

HEARTBEATS- Staying Connected 2/22/2021



Dear Friends in Christ,

ONE AT ONE – Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, February 23 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, let our prayers be for those who are suffering in many parts of our country because of severe weather conditions. Pray for their safety and for quick response by those who can help them. Pray for milder weather. And pray for the Spirit's leading in how we might best help.

Is anger wrong? Is it bad? Is it sinful? Many people would say the answer to these questions is, "yes." Many believe that anger is an evil emotion that reveals our sinful nature and that we must guard against this feeling and try to suppress or block it. But feelings are neither bad or good. They are simply how God created us. God created us as emotional beings with the ability to have many feelings, including anger.

Anger gets a "bad" label because we don't like the outcome of our anger. We can be embarrassed by our angry outbursts. We don't like that it can make us feel out-of-control. And we dislike the destructive or hurtful things that anger causes us to do or say.

Remember, though, that even Jesus became angry. When Jesus was surrounded in the synagogue by those who were looking to condemn Him if He healed a man with a shriveled hand on the Sabbath, "He looked around at them in anger, and

deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.” (Mark 3:5)

Even more familiar is the case of Jesus entering the Temple and seeing the money changers and sellers. He became angry and turned over tables, released the animals, and chased the sellers and money changers out. (Matthew 21:12-13) Jesus was sinless, but He did become angry on occasion.

Emotions are not “good” or “bad.” They are part of who God made us. What we do with our emotions, however, can be negative or positive, hurtful or helpful.

There is such a thing as “righteous anger.” Righteous anger comes when we see things that anger God. These are the things about which we should become angry. And then we should use that righteous anger to motivate us to seek justice in order to correction that wrong.

A black couple in San Francisco was considering selling their home. When it was appraised, the felt that the amount was very low, especially considering the cost of the renovations they had made to their home. After telling their white friends about this, the friends volunteered to “be them.” They brought over pictures of their family so that the home looked like it was theirs. When the next appraisal came in it was 50% higher than the amount given to the black couple.

Does that story make you feel angry? It should. This black couple were being treated unfairly because of the color of their skin. In such situations, we ought to feel anger because God does not approve of this kind of unjust treatment of God’s children. There are many other such situations that happen and the appropriate response to these is anger. Again, what we do with that anger is important. Violence, attacking the person responsible physically or verbally, or other such actions are not what we should be doing. Instead, we can confront the situation, calling out the injustice. We can contact those who may be able to change such practices. And (not or) we can pray for more equitable treatment for all people. This is what God desires.

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jeffrey