

In a Meeting - Temper - After sharp remarks -  
Suddenly one Man - Took off his Coat, Tie, opened shirt,  
and lay down on Couch - Astonished! Is he ill?

No - When begin get mad, I understand,  
That it's difficult to get Mad lying Down.

ANGER - DEADLY SIN  
25-32  
Luke 15:28

Grove Park July 23, 89 P.M. 1000 B  
Lorenton Aug 11, 91 P.M. 1000  
Lake Drummond Jan 28, 96 A.M. 1000  
N. W. - Sept 2, 2001

In the middle ages the church developed as an aid to faith & teaching, a set of  
of fathers were fond of the number seven. The devised the deadly sins (doctrines  
of Cardinal Virtues & works of mercy)

The Parable of the Prodigal Son has a wider coverage and includes the elder

brother. It is brought in as an illustration of how the Gentile prodigal is being  
saved by grace. And how the self-righteous Jew is angry and will not go in. Yet,  
all the while, this religious elder is the prodigal's brother. But he too, needs  
the forgiveness of the Father.

V. (25) - Now the elder son was in the field. He was willing to work. Whatever  
else you might say, this man was not lazy. But while the others were feasting and  
dancing, this man was looking after the crops.

V. (29) - He was faithful to his duty. "Neither transgressed I at any time, thy  
commandment is quick to say this. Just as regular as a clock, ticked off around the  
hours - his motto, I must do my duty. He was as straight as an arrow on this.

It also says that he never received a gift to make merry with his friends.

V. (26) - He was angry and would not come in. He was wounded, and he took it to  
heart. While the Father was full of joy. This boy got out of sympathy with his  
brother. He really got out of sympathy with the servants. And with God. And he  
refused to go in and share their joy in the saving work of God.

Some people are like Buttons - They Pop off at the wrong time.

V. (28) - He was graciously entreated - love, long-suffering, and with patience

the Father pleaded with the son, to come in. And there was great encouragement in V. (31) All that I have is thine.

People who fly off into a rage Always MAKE A BAD LANDING

Now the subject this morning is anger. And this is the deadly sin - we find our text in the elder brother. Three things about this sin we would like to say.

First, it is common sin. Second, it is a corrupting sin. And third, conquering this sin.

"Anger" is one letter short of DANGER!  
RABIN Prime minister of Israel - Assassin Yigal Amir - Angry, thought Rabin giving land to Palestinians that God had promised to Israel! Everything I did, I did for glory of God - I am not guilty - I have no regrets -

I. COMMON SIN

When Dante had his pilgrim reach the third terrace upon the purgatorial mountain, that of anger, they found themselves wrapped up in dense smoke. The poet had in mind just as he did pride. Pride was a sin of the eyes. And envy was a sin of the ears. And now anger seems to become a common sin of the imagination. The angry man sets his imagination revolving around some real or unreal fancied wrong. He does this until his vision becomes dim and cloudy.

Smell Boy, Naughty, Mother Exploded, Whipping - Fed-up Son Under Bed - Father Home, Middle Fight - upstairs Crawl under bed - murder youngster - Hiding - Boy whispered Hi Pop's is she after you too!

There are some people who think that we ought to be like animals. And you know it is the very nature of animals to growl at one another. Because an animal is forever dissatisfied and restless. And filled with dread and unsatisfied cravings. And sometimes, this is what happens to individuals. We simply cannot stand failure. When friends, or strangers, or enemies - or even members of the family get in our way. It threatens our success. It threatens our ego dream. And we feel that we are compelled to be angry - to hate. And if the stakes are large enough, we get desperate enough to steal or to kill. We get in one another's hair, and those we thought would love us. And they have turned out to be our enemies. And hate takes the place of love.

So as you look at the procession of animals - there is the pride of the peacock.  
 The envy of a dog.<sup>Bone</sup> The anger of a wolf. The sloth of an ape. And gluttony of a pig.  
 All of these modern sins were deliberated upon many many years ago. And anger was one  
 of the most devastating sins because of its common place.

Did you know, this is (one sin) that every one of you is capable of committing.  
 The tiny baby with his fit of temper. And he turns it loose. The little boy who had  
 a tantrum. He upsets the whole family organization. The wife who loses her temper and  
 gets a sick headache. The husband who gets angry, and loses his appetite. (Every) member  
 of the family is subject to this sin. No one by nature is immune from this disease of

human nature. *A Boy Refused to eat his pruner, so his mother told the  
 lad that God was angry with him + sent him off to bed - A violent  
 thunderstorm broke out, flashes of lightning + sounds of thunder was intense.  
 Mother went up to room see boy alright, opened door saw boy standing by window  
 mumbling "My goodness such a fuss to make over a few prunes."*

Anger breeds remorse in the heart and discord in the home. And bitterness in the  
 community. Homes are often destroyed by some domestic anger. Business relations are  
 often shattered by fits of temper - violent temper. Friendships are often broken. When  
 somebody uses imagination that is sharper than a knife.

Anger is denounced by the church and condemned - and yet it does physical harm  
 to its victims. It is as dangerous as a rifle.

Because anger brings to much (unhappiness) - God hates anger. Psalm 37:8 - cease  
 from anger and forsake wrath. Fret not thyself to anywise to do evil. Jesus condemned  
 this. Matt. 5:22. I say unto you - whosoever is angry with his brother, without a  
 cause, shall be endanger of the judgement. And whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall  
 be endanger of Hell fire.

Proverbs 16:32, He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty. And he that

ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city. Ask Woody Hayes - Nice People get Mad  
Football coach - grabbed a player, shook Ohio State - Hot Headed -  
Boat Race King - This man coming in 14th - Angry - set fire to the boat &  
walked ashore!

James 1:19 - Wherefore, my beloved brethren. Let everyone be swift to hear.

Slow to speak, and slow to anger.

News Report Little League Parents  
getting out of Hand, Angry if Boy not put in game, Angry Boy favor  
developing fist fights gang up on each other - one town they Compel  
Parents to Attend a Movie about attitudes - Before Actual game.

I have pointed out that anger is a sin that is revealed in the animals, as well  
as in the nature of man. Many people are very loving and charming - really likeable  
people. Until they are possessed with a fit of rage. And then they are transformed  
into repulsive, irrational creatures. They are more like wild beasts than civilized  
people.

Man been married many, many years. Admitted to a Friend  
"Ok, it's true, we fight. But to be honest we have never gone to bed  
Angry." Of course one year we were up for 3 months!!

Doctors tell us that when any human emotion is over stimulated, excessive amounts  
of adrenalin are supplied by nature, to replenish this drain.

Therefore the person with a violent temper, uses up this extra supply of energy  
to feed the flame of his passion. Rather than to put out the fire.

Here I am on Todd Road V.B to Nap - 1 mi From Berk Bridge - Traffic  
Stopped 1 hour - People get Irrational - Turn Radio up - Keep Perspective  
Get out of Hand - Jefferson Count to 10 before you speak!  
Twain said Count to 4 then swear -

This was the problem of Jonah who made the mistake at the beginning of his life  
and at the ending of his life. He first tried to flee from his commission. He did not  
want to go to Nineveh. Finally, at the end of the story, he preached. Yet 40 days and  
Nineveh shall be destroyed. He must have walked through the streets and had little  
idea that the people would repent. But they did. Now he goes out to the hillside  
and to watch - and Nineveh repented and the city was saved.

The unexpected turn of events displeased Jonah and he was so angry that he asked God to take away his life. Now he knew that God had been merciful to him, but he was angry with himself, and he was angry with Nineveh, and he was angry with God. There was a shelter provided from the sun. A gourd. And the angry Jonah was soon upset because a worm arrived and the gourd perished. And again, he said, take away my life. God said to Jonah, now you come one, (let's reason together.) Does thou well to be angry. An angry man cannot see the truth. Jonah replied at once, I do well to be angry even unto death. And Jehovah God said to him, you are angry with the gourd, which you neither made nor created. Which came up at night. And banished at night. Was smitten with a worm. Should I not give consideration to six score thousand persons.

Now here is a man who is a good example of how this common sin invaded, this great man, and marred his work by anger. When a man is angry, he gives all sorts of unrestrained expressions. And certainly this is among one of the most common sins. And we might say, the most dangerous. Because it injures the well-being of man. More than any other sin, it destroys our friendship, and turns our places of peace into war.

## II. CORRUPTION

It is not only a common sin that hurt the elder brother, but it had certain corruption with it. It ruined his capacity to witness. His calmness and peace were corrupted. His conversation was corrupt. And his comradeship with others was broken.

First, capacity to witness. The elder brother lost his great capacity here. To witness for God. When he was upset and angry, we know that he had little influence.

Little influence upon others.

You remember the story of Peter who was angry with the Roman soldier. Took a sword and cut off his ear - but Jesus reproved this. They that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Peter was ruining his witness for Christ at that point. It is possible today for Christians because of their temper to lose that capacity for witnessing. A Christian woman was very concerned about her husband finding Christ. The minister spoke to her husband, but his soul was cold. I am not particularly an irreligious man. But if Christianity should make me as my wife, I do not want any part of it. Why, she is full of wrath. Her temper and her irritableness have no flavor at all.

The minister went to the lady in question and told her what her husband had said. She had not realized that her temper had been out of control. She was very repentant about it - and together, they both knelt in prayer while she sobbed out her heart to God. A few days later, the husband had been out fishing, and he came in with his rod over his shoulder - and he accidentally hit a costly lamp. Which went crashing to the floor. He stood with his hands over his ears, waiting for the second crash - of his wife's anger, but it never came. He looked up to see his wife smiling as she said, "don't worry about it dear, accidents happen in the best of families." You mean, you are not angry as usual he said. No dear, that is all a thing in the past. I'm sorry I have been so impatient. But God is helping me to control my anger now. A few Sundays later the husband joined the church. Her testimony had been strengthened. Her anger been controlled by the spirit of God.

Anger will hurt your capacity to witness. Moses, for example, injured his when the people murmured and asked for water. The command to strike the rock of Horeb.

out of all patience with the people - Moses struck the rock twice, as if the rock had been the head of the people. Crying out, as he did so - hear ye rebels. Now this burst of anger cost Moses the privilege of leading the folks into the promised land. Because of this transgression, they wandered in the wilderness. And he did not have the opportunity to go in.

Now that is not the first one nor the last one, that a promised land of happiness or witnessing has been lost, through anger. And Moses lost it there.

Think about Naaman - he had anger. He had come from Samaria, in his chariot. He thought that Elisha would go out and wash him and cure him. But he told him, go and dip seven times in the Jordan. Why, he said, I thought he would come out surely in the name of his God. Wash in Jordan. Why if that is all that is necessary, there is plenty of rivers back in Syria where I can wash. I imagine that he pulled out his whip and layed it upon his horse, and his chariot plunged forward. Leaving a cloud of dust. But very fortunately, Naaman, had a servant who had good sense. And he said, now wait a little while. Think about this. Reason about it. If the prophet had bid thee to do some great thing - thou would have done it. But to go wash like as a simple child. He finally went, and his flesh became as a little child. How marvelous. We lose our capacity to witness. When anger takes over and you are going to miss a lot of blessings this way.

*2 women on train - argued concerning windows - Angry -  
 Conductor - open "I shall suffocate"  
 "I catch hold" closed "I shall suffocate"  
 "welcome from near - 1st open - Kill one woman / then we'll have  
 2nd close - "other" Place!*

Second, calmness, was lost. When this elder brother heard about this - he got upset. And he lost all of his peace and all of his calmness. How tragic it was for him to lose this joy and this peace. Gen. 4:6 - God said, to Cain, whose joy had been expelled by anger - why art thou wrought. And why is thy countenance fallen.

The bad thing about losing your temper is, that other things are often lost with it. When temper rages, your good expression goes. When temper rages, your reputation sometimes goes. Sometimes your friends go - sometimes your opportunities go. Sometimes, your witness or testimony goes.

Think about Cain who murdered his brother. He was one of the first men to get angry on the pages of the Bible. And Christ warned men about being angry with their brothers, and against other people. But this was the way of crime - these two brothers had brought an offering. And Cain was very angry. Here you have the natural history of anger going to work.

First, it was in his heart. Second, it showed in his face. His countenance was fallen. And thirdly, it was shown in the deed that he committed - he murdered his brother. God said to him, why are you angry. Cain, like many other angry men, would not listen to reason. But his head was filled with passion. And the first murder was committed.

Here was a trail of misery - the crime of anger. What happened to him. Why, he had to go out from the presence of the Lord and become a fugitive. He lost all of the calmness and the peace which he had. Anger drives men out and separates them from God and from other men. And they become lonely individuals. This is how corrupting this sin is.

Too many people are guilty of this sin. Though we excuse ourselves by blaming our uncontrollable anger, on our natural disposition. Deep down inside, our conscience tells us that it is wrong. And there is a conviction that we are grieving



the Spirit of God.

Balaam, who was a gifted eloquent man, was going as an ambassador with Balak, who wanted him to curse the Israelites. He was riding his ass along the highway toward Moab. The angel of the Lord stood in the path. With a drawn sword. Now he did not see the angel, and he encouraged the ass he was riding, which turned out of the path, and he fell upon beating her with his staff. Now this only made matters worse. The ass thrust herself against the wall and crushed the prophet's foot. Where upon Balaam, renewed his blows, and his anger. And he wished that he had a sword in his hand that he might kill the ass. What a picture, that is, of a man losing his temper. Confronting circumstances that were not pleasant. But here was a beast, and the old prophet lost all of his calmness, even an ass was wiser than the man. The real trouble was not with the beast but with Balaam himself. For the angel of the Lord was there to rebuke him, and did you know that is often the case.

A man who has a violent temper and he gets angry at someone else. He really ought to be angry with himself. The source of his own trouble and sorrow,

Balaam finally had his eyes opened. He could not discern the angel, that his own ass was trying to avoid. And that's how it is with anger.

No telling what you say. - Car screeched - Near miss of all souls - Angry - Then smiled sweetly - Pointed Pair Baby shoes hanging near mirror your man "you really shouldn't drive without your shoes on!"

Third, conversation is corrupt. Not only is our capacity to witness, our calmness corrupt. We find even our conversation is corrupted. As in the tale of the

work on answer. at ch - one of man said it plus I work  
one man said it John Stubbins had to <sup>-10-</sup> ~~cross~~ it first to get fixed.

elder brother. When the prodigal was coming home from the far country, and his rags had to be burned in the stable yard, the best robe had to be put on him. A ring on his hand. And shoes on his feet. And the fatted calf killed - that everyone might have the opportunity to sit down to the music that was inspiring. The elder brother was angry. He would not go in. His conversation was corrupt. And he began to speak out against his father. His place at the table was empty. He shut himself out from the banquet. He would have nothing to do with reconciliation. It ought to have been one of the happiest days of his life - but it was one of the most miserable days. But his conversation was corrupt.

Fourth, comradeship was corrupt. This means (friendship) is comradeship. Because of anger, this was destroyed. Here they had been living together, working together, and all of this is destroyed because of his burst of anger. Did you know, this can undo what one has built up through the years.

Friendships that have been long-standing, that have had branches that have born pleasant fruits. Can be blasted and withered by one unexplained explosion of anger. You can inflict some insult and destroy it.

There is a sad story of Alexander the Great, who killed his friend, Clitus. They were at a big banquet, and this man had a long chapter in his life, of a weakness of alcohol. And he began to talk about how he saved the life of Alexander in a recent battle. And he began to brag about his own fame. These remarks stung Alexander - he reached for his sword, which somehow one of the officers had hidden away. And then in his anger, he fell upon this man - and smote him with his fist. But before he could inflict hurt, the friends of that half intoxicated officer heard him out of the banquet hall. But soon, he entered by another door and stood under the curtains. Quoting lines from a Greek poet. Quick as a flash, Alexander snatched his scepter from the hands of

the guard and held it at the figure. By a raised curtain - and soon his friend of his childhood, his life-long companion, and rescuer lay gasping out his life. Alexander, himself, drew out the sphere. And would have fallen upon it - but his officers prevented it. All through the night and the next day he was filled with remorse. Alexander the Great had conquered the world but he could not conquer himself. And his anger had destroyed his comradeship and friendship. And when a man becomes angry, a wise friend can do him a great service. Doth thou well to be angry, the servant said to Naaman. They were words that came to Jonah. And they were words that reasoned with Cain.

Anger is very corruptive. Paul said to the Christians - be angry and sin not. You remember that Jesus condemns the Pharisees and Scribes and over turns the tables, of the money changers in the temple. And drives out with whips of cords.

You think of the anger today in Iran - as lives are being taken. You think of the anger in Germany when thousands of Jews were destroyed.

We need to have anger toward the things that are sinful. But how foolish it is, and how corrupting it is.

We could illustrate it with two youths. Two young people spinning a top. They were alternating. And then they began to quarrel about their turns. Ceased in a rage, one of them pulled out a sharp knife from his pocket, and killed the other. One boy lost his life and the second boy became a murderer. Merely to settle whose turn it was to spin a top.

2

People grow very angry over senseless things. We find that even a salky youth may say I am going to run away from home. And maybe spoil his whole career. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth.

NUM 22:27 Riding

v23 Angle drawn sword - went into field - wall, crushed horse  
v25 " in way thrust herself against wall, crushed foot  
29 - not go forward full road -  
Beat the animal 3 times  
to hood saddle animal  
29 - would kill them!  
34 - Balaam Repented  
I have sinned

Anger will find expression in profane, reckless words. Balaam said, I would that there was a sword in my hand. For then I would kill thee.

Now the Scripture does not tell us all of the events that happened there - and the words that Balaam used. But individuals use some words quite often when they talk to an animal, that are not very good. All anger is sinful. It is to lose self-control.

A man who was poor often went to public debate at one of the schools. They - or rather--he did not understand Latin which they used. But he said this, "I always know who is wrong in the argument." How, said his friend. Why, by noting - "who loses his temper first."

When confronted by a hostile person in a committee etc. 1st instinct is to show own hostility!

Even when wrath is legitimate, it is wrong to give expression to it in a reckless way.

The Bible says something about not letting the sun go down upon your wrath.

In other words, regulate, put some strict limitations upon your anger. It means like the curfew bell in the town. When it sounds, the candles were to be put out. The custom of ringing the bell at 9 o'clock or 10 o'clock throughout Scotland, to let people

# Bible Don't let sun go-13- down upon your Anger

know that the day was complete. Let your anger be confined - and let not the sun go down upon it.

*Beem Temper When I have lost my Temper,  
I have lost my Reason too.  
I'm never Proud of anything  
when Angerily I do.*

*When I have talked in Anger  
And my cheeks are flaming Red,  
I have always uttered something  
which I wish I had not said.*

## III. CONQUEST OF ANGER

I need not say further about this common sin. You are well acquainted with it. The corruption of it - you have probably had some of the results of it, in your own life. But how are we going to conquer this? What is the conquest. How are we going to subdue this. Let not the sun go down.

There are several ways that we might think about subduing and controlling this matter of anger. One way is, first, a desire to get rid of it. There must be some desire within your disposition, to get rid of this by faith. Because anger gets things out of control. Just like a wild sea. And this would no doubt be the first step. I will do something about this unruly temper of mine. Which means that you have stopped justifying yourself. Quite often people say, my whole family is quick-tempered. Or I inherited this from my mother. Or, everyone else loses his temper some time or other. What is wrong with that. You must recognize that it is an ugly sin in the eyes of God. And in your own sight - and you must have some kind of desire to get rid of it. It is not enough to say that all of us have an outburst of temper. There is not one person who does not have temper. But you need to know this - there is one person who has learned how to master his temper. There are other people who have not learned this.

And this is what we want to find out.

"MANSIONS IN THE SKY ARE NOT BUILT OUT OF MUD THROWN AT OTHER PEOPLE."

2 - The second thing we need to do is confess to God this need. Confess to God that you have anger, and ask God to forgive you of your fits of rage. Your uncontrollable

temper. If anger is a sin, and if you have anger with one of your brothers without a cause. We ought to hate it - we ought to despise it. I John 1:9 - we read, "if we confess our sins - he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. And cleanse us of all unrighteousness.

*Mercy Towards Enemies - Heinrich Heine said "If God would ~~to~~ make me happy, let him give me the joy of seeing ~~to~~ my ENEMIES dangling from a tree. I would then forgive them from the bottom of my heart. So we confess this sin to him. we must forgive our enemies but not until they are all hanged!"*

3- Third claiming Christ's promise, for this victory here. Anyone who has anger will know that it is unrighteous and it is unChristlike. Now God in his love, and his mercy has promised us - and people do not have to be spineless to be victorious over this. Because the tongue can use profanity as well as praise. The hand that hurts can become the hand that heals.

That is exactly what Jesus meant when he said, blessed are the meek. Do you remember Peter before the resurrection. He swore in the camp of the enemy that he did not know Jesus. He denied him. He became enraged at this. And this angry spirit was a poor witness as a Disciple. But after the Spirit of God came upon his heart later, never again do we find that he was employed in anger and this sort of living. Never did he raise his hands to violence. Or his voice to deny his Lord. Never did his feet walk with the wicked. But he spoke the mighty word of God.

Now meekness means actually to be under the control of the spirit of God. It is like a wild animal that has been tamed - so the spirit of God can tame, your tongue, your mind, and your temper.

*ISA-26:3 "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee"*

If somehow, you could see yourself, as others see you, in your violence, it might help you. I read the story of a woman whose husband was drunk and she resolved to reveal him to himself. She knew what he was. The children knew what he was. But he didn't seem to understand it. In all of his rage and his anger against the family, she made a photograph of him. The next morning, she had it exhibited on the breakfast table. The disclosure of this, caused that man to make a reformation.

Julius Caesar they say, when he was tempted or provoked would repeat the Roman alphabet before he uttered a word. That is pretty good advice - when you are angry, count to 20 before you speak.

It is strange that some people with an attack of the toothache, it gets rid of all of their sainthood. And we blame our anger on the toothache or we blame it on heredity. Or we blame it on some other cause. One wise person said, it is first wounded vanity. Second, real or imagined injustice. And third, blocked behavior. We all have a great desire to be great. And anything that wounds our vanity irritates us. As a sales clerk. Or as parents who are frustrated by children. We find that we soon lose our dignity.

What can we do about this common cause of anger. This loss of control of temper. How are we going to re-educate us.

Analyze if you are always angry at people why? Sometimes it may be foolish or childish. What is your reason. If anger threatens you. God gave you two eyes to see.

One tongue to speak. (And boys flying their kites, ~~And in~~ the white-winged birds. You can't do that way when you are flying words.) Remember the Bible, Rom. 1:18, tells us that the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against this sin. And that God condemns it. Hence, we need to conquer. He that is soon angry - dealeth foolishly. But we ought to be slow to anger - because the man who can control his temper, is more valuable than one that takes a city.

I Common Sin      II Corruption (1) Swiftness (2) Calumnies (3) Conversations  
(4) Comradship - Friendship

Ecc. 7:9 - and Matt. 5:22 - 24

anger for your -

III Conquest of A  
(1) Desire to get rid of  
(2) Confess to God his need  
(3) claim Christ promise for victory,  
"Gentle Ans. turns away wrath" Prov. 15:1  
Jesus can stand between sin & death"

Deadly Sin

Parade May ap. 16, 89 - "Dr overcomes Anger"

Dr. Fred C. Thomas - Lafayette, Tenn, 8 yrs -  
2nd or 3rd night on call - man cutting wood, chain saw, kicked back at  
jugular about 1/3 through - He held tight drove emergency to -  
1st jugular vein & ever attempted repair. Vascular clamps -  
it was alone - The man survived - Excited - man his arms  
around neck hugged "Doc I was a goner"

Mother \$23 week laundry - Bryan Telfer -  
sister - severed ligaments hand - white Dr. refused \$7 fee -  
hand useless - nephew house fire - white men watched it burn.  
niece & nephew wanted he do - - willard Va. N.O. - med. coll. - North Tex  
every night be bitter - Angry - Mason Co shortage 16,000 people  
last 8 yrs, only Black Dr - 40 or more patients every 2 hrs day  
cares about kids - weddings funeral -  
& his work with "They Trust Me" "You can't go around hating people"



# INTRODUCTION:

Next to last

A woman was walking home from work when a car pulled up alongside her and the driver asked her if she would like a ride. The woman refused to get in and continued walking home. The car pulled to the side of the road, waited for a couple of minutes, and then pulled up alongside the woman again.

Once more the driver asked her to get in the car. Again, she told the driver that she didn't want a ride. She also told the driver to leave her alone. Again the car pulled up on the side of the road and waited. And a third time, the driver pulled up alongside this woman. This time he TOLD her to get in the car. He was going to give her a ride.

At this point the woman became furious. She walked up to the open window of the car and screamed at the driver: *"I told you I don't want a ride. Why won't you listen to me? I told you not to buy that ugly car. Why won't you listen to me? I told you if you bought that ugly car, I wouldn't ride in it. Now why don't you drive your stupid, ugly car home and leave me alone. I'll be home later."* (1)

I had no idea that story would end up like that when I first started reading it. Sometimes it helps if you know the whole story doesn't it. Well, it's the same way with the book of Job. It helps if you know the whole story doesn't it.

A father and his young daughter were riding in a crowded elevator. Suddenly a woman in front of them turned around and slapped the father's face. The elevator stopped and the woman stormed off as she looked back shooting venomous looks at the man.

The father was obviously shaken and confused. He looked down at his daughter and said, *"I wonder what her problem was?"*

To which his daughter replied: *"Oh, she was just a mean lady who likes to hurt people, Daddy. I didn't like her either. She kept stepping on my toes. So I pinched her bottom as hard as I could. That's when she started picking on you."*

Remember sometimes it helps to wait until you know the whole story.

4/19/17  
He was between a rock and a hard place. Moses had an unruly mob on his hands quarreling with him for water, and about to stone him for bringing them out into the wilderness to die of thirst. From their miraculous deliverance at the sea, they had moved deeper into the wilderness, setting camp at an oasis, only to run out of food. In that crisis they had questioned God's purpose with them, wishing they were still back in slavery. Yet, God responded with the gifts of manna and quail. Now, in a new camp, they had a new crisis -- their water supply had run short. And so they ask the recurring question: Is the Lord among us or not?

We know how that feels. A congregation which has enjoyed decades of growth and esteem in ministry, suddenly finds itself in a different situation. Changing demographics, economic realities, changes in leadership, all bring a decline in church attendance and rolls. What was for so long assumed is now questioned. Has God forgotten us, turned to other sources of witness, or taken up leadership in ministry with a congregation other than our own? We scramble for solutions, devise new goals, continually measuring the moment by the triumphs of the past, and ask "Is the Lord among us or not?"

We encounter a personal crisis and question God's presence, providence and purpose in our lives. Working hard at a career, and experiencing some success, suddenly there is an acquisition which results in downsizing, and we find ourselves out on the street, looking for employment. In this city, it is especially treacherous. Suddenly we are unsure of all that here-to-fore we took for granted. We question everything -- our ability, our future, our very identity -- and wonder what sense it makes to speak of God being aware that we exist, much less continuing to care for us. Is the Lord among us or not?

We move through life managing its minor hardships, never questioning the gift of health, only to be suddenly confronted with a life-threatening illness -- be it ours or the health crisis of a loved one. Is the Lord among us or not? For some of us, miraculous moments come, but always surrounded by the hovering fear that the illness may return at any moment. For others, we move more deeply into our private wilderness, coming to realize both how precarious and precious life really is.

These lessons today answer that question. They tell us this is precisely what we are to do. Moses is the model here. Though tempted to take it personally, he makes the only move possible to him in such a situation, Moses takes the crisis to God. It is more than an adroit move to avoid stoning. It is the fundamental reflex of faith! "What am I to do?" he cries out to the Lord.

Notice the answer: "Go on!" Keep moving. I have not abandoned you. God says, "I will be standing before you on the rock at Horeb. Strike it and you will find water."

Moses went on, and found God standing on the rock at Horeb. As he struck it, water poured forth. It was not the last time Moses would find himself in such a crisis. But each time he cried out, he discovered God's presence with him, leading and saving.

What better illustration of the Gospel is there than this? God comes to us in Jesus Christ -- regardless of our circumstance -- and offers us the Spirit to dwell in us, well up within us, gradually transforming us, so that we finally become in reality who we are declared to be -- women and men who have been reconciled to God. Between a rock and a hard place, she stayed in the conversation, maintained the link, and embraced his gift. She discovered not only the Messiah, but God's presence in the flesh. A spring of living water welled up to spill over into her life, giving her new life.

Matt 5:22-24 There fore who ever is Angry with His Brother shall be in danger of the Judgment, "I call this Bro Fool in in danger of hell fire. Have ought against Bro, leave gift at altar - go 1st reconciled Bro than offer gift.  
Ecc 7:9 Be not hasty to be Angry - for Anger rusts in Boomer of Fools!

In this well Jesus Christ meets each of us. His gift has not changed. He gives us himself. As we ask "Is the Lord among us or not?" he says "Go on! I will be standing before you on the rock!" As we trust him, keep conversation with him, worship God in and through him, we discover his presence with us. We discover him present to sustain us in our mission as Christ's body in this city, to sustain us in those moments when we have lost confidence in ourselves, to give us hope in those moments when we have lost confidence in life itself. Thirsts are quenched and crises are endured. Life is not only renewed in hope, it is transformed.

Are you between a rock and a hard place? Go on! God is standing before you on that rock. God is there

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Are you between a rock and a hard place? Go on! God is standing before you on that rock. God is there with you, not only waiting to reveal himself to you in and through the crisis, but more, waiting to give you new life. Cry out to him. You will not be disappointed.