

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Gospel Fluency
TITLE: ANGER
SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 4:25-32
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The word *gospel* simply means Good News. When we read the word Gospel in the Bible and in most other places, we know that it is referring to the Good News about Jesus. The idea of fluency is used most often in relation to being able to speak two or more languages. Yet the word fluent means to be able to express oneself easily and articulately not necessarily just in foreign languages. Meaning when we talk about Gospel Fluency this summer, we are talking about being able to express and communicate the Good News about Jesus easily and articulately to yourself and others.

Lead in — All of us struggle with anger. When we feel wronged—treated badly, treated unfairly, treated with disrespect—when our expectations go unmet or when we are accused of something we didn't do—we get angry and feel justified in our anger. Anger says, "I want my way." "I'm right you're wrong." "I'm against that." "You have done me wrong (either a real wrong or a perceived wrong). "You owe me—love, respect, appreciation, consideration, time, opportunity, etc." Anger can be expressed as *anger out* (angry words, fault-finding, blame-shifting, name-calling, whining, sarcasm, complaining) or *anger in* (disengagement, detachment, silence, withdrawal, passive-aggressive behavior, "whatever" attitude). Either way, both kinds of anger are heart problems.

What can be done about anger? What do we do with an angry heart? How does the Gospel speak to our anger?

- The Gospel is not just the way *into* a relationship with God; it's the way we live *in* a relationship with God.
- Gospel Fluency is about applying/speaking the foundational truths about Jesus to our lives every day in every way.

How does the Gospel help us think about our anger?

Read/walk through Ephesians 4:25-27

The Context — In Ephesians chapters 1-3 Paul re-preaches the foundational truths of the Gospel to the Ephesian Christians. Basically, he's saying—Because of who Jesus is and what he has done for you, you are not the people you used to be, therefore you cannot live the way you used to live. And, in 4:25-31, Paul applies Gospel truth to the issues of anger and forgiveness. He begins by saying—

Be angry and do not sin (4:26).

- The problem is not in what you feel when you are angry; it's in what you do with your anger.

- We are to never allow our anger to control what we say, what we do, and what we decide.

Don't let the sun go down on your anger (4:26).

- Deal with your anger *quickly* (don't let the sun go down on your anger)
- Deal with your anger *reflectively* (cf. Psalm 4:4)

Don't carry around *unresolved* anger. When we allow the sun to set on our anger, we create the potential for sin because unresolved anger eventually works its way out of our lives and out of our mouths in things we wish we could go back and undo.

Get in the habit of dealing with the anger in your heart quickly by dealing with it reflectively—*because*—when we allow the sun to set on our anger, then before long, you forget the source of your anger.

Don't give the devil a foothold (4:27).

When we refuse to deal with our anger quickly and reflectively, it's an invitation for the devil to set up camp in our hearts.

READ 4:28-31

Basically, Paul is saying, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage, harsh words, slander, and any bad feelings you have toward anyone for anything!" —*Is that crazy or what?*

The Question — *How does the Gospel help us think about anger?*

Answer/Big Idea — The Gospel is the motivation for us to deal with anger quickly and reflectively by forgiving people who hurt us just as God in Christ has forgiven us.

What does it look like to forgive just as we have been forgiven?

- It means we are to live in a spirit of forgiveness, in a constant state of forgiveness toward people who hurt and anger you.
- Rid your heart of unresolved anger by giving your hurt to God and letting it go—cancel the debt—"I forgive you. You don't owe me."
- Try to resolve the conflict with those who hurt you by first, forgiving them in your heart, and then going to try to make things right. You may not be able to resolve the conflict, but you can resolve the anger in your heart by letting it go and giving it to God.

For Discussion —

1. What made you angry this week? Are you an anger out or an anger in kind of person? Get mad at any inanimate objects?
2. Discuss this statement: The Gospel is not just a way *into* a relationship with God; it's the way to live *in* relationship with God.
3. Have someone read Ephesians 4:25-27— How much personal reflection do you do when you become angry with someone? Why is this so important? What's at stake if you don't deal with unresolved anger?
4. Have someone read Ephesians 4:29-32. What does it mean to forgive *just as* you have been forgiven?
5. How can we help each other to learn to cultivate a spirit of forgiveness toward the people in our lives?