

Are You a Hurter or a Healer?

Scripture Reading — Obadiah

*You should not gloat over your brother in the day of his misfortune.
Obadiah 1:12 —*

The short book of Obadiah is a prophecy against the nation of Edom. Edom is also called Esau, because the Edomites were the descendants of Esau, Jacob's (Israel's) older brother. The book of Genesis tells us that Jacob and Esau struggled even before they were born. God said that the two boys represented two nations, and throughout history they often fought (Genesis 25:22-26).

Things were at their worst in Obadiah's day, when Jerusalem was attacked by the Babylonians and Edom rejoiced over Jacob's destruction (see 2 Kings 25; Psalm 137:7). Through Obadiah, God told the Edomites that gloating over their brother's misery would result in their own destruction.

Sometimes it's hard not to delight in the misfortunes of others, especially if we think they deserve them. But the season of Lent encourages us to live by a higher standard. Peter reminds us of the example of Jesus. "When they hurled ... insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly" (1 Peter 2:23).

If ever there was someone who had the right to pay back those who hurt him, it was Jesus. But "by his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). The finished work of Christ breaks the cycle of vengeance, and we show the healing of Jesus by not taking part in hurting others.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, only your crucified hands can pry open our clenched fists. Help us to share the power of your healing grace with a hurting world. We pray in your name. Amen.

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