Pet Peeves, we all have them, don't we? Those things that just set us off. Some of my pet peeves are: People who don't use their turn signals or turn them on when they're turning. Road maps that aren't folded back up correctly. I don't know why, it just bugs me. I guess it's like the next one, tangled and wadded up extension cords or water hoses. Fast food lines that aren't fast.

When I hang up my laundry to dry (at my mountain home) it gets hung up by size, color and kind... towels, t-shirts, pants etc. Don't mess it up. All the prescription drug ads on TV with their long disclaimers of possible side effects. If the illness doesn't kill you, the meds to cure it, will...

How about you. What are your pet peeves?

Ever got annoyed by this one: "We're sorry but it is not necessary to dial a one when dialing this number. Please hang up and dial again." Or its evil twin: "We're sorry but you must first dial a one when dialing this number. Please hang up and dial again." I don't care how many numbers we have to remember or have to dial, just make it consistent.

Whew, now I feel better. Pet peeves drive us nuts. They irritate us. They push our buttons.

Today we look at an event in the life of Jesus that pushed all of his buttons. An event that didn't just irritate him but made him angry. You heard the Scripture read and we're told that he lost his cool. Jesus with a whip of cords in hand is not the picture we have of the Good Shepherd is it? An angry Savior just doesn't seem to fit. But, as I mentioned last week, being cross eyed, focusing on his purpose and mission, with the cross looming in the very near future, Jesus saw what was going on in the Temple and was filled with cross eyed anger.

Well, it wasn't so much the selling of the animals or the exchange of Roman coins for Temple coins. It was the fact that the merchants had taken over the Court of the Gentiles making it impossible for any of the Gentiles to worship because of the noise of the marketplace conditions. It was sort of a Jerusalem version of the Denver Stock Show at its highest and that combined with the flair of an old fashioned carnival with all its barkers hollering and selling their wares at one time.

The market trade had grown from simply being the animal sacrifices to a bit of a flea market atmosphere. You could get almost anything. As a result, people had started using the Temple courtyard and the Court of the Gentiles as a shortcut from one side of Jerusalem to the other.

Now the animal sales and money changers was probably a good idea at first. But the good idea had gone very wrong. It had gotten completely out of hand. How could anybody pray in that kind of circus situation. Even worse in the eyes of the Messiah, the Jews had forgotten their calling to reach out to the world with God's message, and they were pushing the Gentiles out by setting up their booth in the Gentile worship area. They were broadening the gap between the Jews and the Gentiles by turning the Gentiles into invisible people. If they didn't see them, they didn't have to deal with them. Besides, how could a good Jew stay ritually clean and deal with those kind of people.

Israel's earliest calling was to reach out to all the nations of the world. In Genesis 18:18 we read, "...Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him." Isaiah 42:6-7 tells us, "I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison, and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness."

That wasn't just about the Messiah. That was a definition of the mission of the Jews. And if you look at the construction of the Temple, you can see that God designed it perfectly. Look at the size of the Gentile area compared to the size of the area for the Jews.

No wonder Jesus got so angry. He also knew they would be doing that same thing to him, shortly. Squeezing him out of the picture in a very cruel way. But God always has the last Word and that Word war Resurrection. None of them would remember that until after the event took place.

If Jesus got angry then anger must not be a sin. What? So many of us were raised that getting angry was wrong. And if it's wrong then is must be a sin, right? Wrong! There is no commandment: "Thou shalt not get angry!" It doesn't exist. Anger is an emotion, not a decision. You don't get up, write your to do list and include: #4 today at noon I'm going to get angry for 15 minutes, then I'll be happy the rest of the day."

Anger is an emotion. Anger happens. Anger is not a sin. Need proof? Well, first, would you agree that Jesus is the Sinless Son of God? Of course you would. That's what Scripture says. Hebrews 4:15 reminds us: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet without sin." If Jesus was without sin, and Jesus got angry, then anger is not a sin.

We don't much care for an angry Jesus. We prefer to think of Jesus meek and mild. But we need to remember meek doesn't mean weak. It simply means gentle. We need to remember, Jesus had other traits besides meekness, some were a striking contrast.

Jesus the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is also the Lion of Judah. In Christ we find both the meekness of the lamb and ferocity of the lion. Jesus could be a strong yet gentle man who welcomed children and the angry man who swung a mean whip to clear the Temple.

Anger is not a sin when used properly. Improperly used and it's a sin that damages everyone. It's like nitroglycerine. Nitroglycerine is an unstable liquid which, in paste form, makes up dynamite. However, nitroglycerine in very small amounts is what is given to heart patients to keep their hearts beating.

Anger only becomes sin when we let it boil over and explode uncontrollably over all those around us. We get angry when somebody cuts us off in traffic or forgets to put on their turn signal. We get angry when somebody takes credit for something we've done at work. We get angry because the drive through took so long or they were out of our favorite whatever. We get angry but don't take it home. Then we come home and the kids get too noisy or our spouse says something we take the wrong way and boom, we explode all over everybody. They have no clue what just happened. All they know is they got caught in the blast of our anger and it hurt. Not only did it hurt at that moment, but that shrapnel filled emotional landmine could scar them for life. That kind of anger, in my understanding, is what constitutes a sin.

Did you hear the saying, "People who fly into a rage always make a bad landing." The one quote I really like says, "Remember the end never justifies the meanness."

Anger is not a sin. Inappropriate use and control of our anger is. In Ephesians 4:26-27, Paul writes: "be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil." I like the way the Message puts it: "Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry - but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life."

So, it's not a sin to get angry. It's OK to be angry. What do we do with anger. Well we can turn it inward and not deal with it. But if you do that it turns into ulcers and sometimes leads to depression. A lot of depression is caused by turning anger inward. Or you can deal with it in constructive ways. Simply acknowledging it tends to help diffuse it. As I mentioned earlier, anger is an emotion and an energy. It can't be destroyed. And it can't be forgotten. It has to be converted. We can find creative ways to deal with our anger by converting it and using its energy for something else, like laughter.

Last question. What should make us angry? The anger Jesus displayed was anger that arose from disrespect of the people for their God, for their mission, for the way they were treating the people of their mission field and the way they were treating God's Holy Place. Those are some of the things that should make us mad, too.

While it is never right to let your temper get the better of you, anger should move us to action every time there's an injustice against God's people. Anger should rise over every child who died of starvation. We have enough food in the world to feed the world. We just can't get along long enough to distribute it to the people who need it. Anger should rise over every child who is ever abused, sexually, physically or emotionally. We need to break that ongoing cycle. Anger should rise over exploitation of children and youth in any which way. Anger should rise about the church as a whole, losing its focus on reaching out.

I could go on and on, you get the idea though. The reason a lot of people don't get angry about those things, is because they don't see them as relevant or pertinent in their lives. How could their little bit help. Well, every little bit adds up to make a bunch. And every little bit helps when you look at the problem of the world and everyday life through the eyes of our Savior.

Two men stood in front of a taxi cab arguing about who had the right to the cab. While they argued, the wife of one of the men stood and watched. After they had argued for a few minutes, one man became calm, opened the door for his opponent, and returned to his wife. Curious, his wife asked him why he'd suddenly allowed the other man to take the cab. He explained, "You see dear, he needed the cab more than we did, he was late for his martial arts class. He's the teacher."

Getting angry isn't a sin but sometimes watching our anger is a good policy. There are plenty of good reasons to get angry, but let it be for Christ's sake. "Be angry, but do not sin."