

**JESUS IN YOU AND AT PEACE**  
**Patterning After the Healthy Christ**  
**Part 7**  
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Our scripture today is a brief word from the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter of the gospel of John. Verse 19. We're continuing a series on "Patterning After the Healthy Christ." Today's subject addresses the question, Do you have anger and hostility in your life? Is Jesus in you and at peace? "On the evening of that first day of the week when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.'"

Jesus is risen from the dead. All power and all authority is in his hands. What is his attitude? What's the mood of his mind? Is he now bent upon revenge towards his enemies who had initiated his crucifixion? Is his life brimming over with the need for retaliation? To give others their due?

His words answer what is in his heart. Jesus is no Komani who's come to power and whose used the occasion now to get at his enemies and line them up. Remember he does have all power. He has risen from the dead. But he responds instead with this incredible word "Peace. Peace be with you."

One of the most hostile persons in the New Testament, a religious fanatic, an angry man named Saul met this peace that was in Jesus and it totally changed his life. This man Saul said to himself "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this is what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison. When they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished. I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them I even went to foreign cities to persecute them." An angry man.

But when Jesus enters this angry and hostile man's life he is forever changed. He never raises his hand or his voice again at a supposed enemy of God. The rest of his life is lived out from the context of love. And even suffering.

Jesus' resurrection calls us to walk in newness of life. That's why we're dealing with this series of "Patterning After the Healthy Christ." We believe that because Jesus has risen from the dead he alone has the power to speak to us authoritatively whatever he says to us is true. Whatever he condemns is condemned. Whatever he approves is approved. Whether it be doctrine or whether it be lifestyle. He has come to bring us the true religion. Religion literally means to bind back or to rebind. Jesus has come to bind us back to God. To take the peace and the wholesomeness and the healthiness that is in God and give it to us. Not only for this life but for life eternal.

So Jesus calls us to walk in newness of life. Part of that newness is learning to live with the peace of Christ residing in our hearts.

We might well look at the level of peace in our life by asking ourselves what is the level of hostility in my life? We've tried to do this now with every message and give you a chance to keep count.

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1. Do I have a quick temper? How easy it is to dismiss a quick temper. A quick temper I generally an indication that the bowl of our life is filled with a lot of anger and it only takes somebody to bump the bowl for the anger to go splashing out. A quick temper is an indication that there's a lot of temper that ain't so quick that's there. And it's waiting for something to tip it in order for it to flow out. How do you think Jesus would respond to that?
2. Am I apt to make thoughtless unfeeling remarks? Like "You're no good. You don't do anything right. You're so stupid. You're nothing but trouble." Those kind of thoughtless unfeeling remarks. Human beings are a lot like plants. Which do you think will help a plant most? Pouring water on it or pouring acid on it? Which do you think will help a person most? Pouring the water of love and joy or the acid of hostility and irritation and anger?
3. When I offer a suggestion is it apt to be more critical than helpful? Of course, when I make suggestions they're helpful; when somebody else makes suggestions they're critical. By this I simply mean when I look at trying to change a person am I really attempting to change by giving helpful suggestions or is my suggestion offered from a vantage point of real irritation and criticism.
4. Am I inclined to tell people off? Maybe the best indicator of this is our driving habits. We talk about giving people a piece of our mind. Whenever we say that we spell the word "piece". Why not give them our *peace* of mind?
5. Am I quick to forgive a mistake and overlook a discourtesy? Or does a mistake and discourtesy really rankle within me? One of the most tremendous and striking things that Jesus says after his resurrection he authorizes the disciples to go out and proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem. Forgiveness of sins. He has obviously gone through the mistake that has been made against him of others crucifying him. He has overlooked their discourtesy and even their hostility by turning around and authorizing his representatives to go in his name and pronounce the message of peace and reconciliation. Jesus does not harbor against his enemies' hostility.
6. Am I superior and overbearing in my attitude toward others so that others I look at as somewhat beneath my dignity? Of course this then makes it possible for me to be very judgmental toward others if after all they are not living life as well as I'm living it. Then it's possible for me to easily find fault with them when they commit mistakes.
7. Am I quick to complain when inconvenienced or imposed upon? Especially this can happen within the household and family. We can be so easily triggered by some minor inconvenience and out comes hostility.

Did you answer yes on all these questions? If you have this would certain suggest that there is a high degree of hostility in your life. If you answered yes even on the majority it would tend to suggest that you are a person who is critical, impatient, thoughtless, overly inconsiderate, overbearing, sarcastic, argumentative, unreasonable, quick to show temper, hostile to people in general, hostile to people specifically and in real need of the grace of the Lord to undergo a transformation.

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If you answered no to all of these questions you might not be telling the truth. Or if you are telling the truth there indicates a level of peace and patience and humaneness and tolerance and forgiveness and acceptance in your life. It's kind of an indicator where you're at.

There are ways that we can express anger. Some of them are actually scriptural approved and some are not.

One mild form of anger is simple irritation or displeasure. The Lord has this on occasion. He gets rather irritated with a couple of disciples when they want to burn down a Samaritan village for inhospitality. Scripture at that moment indicate that Jesus was irritated – Luke 9:55.

He also was very displeased when the disciples through hardness of heart refused to believe in his resurrection – Mark 16:14.

So the Lord on occasion showed irritation and displeasure.

There's also another form of anger which we may call indignation. This can be a very healthy form of anger. It's the feeling that results from the mistreatment of someone or from an injustice. Jesus could be indignant on occasion. Mark 3:5 Jesus is in the synagogue in Capernaum and there is brought to him a man with a withered hand. Everybody sitting around, religious authorities, defying Jesus to heal on the Sabbath. He was angry with the hardness of their heart. He looked around at them individually and was indignant.

He was also very indignant with the disciples who didn't like the fact that people were bringing children to Jesus to have him touch them. They were rebuking these people. When Jesus saw this he was indignant. Jesus had a strong sense of justice and fairness and care for another person.

A third kind of anger is what we might call wrath – fervent anger which seeks vengeance of punishment. We've got it in for someone and we are not going to let go until we have our pound of flesh. From a scriptural point of view this kind of anger is not allowed to human beings. It's a type of anger which is sometimes used to be expressive of God's anger but only God is morally pure enough to handle this kind of anger. So therefore it's only relegated to God. When we have a subtle disposition of anger in our heart against another person it is crying out for punishment and vengeance and mitigates against a spirit of peace in our life.

Another form of anger is resentment, which is suppressed anger brought about by a sense of grievance. This may be explained why a very minor thing will happen to us and all of a sudden we will boil over with some effusive display of anger and maybe our spouse or someone in our household will think "I didn't do anything that bad." What's been happening maybe is we've been containing a lot and all of a sudden it comes out and is expressed.

Maybe that then leads us to the fifth kind of anger – that's rage and fury. Intense un-contained explosive emotion which finds us yelling, losing control, raging, stomping, throwing things, breaking things. This is a very bad time by the way, to get in your automobile. When you're in this kind of anger. There are many accidents that happen because people are in fury and rage and do absolutely insane things that they would never do in normal moment of time.

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We need to look at some unwholesome results of anger. For anger does have very unwholesome results.

Some unwholesome results of anger.

One thing that anger does is it destroys families. The first time anger is mentioned in the Bible gives us a view of a family being destroyed. Genesis 4:5-6 “So Cain was very angry and his face was downcast...” What happened as a result of Cain’s anger? His anger becomes rage and fury and it propelled him into killing his brother Abel.

This form of anger demonstrated against family is a blight and it’s a very serious thing. Police receive more calls for family conflicts than they do for aggravated assault, murder and all serious crimes put together. Sixty percent of all homicides in the United States every year are against family members. One calls a policeman hates to make is to be an umpire in a family disturbance. Twenty-six percent of all police fatalities in the United States come in handling family disturbances. Anger destroys families.

There’s a proverb in Israel, spoken of by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel: “The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children’s teeth are set on edge.” That precisely describes what anger does within a family. When there’s anger in adults the children’s teeth are set on edge.

Anger not only destroys families but anger destroys ourselves. Reacting in anger at someone is like throwing a cactus at someone else with your bare hands. If the cactus hits them they’re going to get hurt. But so are you. You’ve handled the cactus.

Anger also prevents us from solving problems. We can become so enraged that we cease to think in a rational point of view. We find that instead of solving a problem, anger actually compounds it and makes it more difficult to treat. Anger does not change someone else unless the anger has certain controls of expression on it. We’ll talk about. Yelling at a child who is sloppy does not teach him how to be neat. Yelling at a spouse is not a good way of getting results, if you want positive results. That’s not generally a method that generates change. Yelling, anger, does not change another person. It only causes the person to retreat within their shell or come out fighting. One of two reactions.

Anger also is contagious. Proverbs 29:22 says, “An angry man stirs up dissension.”

Love is contagious as well.

How do we release anger in a Christ like manner? Someone has said anger is very much like gunpowder. Depending on how it is directed we can blast away at injustice or kill and maim the innocent.

God designed anger to be in our emotions. He designed it to be handled well so it can blast a way at the right things. There are these guards that are set around anger.

When we express anger there is to be no hatred or malice or resentment. 1 Peter 2:23 says “When they hurled their insults at him he did not retaliate. When he suffered he made no threats. Instead he trusted to him who judges righteously.”

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One of the confidences we have is that when Christ rebukes us he rebukes us from an attitude of love. When he's done rebuking us we are in no doubt whether or not he loves us. He loves us very much. His anger is not accompanied by hatred and malice and resentment. One of the things I think we ought to look for in expressing anger is whether I'm expressing anger simply to get this off my chest or in order to truly illicit change in someone else. My motivation for expressing the anger comes out of a sincere love to see that anger used in a creative sense which can bring about the right sort of changes in someone else. This is a hard thing to get a hold of. Walking away from a situation and not saying anything is not always an appropriate way to handle anger. Sometimes the Lord intends that that anger be expressed. The monitoring of whether it be expressed or not is can it actually be used to create good. If it's used to destroy then it's an extremely destructive force.

Jesus controlled his anger. Mark 11 shows him going into the temple. When he has the whole multitude with him would be the moment to strike. He sees all the moneychangers and all the profiteering going on. He could have in that moment really launched into it. But Mark says he went in and simply looked around and then he came back the next day. I think that was the way the Lord had of controlling things. He didn't just simply get motivated by the passion of the moment and act when his passions could have been very hot and gotten a lot of people involved with him. But he waited until there had been a cool in and a controlling of that emotion.

Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:26 "In your anger don't sin." We can express anger. We're not to store it up. Ephesians 4:26-27 "Do not let the sun go down on your anger. Do not give the devil a foothold." In other words keep your life clean, don't store things away. The motivation is unselfish. If it's anger for someone else's sake and not for our own sake needing to clear the air then it can be very positive and creative.

I would suggest in dealing with anger we start out on the level of recognition, seeing if there really is anger in our life. And hostility. If it's there we come to the Lord in prayer and confess and admit that we are indeed angry people. We may not even know all the causes of how we become angry. Some anger can be very deep seated and come from a long history and background. But through prayer confessing it as a sin, not as a weakness. How prone it is for me to see that somebody else needs to confess their sins but I simply confess my weakness. But confess it as my sin, my failing, the way that I have come short of the glory of God. And say, "Lord, help me. I'm angry. Would you intervene in my life? Would you give me peace? Would you teach me how to be a person at peace? At peace with you. At peace within myself. At peace with others about me."

Another important way of dealing with anger is through counsel – coming to someone else who is a spiritually mature third party who can advise us and lead us, recognizing that the Christian life is not designed to be lived alone and we can come and share our burden and our need with someone else. There are sometimes instant deliverance from things. At other times there is a battle and a warfare that we need other people's help and the counsel of other people and prayer to begin coming out of a situation.

I think also we can get a hold of anger as we respond through love and forgiveness toward the person that maybe has been the object of our anger. Maybe has even initiated the cause of our

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anger in our life. But by loving and forgiving we come to a position where we're ready to respond and treat that person as the Lord would respond and treat them.

By controlling anger also I give opportunity to develop patience and spiritual growth. I recognize that I'm in no position of superiority. No offense by another person could possibly equal my own guilt before the Lord. I come to the Lord in humility and I come before others in humility and I ask God to do something about the anger in my life. If he doesn't, if I don't get serious about this, I'm really going to be hurting the people that I'm living with. What a sad thing it is to recognize how anger really does hurt and maim and kill and destroy. The Lord wants to take that anger out of our life like an abscessed tooth. Remove it so that we can be at peace. God has accepted us in peace. Can we not accept others in peace?

The way that God has accepted us may describe the model how we respond to others whom we have been angry with. God has a way to tell us that we no longer need to walk in anger and hostility. That he receives us and accepts us and loves us. And because God loves us we can turn around and love other people as well.

Lord, you have talked to us today about peace. There are some in the audience today who have been the victims of anger. Maybe it was that they were a battered child and knew that strange hostility of the unexplainable anger of a parent that raged and hurt and abused them. Others are here who have been victims of anger within family. Who've known the anger and the hatred of a mate of a child, of a brother or sister. We think, Lord, of scripture that you heal all our hurts, all of our pains, all of our diseases. That's not an easy wound to close up. But, Lord, you've come to us today with that offer to enter into our life through the precise arena of where we hurt. And bring to us your soothing balm, your healing. We confess that you are the healer. We ask that you bind up the wounds in our life that have been inflicted upon us by the anger of others. Instead of letting those wounds be open and soar and runny, instead of responding to our being hurt by striking back and lashing back or retreating in a shell where we're afraid to express ourselves. Lord, we would pray that the personality of the Holy Spirit bringing Jesus into us would give us the courage to respond in love and forgiveness and peace to the person and incident where we were wounded and stricken and torn. And if on the other hand we are here and we are the perpetrators of anger and we realize as we inventory our life that we're not only hurting ourselves but we are hurting and ruining life for others. Lord, we would come to ourselves in this moment and recognize where we are and recognize our need for confessing to you for your help. I pray, Lord, that we would take the persons of our life that we have anger against and let us see them in this moment as though they were pictures, containers on a shelf. As we look at the cabinet we can see names on each one of these pictures. And perhaps within each one there is hostility, there is anger either them toward us or us toward them. As we envision that in this moment help us to walk over in our mind's eye and take that pitcher and that container and empty all the contents of that anger and that hurt and that rage, that irritation and displeasure, to empty it so that we might be a clean vessel to be filled by the fruit of the Spirit – love and joy and peace, gentleness and kindness and self control, goodness, mercy. I pray for the healing of the angry and those who have experienced anger against them. That we would know and walk in your peace. That we would thank you in this hour that you are the God of peace who brings us to reconciliation and healing. I think how you sent your word and healed them and we confess that for today that your word has spoken to us and given us a beacon and hope. In your name. Amen.