**1. Motivate**

Who are some heroes we admire because of their stand for justice and human rights?

* Martin Luther King
* Abe Lincoln
* Gandhi

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_83u2m6eg> If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/2p8bz6d5>

* Desmond Tutu
* Eleanor Roosevelt
* Nelson Mandela
* Cesar Chavez
* Rosa Parks
* Oskar Schindler
* Jimmy Carter

**2. Transition**

Our God is a God of Justice

* Today we study the prophecies of Obadiah which speak to the issue of justice
* God calls us to join Him in pursuing justice in the face of indifference and oppression.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Dangers of Arrogance

Listen for coming punishment.

Obadiah 1:1-4 (NIV) The 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, and let us go against her for battle"-- 2 "See, I will make you small among the nations; you will be utterly despised. 3 The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, 'Who can bring me down to the ground?' 4 Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down," declares the LORD.

What do we learn about the man Obadiah either directly or indirectly in these verses?

* he had a vision
* he heard a message from the Lord
* he was an envoy sent to the nations

What is the Lord’s complaint about Edom?

* pride in their hearts
* depend on protection of living in the mountains
* figure they have the “high ground” advantage
* feel they “soar like the eagle” and cannot be defeated

The Edomites and the Israelites shared an old, negative family history.

* Jacob cheated Esau out of his heritage
* he had to run away for many years
* Jacob feared his brother when he eventually returned with his family
* Edom was the descendants of Esau

How do longtime family problems affect the spiritual health of the Christian church?

* groups of people will not talk to one another
* one group will oppose anything the other tries to do … at best, they just plane won’t support each other
* one group is full of glee when the other fails
* they make fun of one another
* they hold long time grudges and ill will
* this results in attitudes of sin and God refuses to bless

How do churches sometimes show pride and arrogance with regard to *other churches*.

* our church is growing, yours is declining … Nyah, nyah
* we always beat you in the softball league … that’s cause we’re more spiritual
* those guys always win in softball because they bring in hot players that don’t even go to their church … they cheat! We play by the rules!
* Our bus fleet is bigger than your bus fleet
* We baptized more people than you did last year!
* that group is very liberal/ultra conservative … *we’re* going to get the elevator to heaven, they’re going to have to go up the stairs
* people are leaving that church … now’s the time to add some of those people to our membership list.

How do churches sometimes show pride and arrogance *with regard to culture*?

* our nation is “going to hell in a hand basket”
* our culture is totally anti-Christian … we’re on track for heaven, they’re not
* the world has no concept of purity like we believers
* our culture is full of sin and God hates sin … so He hates them … but loves us because we’re so spiritual
* God hates sin and we hate the sinners
* those people who do abortions should be taken out and shot!

What can we do as individuals to avoid these kinds of arrogance?

* remember that we are all sinners, saved by the mercy and grace of God
* thank the Lord for showing mercy to us
* be quick to admit and confess sin in our lives, repent – receive God’s forgiveness
* pray that God will bring revival to our church, to our group, our families.
* pray God’s blessings on all the churches in our community – both numerical and spiritual blessings
* remember that God blesses each person, each church in different ways

3.2 The Sin of Indifference

Listen for the results of indifference.

Obadiah 1:10-14 (NIV) Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever. 11 On 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. 2 You should not look down on 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. 13 You should not march through the gates of my people in the day of their disaster, nor look down on them in their calamity in the day of their disaster, nor seize their wealth in the day of their disaster. 14 You should not wait at the crossroads to cut down their fugitives, nor hand over their survivors in the day of their trouble.

What other complaints does the Lord have against Edom?

* violence against the Israelites
* did not help their neighboring country when attacked by Babylon
* when the battles were over, they came in and looted
* rejoiced at the defeat of Israel

List the “should nots” in this passage. You should not …

* look down on your brother in his misfortune
* rejoice over neighbor’s destruction
* boast when they are in trouble
* march through the gates after disaster
* look down on their calamity
* seize their wealth after the disaster
* wait at the crossroads to cut down fugitives
* hand over survivors in day of trouble

What are some obstacles to *overcoming injustice* in our culture?

* people who refuse to “agree to disagree”
* “if you don’t believe as I do, you are evil”
* promote “tolerance” but only if you agree with them
* extreme polarization of beliefs
* throwing out accusations at each other
* selfishness
* work only to promote oneself
* climb ladder of success by stepping on everyone else

The Edomites were indifferent to Judah’s plight. To what problems of our culture are we sometimes indifferent?

* abuse within families (shouldn’t interfere with personal matters in others’ lives)
* spiritual needs of neighbors (they’re noisy, have a messy yard, kids that are mean, etc.)
* abortion … (what can I do?)
* voting …
	+ Only about 50 percent of Christians in America are registered to vote.
	+ Of those, only 50 percent show up at the polls,
	+ meaning 75 percent of all Christians are not taking advantage of one of their greatest privileges.

How can believers demonstrate value to lives that even believers sometimes devalue by this indifference?

* confess our indifference to God
* claim Prov. 21:1 *The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases*. as you pray for our leaders

3.3 Justice for the Oppressed

Listen for God’s justice for the oppressed.

Obadiah 1:15-18, 21 (NIV) "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. 16 Just 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. 17 But on Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be holy, and the house of Jacob will possess its inheritance. 18 The house of Jacob will be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame; the house of Esau will be stubble, and they will set it on fire and consume it. There will be no survivors from the house of Esau." The Lord has spoken. … 21 Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau. And the kingdom will be the Lord's.

According to verses 15 and 16, how would God judge all rebellious nations? What does the day of the Lord hold for the unjust and unfaithful?

* the day of the Lord is near for all nations
* as you have done, it will be done to you
* your deeds will return on your own head

What is the meaning of the references to “drinking”?

* Edom “drank” anger and destruction of their neighbor, Israel
* now other nations will similarly “drink” devastation of Edom
* it will go on and on
* ultimately, they will cease to exist

How would Israel be delivered?

* deliverance will come to Mt. Zion
* it will be a holy deliverance, totally different, separate from any other
* the house of Jacob will possess its inheritance
* Israel, Judah will be a fire, a flame
* Edom (the house of Esau) will be stubble that will be set on fire … destroyed
* Edom will have no survivors

What should these truths about God declare to people today … whether a victim or an arrogant rebel against God?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Victim | Arrogant Rebel |
| * God will bring justice
* God sees you, knows your situation
* God loves you
* God will act … in His time … in His way
* He will give you strength, courage
 | * God will bring justice
* don’t mess with God
* you may think you’re great and powerful, “hot stuff”
* God is real, God is powerful, you should stand in awe, shake in your boots
 |

Suppose you take an active role in confronting injustice. Why is it important to have an ongoing close relationship with God?

* so you know what is important, so you have wisdom to know what is really a priority
* know that you will face opposition and will need God’s courage and strength to go on
* to realize that it is God who makes things right … not you or I
* to maintain a credible and biblical attitude towards opponents
* to keep an attitude of love and redemption instead of an attitude of retribution

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

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Application

Move from self-preservation to sacrifice.

* Identify one area in your life where you are operating out of self-preservation instead of seeking the kingdom first.
* Assess how you spend your time, your talent, and your treasure.
* Choose one area to implement a change so that you are seeking God’s kingdom first and living sacrificially.

Move from indifference to empathy.

* Take some time to journal and write out responses to the following questions.
	+ How do I struggle with indifference?
	+ How have I been passively disobedient?
	+ In what areas of my life do I live out of self-preservation instead of sacrificial service?

Move from passivity to action.

* Somewhere in your community there is disparity.
* Identify one tangible area of injustice and bring two others alongside you to formulate a plan to fight for justice in that area.
* Make sure to bring others along who are different from you and can offer other perspectives on how to engage.

HOLY
HOME
INHERITANCE
MESSAGE
MISFORTUNE
NATIONS
NEST
POSSESS
PRIDE
REJOICE
RETURN
RISE
ROCKS
SHAME
SMALL
SOAR
SOVEREIGN
STARS
STRANGERS
TROUBLE
UTTERLY
VIOLENCE
VISION
WEALTH

ALOOF
BATTLE
BOAST
BROTHER
CLEFTS
CONTINUALLY
COVERED
DECEIVED
DEEDS
DELIVERANCE
DESPISED
DESTROYED
DESTRUCTION
DOWN
DRANK
EAGLE
ENVOY
FOREIGNERS
FOREVER
GATES
GROUND
HEAD
HEART
HEIGHTS

Word Search



You better get to work on finding these words. Those decoders who work for Spiros the Spy messed up the grid. Humph! The words go left, right, up, down, and diagonally. Humph! Those hackers owe me a book report each. If you need help go to <https://tinyurl.com/2p8bz6d5> You’ll find other great things to do for all family members. Humph!