Obadiah — Petra

There are times when the reading of the prophetic books in our Bibles can begin to feel redundant. *I've heard this before. People are being pretty awful. Fix it now or you'll pay for it later. That's why we need Jesus.* Our reactions, possibly lullabied by the repetition and quick Sunday school lessons of a handful of stories then lead us to assumptions. *Wow, these guys must have been really bad. Why didn't they just listen, change, or do as they were told?*

How much has the world actually changed?

But then, I wonder, how much has the world actually changed?

As history cycles through one empire—one Babel, one Jericho, one Babylon—after another, what has humankind learned? What have the people of God learned? Who has listened? When have they listened? And are *we* listening now?

I was blown away by the rocks of Petra. The intricacies of the stone, the colors of the rock, and how, in the middle of a seemingly empty wasteland, a haven along a road of wanderers was forged.

What do we do with such refuge?

What do we do with our safe havens? We've staked our flags, declared our lands, and built our walls, but what do we do with such safety? What do we do with such refuge?

A new friend of mine is an emissary from a country currently at war. This young woman visited multiple churches across the states to share stories of her church and the people of her country, how they are supporting their people, praying for their brothers and fathers and husbands on the front lines, and trying to make life as "normal" as possible.

What is this normal like? Waking to 5 am drone attack alarms, fleeing to underground shelters, and then back in time to run a 10 am worship service. Weekly Interfaith Bible Studies reading Scripture with young adults and praying for their friends and family. Checking on those who fled more dangerous cities staying in the shelter of a church basement or neighboring apartment that was purchased for this specific purpose. Mentoring young people who soon will face conscription after an upcoming birthday. Saved money being spent to purchase night vision goggles for a soldier or a needed surgery to be done more quickly to keep a family member safe and in their best health as they fight in the war.

For many of us, a world like this is unimaginable. It's like a dystopian novel we read, or the prophets of the Bible we skim over, and then we go about our daily lives. *We would never do that. We would never be in that sort of a situation; we know better.*

Yet, this young woman stood in front of a room of strangers who too often forget of such

wars or refugees, much nearer than we'd realize, and revealed, "As I have been speaking about the war, and my home, more and more on this trip, the reality of the situation makes me sad. Because we try to make life normal for the people we are working with, but there is nothing normal about it. This is not normal."

She spoke of people sleeping in subways to get just one full night's sleep safely nestled under the wailing ground, and I couldn't help but see in the image of subway tunnels, the orange sand and rocks of the creviced walls of Petra. We don't know why the people of Edom, those hiding in the walls of Petra at the crossroads of the earth, chose to normalize the evil of the empires that ruled around it. Fear? Exhaustion? Greed? We don't know what made them cave to the rule of others, give up those innocent and fleeing for safety, but we see people facing the realities of such situations even today. We just have to open our ears to hear the voices of those on the margins who are sharing these stories.

What will we do when others flee to us, and it's not just a story we hear on a Sunday? What do we do when bombs are dropped and drones are purchased and warlords reign and peace is used as propaganda instead of promise? Do we open our hearts and homes to the refugee? Do we seek to comfort, feed, clothe, and shelter them? Or does the potential risk of our own safety trump the call of loving one's neighbor as yourself?

Does the potential risk of our own safety trump the call of loving one's neighbor?

How much has the world—have we, actually—changed? Because this world of war and turning aside of the refugee has become "normal." And it is in no way the normal that God created the world to be.

PRAYER

We stand at the crossroads of the earth,
protecting, caring, sheltering, feeding.
When destruction reigns and chaos abounds,
may radical hospitality be our natural posture.
May we not just stand by and watch or gloat
over those running from destruction.
But instead use our hands and our voices
to halt the clamor of trouble.
We long to be part of what you are building—
a world where we see and hear and care
about all humankind.

How do we treat those in trouble?
O God, refine us, and show us how.

Amen

EPISODE 59 (SESSION 2)

THE FOUR PILLARS



BEMA Discipleship is built on four pillars; a **Four-Pillared Perspective** to help us remember **to elevate the words of God** (not ours) and help us identify the principles that we see recurring in the story of God's people.

Here are some applications for this episode echoing the ideas of the four pillars:

I

TEXT

What stands out from the Text that you want to carry with you as you read the prophets? Try meditating over and memorizing parts (or all!) of Obadiah.

II

COMMUNITY

How does your community see your role of caring for those fleeing violence, war, or danger? What difference does it make to do this together?

III

DISCIPLESHIP

How can you model this sort of passion for the outcast or refugee to young adults around you? Who might have something to show or teach you?

IV

WRESTLING

What are your thoughts on this prophetic word to a people not a part of Israel? How do you wrestle with God's anger? Where do you see struggle in our world?

Spotify

Are you a music listener?

Listen along to our BEMA Music Playlists on Spotify.

Song suggestions? Send them to bemabesorah@gmail.com.

BEMA SESSION 2

MEDITATION & PRAYER

REFLECTION, APPLICATION & IMPACT

There are three emphases that we are always thinking about in terms of application at BEMA. These may be stated explicitly at times, but often we will want you to do the work of finding ways to connect the dots to the things we are learning. Much of this is what makes the work of BEMA distinct as a ministry of Impact Campus Ministries.

CREATING A SPACE
SPIRITUAL FORMATION

True success is developing intimacy with God. In Session 1, we encountered the idea of "Creating Space for God" in our lives. We believe that ***if we do our part of creating that space, God will fill it*** *as He desires. You're already doing this as you dive into the Text and jump into a place to discuss. God will meet you in these places! Look for places the Holy Spirit can do work in and through you as you go about your everyday life.*

CONSIDERING CAMPUS
YOUNG PEOPLE FOCUS

We believe that young adults are shaping the future of this world. *Jesus modeled a ministry of discipling young adults, and that approach has and will work. If you are a college student who is listening, we want this material to be directly helpful to your pursuits. If you are not a college student, we want to challenge you to come alongside one and work together.*

SACRED STATION
THEOLOGY OF WORK

This isn't only for church or Bible study; this is about what we do every day. How we do our job and how it may take advantage of or bring life to others is something God says is central to our presence in the world. Justice is very much something God cares about. Does our physical work (our 9–5 job) bring shalom or chaos? Does it exploit creation? The way we manage our employees, interact with customers or coworkers, care for our children, or create products can provide relief to others. ***The work we do every day is sacred and matters!***

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