or use anger to make the world a better place. The band is going to play a song by Mumford and Sons that talks about misusing our anger, viewing the world with apathy and letting it slide by without engaging it in any way.

As the song plays, reflect on these 2 questions:

Do you believe the things you usually get angry about are actually worth getting angry about?

What are some things you could do to ensure your anger leads to making things better?