

August 22, 2021

## 12. Job's Response to Suffering: Angry Despair — Job 30:16-31 NRSV

When I read the title of this session, I thought, *I would be so angry with God if I were resident in today's text—I wouldn't be able to see straight.* I get Job's words: "How long are you going to keep battering away at me, pounding me with these harangues? Time after time after time you jump all over me. Do you have no conscience, abusing me like this?" (Job 19:1-2, *The Message*).

It seems that nearly every US resident is mad about something. Maybe Canadians are too. Democrats are mad at Republicans, and Republicans are mad at Democrats; Christians are mad at atheists, and atheists are mad at Christians; baby boomers are mad at millennials, and millennials are mad at baby boomers; commentators at Fox News are mad at commentators at MSNBC News, and MSNBC commentators are mad at Fox News commentators. Church denominations are mad at each other, and those within denominations are mad at each other.

This simmering corrosive energy is problematic. It plugs our ears, clenches our fists, raises our voices till all one can hear is personal opinions. One is blinded to anything that does not support personal views. Gripping personal baggage ensures that what one knows is what one knows and nothing else needs to be known.

Angry, needing to be right (this may be a worse pandemic than COVID), Americans hide behind walls in collaborating enclaves: drinking from the same well, espousing the same opinions, clamoring for the same rights! The problem with walls is that they are so firmly made that we can't see or touch anyone on the other side. While they may protect us from perceived threats, they also prevent us from making progress toward diminishing threats. When we lock others out, we also lock ourselves in.

A comment about Job's anger: He could not square his innocence with his fate. I wonder, was Job's anger sinful? Ephesians 4:26a says, "Be angry but do not sin." Christians excuse their anger as the righteous kind. I don't think we do righteous anger very well. Maybe we should try not to become angry in the first place. I wonder about that too.

—Ruben Chupp  
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**Ruben Chupp** of Nappanee, Indiana, is a spiritual director, chaplain, and retired pastor. His personal goals: “love God and the person in front of me at any given time; read some, write some, think some, pray some, and take a nap every day; love my wife, Idella, my children, and their children with all the grace I possess; and finally, get home before dark.”

## Resources for this session

### *Salt & Light Videos*

**Hendy Matahelemual** is the presenter for unit 3, Suffering. These teaching videos are great for leader preparation or introducing each session. They are available on [MennoMedia's YouTube channel](#). Hendy is associate minister for community engagement for Mosaic Mennonite Conference.

### **Live URLs recommended in the Leader guide**

The quote and speech noted at the bottom of page 71 is a video embedded in Ivan Natividad's article, “The Time James Baldwin Told UC Berkeley that Black Lives Matter,” *Berkeley News*, June 19, 2020, <https://news.berkeley.edu/2020/06/19/the-time-james-baldwin-told-uc-berkeley-that-black-lives-matter/> Scroll down to the second picture. The quote starts at 17:34. Baldwin's speech may be difficult for some. Listen deeply and try to understand the truth he is speaking.

**Additional commentary for this session is available at:**  
<https://www.mennomedia.org/salt-light-supplements/>