

Two Minute Sermons

An Enemy's Misfortune

Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament. Yet hidden away in its brief record is a vital question that affects us all: How should we respond when we see an enemy experience misfortune?

The prophet Obadiah served when the city of Jerusalem was under fierce attack by the armies of Babylon. The neighbors of Jerusalem, the Edomites, were actually cheering on the enemy armies to destroy the city and kill the Jews (Psalm 137:7-9). Ironically, these hurtful jeers were spoken by blood relatives of the Jews. They were descendants of Jacob, and the Edomites were descendants of his brother, Esau. Obadiah condemned the Edomites for gloating: *"You should not have gazed on the day of your brother in the day of his captivity; nor should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction"* (Obad. 12).

If someone has repeatedly been hurtful to us, it is easy to give in to vindictive pleasure when they experience misfortune. But Scripture admonishes us, *"Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles"* (Prov. 24:17). Instead, we are to maintain an attitude of compassion and forgiveness, and trust God to bring justice in His time. Romans 12 teaches us how to handle people problems: Be patient (v.12), bless persecutors (v.14), be humble (v.16), don't take revenge (v.19), defeat evil with good (v.21). Love for God can be measured by the love we show for our worst enemy. (D. Fisher)

Two Memorials

The Taj Mahal in India is a magnificent mausoleum. Built entirely of white marble, it was commissioned by the Emperor Shah Jehan in memory of his wife, who died suddenly. It took 22 years to complete. Millions of tourists visit this memorial annually in order to see this grand structure the emperor ordered to be built in memory of the woman he loved.

Millions of people also throng to Jerusalem to look at another site—a tomb that some archaeologists say may have been where Jesus was buried. No matter what tomb He lay in, Jesus occupied it for only a few days. It has been empty for 2,000 years.

Jesus doesn't need us to build a memorial to Him. Instead, He gave us the Lord's Supper as a memorial to remember Him. On the night He was betrayed, Jesus took bread and the cup and gave thanks to His Father before offering them to His disciples (Luke 22:14-21). Each time we partake of those elements in church, we are first to examine ourselves and our relationship with God (1Cor. 11:28). *"As often as [we] eat this bread and drink this cup"* we are to do so in remembrance of the One we love, till He comes (vv.25-26). The Lord has given us an enduring memorial to remind us of what He has done for us. (C. Hia)

Never Sleeps

What is the sleepest animal on earth, and don't say your teenage child. Most folks think the answer is cats. While they do sleep an average of 12 hours per day, they are not the sleepest animal on earth. Lions sleep 16 hours, opossums sleep 19, and koala bears sleep 22 hours per day!

On the other hand, giraffes have the shortest sleep cycle of any mammal. They sleep only between ten minutes and two hours in a 24-hour period and average less than two hours of sleep per day. Seemingly always awake, the giraffe has nothing much in common with most humans in that regard. If we had so little sleep, it would probably mean we had some form of

insomnia. But for giraffes, it's not a sleep disorder that keeps them awake. It's just the way God has made them.

If you think two hours a day is not much sleep, consider this fact about the Creator of our tall animal friends: Our heavenly Father never sleeps. Describing God's continual concern for us, the psalmist declares, "*He who keeps you will not slumber*" (Ps. 121:3). In the context of this psalm, the writer makes it clear that God's sleepless vigilance is for our good. Verse 5 says, "*The Lord is your keeper.*" God keeps us, protects us, and cares for us—with no need for refreshing. Our Protector is constantly seeking our good. As one song puts it: "He never sleeps, He never slumbers. He watches me both night and day."

When anxieties bring you sleepless nights, turn to the One who never sleeps. Each second of each day, let Him "*preserve your going out and your coming in*" (v.8). The One who upholds the universe will never let you down. (B. Crowder)

Join the Angels

Angels are a popular topic of discussion, and people believe a number of myths about them. For instance, some people pray to angels, thinking they are on the same level as God Himself. And some believe that people become angels when they die. But here's what the Bible, our authority, teaches:

- God created angels (Col. 1:15-17).
- Angels worship God (Neh. 9:6), and are known by these terms: archangels (Jude 1:9), cherubim (2Kings 19:15), and seraphim (Isa. 6:1-3).
- They minister to God's people (Heb. 1:13-14; Psalm 91:9-12).
- They are given special tasks by God (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:26).
- God's angels rejoice when we turn to Christ for salvation (Luke 15:7,10).

Only God deserves our worship. So let's join the angels in singing His praises.

A Moments Wisdom

--Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous.

--Success in life is a matter not so much of talent or opportunity as of concentration and perseverance.

--Take time to deliberate; but when the time for action arrives, stop thinking and go in.

--The great thing in this world is not so much where you stand, as in what direction you are moving.

--Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must first be overcome.

--I avoid looking forward or backward, and try to keep looking upward.

--The soul of conversation is empathy.

--Govern your life and thoughts as if the whole world were to see the one and read the other.

--As the sculptor devotes himself to stone, so I must devote myself to my soul.

--Fortify yourself with contentment, for this is an impregnable fortress.

--You cannot depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus.

--Receive love. Give love. Repeat.

--The worldly may mock our message, but they can't stop our prayers.

--The language of prayer is forged in the crucible of trouble. When we can't help ourselves and call for help, when we don't like where we are and want out, when we don't like who we are and want a change, we use primal language, and this language becomes the root language of prayer. (E. Peterson)