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Alfred
Street
BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley

APRIL 10/11, 2021
JOHN 11:21 (NRSV)

**"IF.../
WHEN
YOU'RE
ANGRY
WITH GOD**

A SERMON SERIES BY

REV. DR. HOWARD-JOHN WESLEY



@PASTORHJW

**WHEN YOU'RE
ANGRY
WITH GOD**



VILLAGE
@ASBC

MOVING FROM CROWD TO COMMUNITY

Sunday, April 11, 2021

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley

Sermon: When You're Angry At God- Part 1: "IF"

Scripture: John 11:21-22(NIV)

**CURRICULUM
GUIDE**



Sermon Summary

This month, Pastor Wesley begins a sermon series tackling the subject, “when you’re angry with God.” In this series we will journey through the Bible to learn lessons from people who’ve reached a place of disappointment, frustration, confusion, and/or anger with the will, the way, and the workings of God. In Part I of the series subtitled “If” we dive into the story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and Mary and Martha’s disappointment and anger towards Jesus. We learn that when we are angry with God our prayers are not just for the purpose of receiving the outcome or answer we want. Prayers are meant to show us the glory of God. Our religion, righteousness, piety, discipleship, worship, service, and devotion is a response to grace, and not an investment in mercy. We learn to not compare our lives to others because nothing good comes from comparison. Lastly, we learn that when God operates outside our understanding, we must declare, *“but even now, here’s what I believe about God.”*

Key Points:

There were three underlying sources of Mary and Martha’s anger and disappointment:

1. They came to Jesus in a privileged position.
 - a. Religion, righteousness, piety, discipleship, worship, service and devotion can delude you into a privileged position where you think what happens to other people should never happen to you because you’re religious. Righteousness does not give you immunity from life. Righteousness is not a quid pro quo.
2. They came in a context of comparison.
 - a. Don’t compare the reality of your life to a snapshot of someone else’s. Comparing your life to others will always leave you angry and frustrated. The wicked may prosper but they’re never blessed. Don’t worry about others, Jesus is still able to bless you.
3. They struggled with sovereignty.
 - a. We are stewards of the mysteries of God. God is more of a mystery than a certainty and cannot be confined to a box. We may not understand what God is doing or why. God is sovereign!

Notes for Facilitators:

Welcome to the Final week of the Winter/Spring 2021 Season of Village. We've come a mighty long way together. Thank you for your commitment and hard work. The Fall season of Village 2021 will run from September 12, 2021 through December 10, 2021. Early registration links will be sent to all existing facilitators, hosts, and Villagers by Sunday, April 18, 2021. Don't forget if your group is having a final gathering that involves outdoor activities please let us know when, where, and what time ASAP. We would like to capture some of these for our upcoming Village season promos. Also feel free to make screen shots of your Village when you meet virtually.

Getting To Know You Questions:

1. In tough situations, are you typically predisposed to anger, frustration, or disappointment?
2. Was there ever a time when you needed a friend and they did not come through? How did you feel? Have you ever been the friend that was needed and you didn't come through?





Into The Bible Questions:

1. The sermon reminds us that when the hand of God escapes the understanding of our minds, the character of God must be believed in our hearts. Read John 11:25-26, what does Jesus tell Martha about himself in these verses? Why is this a significant statement about who Jesus is?
2. Jesus does not chastise Martha's anger or Mary's disappointment, but instead "he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled" and wept over Lazarus. (John 11:33-38). What does Jesus' response reveal about his humanity and compassion?
3. Are you aware of other examples of **prolepsis**—a literary tool where a writer takes a future event and recasts it in the past as if it has already happened—in the Bible?

Life Application Questions:

1. When Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was ill, there was an expectation that Jesus would arrive immediately. When have you struggled with confining God to your own expectations and timeline? Why?
2. Why do you think we've been taught to hide when we struggle with anger, disappointments or frustration towards God? Have you ever been guilt-ed into believing something is wrong with you because you've been angry with God?
3. Sometimes our anger with God is not what God didn't do for us, but how much God did for another. Are you currently disappointed in God because of how God moved in someone else's life? How does the sermon encourage you to combat the spirit of comparison?

"Can I Push It?"

1. If everything that happens is the pre-ordained will of God, what does prayer really do? If prayer is not a tool to maneuver God, then why should we pray?
2. When Jesus shows up there are people with Mary and Martha that were, "the enemies of Jesus," criticizing and questioning why Jesus who healed strangers in the past did not heal Lazarus. Who do you consider "the enemies of Jesus" today? Why?

Activity:

Pastor Wesley offered that the purpose of prayer is to not change what God is doing, but to help you see the glory in what God is doing. In the chat, spend one-minute sharing what you believe is the purpose of prayer. Discuss the responses and write down any that will be useful in your prayer toolkit.



Spirit Work:

God Is A Mystery:

This week read and reflect on Isaiah 55:8-9. In a journal write out all the current areas in your life where you don't quite understand what God is doing. After journaling and writing out the areas, individually pray over each, ending your prayer with "God you are sovereign and I still trust you."

Additional Questions for Married Couples:

1. When Jesus does not immediately arrive to heal Lazarus, Martha responds in anger and Mary responds in disappointment. What times in life have you and your spouse responded differently to a situation? Did the differing responses cause disharmony? How does Jesus' compassion towards Mary and Martha model the compassion we should have for each other?

Additional Questions for Young Adults

1. Pastor Wesley cautioned, "one of the worst things you can do in life is to compare the reality of your life to the snapshot of someone else's [life]". As young adults living in a society obsessed with social media, how does comparing your life to what you see on-line affect you? What tools are necessary to defeat comparison—the thief of joy?

Additional Questions for Parents:

1. How do you set examples for your child(ren) to reject religiosity and embrace a relationship with God? How do you teach them that righteousness does not give them immunity from life's happenings? In what ways do you model or teach having patience with God?

Additional Questions for Women:

1. Pastor Wesley mentioned that it is healthy to be honest about our feelings, frustrations and disappointments with those we are connected to. Our relationship with God is no exception. Are you able to be honest about your feelings in your relationships? Does this include God? Why or why not?

Additional Questions for Men:

1. How do you handle situations when God proves that God is bigger than you thought or when God is not confined to your box?

Reading for This Week

Monday, April 12	John 11:1-44
Tuesday, April 13	John 12:1-11
Wednesday, April 14	2 Corinthians 10:12
Thursday, April 15	Psalms 37:1-10
Friday, April 16	Psalms 4, 6, 13, 22

Further Study, Resources, and Terms

1. *Prolepsis*—when a writer takes a future event and puts/writes it in the past as if it has already happened
2. Learn more about Gerard Sloyan
<https://www.biola.edu/talbot/ce20/database/gerard-s-sloyan>
3. Calvinistic/predestined Ep. 2 "Theodicy" Pt. 1 - Can I Push It? (April 2020)
<https://youtu.be/SUSyJErW-TM?t=943>
4. ASBC Self-Care Guide <https://www.alfredstreet.org/selah/>
5. Clark-Soles, Jaime, and Fentress-Williams, Judy, et al. The CEB Women's Bible. Common English Bible, 2016.
6. Fentress-Williams, Judy. Holy Imagination. Abingdon Press, 2021, pp 276-285.