

12. How do I deal with my anger? (Part 2)

Colossians 3:12-14

Therefore as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love which binds them together in perfect unity.

The way God is, the way he has made the universe, wrong doing must be paid for. Who will pay for it? Our answer to that question will determine our happiness in this life and the next.

When we are wronged, we want the wrongdoer to pay. After all, they have destroyed the balance of things. Our instinctive anger feels that they should pay – perhaps with an apology or with a broken nose, an earful or the cold shoulder.

It gets messy. Perhaps we feel we have been wronged, but when we try to inflict the cost on the wrongdoer, they feel they owe us nothing. Perhaps we exact payment but still feel angry after we have done so.

It gets messier still when we turn the question back on ourselves. Who should pay when we are in the wrong? What if the thing we did was so bad that there's nothing we can do to pay it off; what if the person we wronged won't accept our apology, or has died?

You can see how quickly anger and guilt engulf us as we encounter wrongdoing and do wrong ourselves. These powerful and negative feelings get stuck in our souls like congealed grease in the u-bend of a sink.

Only with a clear understanding and obedient faith in the cross of Jesus can our souls be unblocked. Wrong doing must be paid for; and on the cross, Jesus paid for it on behalf of anyone who trusts in him.

So, the price I want to demand of those who have wronged me – Jesus paid it. I need not, and in fact should not, demand it. The price I owe to those I have wronged, including the infinite price I owe to God – Jesus paid that too. I need not, and in fact cannot, pay it myself.

Today's reading tells us to, "Forgive as the Lord forgave you". Anger melts away when people understand and trust in the overwhelming payment Jesus made for them on the cross.

Many will know the story of Corrie Ten Boom. Imprisoned by the Nazis, she lost her dad and beloved sister in the camps. After the war, by now a well known speaker on reconciliation, she was confronted with the outstretched hand of a former S.S. guard whom she remembered from the camp.

As the anger welled up, she fought it with the conviction that Jesus had shed his blood for her forgiveness and for his. As she took his hand the anger thawed and turned to love.