

060224 English Sermon "Work of Healing" Mark 3:1-6

In one Peanuts cartoon Lucy says to Charlie Brown, "I hate everything. I hate everybody. I hate the whole wide world!"

Charlie says, "But I thought you had inner peace."

Lucy replies, "I do have inner peace. But I still have outer obnoxiousness."

I read an article someone wrote about "anger".

It all began with a simple question on a neighborhood social media app about a local pizza place. Someone asked why people loved it so much when they found it just okay. A few responses were harmless, suggesting other places to try. But then, someone got really upset, saying the money spent there could have been better used to help someone in need.

Suddenly, a flood of responses poured in. Angry responses. Posts about judgment. Posts about superior attitudes. About charitable donations. About self-proclaimed experts. The thread continued for hours, people heatedly arguing. All this over pizza! Why were they so worked up? Are people really so passionate about the combination of dough, sauce, cheese and toppings? Was it just about the pizza, or was there something deeper going on? Why are people so angry? From Twitter tirades and road rage to mall meltdowns and family feuds, the world seems angrier than ever.

In Mark 3:1-6, Jesus encounters the Pharisees in the synagogue on the Sabbath, which is like their special day of the week for worship. While He was there, He saw a man with a hand that was not well. In any case, Jewish religious leaders at that time kept a close watch on whether Jesus would heal the sick on the Sabbath. The reason they were so keen on observing Jesus on the Sabbath was because of Jesus' popularity. Since Jesus was in conflict with the religious leaders, the pharisees were looking for any reason to put Jesus in jail, thinking to themselves, "Let's see if he makes a single mistake!" They were specifically trying to see if Jesus would keep the law or not.

In the scripture today, they wanted to observe whether Jesus would do work on the Sabbath. Jesus knew the hearts of the pharisees, and asked this question, "Which is right: doing good or doing evil on the Sabbath, saving lives or killing them?"

When they heard this, they became quiet. I don't know how this story will sound to you, but it was quite shocking to the Jews at that time. The Jews thought that they only had to keep the Sabbath so far, that is, they had to do nothing on the Sabbath, but Jesus is telling them to participate in doing good and saving lives on the Sabbath.

And the Bible says that Jesus was angry and looked around them. We humans are actually made to be angry. The method and degree of expression may be different, but there is no one who does not get angry.

22 years ago, when I was studying at Yale Divinity School, there was a pastor who I was studying together with. His wife was always tired and could not become pregnant, so she went to the doctors but there was nothing wrong with her. But one of them told her that it was due to her having a lot of anger built up in her. This happens quite frequently to people around us. Built up anger can have negative effects in our lives. If it becomes too much, depression and other serious health problems could occur. It may lead to destruction of a family or even a community.

If you look at today's text in the original Bible, the word "anger" contains subtle nuances. Looking at the Greek grammar, you can see that Jesus' anger was a temporary feeling. It was not an accumulation, but the anger appeared and disappeared after a while. Anger is just the body's natural reaction to being blocked and frustrated. In other words, it is a reaction when something you want is not achieved. The problem is not "anger" itself. The important thing is to know the reason why you are angry and how you deal with that anger and where you take it from there.

In the Bible today, what did Jesus do with that anger? The Bible records that Jesus looked around the religious leaders with anger. And then the important thing is that the gaze did not stay on them. To whom did the Lord's eyes go to? Yes, it turned to the man with dry hand. And he speaks to him. "Open your hand" Jesus healed him. Healing and recovery followed Jesus' anger.

Of course, we cannot miraculously cure other people's illnesses like Jesus did. So then what can we do? Even though we do not have the healing powers that Jesus has, we are called to be peacemakers. Making peace is restoring, healing, connecting and bridging instead of grouping. Jesus' anger was linked to

making something good, healing it, and restoring it.

What links our anger? Where does that anger go? Do you make peace around you? Make the world a better place? Please realize your anger. At the same time, learn through the Word of the Bible how to turn our attention and focus on the conditions of gratitude that we are missing. And I hope that anger fuels the holy work of healing and recovery.

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, the reason God called us Christians is to do good, save lives, and make peace. Please recognize your anger, when and what makes you angry. And through that energy, I hope that you will participate in the holy work of restoring and healing your community. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you, your family, your business, your studies, and with the lives of your children. To Christ be thanks and praise. Amen.