

# QUANTOCK MINISTRIES

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*A Bible teaching and preaching ministry  
for the Christian community*

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## **COMMENT - ANGER AND THE CHRISTIAN**

**August 2019.** Just outside my bedroom window there is a weeping birch tree in the front garden. It's been there for many years now and although only 10 – 12 feet tall it is a fine specimen with a thick canopy right across the crown of the tree. For a number of years, a pair of pigeons have chosen that canopy as a site for their nest and this year has been no exception. Several chicks were hatched in the nest this Spring and were obviously reaching a good size. Early one morning in July I was woken by a tremendous commotion in the garden outside. It was fully light with the sun rising, and I opened the blind to be greeted by a very sorry sight. The lawn under the thick weeping branches was covered with a mass of small soft feathers and down, and there wasn't a single young bird left in the nest. A pair of magpies were just finishing their breakfast of tender young pigeon, possibly having waited until the chicks were developed enough to make their efforts worthwhile.

Heart-breaking, but a very powerful metaphor for what can happen to our children as they leave the comparative innocence of childhood, moving into the much more dangerous years of their youth. After all the protection that good parenting seeks to provide in the children's early years, the world and malign influences suddenly and rapidly tend to devour their minds and hearts, often leaving a tangled mess of attitudes, opinions and activities in and around these vulnerable young lives. This is what is happening to C, one of the two children the Lord called me to help care for when she was less than one year old. My caring task greatly increased when C was just two, after her mother left her home and family here. C and her slightly older brother responded so well to the foundation of love, security and Christian influence that I sought to build into their lives while helping to look after them, and they both displayed a simple but growing spiritual interest. C expressed her love for their situation here so sincerely on many occasions, even as recently as January this year when quite spontaneously she just said: "Dave, I really love you so much; thank you for all you've done for me".

Yet within four months of that statement C had completely rejected regular contact with her father, with me, with any Christian interest and with this home (she was born here and always loved the place). The circumstance which brought this about was a natural desire to live with her mother for a while as she was beginning to experience changes which are a normal part of a girl's development, in C's case as she approached her 11<sup>th</sup> birthday. The move was agreed between her parents without any problem, and they expected C to come back here for access visits. Sadly, she was targeted by a strong pagan and humanistic influence, turning her against her past. Already C shows evidence of oppression by evil spirits, including fear, hatred and deception. She only speaks to me if she has to, although that may be partly due to guilt or embarrassment. Her mother has suggested C's rapid personality change is a mental health issue, but I consider it to be a serious spiritual attack. C's brother, by the way, is a star. He loves his Mum but declares he has no intention of leaving us or changing his outlook.

What I really want to comment on is my reaction to all this, which is a depth of anger I have never felt before. So, *what part should anger play in our lives when we are confronted by real satanic evil, and how do we deal with that anger?* After all, Jesus Himself showed genuine anger in a variety of circumstances, and He was sinless, so there is such a thing as "righteous anger". I suggest our responses could come under four headings.

### 1. Understanding God's purposes in allowing the situation

My experience is probably no different to that of many Christians, when loved ones show signs of rejecting us and our Christian faith, especially when it leads to persecution. Twice this year I have been attacked by a series of texts regarding the "bad" nature of both my character and my past care for C, my Christianity, and much more. (I'm reminded of the accusation against the Lord in Matthew 12 v 24, that He acted in the power of Satan.) These texts did not come from C or her mother, but it appears C has been informed of the accusations and influenced by

them. Each criticism was totally untrue, and I say this having examined my heart over every point made. Like Job, I have tried to use the work of Satan as an opportunity for self-examination. I'm sure we must not let our anger blind us to the fact that the whole experience is part of God's purposes for our sanctification, and I would suggest this is the first response we should make: "What is God saying to me through all this?"

## 2. Ensuring we correctly target and handle our anger

Initially I found myself feeling very cross with C for becoming nasty and ungrateful, but my love for her soon prevailed over that. The change was so sudden and profound it couldn't be childhood naughtiness and there had to be an external influence of some sort. After all, she was then only a ten-year old child. No, this was outright spiritual warfare; a deliberately evil attack on Christianity, targeting C and using her as a pawn. The question then was whether I had a duty to take issue with whoever was responsible, condemning the great evil they had brought upon C and showing them where they stood before God. However, the particular circumstances meant I had to depend entirely on the Holy Spirit for guidance, both on the right course of action and, if I did engage in argument, whether to do so face-to-face or through writing. My robust response to the earlier accusations by texts was only defensive and I did not counter-attack, but now my anger was driving me to go further. I'm sure it was only by God's grace that this strong inner passion drove me first to my knees, and there *I felt very constrained to leave the matter entirely in God's hands, to be dealt with by Him*. Making this decision certainly brought me His wonderful peace, although the anger bottled up within me has wanted to burst out from time to time and give someone a real dressing down! I have been able to cope with this pressure by sharing the anger and praying about it with fellow Christians. How powerful a safety valve this can be! (See Galatians 6 v 2.) I am grateful to all who are standing with me in prayer at this time, especially my friends in our local fellowship.

## 3. Discerning where the blame really lies

The point then arises whether human agencies are to blame or Satan himself. I think the answer must be that both are, and that therefore the anger must be directed towards both. All humans have personal responsibility (and accountability), and that cannot be avoided. If this were not so, there would be no need for the Cross and the Atonement. Sin would be reduced to the level of "accidents" of nature and nurture, and thus easily explained away. In this case I am well aware that someone is culpable, and that I am fully justified in my anger towards them. A channel of evil abuse involving a child appears to have been willingly opened, and the devastating impact on C and others must mean someone knows what they are doing. But then there is also the deeper issue of our anger at Satan and all the evil demonic powers that have wrought such havoc on the world ever since the temptation of Eve. How ready are we to look not only at the human agencies of evil, be they politicians, rulers, media people, humanists, family members, church members (sadly), etc., but also to feel anger at him who is at the root of all sin? It is very easy just to consider the human channel, but if we have a true love for our perfect and heavenly Father God, His creation and grace, the very gifts of life and love, our feelings of anger at the terrible work of Satan should be deep. Surely the Spirit-filled Christian should be genuinely moved to anger by the dreadful damage Satan has done through sin of every kind, bringing injustice, lies, hatred, wretchedness, destruction, suffering, misery and death to this wonderful world and the human life in it?

## 4. Deciding what to do with the anger

This, finally, brings us to answer another question that my anger has raised; should I let the sun go down on my anger (Ephesians 4 v 26)? If Satan is at the root of all evil our anger towards him cannot and should not be fully assuaged until he is finally vanquished in the lake of fire. By the same token, if a human agency of evil has also left us with feelings of deep and justified anger, then any deliberate absence of remorse and repentance by that person should mean we cannot stop feeling angry at such attitudes until the evil is dealt with one way or another. Luke 17 v 1 – 3 has meant a lot to me at this time. We must always look for evidence of true repentance from sin, and if we find it, we must be genuinely willing to forgive and replace anger with true Christian love. However, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay" is the Lord's clear instruction in Hebrews 10 v 30. Therefore, *it is always right to bring to Him the anger that is within us, for His action and resolution, and for it to be firmly under His control; He deals with it, even if we still feel it*. Indeed, if we have no empathy with God's wrath at whatever causes His vengeance we are, in my view, failing to share in the present sufferings of Christ (Philippians 3 v 10). As we abide in Him our feelings of any sort, right through from unconditional love to righteous anger, should be a reflection on Earth of how the Lord feels in Heaven. And unless we do feel as he feels how can we be really effective in prayer, in witnessing and in preaching the Gospel? It is not just the mind of Christ that should be within us, but the heart of Christ as well, and this is the only antidote to the complacency, fatalism and lukewarmness that characterises so much of our Christian activity today.