

Sermon Title: **Be Angry But Do Not Sin**

Bible: **Psalm 130 & Ephesians 4:25-5:2 (NRSV)**

When: on Sunday, August 8th, 2021

Where: about 25 people (including YouTube live streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, we dare to come to this church, as we are the body of Jesus Christ. Through this church, we feel your presence. Through this church, we learn how to love one another. Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. Ephesian Church

Today's Scripture Reading of Ephesians from the lectionary is about the life of church. The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Ephesian Church. Just like us, the Ephesian church was not perfect. He gave much advice to the church members. "Be angry but do not sin" is one of many pieces of advice he gave. I believe that you have seen me when I have been angry. If not, I guarantee that you will see it, because I am just a human being, who is not perfect and who has a lot of emotions. Have you been angry at the church? What does it mean, "Be angry, but do not sin?" How can we be angry and yet not sin? Where is the line between anger and sin?

2. A Nice Pastor is Not a Good Pastor.

I am still coming to church. The church has been giving me a lot of meaning and joys. The church helps me to be a better Christian, and a better husband. What I learned from Gilroy United Methodist Church is "Happy Wife, Happy Life" and "Yes, dear." I hope that I learned

this well. You might ask my wife about myself, before Gilroy UMC and after Gilroy UMC.

Definitely, the church made me a better person, but I know that the church is not perfect.

Sometimes, because of the church, I have tears, headaches, and stress. And sometimes I felt broken. Nevertheless, I dare to come to church, because I am a part of this church, the body of Jesus Christ. As much as God loves me, I believe that God loves the church.

Fortunately or unfortunately, I dare to become a pastor. As a pastor, one thing that I learned from the church is that a nice pastor is not a good pastor. I used to be a yes man. Yes to everything and everyone. I learned that a nice pastor can be a problem for the church, because I cannot make everyone happy. In many cases, nice pastors can be a problem for themselves, and their families. So, I learned to say no. It was not easy, but I learned it. I am still learning how to say no. For the church, for myself, and for my family, I do not need to be a nice pastor all the time. So, please do not expect me to be a nice pastor. I will sweat to be a better pastor. You might be able to tell that Hwapyoung is very passionate, but sometimes he is very picky. I hope that you choose the positive words for me, not picky, but passionate and enthusiastic.

3. Agree to Disagree

As you come to the United Methodist Church, I would like to share a couple of teachings from our founder, John Wesley, like the Ephesian church has teachings from Paul. Did you know that John Wesley coined the term “Agree to Disagree?” John Wesley and another pastor George Whitefield had different theological views, and they argued a lot over the differences. John Wesley said in a memorial sermon for Whitefield, “There are many things that are less essential. In these we may agree to disagree.” For example, do we need to have Scripture Reading during

the worship? This is essential. Which Bible translation do we need to use? This is less essential.

We can enjoy a lot of different translations; NRSV, CEB, KJV, the Message. I am so proud of our founder, John Wesley. How about you? Let us keep it in our mind, “Agree to Disagree.”

4. Love, One Heart

Of course, sometimes we need to make important decisions for the church. During the decision-making process, we can be angry, but we might need to be careful not to sin. I still wonder what it looks like “Be angry, but do not sin.” But, one thing I learned from the counseling class is when I am angry, I try to use “I” statements, rather than “you” statements. For example, I said, “I felt hurt that you forgot our 9th anniversary,” instead of “You always forgot it.” Then, I can express my emotions, but my emotions hopefully won’t harm others. For the church’s decision-making process, because we are Methodist, we have the Book of Discipline. This book has detailed information about our faith, our understanding of theology, ministry, and social principles, organization, and administration, etc. I studied this book to be an ordained pastor, but I cannot memorize all of this material. When we need some guidelines, we can look into it. Now we can google this on our smart devices. We do not need to memorize all of these details. But I hope for us to remember this quote from John Wesley, “Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion. Without all doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these smaller differences.” We are different, and we should have different opinions. But, can we love each other? Can we have one heart?

When you read Psalm 130, what do you feel? Can you feel the cry of our souls? Out of the depths we cry to our Lord. Our souls wait for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning. And can you feel love, the steadfast love of our Lord? More than we wait for the Lord, our Lord is waiting for us. Before the morning, even in the darkness, our Lord is waiting for us.

We are different. We have different opinions. We can disagree. We may agree to disagree. We can still make decisions. Some decisions can be what we agree with, and some decisions can be what we disagree with. Through all of these processes, through our church life, let us remember that all of us are members of this church, those whom our Lord loves. Let us open our eyes to God's steadfast love. I really want us to learn this from this church: our God loves us, all of us.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, we dare to come to the church, because you love all of us. As you love us, please lead us to love one another, beyond our thoughts, our opinions, and our differences. In Jesus' name. Amen.