

LORD HELP ME: I'M MAD AS A HORNET

Psalm 137:1-9

(1) By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. (2) We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. (3) For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. (4) How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? (5) If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. (6) If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. (7) Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof. (8) O Daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. (9) Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

Introduction

Psychologists say there are more angry people today than ever before. Many spouses are angry at each other. Many employees are angry at their supervisors. Children are angry at their parents and vice versa. Citizens are angry at the government. Demonstrators are angry at counter-demonstrators and vice versa. Some folk are angry at themselves for making bad life-impacting decisions and let's keep it real, some folk are mad at God for allowing evil to take such a strong foot hold in our society. Moreover, many people are angry because they feel that by now, they should be further along in life. Some are angry because they feel a loved one passed away too soon. Just about everybody is angry, in one way or another, because Covid-19 has disrupted our lives in almost every way and has exacerbated the other sources of our anger. Psychologists also say that now anger lingers longer than before. People used to get angry, blow their tops, and then forget about it; now it lasts for months and even years. This is due in part, because of the misuse of technology-especially social media.

This psalm is a psalm of great contrast. It is perhaps the most troubling of all the psalms. It is divided into several parts. There is the expression of sorrow. There is a protest where the musicians would not use their praise and worship songs to entertain their captors. They hang their harps on the willow trees. There is an oath never to forget Jerusalem and the worship in the temple. Then the mood changes abruptly. There are angry words against the Edomites and the Babylonians tormentors. They are mad as hornets. Why is this included in the Holy Scriptures? To let us know there are times when we will allow the evil among us to temporarily make us "loose our cool." At times we seem powerless to make a change for good. Much of the evil and injustice in our

society is systemic. It is difficult to ventilate to a system. You can give an individual a piece of your mind-but not to a clandestine system. The historic context of this psalm is barbaric. The Babylonians had demolished the temple, put Jerusalem in ruins, ravished their wives and daughters, slaughtered their young children, killed most of the soldiers, and captured the rest of the people and took them to Babylonia to work digging canals to connect the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers. The Edomites egged the Babylonian on and would not assist the Jews. In Babylonia they added insult to injury. Verses 7, 8, and 9 are what theologians describe as “imprecatory.” Yes, this writer is mad as a hornet. Let’s be totally transparent: Much of what we see and hear firsthand and what we see on the 24/7 news cycle makes our blood boil. Let us see how we can process our anger in a Christian way.

Exposition

1. Realize Anger Is a Part Of Life-The Question: Can I Control It?

(Be Angry and Sin Not-Easier Said Than Done –Ephesians 4:26)
(Use Old Fashion Self-Control-Proverbs 16:32)

2. Acknowledge Your Anger

(Some Super Saints Are In Denial)
(Some Things Should Bother You)

3. Analyze the Source/Cause of Your Anger

(Is the Source Injustice, Evil?)
(Is the Source Petty and Trivial?-Matthew 5:22)

4. Anger Unchecked Morphs into Hatred and Foolish Decisions

(Hatred is a Burden to the Hater)
(In The Heat of Anger Many Bad Decisions Are Made)
(Don’t Let the Sun Set On Your Anger –Ephesians 4:26)

5. Let Your Anger Motivate You to Do Something Practical and Positive

(Romans 12:21)

6. Rest Assured Ultimate Justice Is in the Lord’s Hands-

(Romans 12:19)

7. Don’t Let Anger Be Your New Normal

(Mad People are Also Sad People)
(If You Are Mad All the Time You Are Also Sad All the Time)
(Don’t Let the Devil Steal Your Joy)
(Ignore the Devil’s Trash Talk)

Closing Thoughts

There is a corny quip that says: “Whether you are mad or sad just talk to Jesus; He will take it away and make you glad. I know it is corny, but it has a lot of truth. Remember just coming out of slavery our ancestors could sing: “I’m so glad Jesus lifted me. I’m so glad Jesus lifted me, Singing Glory, Hallelujah, Jesus lifted me!” Give God Glory! Give God All the Glory!

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