

Chapters 8-9

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Preacher: Jason Webb

[0:00] Amen. Well, just to let you know, there are five copies of Feelings and Faith on the table in the foyer if you are interested. I know some of you had raised your hands and you were interested in purchasing those, and so those are back on the table in the foyer.

Well, last week we talked about Christian experience. Do Christians have a distinct Christian experience? And we said, yes. All true Christians live a different kind of life.

They don't live like unbelievers. They have a different experience. And that experience is one of growing obedience. They continue to grow in obedience, but they'll never be perfect while they're here.

They suffer. We just read Paul, we must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God. And that's going to be true for all of us to one degree or another.

We all suffer, but God at the same time blesses His people with joy, with contentment, with peace as they believe. And then we ask, well, what do you do when you don't feel like obeying?

[1:07] There comes some command or you know you're supposed to do something, but you don't feel like obeying. Your emotions aren't falling in line. Well, what do you do? And we said, you call it what it is.

You call it sin. You call it sin. We don't minimize it. We don't say cheerful, wholehearted obedience is some sort of bonus. As long as you gut it out, that's what really matters.

God is worthy of wholehearted, cheerful obedience. And so when we fail to render that to Him, then we call it sin. And what do we do with our sin?

We run to Jesus. We run to Jesus for forgiveness, for grace, for help, to overcome our unbelief, to overcome our sinful emotions.

And we ask for forgiveness for the way we haven't been obeying properly. And then we asked the next question, should Christians seek an experience with God?

[2:13] Should Christians seek an experience with God? And we said, well, it depends. It depends on whether this experience is governed by truth or not. If it's just experience for experience sake, then no.

That's really not what the Bible tells us to do. That's not what we should be going after. But does the Word of God motivate our experience? Does the Word of God give us the truth that empowers our experience?

And if that's the case, then we should want those kind of experiences. We should be experience hounds in that sense that we're not going to be satisfied until this truth comes home to my heart and I emotionally fall in line with it.

So I see that Jesus is glorious and I read that on the pages of Scripture. I don't want those words just to sit there. I want them to come into me and I want to feel that Jesus is glorious.

So to really understand the truth is to experience it. To see Jesus, to know Jesus, is to love. To love Him.

[3:22] To understand justification by faith or future glory or the character of God is more than just data put into our heads. It's meant to lead to an emotional experience.

And so it's right to want that kind of experience. We shouldn't be going after artificial experiences, unanchored in the truth. But it is right to seek God-centered, truth-driven experience.

Now, that's sort of a review of what we've covered last week. And I want to give you an opportunity to make any comments, to ask any questions, to say anything before we move on.

Anything about last week that you've thought about this week and you want to add or some other thought or question? You're very subdued. It's okay? You can ask?

Okay. Speak now or forever hold your peace. Okay. So this week we begin a new section. This section is all about mortifying, ungodly emotions.

[4:26] And the overall purpose of this book is a positive one. The subtitle is called Cultivating Godly Emotions. And so we're talking about growing something, about doing something positive.

But godly emotions can't grow when our hearts and our lives and our emotional life is full of ungodly emotions, where ungodly emotions are choking out godly emotions.

And so the purpose of mortifying, of killing ungodly emotions, of weakening those and destroying them, is so that godly emotions can take their place.

We don't want to leave a void. We want godly emotions to grow in their place. And so first we're going to look at an introduction of this subject. Just sort of three broad steps that is necessary no matter what sin we're talking about.

And then in the second half we're going to talk about sinful anger. How do you mortify sinful anger? Well, Borgman says there's three basic steps that come before that are preliminary to all mortification.

[5:38] And the first preliminary step, the first basic step, is honest self-evaluation. Honest self-evaluation. Before you begin killing any emotional sin, you have to have some level of understanding of yourself, of your emotional makeup, of your tendencies, of the sins that you naturally fall into.

So we need to be honest with ourselves. Listen to what the Apostle Paul says in Romans 12.3. For by the grace given to me, I say to everyone among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

And so we have to know ourselves. We have to have this sober judgment about ourselves. We don't want to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. And so before we can put this sin to death, we have to be figuring out what emotional sins we struggle with.

So sometimes it's very hard to know yourself, isn't it? Have you ever been talking to someone and they say something like, well, I'm not an angry person.

I'm pretty easygoing. I don't get stressed out very easily. I'm not the jealous type. But at the same time, you're thinking as they're saying those things, does this person have like a twin sister that I've been dealing with?

[7:14] Because this person is wound so tight. I get stressed out when I'm with her. She's ready to blow her gasket at the drop of a hat. It's so easy to think of ourselves differently than what we really are.

But sober, honest, realistic judgment is hard. And that might mean you, if you're serious about dealing with and having emotional holiness, you might need to ask someone.

Brother, sister, mom, dad, older child, someone that you know and trust. You might need to ask them for help. If you're serious about putting to death emotional sins, you should ask someone, what do you see in my life?

What patterns in my life of emotional sin, emotional problems, in what situations do I get out of line where I step out of bounds?

And as we're asking them, we need to remember that the wounds from a friend can be trusted. They can be trusted.

[8:25] It might hurt for them to tell us these things, but they're good. And so as you're asking your friend or your older child, we need to also remember to ask God to search us.

Take David's words into your mouth from Psalm 139. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me, and know my anxious thoughts.

Anxious thoughts. That's an emotional word. David isn't telling God to figure him out. David is telling God to help him figure himself out.

God knew David from top to bottom. But David struggles to know himself. And so he asks God to test him, to show him what he's made of.

And so that's where we begin. We begin with this honest self-evaluation. We begin with ourselves. And then the second step is that after you identify the ungodly emotion, we confess it.

[9:30] We confess it. We confess it to the Lord without excuse. We confess it to the person that we've sinned against without an excuse. Whoever conceals his transgression will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

And so let's, for example, let's say you discover this ongoing sin of bitterness in your heart. You hold grudges and you're bitter towards people for hurts that they've done.

So what do you do? You take it to the Lord and you confess it to Him. And confession is not merely saying that you have a problem, that you sometimes do this.

Confession is more than that. Confession is telling God, I sin because I'm a sinner. This isn't some problem that's incidental to me. This is my problem.

This is who I am. It's saying you have a problem and it's nobody's fault but your own. It's not the situation. It's not other people.

[10 : 38] It's not this or that. I'm bitter because of me. I'm a sinner and I sin in this way. And when we own that before the Lord, when we confess that before the Lord, that's confession.

And that confession begins the process of receiving mercy and grace. That's the verse that we just read. Whoever confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

This is the first step to mercy. Well, we don't only confess our sins to the Lord. I don't know about you but I find it much easier to confess my sins to the Lord than I do to other people.

Have you ever noticed that? It's much easier for me to get angry with my wife, we'll say, and after I've done that to feel bad and to confess it to the Lord but not to really ever go to her.

So we not only confess it to the Lord, we confess our bitterness to the other person, to our wife, to our accountability partner. If this is just sort of a tendency, then we confess it to the person that can help us.

[11 : 53] We don't settle just for confessing it to the Lord. Take it before the person you've sinned against. Take it to the person that you're seeking help from and confess it to them. Confession is dragging sin into the light.

You know, 1 John talks a lot about light and dark and about people who are in the light and people who are in the dark. People who are in the dark, they sin in the dark. They are in the dark.

Their sin keeps them in the dark. But when we live in the light, it doesn't mean that we stop sinning. It means that in a way, we drag our sin into the light of who God is.

We drag it out into the open and sin dies in the light. It dies in the light. Sin loves darkness.

Sin likes to be hidden in your heart where it can brew and stew and grow. But when you drag it out into the light, it withers. Thomas Manson, the Puritan, said this, Confession is an act of mortification.

[12 : 55] So confession is actually itself part of putting sin to death. It's an act of mortification. It is, as it were, the vomit of the soul. It breeds a dislike of the sweetest morsels when they are cast up in a loathsome ejection.

Sin is sweet in commission, but bitter in remembrance. Sin is sweet when you're doing it. But when you confess it, it becomes bitter.

It becomes disgusting. So suppose you love Hershey's chocolate and, you know, one time you're eating it and you, an hour later, you throw it up and you know that's what it was.

It was that Hershey's chocolate. Well, and then pretty soon after that, every single time you ate this chocolate, you threw up. You threw up an hour later. You threw up a half an hour later. Fifteen minutes later, you're throwing it up.

Pretty much every time you threw it up, wouldn't that make you hate Hershey's chocolate more?

Wouldn't you say, you know what, I really need to stop eating this chocolate. This is disgusting. Well, that's confession.

[14 : 05] That's what confession does to sin. Every time we confess it to the Lord and we confess it to our neighbor, our friend, it begins this process of putting sin to death and the way it does it is it makes us hate the sin.

It makes us disgusted with the sin. And then, like I said before, this is the way we obtain mercy.

When we confess fully and freely to the Lord, Lord, this is who I am.

This is what I'm struggling with. I hate this. God has promised that mercy will quickly follow. We often say that God is the good physician, don't we?

Well, any good physician, if a patient is moaning and crying in agony, is going to be quick to come to the help of that patient and do whatever he can to help him.

And so, God is our good physician. And when we're confessing and moaning and groaning over our sin, He won't stand idly by. He'll rush into our room, He'll give us the medicine, He'll help us, He'll help us to kill it.

[15:15] So, confession brings God into the picture. Confession brings forgiveness. It brings holiness. Well, thirdly, so, so we've talked about you have to begin with self-examination.

You need to secondly go with confession. And then third, you need to understand the biblical process of transformation. And this, this last, this third point, we're going to be covering over the next several weeks.

And so, I don't have a lot to say about it here. But, there's a process, and it's not just emotional sins, it's for all sins, where we confess it, we repent of our sin, we mortify it, and we just don't stay in this past, or in this negative situation where we're just focused on killing it.

We also seek to put on the opposite virtue, the opposite grace. So, if we, if we struggle with anger, which we're going to talk about next, we repent, we confess, we mortify, and then we put on gentleness, or tenderness, and, and we become transformed.

And what happens is, if, if our life is full of tenderness, and compassion, and gentleness, there's not a lot of room for anger to grow, is there? And, anger sort of gets rooted out, and, yeah, every now and then you'll suffer for, or suffer from it, you'll, you'll sin in that way, but, to a great degree, it's possible to have those things rooted out of our lives, and it's this whole process, and it's the process of putting off and putting on.

[17:01] And so, today we're looking at sinful anger, like I said. So now we're moving out of the basic general steps, generic steps, and we're talking about anger. And let's begin with a question.

Question for you. Everyone here knows that anger is not always bad, right? It's not always sinful. We're not going to cover that ground again. You, you guys know that. So, let me ask you, how do you know if your anger is good anger or bad anger, righteous anger or sinful anger?

What's the difference between those two? What questions can we ask ourselves as we look at a situation that we're in where we're angry? When is it righteous anger and when is it sinful anger? Let's hear what you guys have to say. There. Okay. Okay. Very good. So, is it about us or is it about others?

Is it about, is it a God-described anger? Those are two very good things. What else could we say? What other questions could we ask? Or can we be more specific on what Dara said?

[18:10] Yes, Cindy. Right. It's going to have the wrong motivation. It's motivated by something other than God.

And it's going to have other sins with it. What else could we say? That's very good. What else could we say about sinful anger, righteous anger? Okay.

Is it going to bring glory to God? That's good. What about degrees? Do you understand what I'm saying? So, is it right to be angry about this thing to the extent that I am angry about it?

Sometimes we can be angry about the right things, can't we? angry. But, somehow, in our sinful minds, in our hearts, good things and bad things get sort of interwoven together, don't they?

And when our self and God's anger kind of get together, we have a tendency to go overboard. Where we stay angry.

[19:13] Or we're way more angry than we ought to be. Do you understand? Do you understand? So, sinful anger is marked by too much anger or maybe even too little anger.

If we're sort of like mildly disturbed about some really bit of unrighteousness, that shows you that our anger is sinful. It's about the right things and it might be motivated by the right things, but it doesn't come up to the standard of how angry we should be.

Now, I don't know how to divide those things between too much and too little, but that's one way that we could look at it. Basically, God's anger occurs when God doesn't get what He wants.

Godly anger occurs when God doesn't get what He wants. Righteous anger is motivated by a sincere love for God. And so, righteous anger is aroused when God's will is violated.

But sinful anger occurs when I don't get what I want. It's motivated by a sincere love for me. And it's aroused when my will is violated.

[20:29] And sinful anger is always born of idolatry. It's always idolatrous anger. I want something more than I want God. I'm not happy with God.

And so, I get angry because I want that and God isn't enough because my idol isn't being satisfied and so I'm angry when I don't get what I want. So, where does sinful anger come from?

It comes from inside of me. It begins in my heart. It begins in my own idolatrous heart. It doesn't come from outside of me. Now, here's where a lot of people get this all wrong.

We want to blame our anger on something else. We want to blame our anger on something outside of ourselves. So, it's our co-workers' fault that I'm angry.

It's my wife's fault that she's not doing what I want. She's uncooperative. It's my strong-willed child's fault. It's this misbehaving puppy.

[21:33] It's this rebellious lawnmower. It's the Congress. It's the President. It's the Senator. It's the liberals, the conservatives, the economy, whatever. It's traffic.

It's outside of me, and they make me angry. But sinful anger doesn't come from the outside. It comes from the inside.

It's your fault that you're angry. So, from within, this is Jesus' words, from within, out of the heart of a man come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, and on and on he goes.

All these things come from within, and they defile a person. So, we need to get this straight right here and now. Sinful anger is an internal problem.

It's an inside problem. It isn't an external, circumstantial problem. So, where does it exactly come from?

[22:37] Where does the sinful emotion grow out of? It begins with idolatrous wrong thoughts. It begins with wrong thoughts. Wrong thinking affects how you feel.

And sometimes our wrong thinking is like a microwave. Or, not a microwave, like a crockpot. You know, it's the steady, slow, simmering.

It's this growing, growing heat, and we keep it all in. We keep it pressured, and the whole time, our wrong thinking is feeding this internal, simmering anger.

And sometimes it's like a microwave. My wife used to chastise me for not taking the lid off the leftovers before I put it in the microwave, and maybe you guys know why.

because, you know, I put in the bowl of chili, and it has the lid still on, and I press one or I press two, and it goes for two minutes. About a minute and 30 seconds into it, I hear this pop, right?

[23:39] And the lid just blew off, and chili just all over the microwave. You guys have done that? No, you never do that.

Well, that's how sometimes our thinking is, and our anger is related. We get into a situation, and our thinking is hot-wired, hard-wired, and this is a situation where we are ready a minute in the wrong circumstances, and boom, we blow our top.

Either way, it comes from wrong thinking. It comes from an idolatrous desire for something. It comes from thinking too highly about something that we like, we love.

It might be good, it might be bad, but we think too highly of it, and when we don't get it, we get angry. And it's not just things, it's situations, it's people, it's having people do the opposite of what you want them to do.

But either way you look at it, behind sinful anger, there's this wire that's plugged in from the crockpot to the microwave, and it's plugged into wrong thoughts.

[24:49] And as soon as you plug your mind into wrong thoughts, and your heart into wrong thoughts, one way or the other, sinful anger is going to come out of you. And that's what James says.

Let's turn there. James chapter 4. James 4. James 4. We're going to read the first two verses. James asks this great question.

And he gives a very profound answer. James 4 verse 1. What causes fights and quarrels among you? That's anger, isn't it?

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? It's inside of you. You want something, but don't get it.

You kill and you covet, but you cannot have what you want. And so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. So why are you fighting?

[25:51] Why are you angry with each other? You want and you don't get. You want what you want. You deceive yourself into thinking that you deserve what you want.

you have the right to want that and you have the right to have it. And so you fight because of your desires and you're angry because you're deceived.

Your thinking is all wrong. And so at the bottom of all sinful anger is wrong thinking. You're putting the wrong value on what you want.

So you're legitimizing your desires with wrong ideas. And it's so easy to justify our anger.

Borgman tells a story. A husband told me with confidence, Pastor, I can only get through to her when I'm yelling and using profanity.

[26:53] Oh really? And when she finally listens, you're able to do things God's way? Exactly, was his immediate triumphant reply. So you think that your use of anger is justified because it accomplishes God's purposes.

Another triumphant, I told you so. Then, yes, that's what I'm saying. And I said, I think God's opinion is different than yours. For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. It's easy to justify our anger. We think we're getting something good when we become angry. We think it produces results. But brothers and sisters, that kind of anger does not achieve the righteousness of God.

It might look like the righteousness of God, but it's not. It might look like something good. It might look like you've achieved something, you've accomplished something, you've received something, but you haven't.

And as long as you're thinking about anger wrong, in a wrong way, and you're excusing anger, and you're loving something too much so that you are angry, it's going to have a stranglehold on you.

[28:12] You're not going to be able to put it to death. Well, what do you do about sinful anger? Maybe you've seen in your life that this is an area that I struggle in this area.

what do you do about it? Here's my first direction. Look for the idol. Look for the idol. Whenever you're angry, whenever there's a situation, there's an idol lurking somewhere in your heart.

That's where anger comes from. So you're angry with your spouse because he's not doing something that you want him to do. He's not taking out the garbage in a prompt He's forgetting it over and over again to take it out.

And he's just not doing it. Maybe he's lazy. Whatever the reason is, he's not doing what you want. And now you are angry. You're angry. I can't believe it. I can't believe it.

He forgot again and you're stewing there. You're yelling at him. You're angry with him. So we need to ask, where does that anger come from? This situation, where does that anger come from?

[29:18] Well, don't say, I'm angry because he's not doing what he's supposed to do. I'm angry because he's not taking out the trash. That's not why you are angry.

That's when you are angry. That's the circumstances of your anger. That's the occasion. What's the reason? It's not because of him.

That's when. It's because there's something inside of you. There's an idol in there. That idol could be comfort. You don't like taking out the trash.

And you've exalted your own comfort. And now that he's violating it and making you take out the trash, you're angry with him. Or maybe it's fear. You know, if I keep taking out the trash for him, this might get to be a pattern.

And I might end up having to take out the trash every single night. And I don't want to do that. I don't want to be stuck doing that. Maybe it's pride. pride. I work hard all day.

[30:24] I work harder than he does all day. He should do this for me. So you ask yourself, where's the idol? What is the idol? Find it.

Now, now confess it. That's what you do with sin. You confess it. You have a sin to deal with. You confess it. You need mercy. You need Jesus to forgive you. You need Jesus to give you help and strength because that is a difficult situation.

We're not poo-pooing the hard situation, the circumstances, but you've sinned.

You need to confess it. You haven't been trusting him. You haven't been depending upon him.

You've been relying on your own effort. A lot of times when we're angry, we're trying to do God's job for him.

We're trying to make our husband, our wife, our children holy. Aren't we? We're trying to get them to do what they're supposed to do and we do it in the wrong way. And so we've been taking God's prerogatives on him.

[31:32] We're doing what God only can do and we proudly thought that it was really up to us. It was up to me to fix my wife or my husband. But you were wrong.

You're wrong. So you need to confess it. You repent. You stop thinking that way. Stop blaming your husband for your anger. Stop thinking that that's just the way you are.

And start thinking a different way. Fill up your mind with the promises of God. I will never leave you nor forsake you.

That's a promise that's true when your husband or your wife isn't doing what you want her to do. I'll never leave you nor forsake you. Cast all your anxieties on me because I care for you. God works all things together for the good of those who love him. No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.

[32 : 34] You fill your mind with the promises of God. Bring God into the situation. take the idol off of its throne and put God back on.

That's how you throw off false thinking. That's how you get rid of these idols. And what happens is when you take the idol off the throne, you begin to transform. Your inner emotional life begins to transform and you get rid of anger.

You don't put it on anymore because you don't need it. because God will do that for me. I can trust God. He's going to be good in this situation so I don't need to be angry. I don't need to try to get my own way because God's way is better.

And Colossians 3.8 says you take it off and you refuse to put it on. Colossians 3.8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these, anger, rage, and malice.

So whenever we feel like anger is coming on, what do we do? We get rid of it. We throw it away like an old nasty ratty coat that we don't want to even be near anymore.

[33 : 44] So we get rid of it. So what do you do when you start feeling anger coming on? You ask yourself, what do I so desperately want that I'm not getting?

Where's my idol? And then you fill your mind with the promises of God with the truth. And then you fill your mind with the truth about what God thinks about your anger.

Is God a big fan of sinful anger? No, he's not. We've read Colossians 3.8, get rid of it. We've read James 4.1-2. That's all idolatry.

And God hates those things. And so we memorize those passages. If you're struggling with anger, look to these passages. Memorize James 4.1-2 and start looking at your life through these circumstances, through the situation.

And then you replace your old thoughts with God's thoughts. And then you strive to put on the opposite grace. We don't want to leave any room in the flower bed for any more sinful anger to grow.

[34 : 55] And so we put in tenderness, compassion, gentleness, patience, forgiveness. We ask God to grow these things in our hearts.

We strive in these areas. And if you do fill your mind with God's promises, you will change. And compassion and patience and tender heartedness will grow.

Now finally, how do you get rid of, how do you kill anger? You drag it to the cross. You drag it to the cross. And what I mean by this is that you drag your sin to the cross and say, okay, look at what Jesus has done for me.

Look at what he's done for me. He loved me. He loved holiness so much that he bought it with his own blood. And sinful anger, you cannot go on living.

You have to die because he died for me. He faced God's wrath for me and so you will not rule over me. You cannot reign over me. I will tear you from the throne.

[36 : 07] And we crucify our sin. We drag it before the cross and say, anger, I can't indulge you anymore. God, or the Lord Jesus died to save me from my sins.

He died to save me from you, so I'm not going back to you. God turned his face away in horror at what his son had become.

And so can I really embrace you that made Jesus horrendous to his father? And we drag the idol before Jesus' cross and say, did you sinful, angry, anger, you sinful desires, did you ever do anything for me compared to this?

What have I ever gained from you? And look what I've gained here. I've gained everlasting life at this cross. And you would drag me into hell itself.

So I'm not going your direction and you are dying. Jesus died to save me. Jesus died in love for me. He died to free me and I will not and I cannot indulge you anymore.

[37 : 16] And that's what it means to drag your sin before the cross. You put your sin next to Jesus' cross and that's where sin dies. The cross casts a shadow that is poisonous to every sin.

So you drag it there and you watch it die. Well, if you want to mortify sin, think about Jesus. Fill your minds about what he did for you and loving you because anger will die on the cross and it has died

and it will continue to die.
Well, we are dismissed. We are