

Sermon Series – All You Need is Love
Part 6 - “Love is Patient”
Pastor Dale Campfield - September 25th, 2011

Intro:

Matt 28:19 “Go and make disciples of all nations...”

ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration and connection groups. To grow...which is expressed in our Path to Discipleship. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

We recently completed a sermon series in how to be a God Pleaser – by Living a Life of Faith. **Hebrews 11:6** “**Without faith, it is impossible to please God.**” Now what? Now that we know how to live by faith, what are we to do with it? The Bible tells us that if you are a follower of Christ, all that matters is your faith that makes you love other people! That’s what this next sermon series is all about. “All You Need is Love.”

Sermon Series: “All You Need is Love”

Theme Verse: Galatians 5:6 “If you are a follower of Christ Jesus all that matters is your faith that makes you love others.”

Today’s Sermon Title: Love is Patient

We’re moving in our series, “All You Need is Love.” I want to thank Pastor Angela, our youth pastor for bring the message last week. We’ve been celebrating this last month or so how God can work in brand new ways in our relationship. We’re going to talk about a few difficult things today. I thought a mass confession to start out with might be helpful. When we all realize we’re all in the same boat, it would be a good thing. How many of you at least in the last month would say “I have become angry or had an argument one time?” Some of you multiple times in the car on the way to church today. How many would say at least once you’ve had an argument in the car on the way to church? I heard one guy say, “My wife and I have found a way to solve that problem. We come to church in different cars. It works real good!”

We're going to talk today about how you and I can experience what it means for love to be patient. This isn't just patient with circumstances. [This is patience in our relationships, patience with people.](#) It comes from the...

Greek word for "patient" = *makrothumos*. Meaning: it takes you a long time to boil over. You have a long fuse rather than a short fuse.

This is important in our society – learning to be patient. The truth is, anger in our relationships is not something that's decreasing. It's more and more increasing. We see each and every day and each and every year new evidences of the increase of violence and anger in our society.

I was reading some quotes this last week about this. This has been going on for a long time. Two hundred years ago Thomas Jefferson wrote, "When angry, count to 10 before you speak. If very angry, a hundred." A hundred or so years ago Mark Twain wrote, "When angry count to four. When very angry, swear." A little change in a hundred years.

You watch most of our movies today, and it's "When angry, blow them away, right away."

Things are changing, and we need to figure out that all of us struggle with this thing called anger in our relationships. Today we're going to talk some about this.

For those of you who are maybe just leaning back in your chair and thinking, "I got this one covered. Other people get angry but not me," let me take a moment to remind us: anger is expressed in our relationships in a lot of different ways. [You don't have to be a loud person to be struggling with anger.](#) In fact, I was reading a study in *American Demographics* that says in terms of arguments, 23% of people say they openly express their anger, 39% do something to hide or contain their anger (they bottle it up), 23% walk away from the situation. All of which are bad ways to deal with an angry situation.

In anger in relationships, usually we have one of two strategies. Some of us are what I would call **skunks**; some of us are what I would call **turtles**. You know the difference. A skunk is the one who, when an argument occurs, you sort of spew. Everybody in the room knows how you feel. You stink up the place, and you want everybody to know. Then there are some of you who are turtles. When the bad times come, your head goes right back in the shell. Neither of those ways work. God has a better way to deal with the anger we sometimes feel in our lives.

Today, we're going to look at how you and I can manage anger once it begins to rise up in us. We all need to learn to do that because we all face anger in our lives. It's an emotion we all deal with. How do you manage it once it begins to happen in you? How do you walk patiently with people, not angry?

I'd like to take a little different angle on it.

1 Corinthians 13:5

"Love is not easily angered."

James 1:19

“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”

Circle “easily angered” and “show to become angry.” The Bible doesn’t say don’t get angry. It just says don’t become easily angered – *“be slow to become angry.”*

Jesus was angry, so obviously there are times when it’s right to be angry.

Mark 10:14

“When Jesus noticed this, He was angry, and He said to His disciples, ‘Let the children come to Me.’”

He was angry that the children weren’t being allowed to talk to Him. It doesn’t say don’t get angry. It says don’t be easily angered.

I’ve read and thought a lot about what to do once anger starts to rise up. What about not being easily angered? Being slow to become angry? I’ve read a lot of what to do once the gauge gets red hot with anger. Is there anything you can do to not have the gauge peg out so often?

Yes.

Illus: Temperature Gauge in your car.

If, in your car, you waited until the gauge flashed red to put water in, that would be very damaging to your car. Sometimes we do that with anger. There are some things you can do to not get there so often. Be *slow* to become angry. There are dozens of things. I’m going to look at a top five list of what you and I can do to not become so easily angered. If you’ve found yourself to be constantly angry lately, this message is for you. It’s for all of us because we all deal with it. (And...we’re going to count this down from 5 today – a little different.)

The “Top Five” Things You Can Do To Not Be Easily Angered

5. Break the pattern of anger.

It is easy to get caught up in the pattern of anger where anger breeds more anger breeds more anger. And it gets worse and worse. It’s a downhill slide.

There is a lot of anger in our movies. [Like the movie, You, Me and Dupree](#). Or, [Like the movie What About Bob?](#) It just gets worse and worse. You see the pattern throughout the movie. It’s an escalating pattern of anger from worse to worse to worse. Some of you have been on that downhill slide. You may be on it right now. You know what that’s all about. Instead of asking, “What about Bob?” I want to ask, “What about God? What does God have to say about why this happens?”

Proverbs 29:11

“A fool gives full vent to anger. A wise person quietly holds it back.”

Circle “fool.” It’s foolish to give full vent to your anger. Why is it foolish? Doesn’t that just get it out? Make everything better? No! To give full vent to your anger just creates more anger. It gets worse. Remember that old Doritos commercial that said, “Eat all you want. We’ll make more.” Your body is like that with anger. Yell all you want. Your body will make more anger. Become angry all you want. Your body will churn out more anger. There’s an anger assembly line inside of you. You can just churn it out day after day. You find yourself on this downhill slide, caught up in this pattern of anger.

Proverbs 14:29

“Slowness to anger makes for deep understanding. A quick tempered person stockpiles stupidity.”

A quick temper makes you act in more and more foolish ways every day. It’s stupid.

When it comes to anger, we are *crazy!* Why is anger crazy and dumb? Because it hurts me. It shortens my life. Why is it ridiculous? It hurts the person that I love the most. It damages our relationship.

Proverbs 25:28

“If you cannot control your anger, you’re as helpless as a city without walls, open to attack.”

Defenseless. When you’re angry, all the defenses come down. You’ll say anything to win the argument, even if you’ve told yourself, “I would never say that!” No matter how hurtful it might be, you’ll say it. Sometimes you do anything, the craziest things, things you never imagined yourself doing. That’s the danger. All the defenses come down.

Does this mean I’m supposed to pretend I’m not angry? That I just stuff it? No. Holding it back doesn’t mean you stuff it. Ephesians 4 gives us the practical steps to break the pattern of anger.

Ephesians 4:26-27

“In your anger, do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you’re still angry. Do not give the devil a foothold.”

Circle “do not sin.” That means sometimes you need to wait until the temperature cools to have a conversation. If you talk right away when you’re feeling that red-hot gauge of anger, you’re going to say the wrong things. Back off a little bit. Let things cool down. Do not sin. Speak when you’re angry, and you’ll make the best speech you’ll ever regret. Cool down for a minute.

You might also circle, “Don’t let the sun go down.” Don’t let the sun go down on your anger. Don’t let it go past one day. That means you can’t wait so long that the cooling gauge goes to freezing. That happens very quickly. All of a sudden we can’t talk about it. There’s nothing to say about it. Your anger becomes frozen rage, frozen bitterness because it’s cooled so far. The Bible says talk about it that day. Give yourself time to cool off, talk about it that day and you

won't get in this extended pattern of anger. You were not made by God to live in an extended state of anger.

My bride Cathi and I made an agreement at the beginning of our marriage to never go to sleep angry with each other; and we've stayed to that agreement for 31 years. Grant it, we've had to stay up ALL night at times to figure it out; and we didn't always agree with the issue at hand; but we never went to sleep angry with each other.

Some of you may have lived in this pattern for a long time. I'd say it's very possible you're going to need a trusted Christian friend, a Christian counselor. Sit down and talk this through with them. Once you break through that frozen part of the pattern, then you can begin to live out God's strategy. Back off long enough to cool down, but then talk about it before the end of the day. Break the pattern of anger.

4. Guard your relationships.

You will become an angry person if you hang out with angry people. That's what the Bible says.

Proverbs 22:24-25

"Don't hang out with angry people. Don't keep company with hotheads. Bad temper is contagious. Don't get infected."

Others' anger can easily infect you. At its core, anger is an emotion that seeks to correct wrong. When you feel angry, you feel wronged. That's why there's a good kind of anger. There are some genuine wrongs in this world that need to be corrected. The best example obviously is terrorists attacking innocent victims. We should be angry about that. It is a wrong that needs to be corrected.

In an argument, oftentimes you feel like you've been wronged for all kinds of wrongs that you make up in your mind that are much greater in your imagining. You also know that there are people in your life who can help you calm down in that situation. There are other people who will cause you to become angrier. You get around the wrong kind of person, and they'll just build on it. You say, "Somebody at work said something that bothers me." They'll look at you and say, "Bothers you? You should be angry about that! You should go back and tell them what you think." They you go back and tell them what you think, and they say, "Why do you do that?" That's what happens in that circumstance.

There are people in your life who cause you to become angrier. The Bible says watch out for those kinds of people. They say phrases like, "You deserve better... You should be angry... I'd tell them what I think if I were you." But they don't tell you...

Proverbs 11:23

"Wicked ambition ends in angry frustration."

If it's all about me and what I want, it's always going to end up in angry frustration.

Don't hang around angry people. Some of you might be thinking, "What if the angry person is somebody in my family? How do I handle this?"

That's an honest question. What if it's my husband/wife, how do I deal with that? The Bible has an answer for this, too. It tells what to do in our closest relationships to make sure that anger doesn't continually happen in those relationships.

Proverbs 15:1

"A gentle response diffuses anger, but a sharp tongue kindles the fire."

This is a verse that you want to use toward yourself – internally. In the midst of an argument, you want to use it for yourself, not like on someone else. You don't look at someone else and say, "A gentle response diffuses anger."

Gentle does not be quiet. You can be quietly sarcastic or harsh and cause just as much anger. It means I'm thinking about the other person in this moment. It means I'm taking just enough of a step back and thinking what might they need.

That means that in dealing with anger there is a loving phrase that we need to learn to say – "I could be wrong." Try that just once this week and see what happens. See how it changes things.

3. Release your worries to God.

Because our worries and anxieties often take us down a road that lead us straight to anger, anger and anxiety are closely connected.

Psalms 37:8

"Stop your anger. Turn off your wrath. Don't fret and worry. It only leads to harm."

Fretting and worrying often leads to anger and wrath in our lives because we're anxious. It comes out in angry words.

In the movie *Toy Story*, the toy Woody is angry with the toy Buzz because he's feeling some loss in his life. He's feeling anxious about losing his place in the toy world.

When you're filled with anger, ask yourself, "What am I worried about? What am I anxious about?" It will often help you to break through. The loving thing is to ask yourself those questions about the person you love who may be angry. What are they worried about? What are they anxious about? What's going on?

That means that you have to admit that anger is not some other person's responsibility, not some circumstantial responsibility. It's my responsibility. Instead of blaming others, you take responsibility for your anger in that moment. You must – I must – take responsibility for my anger. If I don't take responsibility for my anger, no one else is going to take responsibility. If I don't take responsibility for my anger, I'm going to live with this the rest of my life. I'm going to be a slave to it the rest of my life. We use phrases like "You make me so mad!" Who is

responsible in that little phrase? You are! The truth is *you* don't make me so mad, *the world* doesn't make me so mad, *circumstances* don't make me so mad. *I* make me so mad! The choices I'm making are the things that cause that anger to happen in my life.

Once I do that, once I take responsibility for my anger, I begin to do things like God encourages us in...

Philippians 4:6-7

"Don't worry about anything. Instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all He has done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace."

You tell God what you're worried about and you experience His peace instead of the anxiety and then the anger. You tell God you're grateful even in the midst of difficult days. Tell Him what you're grateful for. And you experience His peace.

2. Get a nap and a snack.

More often than not when it comes to being angry, we just need a snack and a nap. That's what we need to make it through.

There's no better example of this than Elijah in 1 Kings 19. Elijah is the prophet of God. He has just battled 450 false prophets on a mountain. One prophet of God against these 450 false prophets. That's what I would call a poor "prophet" margin! He's victorious over 450. The next day Queen Jezebel says, "This isn't over yet! I'm still after you." Elijah has a meltdown. He goes ballistic. He runs as fast as he can to the other end of the country, all the way talking about his depression and his anger, all the way talking about what a terrible thing. You can almost hear the wheels spinning. "I have this great victory! Couldn't I enjoy it for one day? No! All of a sudden, she's after me again." All the way to the other end of Israel he keeps giving the same "Poor Me!" speech to God. "I'm the only one left. You've only got me, and look what You're doing to me." If you hear yourself continuing to give the same Poor Me speech, it's a pretty good indication that you're too tired. Or that you need something to eat.

Elijah gets as far away as he can from the situation, and then God encourages him to get some rest and eat.

1 Kings 19:5

"Elijah lay down under a tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, [and here's what the angel came all the way from heaven to earth to say to Elijah] 'Get up and eat.'"

That's an important message. Lay down and rest. Get up and eat. That's one of the most important things you and I can do to break through the anger in our lives.

One of the reasons why you're so angry is you are just too busy. The busyness of life, the pace of life is what's creating so much of this anxiety. God invites you, before you do anything else, get some rest. Take some time off. Take the break that you need. That's where all this is coming from.

Butch and I, when we have disagreements, usually it's about something small, but it builds due to the fact that one of us may need something to eat; for our blood sugar is too low. I've been known by the family to be "Captain Fussy Pants." Ouch.

As it turns out most of our arguments are about tiny, insignificant details because we are tired. We are worn out. One of our biggest arguments is about what do I wear on Sunday's? I think one thing, and it's usually the wrong thing, so I ask, she responds, I respond, it gets weird!

We just need to say, "Let's take a break. Realize that we're both tired." Give each other some grace in this circumstance. Some days you're just grumpy because you're tired, and you just need to say, "God, help me keep my mouth shut today!" That's the best prayer in the world that you could pray. Get some rest. A quick temper is a warning light. If you have a quick temper, it's a warning light. It's saying: Get some rest. Take a break. Slow down. Get something to eat. Get a fresh start.

The most important thing that you and I could do to not be so quick to anger is...

1. Change your expectations.

Our anger always starts in our thoughts – our expectations of how things are going to work out.

Proverbs 4:23

"Be careful what you think because your thoughts run your life."

The way you think eventually is going to run your life. We have expectations of what's going to happen. When those expectations don't match reality, the further apart those are, the angrier we become. We tend to get angry.

FOR EXAMPLE... ILLUS. TO USE...

- Two Signs: For example, you buy a Christmas present this year and it says on it: Easy assembly required. If it had said, **this baby is going to take 20 hours of your blood, sweat and tears and still not look right**, that's OK. But here you are on Christmas Eve with bloody knuckles because it says **"Easy Assembly Required,"** and you're angry. Your expectations and reality just didn't match.
- So ... you're out on the golf course. You've got a little white ball, and you're going to hit it right down the middle of the fairway. That's your expectation. When expectation doesn't meet reality, sometimes a broken golf club is a result! When expectations don't meet reality, we can find ourselves doing the craziest things.
- So... you expect a Martha Stewart Thanksgiving next month. The smell of the turkey wafting from the oven, a perfectly browned turkey. You bring it into the table and set it down to "Ahhh" and some light clapping in the background. You expect that you're going to get along perfectly with someone you haven't liked for 25 years. You expect

soft music playing in the background instead of the football game. Or you expect the football game instead of soft music. Either way, expectations and reality just aren't matching.

I encourage you! Lower your expectations a little bit. Have different expectations for Thanksgiving like, "At least no one died from food poisoning this year." Then anything above that is like a Win! The stuffing didn't turn out, but at least no one stuffed the turkey down anyone else's throat. That was a good thing this Thanksgiving.

We laugh, but I know what a painful time this can be for some of us. My encouragement to you is to ask God for a new sense of expectations. No, it's not going to turn out perfectly. Irritating people are still going to be irritating people. But that doesn't mean God can't be there. It doesn't mean God's goodness is not real.

Thomas a Kempis said 600 years ago, "Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be." That's a lowering of expectations.

How do you do that? How do you change your thinking next month about Thanksgiving or anything else?

Philippians 4:8 invites us to do that and tells us how.

"Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely. Dwell on the fine good things in others. Think about all you can praise God for and be glad about."

Dwell on the fine, good things in others. Find the one good thing you can dwell on in people's lives. Find the one good thing you can dwell on in one person this next week. Some people get angry because God put thorns among the roses. Other people praise Him for putting roses among the thorns. What's it going to be for you? Look for the roses among the thorns this Thanksgiving.

Conclusion:

When it comes to the issue of expectation, maybe the greatest change in expectation for you needs to be your expectation of what a relationship with God is like. God says...

Exodus 34:6

"I am the Lord, the merciful and gracious God. I am slow to anger, rich in unfailing love and faithfulness."

Circle "unfailing love" and "faithfulness." That exact phrase is used no less than nine times in the Bible. God wants us to get this. What kind of relationship can you expect from God? One filled with judgment? One filled with guilt? If you expect that, you're going to be afraid of God. Who wouldn't be afraid of a being of immeasurable power who has His thumb poised to squish you at the slightest sign of any mistake?

But the Bible says that's not what you can expect from God. He's slow to anger. He is rich in love toward you. He is rich in compassion toward you. He loves you more than you could ever imagine. He sent His Son Jesus to die on a cross because of the depth of love He has for you. That's what God's like. He's not waiting to get you. He's waiting to love you.

For some of you, this day and the holidays that are coming up are a time to celebrate more than any other. Step over the line and say, "I've always known that. God, instead of living in fear of You, I want to get to know You better the one who loves me the most." What better way to celebrate life!

We've talked about how you and I can begin to break through this thing of becoming so easily angered. To do that you have to trust God. You can't do it on your own, on your own strength. You ask God for the strength to break that pattern of anger. Then you get in with a group of people who are trusting Him to encourage patience rather than encourage anger. You pray to Him about your problems and you find His peace in your life. Then ask for His wisdom when it comes to the need to get some rest, to slow down a little bit. You expect God's love to strengthen you in the realities of life.

Will you expect God to love you?

Remember: All You Need is Love – God's Love.

And when you do: You watch...you wait... you'll see!