



Man Disrupted:

How Jesus changes men for the better

Devotion #1

Read Psalm 115:1-3

It had been a frustrating week of moving between rentals; dealing with difficult real estate agents, cleaners who didn't do their job, and over-priced removalists. I'd had enough. Someone or at least something was going pay for all this! For once, something in this universe was going to obey my sovereign will, and on this particular day it was my phone. I'd just finished a phone call during which it'd become clear that the cleaning company that had fleeced me was well rehearsed in their routine and my money was never coming back, when I made the reasonable and fair-minded decision to obliterate my phone. It was a dumb-phone so it didn't cost a lot, but enough to feel like something worthy of destroying! I immediately regretted it and was very glad nobody was around to witness it – at least, no one on earth.

Why do we do such futile things? What's the point? It wasn't the phone's fault that I'd been ripped off, what good did it do to destroy it? Why kick bins, punch a steering wheel or slam a fist on the keyboard? Of course there's no point, nobody thinks there is. But we still do it... a lot. So why, in the moment, does anger seem like a completely reasonable or rational response to what's happening?

I can't say why you do it, but I can tell you why I do it, or at least why I did it. Life felt unfair and out of control. Nothing I was doing seemed to be working and it felt like there was nothing I could do about it. I felt powerless and I wanted to feel powerful. I wanted something to do exactly what it was told. Anger is often about power and potency. I wanted things around me to obey me. I wanted, in a way, to be God and when I'm reminded that I'm not, I get mad. Most of the time if you're like me, your anger is wrongly awakened. Getting stuck in traffic isn't really unfair, it's unlucky. The bottom of the bin bag falling out before you get to the bin isn't unfair, it's unfortunate. The computer stalling or loading slowly isn't unfair, it's just inconvenient. But if you buy into the belief that you are a sovereign being, whose happiness depends on the universe and everyone in it adapting their priorities to meet your immediate needs, wants and desires, then you will find yourself angry.

That's why the truth of Psalm 115 is sweet relief. God actually is sovereign. He is in the heavens and He does all He pleases. True joy is found in giving Him glory, not getting glory for ourselves. But probably greatest of all is that He isn't a capricious God who does whatever He pleases, like a young king – spoiled and selfish. He is the God of 'steadfast love and kindness.' He deserves for all things to perfectly obey Him, and yet when we defied Him, He sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sin: to redeem us. Even when life feels out of control, there is a good and loving God at the wheel. Perhaps if we could more often remember this truth, we might find a few less banged up steering wheels and phones!

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Reflection Questions

1. Where do you see yourself seeking your own glory and how does this make you prone to unrighteous anger?
2. How does God's steadfast love for us humble us and lead us to want to give Him the glory more than ourselves?
3. As you think on the words 'Our God is in the heavens he does all He pleases', does it fill you with a sense of peace? Why or why not?

Prayer

Father help me to trust you when I feel out of control and angry. Help me to see that I am not at the centre of the universe but that you are, and you are good. As I consider Your great and steadfast love for me, may it lead me to give you glory in every area of my life and to surrender unrighteous anger. Grant the peace and joy that comes from knowing that you are the sovereign and merciful. Amen.

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