

Here's to the crazy ones, the misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers, the round pegs, and the square holes. The ones who see things differently; they're not fond of rules. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify, or vilify them. But the only thing you can't do is ignore them because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius because the ones who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world are the ones that do think differently. Steve Jobs

Those were the words spoken by Steve Jobs that flashed over pictures of the influential figures of Albert Einstein, Martin Luther King Jr., John Lennon, and Gandhi. Those words mixed with those images was the 1990s Apple Advertising campaign. It was a campaign that, in many ways, took a fledgling computer company and began a new trajectory to where it is today as the world's most profitable company.

Every culture, every society, and every community inevitably have a value or a set of values that it considers fundamental, some basic good, which positions every other claim to goodness. What made that campaign so resonant was that Apple tapped into that rock bottom fundamental value of American life—expressive individualism.

Robert Bella, out of UC Berkeley, coined that phrase, and he meant that humans are ultimately defined by their individual psychological core. Their purpose of life seems to flow, or we believe it flows from an unrestrained authenticity to who we believe we are, and anything that challenges this expressive nature of our identity is seen as an intrusion. It's seen as the oppressor. It's viewed as something that must be overcome and abolished. You probably haven't heard that phrase, but you've heard phrases like: you do you, just be yourself, follow your heart, live your truth, or to each their own. This is the water we swim in as Americans.

Now, before I go much further, I'm not saying that expressive individualism is patently a bad thing. There are all sorts of goodness that humans do. We, in fact, have personality, uniqueness, and particularity; we have feelings. We're emotional beings with personal freedom, with the extension of that freedom a force for good in the world. However, attempting to organize life, let alone a whole culture, around this concept of unmitigated freedom can have disastrous effects.

What happens when my expressive individualism butts up against your expressive individualism? What happens when yours conflicts with theirs? All of a sudden, it becomes the milieu where conflict stew. What ultimately happens, the end goal of expressive individualism, is everything gets diminished to what maybe an easier phrase would be: The greatest value we hold is tolerance.

Tolerance isn't love. Those are two different things, but tolerance often masquerades as love. Tolerance is nothing more than a flimsy virtue. It is not one we should do away with, but in our current moment, it seems to present itself as love. If you could just tolerate me, or maybe you've heard that phrase, "The only thing I don't tolerate is intolerance," which is just a logical fallacy at its core. You can't not tolerate intolerance. It just doesn't function that way. Love and tolerance are different.

It reminds me of the great writer Elie Wiesel, who wrote, "The opposite of love is not hate; it's indifference." Tolerance, at its core, is a form of indifference. You do you; I can't impose anything on you. I can't do anything to transgress that. But Wiesel says it right: the opposite of love is not hate; it's indifference. So what happens when we arrive at week three of a sermon series in which we're listening to the very character and name of God as defined by God, and we land at that third phrase, slow to anger?

Well, anger necessitates not indifference; anger necessitates action, involvement, and connection. However, the problem for us, when we come across God describing himself as slow to anger, is we think that God isn't angry because that would transgress our individualism. How could God be angry with me if I'm the arbiter of my own story? I'm the one who writes my own truth. So if God's angry, he's transgressing something very core to us. What does it mean that God is slow to anger?

The point I want to make this morning is that I believe it's actually quite hopeful. Because if God is angry, that means that those things that are wrong in this world that do seem to butt up against you and cause pain and hurt and brokenness, well, if God's angry at the right things, he's also angry at those things that are destroying the world. This idea of God being slow to anger offers quite a bit of hope.

Exodus 34:6-7 are the verses we have been teaching from during the season of Lent. It's my attempt at subtly causing you to memorize the name and character of God, which, if you haven't caught on, go ahead and do that on your own. These two verses of God describing who he is are good verses to memorize. So, I hope this is slowly integrating itself into your memory.

**And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation." Exodus 34:6-7**

We arrive at this description of God, by God, as slow to anger. A little side note on this verse: it is the most quoted verse in the Bible by the

Bible. You'll hear echoes of this all throughout scripture because this is God revealing his name. It speaks to his essence, his character, which you'll see a few examples of this morning. I want you to hang on to this as the big idea: God's anger flows from God's love.

So let's look at this phrase—slow to anger. It's two words in the Hebrew language, *erek appayim*. The first word, *erek*, means long. You'll often see this Hebrew word throughout the Psalms when it's talking about something like an eagle's wings. Their wings are *erek*. They're long. When it's used in conjunction with someone's life, it can speak to the longevity of their life. They're *erek* of days; they're long of days. It has both a physical connotation and a metaphoric understanding. To be long means to have duration.

The second word, *appayim*, is interesting. It means nostrils. So the literal rendering of slow to anger is long of nostrils. Yahweh, Yahweh, compassionate and gracious with a big, long nose. That's what the phrase means. Now, how did we get there? How did we get from long of nostrils to slow to anger? It's a bit of an interesting story. It's an idiom.

My oldest daughter is in a play on Narnia. She's in the theater production. So every time she heads off to the theater, I tell her to break a leg. We all know what that means. We don't mean literally go break your leg. It's an idiom in the theater that means go do a good job. I don't know how we got there to that. I just know that's what I'm supposed to say to the actress. Go break a leg. It's an idiom. We have all sorts of these.

Think of idioms such as rule of thumb or knock on wood or raining cats and dogs. None of those are intended to be taken literally, but somewhere along the line, we created and understood the context of these particular phrases to where they have a residence there. So when we come to this phrase, long of nostrils, we should be asking what the story behind that is. How did we get to God being compassionate and gracious to long of nostrils?

In the ancient Hebrew culture, emotions were often expressed through physical descriptions. Scholars actually talk about the way we can relate to God through anthropomorphism. It's the idea that God takes on or experiences human qualities. Often, the ancient writers would speak in a way for us to understand what God's going through by anthropomorphizing him, which is the idea that we can relate to God through our lived experience. This is where this idea of the long of nose comes from.

Let me keep unpacking it. God's anger or the anger of the divine is often related throughout the scriptures with fire or burning. Think of the Pixar movie *Inside Out*. Do you remember the character Anger? He is depicted as fire coming out of his head. We associate anger with red hotness.

Other parts of scripture, particularly this one in Exodus 4:14, which was after Moses refused to do what God had said. The text says, "*The Lord's anger burned against Moses.*" The word burned is the same root word as *appayim*, which could literally translate to the nose of Yahweh burned hot against Moses. It's their anger. Something in the nose is like the description in which you are expressing that anger. And it's not all that far of a leap. I mean, when you get angry, does your face not flush red? Do

you not have all of that blood rushing to your nose, rushing up to your brain?

Then what usually happens is you take a short breath, and we snap and release it. We take a short breath, and we explode on the other person. But if you are long of nostrils, like God, your nostrils flare out and get long, and you hold it. Then as you exhale, your nose continues to stay long of nostrils. The description of God as long of nostrils is a figure of speech that comes from the physiological feeling you get when you are angry. And over time, this became the natural way for God and the ancient writers to talk about the divine anger. But I love this imagery of long because it's important that God's anger is different than ours. God's anger is, in fact, long.

Well, let's look at a few other texts in scripture that help us understand the nuance of this phrase. Let's go to Proverbs 14. It says, "*Whoever is patient [erek appayim] has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.*" That is: *erek appayim* has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly. Now, here we see an antonym to long of nostrils or patient. That second phrase says that whoever's long of nostrils is patient. And then it contrasts it with someone who's quick-tempered.

So the opposite of long of nostrils is to be quick to snap at people, quick-tempered, ready to be angry, and jump at any moment. If someone cuts you off and you're not long of nostrils, you're quite quick-tempered. You snap out at them and lash out at them. It's as if that anger is boiling right beneath the surface and it just needs something to set it off.

The antonym of patient is quick-tempered. But let's look at a synonym of it. Go to Proverbs 16. "*Better a patient person [erek appayim] than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city*" (Proverbs 16:32). Here the author offers a synonym to it. It says, better is the long of nostril person because they demonstrate self-control.

So now you begin to get this picture of the anger of God that isn't something bubbling beneath the surface like that Pixar character ready to explode, but rather someone who is in utter control, self-control. To be long of nostrils is not to fly off the handle; it is to be calculated. It's to be slow to anger, not quick-tempered, but in control of your emotions.

What this description, if you were to take it in its totality, means is that you can make God mad, but you have to really work at it. God is slow to anger, which is different from our anger. I don't know if your anger is like mine, but often, I am much less slow to anger. I have those moments. I'm not too much of an angry person, I don't think. I don't get too angry too fast, but when I do, I typically have bottled something up, and then it explodes in an unhealthy way around me. That is not necessarily the resting state of who I am, but rather, it's a different anger when I get angry and flare up like that. It's not one that I would classify as self-controlled. It's one in which I feel like I reached that tipping point, and it spills out in unhealthy ways to the people around me who I love.

God's not like that. God's anger is different than that. He's slow to anger. Not one who lacks self-control but, in fact, has it. But even if God is slow to anger, we have a hard time thinking of God as angry. We have

dysfunctional ways of thinking about God's anger. Some of us obsess over it. Some of us assume God is furious, waiting to snap off. So, we struggle with the idea that God is slow to anger. Others of us view God as a permissive life coach, in which we have a really hard time thinking that God is angry.

What do we do with this? Because the scriptures attest to God's anger. Another word we've used for it in the past is the idea of God's wrath. Well, the scriptures talk about the wrath of God 600 times. That's a lot of times. It is a clear theme with which we have to come to understand and wrestle. Because isn't God a God of love?

That goes back to our understanding of expressive individualism. That anger that comes against me must be transgressing against my personal freedom. So how could God be angry because I write my own story? I'm the author of my destiny, so he can't be mad because what is inside me is what's most true. If I feel it, it must be true. How could God get angry at that? But that's a dysfunctional understanding of God's anger.

Let's dig a little bit more because we have a hard time with this concept. We bring all sorts of baggage to the idea of God's anger or God's wrath. The reality is that often, we bring that baggage well-earned. This topic of God's anger and God's wrath has often been abused, misused, and co-opted as a tool for manipulation from people like me and pulpits like this, who knows that you can dangle that in front of people and manipulate them. Unfortunately, the church has a history of that. It can be ways that we mishandle this characteristic of God. So we bring all of that into play. But I encourage us to look fresh at this and not discard it. God says that this is part of his character. He is slow to anger.

Look at how John Stott describes the wrath of God. "God's wrath is his steady, unrelenting, unremitting, uncompromising antagonism to evil in all its forms and manifestations" (Stott). That is a pretty good definition of God's anger or wrath. God's wrath or anger flows from God's love, and his love is committed to the restoration and flourishing of this very world and your lives. His anger is in response to all of the evil in all of its forms and manifestations.

Often, I'll hear people say something like, "I don't believe in a God of wrath." I actually think you do way more than you realize. Every time you read about injustice, every time you read about a child abused, every time you hear of the abuse of careless corporations that are damaging the environment or every time you read about rape, murder, or genocide, every time that you read and see those stories or experience them yourself, when you feel the pain of a broken evil world, you desire God's anger. You long for God's wrath.

It is a proper understanding because when you experience that brokenness, you long for God's anger to be roused in such a way that it could rid the world of all the evil in all its forms and manifestations. We recognize at some level that things are not the way they're supposed to be. We feel it. We intuit the world is indeed broken, and there's something wrong within it that isn't God's will. We recognize that and feel that evil is real, pain is real, and the fact is that there is an objective reality of wrong in the world. When we bump up against it, we desire God to be roused to the same anger that stirs within us.

It is not God's intention to have all of that evil flowing throughout the world, and there is coming a day in which God will make things right. The challenge we have with anger is we forget who God directs the anger toward. We forget where the anger is aimed at. The anger is aimed at the evil and the atrocities that it perpetuates throughout this world. Look at Psalm 5.

**The arrogant cannot stand in your presence. You hate all who do wrong; you destroy those who tell lies. The bloodthirsty and deceitful you, Lord, detest. But I, by your great love, can come into your house; in reverence I bow down toward your holy temple. Psalm 5:5-7**

God detests. That is strong language. Look at Psalm 11.

**The Lord examines the righteous, but the wicked, those who love violence, he hates with a passion. On the wicked he will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur; a scorching wind will be their lot. For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; the upright will see his face. Psalm 11:5-7**

These are strong words, but notice who the psalmist aims them at. Who does God detest? He detests the wicked. He detests those who love violence. Imagine the terrorists, the serial killer, the abusive father, the date rapist, the con artists who are taking advantage of the widow, the pedophile, all of these things that perpetuate evil and brokenness.

Did you notice that both of the psalms connect to this concept of love because God's anger flows from God's love? He's slow to anger, long of nostrils, slow to get there, but he does, in fact, detest the evil that permeates this world. A loving God cannot tolerate that evil. He does not desire for it to continue to wreak havoc. This is basic to relationship, isn't it? If I have a love for someone close to me, when someone does evil against them, the right, proper, mature, healthy response is for me to be angry at that.

Now, the scriptures elsewhere would say in your anger, do not sin. This is really important because often, in my anger, I do sin. However, God is slow to anger, meaning he's controlled and measured, not vindictive or vengeful. We have to see that the anger of God flowing from the love of God is part and parcel of a God who relates to the world and to his people.

I want to walk you through a section of a brilliant book called *The Prophets*. It was written by Abraham Joshua Heschel, a rabbi and scholar. The book is around 600 pages and is dense and difficult to read. But I want to walk you through a section in which he talks about the God of pathos. When you see the word pathos, just think of emotions. He's wrestling with this idea because we're really comfortable with God having a will and an intellect, but we often struggle with the idea of God having emotions.

This section of the book has some brilliant ways that help us understand the anger and the wrath of God. Because the emotions of God help us understand that he actually cares. He is actually involved and moved by the events of what's happening within his beautiful world. There are some long quotes here, and I apologize for that, but it's worth it. The

prophets mentioned in this book are essentially those who wrote all of the scriptures. Just think of those who wrote the Bible.

“An idea or theory of God can easily become a substitute for God, impressive to the mind when God, as a living reality, is absent from the soul” (Heschel). Meaning we can create God in our own image. Often, we project onto God who we think God is. We think of God as a life coach. He just allows us to do everything. It’s really easy for that idea of God to become a substitute for the actual being of God. On the flip side, we think of God as an angry tyrant waiting to flip off the handle.

We can create an idea of God, and that can substitute for God himself. But those two things are different. Our ideas of God and God himself are often not in alignment. We need to do the work of coming back to the scriptures and allowing the text to guide us. Heschel goes on:

**The prophets had no theory or “idea” of God. What they had was an understanding. Their God-understanding was not the result of a theoretical inquiry, of a groping in the midst of alternatives about the being and attributes of God. To the prophets, God was overwhelmingly real and shatteringly present. They never spoke of him as from a distance. Heschel**

This means he’s in this very world, shatteringly present to all who are good and broken in this place. If we can’t grasp the idea that God is here experiencing the joys and the heartbreaks, we will have no concept of the anger of God. We will think of God as distant and remote, and it’ll be images much more like Zeus throwing lightning bolts down at Earth, something removed and beyond. But if God is shatteringly present in this world, then, of course, he experiences anger. Of course, he’s angry at wars. He’s angry at the brokenness, at abuse, at oppression. Of course, he is.

**God does not reveal himself in an abstract absoluteness but in a personal and intimate relation to the world. He does not simply command and expect obedience; he is also moved and affected by what happens in the world and reacts accordingly. Events and human actions arouse in him joy or sorrow, pleasure or wrath. He is not conceived as judging the world in detachment. He reacts in an intimate and subjective manner and thus determines the values of events. Quite obviously, in the biblical view, man’s deeds may move him, affect him, grieve him, or, on the other hand, gladden and please him. This notion that God can be intimately affected, that he possesses not merely intelligence and will, but also pathos, basically defines the prophetic consciousness of God...the God of Israel is a God who loves, a God who is known to, and concerned with, man...God does not stand outside the range of human suffering and sorrow. He is personally involved in, even stirred by, the conduct and fate of man. Pathos denotes, not an idea of goodness, but a living care. Abraham Joshua Heschel, The Prophets**

The emotion of God is because he cares and is deeply vested in this world. God’s slowness to anger, which we seem to wrestle with and

detest, is the very evidence. It is the proper response to brokenness. But we have a hard time with this, and Heschel addresses this one more time.

**Few passions have been denounced so vehemently by teachers of morality as the passion of anger. It’s pictured as a sinister, malignant passion, an evil force, which must under all circumstances be suppressed. The truth, however, is that these features are accretions and exuberance, not its essence. [It’s a way of saying that your experience of that is a side effect, not the actual essence of anger.] Admittedly, anger is something that comes dangerously close to evil, yet it is wrong to identify it with evil. It may be evil by association, but not in essence. Like fire, it may be a blessing as well as a fatal thing—reprehensible when associated with malice, morally necessary as resistance to malice. Abraham Joshua Heschel**

He says if you use anger to express your malice and vindictiveness, then it’s evil. But it is morally necessary to resist the malice and brokenness of this world. Church, the pathos, the emotion, and the anger of God are essential to God’s knowing and understanding of this very world. God’s anger flows from God’s love. We have to see that, or as Elie Wiesel said, “The opposite of love is not hate. It’s indifference.” What is indifference? It is apathy, which is a pathos without emotion. If God were to watch the atrocities that unfold throughout this world and not have a response to it, you could argue that this is evil, being indifferent toward it.

Now, we’re stepping on all sorts of complicated topics here. I understand we’re stepping into the idea of free will, and why wouldn’t God just eradicate it? But he has given us dignity and allows us to stand on our own two feet and have agency in this world, which often means we choose wrong and perpetuate sin.

We’re stepping in all of those waters. I understand. It’s not simple. It’s very complex. The relationship between God and his movement in this world and our free will and our ability to either choose the way of God or choose ourselves often ripples out in brokenness. I see all of that. I understand that. What I want you to walk away with is that this is God when he experienced that anger, it was him experiencing suffering. He is walking with you.

We’re approaching Good Friday. Lent is a reminder that we are frail and we need something beyond ourselves. Good Friday that precedes Easter reminds us that God himself bled and suffered. I can’t answer with very clear reasons as to why God allows some things to happen and others not, but I can with full confidence say that it grieves the heart of God, whatever pain, whatever brokenness, whatever part of the journey you’re in.

You need to be reminded that God is angry. He, too, does not like the injustice you experience. He, too, views evil and sickness and death as an intrusion on his good world. My hope is that you may be reminded of that. Because we also have to recognize, on the flip side, those who have a vision of God as an angry tyrant. Remember that anger is a responsive attribute, meaning it happens in light of circumstances.

The scriptures do not teach that God is anger. It teaches that God is love. Even here in Exodus 34, it doesn't say God is anger. It says he's slow to anger. There are descriptions about the way he gets to that responsive attribute. Do you see the difference? God is love and, therefore, will get angry. But nowhere in scripture does it say that God is anger. The essence of God is love, and anger is the proper response to that. The description in Exodus 34 is his slowness in getting there. That's what we have to remember.

Let's look at this in real time. I want to flip to Mark 11 and show you a story of Jesus getting angry. I go to Jesus here because often we also have this view of God in the Old Testament as angry, but Jesus was nice. He is the life coach that I want to buddy up with. I want to demonstrate the way this plays out. The same God in the Old Testament is Jesus of the New Testament. There is no distinction other than Jesus is the human form of God. Mark 11 is a familiar story. You've heard it before. It's towards the end of Jesus' life.

**On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers.'" The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching. Mark 11:15-18**

Now, let's fill in a little bit of a backstory here. We've learned about this in the tabernacle in Exodus. The temple is the overlap of heaven and Earth. For the Jewish people, it was the access point into the presence of God. The Torah taught that you would regularly have to bring sacrifices to the temple, and people would come from all over the known world to the temple, bringing that sacrifice. It could take two to five days of walking with their sacrifice.

But the Torah also taught that the sacrifice had to be without blemish. So often, the person would get there with their lamb or whatever it was, the best of their particular flock, traveling multiple days to get there, and outside the temple courts would be an inspector. Before you were able to go in, they'd take your sacrifice and inspect it. They'd say, "Oh, this one's got a bit of a defect, so it isn't good enough. But if you visit this table, we will sell you one that's already been pre-approved." That is literally what was happening.

They'd go over there and would be charged some exorbitant amount so they could have a sacrifice to offer at the altar. It was extortion, it was abuse, it was corruption. Others came from even farther and could travel two days with a goat, but not a week. So they would come and bring a financial offering. They would bring Roman currency to the temple, and an inspector sitting there might say, "Actually, we only accept temple currency. Rome's the enemy. We can't accept that here, but if you visit this table, we've got someone who would love to exchange

that money. We'll just take a little bit off the top." They would then extort them for money.

Jesus walks in, and he sees all of this taking place, and he begins flipping tables. He's churning over. He's scattering all the animals. This is not the image of Jesus we often have. You don't have many beautiful paintings hanging on your wall or this particular text etched on the pillow on your couch. This is Jesus who's angry. He's furious at the corruption. He's seen the way in which the temple establishment is abusing and oppressing the people around them, and he's irritated by it.

Now, here's the kicker. We often read this story and think of anger in the terms that we bring to it. We think Jesus just snapped. But what you must understand is this came right here in the Gospels at the very end of Jesus' life. Jesus had been going to the temple since he was a young boy. He'd been there hundreds if not thousands of times, and he had walked in and seen this corruption play out over and over and over again.

Most scholars suggest that this moment was, at minimum, three years in the making when Jesus came to public prominence. He's watching this happen, and as you read the Gospels, you see Jesus constantly calling the religious establishment to repentance. He's told them time after time to change their ways. "This is corruption. I've come to end all of this."

This was slow, deliberate, calculated, and measured long of nostrils. Jesus is the embodiment of the very character of God. He is not flying off the handle. In fact, scholars would also say that Jesus intentionally did this at this moment because he knew this particular act would be the straw that broke the camel's back. The religious leaders would seek to arrest and kill him, taking him to the cross. It was a calculated decision. He looked at the oppression and said, "I've given you enough times to repent, but enough is enough."

At some point, for the love of God to continue to be the essence, he must say, "I'm done. I'm done with evil." He marches in there and says that this corruption to the marginalized in the crowd who are just trying to obey the Torah to come and worship the Father; he says, "Enough is enough." And he begins to toss the tables. He says, "You've made this place a den of robbers for years." Jesus called the religious establishments to repent and they refused, and he finally had enough. We must see that God's anger flows from God's love.

So there are two ways in which you might relate to this. There are some of us that need to remember God is slow to anger. Some of us relate to God in a way that projects a little bit more of our family of origin. Maybe you grew up with an angry parent or a volatile home in which you've had this conception that God is just like that waiting for you to screw up. You have this image of God hovering over you, tallying your wrongs, and just cannot wait to crush you.

You need to hear that God is slow to anger, that God actually sees who you are, and that he is a God of compassion and graciousness, as we learned last week. Next week, we learn he's abounding in love. That's intentional. God couches this descriptor of slow to anger between

compassionate and gracious and abounding in love and faithfulness. But you need to hear that God is slow to anger. If you sin and are broken, you need to confess those things and bring those before the Lord, but you don't need to be fearful in that sense because God is a gracious God. He will call you to repentance. He wants you to change for your own good, but he's slow to anger.

Some of us need to be reminded of that. It's that God is something that is different than that. Maybe you grew up outside the church and just can't seem to get your act together. You've created that cultural assumption that God's angry, and I hear this all the time when I talk to random people I meet at a coffee shop. They say they couldn't step foot on a church campus or else they would burn up. It's an image of God's anger. You need to hear God is slow to anger. He's really gracious with us. He creates space and room for us to change.

The inverse is also true. For some of us, we've just fallen on the grace of God, and we're swimming in the waters of tolerance and individualism. We just assume that God rubber stamps everything about our life. If I feel it, it must be true. So God will just let me do all of that. Some of us need to remember that God is, in fact, angry at sin. He's slow to anger, but he's angry at it.

You've been worshiping at that altar of tolerance, and you see God more as permissive. Maybe someone who had that passive parent who let you do whatever you wanted, and you find yourself like that younger son at the end of his rope, the bottom has dropped out, and you're wondering how you got there. Church, do you see that? It's the way, when we sin, he wants to correct us and bring us back into the fold.

Some of us view God as a permissive parent, and we need to remember that he does, in fact, want to interfere with our lives. He has an agenda for our lives, and usually, it's not our agenda. It's quite different because he's a good Father who desires to bring a change in you. For this person, God is nothing more than a life coach propelling and encouraging you forward with whatever you desire. Live and let live, follow your heart. But God loves you enough to disrupt that. God's desire is not for you to just live whatever way you want.

Some of us need to remember that God is slow to anger because there's coming a day in which God wants to set all the brokenness of this world: where evil is no more, death is no more. He invites us continually into his slow to anger, compassionate, and graciousness. God is neither the permissive parent nor the angry jerk. He's a good father.

He's compassionate and gracious. Slow to anger. It's the invitation before us. May we come to trust this God because for those of you who see God as slow to anger, the invitation is to trust that God is loving. For those of you who see God as slow to anger, the invitation is to repentance, to come back to the Father. Allow him to restore you and demonstrate his compassion and graciousness.

*This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.*

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