

THINGS THAT MAKE YOU THINK 6 – *Why Did Jesus Sometimes Seem Angry or Harsh?*

Jesus said, “I am meek and lowly.” However, He used powerful actions, strong words, and harsh rebukes in righteous anger. If we ignore those moments, we misunderstand Him. If we misunderstand them, we will misrepresent Him.

Big Question - If Jesus is loving and gentle, why does He sometimes speak sharply, rebuke strongly, or act with visible anger?

Simple Answer - Jesus’ anger is never sinful or selfish — it is holy, purposeful, and rooted in love for God’s glory and compassion for people.

Things to Note –

- Who did Jesus address in these ways?
 - When, how, and how often did Jesus use these strong displays and righteous anger?
 - Why did He choose to act these ways (what was accomplished)?
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Understanding Jesus’ Strong Words and Actions – Notice The Moments That Jesus Displayed Righteous Anger and Strong Emotions

1. Jesus Was Angry at Hypocrisy That Misrepresented God and Misguided People

- Jesus cleansing the temple — John 2:13–17, Matthew 21:12–13
Summary: Jesus overturned tables and drove out money changers who were exploiting worship through commerce. This had prevented worship and restoration.
Demonstrates: His anger defended the holiness of God’s house and protected sincere worshippers from religious corruption.
- Jesus rebuking the Pharisees — Matthew 23
Summary: He directly addressed religious leaders as hypocrites continually and called them “whitewashed tombs” and “blind guides.”
Demonstrates: Jesus’ harshest words were aimed at spiritual hypocrisy that burdened people with pretend holiness because it led to away from God and toward hell and self-righteousness.

Point: His anger wasn’t against sinners seeking mercy, but those blocking the way to God.

2. Jesus Was Strong When Defending the Vulnerable

- Indignation when children were kept from Him — Mark 10:13–16
Summary: The disciples tried to prevent children from coming to Jesus, and He was displeased (this word is translated *indignation* 5 of the 7 times used in the Bible).
Demonstrates: He guarded and guided those that others neglect or discount.
- Warning against causing little ones to stumble (offended) — Matthew 18:6
Summary: Jesus said it would be better to be drowned in the sea.
Demonstrates: His strong language shows how seriously He views spiritual abuse and exploitation. To guide the impressionable child into sin and away from God.

Other Examples: Condemning those that devour widows houses (Mark 12:38-40); calling off those about to stone the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11)

Point: His severity protected the weak, defenseless, and those in need of grace.

3. Jesus Was Firm With Hard-Hearted Unbelief and Insubmission

- Rebuking cities that refused to repent — Matthew 11:20–24
Summary: After performing many miracles, He pronounced woes on unrepentant cities. The word upbraid means “deride, chide, reproach, to show teeth”
Demonstrates: Though God is patient, rejecting Him brings severe consequence.

- Calling Peter “Satan” — Matthew 16:21–23
Summary: When Peter tried to deter Him from the cross, Jesus sharply rebuked him.
Demonstrates: Anything that opposed God’s redemptive plan was confronted immediately.

Point: Jesus used strong words to evoke an accountable response from unbelief.

4. Jesus Expressed Grief-Filled Anger – Upset with Stubborn Sin and Brokenness

- Anger and grief in the synagogue — Mark 3:1–6
Summary: Religious leaders baited Jesus with a man with a deformity to accuse Him for healing on the Sabbath. Jesus looked at them “with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart.” They would not see good but fixated on their bitter differences.
Demonstrates: His anger was intertwined with sorrow — not ego, but heartbreak over hardened hearts.

Point: Jesus’ anger flowed from love and righteousness, not pride and selfishness.

5. Jesus Sharp Words and Actions Often Served a Redemptive Purpose

- The accusing Pharisees – Matthew 12:22-45
Summary: Jesus calls the Pharisees snakes because of the poison in their words and hearts after they accused Jesus of being evil. He called them to repent like Nineveh or be destroyed.
Demonstrates: Offending with loving truth someone may call their attention to their need.
- The fig tree cursed – Matthew 21:18-22
Summary: Just after cleansing the temple, Jesus, being hungry, found a fig tree without fruit. He cursed it and it died. This was not an act of temper and rage, but He displayed with an illustration the heart of Israel’s religion. Full and puffy with leaves but bearing no fruit.
Demonstrates: Firm action can draw attention to internal condition.
- The rich young ruler — Mark 10:17–22
Summary: Jesus confronted his idol of wealth and was willing to let the man be grieved in order to call him to true repentance.
Demonstrates: Love sometimes requires piercing truth.
- The seven churches warned — Revelation 2–3
Summary: Jesus rebuked churches drifting into compromise.
Demonstrates: Strong words were meant to call them back before greater judgment.

Point: His severity is often veiled mercy — a warning before destruction.

Core Lessons:

1. Jesus’ severe words and actions were always directly to the specific people needing them.
- It was not his demeanor or disposition, but rather purposeful response in personal way.
 2. Jesus’ anger was never selfish, used for personal gain/preference, or to crush or embarrass.
 3. His anger was controlled and personal not demonstrations of rage or contempt.
 4. His anger defended God’s glory and people’s good.
 5. Love without holiness is not Biblical love.
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Family Discussion Questions

1. Which story of Jesus’ anger surprised you most?
 2. Who did Jesus speak most harshly to — and why?
 3. How is righteous anger different from sinful anger?
 4. How is my sinful anger different than Jesus’ righteous anger? (Who, How, When, Why, What?)
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Am I grateful for God’s firm hand in my life? Is my anger righteous or self-righteous? (disposition/demeanor)