



Righteous Anger in the Face of Injustice: Fighting for Hope in the New Year

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The start of the New Year brings new beginnings, new ideas and many new challenges to examine. As 2019 begins, I find myself holding both sorrow and joy as we face the continuation of a partial government shutdown, while simultaneously celebrating the installment of the most diverse congressional class in history. I feel the energy of this historic moment, yet am fully aware of the work still needed to be done as witnesses for justice.

As a deep feeler, I often carry multiple emotions at once, sometimes not entirely sure which one is speaking louder than the others. I believe my empathic nature led me towards the social work profession and ultimately my passion for policy advocacy. Working in federal policy, I find myself frustrated and angry due to the lack of morality and lack of political will within our current administration to address issues of injustice. I weep in sorrow as hate crimes increase, refugee siblings are ostracized and dehumanized, and racism continues to thrive.

There are times when I speak out about injustice and am met with questions such as, “Why do you care so much?” Or, “Why are you so angry?”

I’m reminded of the Old Testament story of Rizpah, whose sons were killed by King David because of their potential claim to the throne as descendants of former King Saul. In an act of final revenge against King Saul, Rizpah’s sons were not given a proper burial. Instead, they were hung on an open mountain hillside to decay in reach of scavenging birds and predators. Rizpah was outraged by the murder of her innocent sons, and climbed to the top of the hill where they hung in order to defend their bodies for weeks on end. In her anger and her grief, Rizpah stood up to power to fight for justice for her sons.¹

In acts of injustice, Rizpah’s example teaches us that righteous anger is not wrong. Anger resulting from abuse of power is not destructive, but instructive for envisioning what could be. Together, we can build a just world for all where the idea of loving your neighbor is fully manifested in policy and walls are not built, but broken down.

This year, as we continue to encounter both sorrow and joy, may we commit to being truth tellers. May we follow in the steps of Rizpah and speak truth to power when necessary and fight for hope out of love for all of God's siblings. Marilyn Nelson once said, "We are the way light enters the universe. When we allow the love of the Divine to enter us and come through us, we are offering something not only to us but also lighting the way."²

1. Austin Channing Brown. Evolving Faith Conference. October 27, 2018.
2. Mariyn Nelson. On Being with Krista Tippett.

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