

To Be a Man Is to Be Angry

To be a man is to be angry, whether it's over political debates or marital spats, over the traffic that blocks us or the boss that infuriates us.

But, it's what we do with that anger as men is what moves us toward destruction or redemption. Here's a recent example from my own life:

I have trouble projecting my voice when speaking publicly. To make matters worse, I often drop my voice to make a point. I've been told this any number of times, but still forget and find others miss what I say.

Recently I asked my wife, Heidi, about my voice as we were driving home from teaching a class at my church. She informed me kindly but plainly that my voice was hard to hear at points. It triggered something inside.

I wanted to object, defend, deny, or dismiss. I felt exposed publicly once again as someone with lousy oratory. The shame quickly turned into anger. I could feel myself getting angry with Heidi, angry at the room acoustics (how absurd), and angry with myself for making the same mistake. The anger that my shame prompted may be understandable, but it is still self-consuming.

Then there is the anger we all feel in those places where others have wounded us—the abuse, the abandonment, the betrayal. The anger is just and necessary to our healing as men, but to stay there and refuse to forgive leads to hardening and bitterness. Once again our anger is understandable, but it is still all about us.

Then I open the pages of the New Testament and read about the anger of Jesus (Mark 11:15-19) as He cleared the temple. The court of the Gentiles was the one place that God-fearing

Gentiles could come and pray in the temple precincts. It was a place even Jews had to walk through to get into the inner parts of the temple.

But this court had become the equivalent of an Oriental bazaar, selling animals used for the sacrificial system as well as salt, oil, and wine used in the rituals. There were already four markets set up on the adjacent the Mount of Olives where animals could be bought for that purpose. The recent use of this court for such a purpose showed flagrant disrespect for the temple, for the Gentiles, and for God's glory. The physical force and passion required by Jesus to clear such a large area can only be imagined. What kind of anger is this?

It's not anger over one's shame or wounds. It's anger over how sin defames God and wounds His creatures; it's anger over the evil that corrupts and with the evil one who destroys. This is the anger of Jesus, the obverse side of His love, a heroic passion that hates what He sees and is determined to make it right. To begin to place our anger here is a part of our awakening into redeemed manhood.

How do we move toward this anger? Ironically, by growing in His love for us. As we do so, we will more and more love what He loves and be angry over what He is angry. This love and anger will in turn motivate us to prayer or action—probably both. But the prayer and action will be for the kingdom, for the glory latent in every human, and for the glory residing in God Himself.

The Lord's Prayer gives us the final motive for our anger: so that God's name and reputation would be kept pure, so that His kingdom would finally arrive, and so that His will would at last be accomplished.

This is a long way from my anger over my oratorical lapses. It's a long way from all our anger. But Jesus intends to make

us like Himself, fully human, fully man.

Even with our anger. {eoa}

Bill Delvaux is a graduate of Duke University and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and has served as a pastor and a high school Bible teacher. Presently, he leads Landmark Journey Ministries as a speaker, small group coach, and author of *Divided: When the Head and Heart Don't Agree* and *Landmarks: Turning Points on Your Journey Toward God*. Bill and his wife have two grown daughters and reside in Franklin, Tennessee. Follow Bill on Twitter @BillDelvaux.