



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Lent Sermon Series – What is God Like? Slow To Anger

Speaker: Rich Villodas – Lead Pastor

Scriptures: Exodus 34:5-7, Mark 3:1-5

Exodus 34:5-7

⁵ Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. ⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”

Mark 3:1-5

Jesus Heals on the Sabbath

³ Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. ² Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. ³ Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, “**Stand up in front of everyone.**”

⁴ Then Jesus asked them, “**Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?**” But they remained silent.

⁵ 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.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Pastor Rich will be continuing our Lenten series through Exodus 34. We will explore what it means that God is slow to anger. We invite you to read Exodus 34 in preparation for the message.

Sermon Questions:

Pastor Rich shared two implications for believing that God is slow to anger: 1) Your failures won't lead you to hide from God. 2) You can learn to be slow to anger with others.

1. Do you strongly believe or struggle to believe that God is slow to anger? Why or why not?
2. In what areas of your life are you hiding from God?
3. Where and with who is God inviting you to grow in your ability to be slow to anger? Take time to ask him to help you.
4. Please refer to our Lenten Study Guide for further questions and reflection.



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CHURCHWIDE LENTEN 2024 BIBLE STUDY

what is
GOD
like?

WEEKLY STUDY GUIDE



Session 4: Slow To Anger | “’ĀRĒK ’APPAYIM” | אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם

IMMERSE

After reading the introduction for this session, read Matthew 23. In your own words, make a list of all the things that anger Jesus. What themes do you notice?

INTRODUCTION

God is “*Slow to Anger*,” and yet many struggle with an image of God as angry and eager to punish sin, particularly when reading the Old Testament. It would be easy to mistake the arrival of Jesus in the New Testament as beginning a new, more merciful, and gracious era for God’s people, but actually, nothing could be further from the truth. Jesus’ life demonstrates what has always been true about God and his nature - that he is slow to anger and eager to show grace and mercy.

Yet, we have to acknowledge that God eventually gets angry and the fear of triggering his anger can keep us from approaching God freely. We see this fear of anger and punishment in the passage we read last week about the woman with the issue of blood in Luke 8. When Jesus turns around and asks who touched him, we see her timidity in revealing her identity; she fears Jesus’ rebuke and public exposure. Instead of getting angry for violating purity laws, Jesus receives her with grace and compassion.

So what makes a patient, merciful God become angry? God is gracious, but he is also just. When people, especially people who are acting as God’s representatives, perpetuate injustice, it angers God and if he cares for humanity, he must act eventually.

INTRODUCTION (cont.)

He is slow to anger and gives people many chances, but God also has righteous anger that compels him to set things right if he is going to be truly compassionate to those in need. If God is only merciful, then how can vulnerable people be protected from those who abuse their power?

In the gospel passages, we see Jesus surprise people by showing grace to the desperate, and anger toward those who misuse their power. As we submit our lives to God through Jesus, we can be assured that Jesus has taken on the consequences of our sins and cleared the way for God’s grace in our lives. Out of that assurance, we recognize our call to steward our power well and to extend the grace and mercy we have received to the most vulnerable among us.



Scripture Passages

LUKE 8:40-48 (NIV)

Reread this passage from last week together

40 Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. 41 Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house 42 because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. 43 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. 44 She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

45 "Who touched me?" Jesus asked.

When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you."

46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me."

47 Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. 48 Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

MATTHEW 21:12-14 (NIV)

Read together

12 Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. 13 "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of robbers.'" 14 The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them.



Session 4: Slow To Anger (cont.)

OPENING QUESTION

What is one of your pet peeves (something that easily irritates you that might not bother others)?

INVESTIGATE

1. As you read Luke 8:47, picture this scenario with another religious leader of that time. How might they have responded to the woman? In light of that, what do you think the woman was feeling at the moment she revealed herself to Jesus?
2. In Matthew 21, what did Jesus do with the space cleared inside the temple courts?
3. After Jesus healed them, the people who were blind and lame could more fully participate in the temple's activities. Imagine for years you could not participate in church services and activities with the rest of the community, only hearing afterwards about how wonderful it has been. What would it feel like to be allowed in?
4. Why do you think Jesus was so passionate about removing obstacles that kept people from being able to pray and worship?

INTEGRATE

1. Have you viewed Jesus in the New Testament as more merciful and gracious when compared to God in the Old Testament?
2. How has your perspective of the anger of God impacted how you approach him?

INVITE

Take a couple of minutes as a group to pause and reflect on God's invitation to you with either of the questions below. Afterwards, share as a group.

1. Pray and reflect on what obstacles may be getting in the way of you being able to freely come to God in prayer and worship.

Take turns sharing in a sentence or two, starting with the prompt

"I'm beginning to realize _____."

CLOSING PRAYER

Have a volunteer close in prayer, asking God to remove the obstacles to prayer that were shared today.