**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes 5-28-2023
Majoring in the Minors – Obadiah**

Today is a very important day, for many reasons.

First, as was mentioned earlier, today is Kara and my anniversary. We were actually married on a Sunday and so it’s neat whenever our anniversary falls on a Sunday. I remember worshipping at church in the morning of my wedding day and then coming back for our 4:00 o’clock wedding. It doesn’t seem like that long ago, but it’s been 17 years.

And our marriage has been a blessing. At least for me. And hopefully it hasn’t been too bad for Kara as well. 😊

But marriage is actually one of God’s tools of humbling people. By that I mean that marriage can be one way that God helps people become less self-focused, less proud.

As Christians, marriage is one of God’s tools to help believers recognize their need to put off their old sinful nature and to put on the new nature that was given to them by grace through their faith in Jesus Christ.

Today is also important because it is the Sunday of Memorial Day Weekend. This weekend is the time each year that we give thanks to God for the women and men that have given their lives on behalf of this country. This should humble us as well as we think about those that have sacrificed themselves for us.

And finally, today is also Pentecost. Pentecost should humble us as well. And this is because Jesus told His followers that they needed the power of the Holy Spirit to be faithful witnesses for Jesus. We need the Holy Spirit too. In and of ourselves, we can do nothing of significance in the Kingdom of God. We are to humbly look to the Holy Spirit to help us and lead us and empower us each day.

For all of these reasons, we are reminded of the importance of humility. In God’s Word, it is very clear in many places that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. The humble are able to receive and the proud are turned inward, unable to receive and focused on themselves.

Turning again to the minor prophets, we find ourselves on the shortest of the twelve books today – the Book of Obadiah. I would guess that most of you haven’t heard many sermons on this book. I don’t know if I’m ever heard one myself.

But, like all books in the Bible, we can learn from Obadiah as well. And a big theme within it is how God resists the proud.

As we now prepare to hear from Obadiah, let’s take a moment to just set the context a little bit. Obadiah was most likely written well after the minor prophets that we have looked at so far. And this is because Obadiah writes about the fall of Jerusalem and things related to this tragic event. Jerusalem was part of the southern kingdom of Judah and the fall of the city didn’t happen until 586 BC. The northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians about 100 years earlier.

And like was the case of Israel, it was the sins of Judah that brought forth God’s judgment against it. They became worse than the pagan nations around them.

But this prophecy of Obadiah does not focus on the sins of Judah, but rather than sins of Edom. Edom was the nation that descended from Jacob’s brother Esau. You may remember the story from Genesis. Jacob and Esau were twins.

Esau sold his birthright as the firstborn son for meal. Jacob deceitfully stole his father’s Isaac’s blessing. You can read all about this in Genesis.

The bottom line is even though God was building his covenant people through the family of Jacob, who became known as Israel, God still loved and cared for Esau and his descendants even though He chose Jacob.

God would prepare land for Esau’s descendants, the Edomites, to live and flourish. But Edom would be hostile towards Israel pretty much throughout their long history.

And Edom was also a prideful people. And the pride of Edom led them to do some very sinful things when Judas was under siege and about to fall.

Let’s now read the short but powerful book of Obadiah to see what was going on.

**1The vision of Obadiah. This is what the Sovereign Lord says about Edom—We have heard a message from the Lord: An envoy was sent to the nations to say,
“Rise, let us go against her for battle”—**

**2“See, I will make you small among the nations; you will be utterly despised. 3The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Obadiah+1+-+21&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22514a)**] and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, ‘Who can bring me down to the ground?’ 4Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down,” declares the Lord. 5“If thieves came to you, if robbers in the night—oh, what a disaster awaits you!—would they not steal only as much as they wanted? If grape pickers came to you, would they not leave a few grapes? 6But how Esau will be ransacked, his hidden treasures pillaged! 7All your allies will force you to the border; your friends will deceive and overpower you; those who eat your bread will set a trap for you,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Obadiah+1+-+21&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-22518b" \o "See footnote b)] but you will not detect it.**

**8“In that day,” declares the Lord, “will I not destroy the wise men of Edom, those of understanding in the mountains of Esau? 9Your warriors, Teman, will be terrified, and everyone in Esau’s mountains will be cut down in the slaughter.
10Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever. 11On the day you stood aloof while strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them. 12You should not gloat over your brother in the day of his misfortune, nor rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction, nor boast so much in the day of their trouble. 13You should not march through the gates of my people in the day of their disaster, nor gloat over them in their calamity in the day of their disaster, nor seize their wealth in the day of their disaster. 14You should not wait at the crossroads to cut down their fugitives, nor hand over their survivors in the day of their trouble.**

**15“The day of the Lord is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head. 16Just as you drank on my holy hill, so all the nations will drink continually; they will drink and drink and be as if they had never been. 17But on Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be holy, and Jacob will possess his inheritance. 18Jacob will be a fire and Joseph a flame; Esau will be stubble, and they will set him on fire and destroy him. There will be no survivors from Esau.” The Lord has spoken.**

**19People from the Negev will occupy the mountains of Esau, and people from the foothills will possess the land of the Philistines. They will occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria, and Benjamin will possess Gilead. 20This company of Israelite exiles who are in Canaan will possess the land as far as Zarephath; the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad will possess the towns of the Negev.
21Deliverers will go up on[**[**c**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Obadiah+1+-+21&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22532c)**] Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau. And the kingdom will be the Lord’s.**

So, what was going on here? What had happened was the pride of Edom got the best of them. When the nation of Babylon came in as God’s instrument of judgment against Judah, Edom was celebrating.

As Judah was being humbled because of its sins, Edom was not grieving for them. Instead, Edom was going in for the spoils as if they conquered Judah. And when the Jews were fleeing, it was the Edomites that were lying in wait to attack and plundered them.

The Book of Obadiah reminds us that God remembers that Edom and Israel are brothers – the peoples are related. And yet, the Edomites were behaving far from brotherly to the people of Judah.

Obadiah tells us that God sees not only Edom’s pride, but also the ungodly fruit of their pride – all these sinful actions taken against Judah.

Even though Judah was being punished for her sins, Edom was not to be taking advantage of them.

Scripture is clear that pride eventually leads to destruction. Pride was the original sin of Lucifer, whom we now know as Satan. Pride is poison for the soul.

And Obadiah describes that God sees Edom’s pride and Edom will be humbled themselves. And this would eventually happen. Edom would be laid low.

As Christians today, of what relevance is the Book of Obadiah? More than we may realize. The main thing to remember is that God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

God desires for us to grieve and pray for those that are reaping the consequences of their sin. This is what Edom should have been doing. Instead, they were throwing a party. God takes no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked and neither should we.

As Christians, there are many things that we should be grieving over in our world today. In just a few days many people around us will begin to celebrate Pride Month.

How are we to respond?

Chestnut Grove and 140 other churches are having to pay huge amounts of money to the Susquehanna Conference, and even having to take out loans, like we have, just in order to stay faithful to the Scriptures. Is it fair? No. But how are we to respond is the question?

To these questions, we are to respond with love and humility, rather than anger and pride and self-righteousness.

And we are to pray. Let us fervently pray for all those that are celebrating Pride Month. They need Jesus. Let us fervently pray for the Susquehanna Conference and the United Methodist Church – that it would grow to become more faithful to God’s Word and that God would use the UMC to be a church He uses to advance His Kingdom, as He has ministered through the UMC in the past.

The fruits of humility and the fruits of pride are diametrically opposed. God is drawn to one and opposes the other. God lifts up the one and brings down the other.

It is the humble who recognize their need (see Matthew 5:3), the humble who want to keep growing, the humble who want the best for others. And it is the humble whom God will use most in this world.

As we seek to more and more be that light on a hill sharing the love of Jesus Christ, may we remember the importance of humility. Again, things like wedding anniversaries and Memorial Day weekends and Pentecost Sunday – they all remind us that life is not about ourselves, but about living to bless God and bless others in this world.

Finally, let us remember Jesus. That was how Jesus lived amongst us. He came to bless. He came to humbly serve. He knew who He was, but He went low and walked in incredible humility. We follow His example as we seek to live in like manner.

Resources:

[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

The World and the Word book – chapter on Obadiah

Handout from Dr. David A. Dorsey – Prophets course – Evangelical Seminary