

High Stakes

During the reign of Ahab and Jezebel, God's people lived in great fear. There is no greater example than Obadiah (not to be confused with the prophet). He was Ahab's palace administrator, serving a king who "did more to arouse the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, than all the kings in Israel before him." (cf. 1 Kings 16:33). How will he fare in his position? How is he able to serve the king and Yhwh himself at the same time? Surely they are mutually exclusive. Yet, the Scriptures recognise that real life cannot be so clearly delineated. Real life situations can be complicated and messy, oftentimes with high stakes.

In some sense, our situation today is very similar to Obadiah's situation. We are working and serving in a culture/society that is increasingly arousing the anger of Yhwh, through our actions and pride. How can we work and serve in a society that seems to be mutually exclusive to the lordship of Yhwh? Let's have a look at Obadiah's example and learn from it.

Launch

- 1) What are some common points of pressure for Christians in the secular workplace? What are some consequences of not following the ways of the world?

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Read 1 Kings 18:1-15

- 2) What is happening in Samaria? (v2) Who was responsible for it? (cf. 1 Kings 17:1)
- 3) What do we know about Obadiah and what did he do for Yhwh? (v3-4)
 - a. What do you think would have happened to him if what he did was found out by Ahab?
- 4) What was Ahab more concerned about in his conversation with Obadiah during this famine? (v5)
- 5) Who did Obadiah meet when he split up with Ahab to cover the land? (v7-8)
 - a. Why was Obadiah so fearful of letting Ahab know that Elijah was there? (v9-14)
 - b. What does that say about Ahab's character and his relationship with Obadiah?



- 6) What kind of situations can you envision in which the Christian's obedience to God will result in serious consequences for them in this world?
- 7) What did Elijah say to Obadiah's reluctance or doubt? (v15)
 - a. What promises of God can we rely upon today?
 - b. What guarantees do we have that God will keep his promises? (cf. Matt 1:17-23, Luke 1:44-55, Rom 1:1-4, Gal 3:18, 26-29)
- 8) Why is it that we sometimes doubt God's ability/desire to keep his promises?
 - a. How can we increase our trust in God and his promises? (Think about how you increase trust in another person)
- 9) What are some pressure points in your own life? How can the rest of the small group pray for you and support you?

Conclusion

Obadiah seems to be between a rock and a hard place. He is the palace administrator to Ahab, one of the kings that most arouse the anger of Yhwh. How can Obadiah serve Ahab and Yhwh at the same time? He did what he could in his position. When Jezebel killed of Yhwh's prophets, Obadiah took it upon himself to save 100 of them. That is very risky as it would definitely have cost him his life if he was found out.

When the famine hit, Ahab didn't care about the plight of the people, only about his horses and mules (for they served him). Obadiah met Elijah in his journey, and was asked to inform Ahab that Elijah wanted to meet him. Initially Obadiah was reluctant for he knew that Elijah could easily have gone elsewhere under the direction of Yhwh. If that happened, Obadiah will surely be killed. However, Elijah reassured him that it will not happen. Yhwh keeps his promises, and Obadiah can trust him.

In the same way, we have to trust God that he keeps his promises today. One of the greatest promises is from Romans 8:18, whereby our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. We can trust God because he has always been a promise-keeping God. We see this ultimately in the coming of Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of all that he has promised since the Old Testament. "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Rom 8:31-32)