

YOU

Sermon Series: When Emotions Rise
To be used with: Session 4: Redirecting Anger
Sermon Title Possibilities: Feeling Angry
Scripture: Psalm 35:1-3,13-18

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study “*When Emotions Rise*,” this sermon explores how a believer should behave when angry. There will be times when our personal circumstances or the state of the world will anger us and we need to prepare to have a godly response in advance.

Introduction: Anger is a much discussed and debated topic. Some theorize that being angry is wrong in and of itself, while others maintain that the feeling itself is not wrong, but the ways in which it is acted upon may be. Scripture itself presupposes that there will be times when we become angry, but it admonishes us not to sin in the process (Ephesians 4:26).

In this psalm we find David expressing his anger about those who have treated him unfairly. Several times in his life David is mistreated by other people, most notably by his predecessor Saul as well as by members of his own family. David does not hide his anger, but rather honestly expresses his concerns to God.

1. The Request (v. 1-3)

While facing opposition David boldly requests that God intervene on his behalf. Although this may seem presumptuous, David is correct to take his anger to God. Crying out to God for deliverance sometimes is the only option that people who are victimized have. Making this type of request acknowledges God’s sovereign authority to deal with those who threaten to harm us. We must be humble, however, and submit to God’s authority over us as well.

David also asks for assurance that God is his salvation. While dealing with external opponents, David is likely also dealing with internal opponents of doubt and worry. God is able to handle these foes as well. David is specific in the help he requests for God to provide. We can be as well, while being open to accepting God's help however it is provided.

2. The Reason (v. 13-16)

David contrasts his opponents’ treatment of him with his own behavior. He says he fasted, prayed, and mourned with them when they mourned. He treated them as he would have treated his own family. Some of us may recall times when the people we helped turned on us. Experiencing this can

definitely lead to being angry. The feeling is worse when we are mistreated by those with whom we are close.

Unfortunately, David's kindness has not been reciprocated. Instead, the people pursuing him mock his struggles. Rejoicing at another person's misfortune adds insult to their injury. We must be careful how we treat others while we are up, because like David, we may find ourselves down at some point. The good news is that we always can express our true feelings to God.

3. The Result (v. 17-18)

David wants to know how long the Lord will allow this to continue. We can take our questions to God, knowing that he has the answers, and more importantly has concern for us. Many of us have been at a point of being ready for our problems to be over. David openly requests to be rescued. He understands that he is in a position of complete dependence on God. We have to come to this realization as well. Our hope for rescue resides in God alone.

David assumes that God will intervene and promises to praise God in the presence of others. This implicitly affirms belief that God will save him and provide him with another opportunity to join the worshiping congregation. Looking beyond our anger in anticipation of worship is not always easy, but ensures that our focus remains on God.

Conclusion: Even when we feel angry at having been mistreated, we have reason to rejoice. God does not abandon us in times of trouble and is not threatened by any opponents we may face. Through Jesus' death on the cross, God defeated our enemies of sin and death. We can trust him to handle any other opposition we face as we remain in his will.

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