PONDER E35 | OCTOBER 26 2026

Pondering Christ in Obadiah

TRANSCRIPT (AUTO-GENERATED)

Well, hey, welcome to Ponder by NorthernLife. We're having a conversation about the Word of the Lord as it was preached to us on Sunday and as we encounter it in our everyday lives. I am not Jack.

I am in fact Ben. Jack's out sick this week. No, he's not.

What is he?

Holidaying.

Jack is on holiday this week, so enjoy Jack. But I'm here with Tristan and Jono ready to ponder Jono's sermon Christ in Obadiah. Do you want to give us an overview of yesterday's sermon?

Yeah, love to.

Obadiah is the shortest book of the Old Testament. It's a tough book because it's about God's judgment on Edom, the descendants of Esau. I tried to focus in on the Kingdom of God, and God's judgment coming out of his expectation on Edom.

He calls Edom not so much the people of God, but relatives of the people of God, the link being back to Jacob and Esau's twin brothers. And so, yeah, I looked at Kingdom Allegiance, Kingdom Consequence, and Kingdom Deliverance.

And that really all comes from the fact that at some stage, it would seem it's probably the exile of 586, of Judah being taken off to Babylon, finally, and the temple and the city being destroyed.

Obadiah says that Edom, a brother of Israel, watched on and were aloof. And even more than that, they gloated over the misery coming upon their brother Israel. And so God was asking more of them than that.

And so we talk about allegiance and what it means to have Yahweh as Lord, Jesus as Lord. And the fact that in the Kingdom of God, there is consequence, we reap what we sow.

Unless there is a Savior to alleviate that, remove that guilt of what we should sow from what we reap. And then there is this really great pointer of deliverance towards Messiah, who would be revealed in a place, in Mount Zion, in Jerusalem.

And so we tried to take all of that, as obscure as it is, and try to apply it to our own lives, about the Kingdom Allegiance, Consequence and Deliverance.

Did you have any reflections, Tristan?

Yeah, my main reflection was, I really honed in on the allegiance point, when I watched it the first time, because it's something so relatable, where I'm an avid sports person, sports fan, and I'm one team and nothing would change that.

But when trying to flip the question on us, when it comes to our faith, and what it means to be a Christian, and what different allegiances you have, it was actually very pointed, where it's like, oh, maybe my allegiance is to work over this, or some

other interests. And then it brought me back to that main point, which I've said on the podcast before, which is, what is the priority? Which is, like, what is your allegiance? What are you giving yourself to?

So yeah, I always enjoy a Kingdom message. So, that's good.

Yeah, love the Kingdom.

I thought it was just classic, where you open the sermon by saying, who's heard a sermon in Obadiah before? Not a single hand in the entire room went up.

Insulted crickets.

Seriously, like, why do you think that is? Do, like, why do we avoid these parts of the Bible? Or maybe the flip side of that is, what value is there in spending a week in these obscure parts of the Bible that no one's ever read?

Well, it's Timothy saying that all of scripture is helpful for teaching and rebuking and righteousness.

But as you've mentioned, quoting someone else over the years, not everything is of the same worth. What's the line?

Well, this is a Ben Shanks quote, actually.

Yes.

All scripture is God breathed and is useful, but not all scripture is equally useful for the purpose of forming us.

Maybe that's true, I think.

Yeah, partly true. I think when it comes to Obadiah, it's short, it has a similar message to some of the other prophets, but there is still some kind of unique things that you pulled out.

So I want to jump into these three points, Kingdom Allegiance, Kingdom Consequence, and Kingdom Deliverance.

Firstly, on that Kingdom Allegiance point, you use the illustration of a sports team that a true sports fan would never put on the jersey for their team on Sunday and then wake up Monday and change teams. And yet we kind of do that with God.

We wear our Sunday best, kind of Jesus jersey, and then we wake up Monday morning. You even said you put it as strongly as saying we put on the gear of the evil one.

What do you think that looks like in our life for us to be kind of Sunday Christians and then change allegiance on Monday? What does that look like?

I think the most obvious thing is going into, say, the workplace and taking on the culture of the social grouping that you're in, but not, you know, being a light, not being salt, just being one of that group and taking on their allegiance.

And so that could be sort of any setting. It's typically a social setting. Of course, there could be some vice that you're into.

That's unhelpful too. You might be stuck with gambling. And, you know, that's like a vice of the evil one.

Absolutely.

It's a good point that allegiance is in some ways a social thing.

It's individual, of course, that I need to personally profess Jesus as my Lord, but it's heavily influenced by the community that you're in, which is why sports teams have such kind of power, because you get in the throng, the arena of all the fans

chanting your favorite football player's name. And so when you're standing in church surrounded by Christians, it's easy to be Team Jesus, but then you go into the workplace, like you're saying, and it's easy to kind of change jerseys almost.

And any vice that is fueled by the internet is run by a social community. They may not know each other, but they're fighting for the same cause of wickedness actually, sometimes.

I would say there's a real danger of that word aloof, where we can fall into that category, especially in a social context.

Because like you said, when we come on a Sunday, we have all these emotions happening because we're gathering together, and it might be a good worship session or a good message in the moment.

But I think where we can fall into the aloof category is when that emotion is not there. And that's literally the definition of aloof, to be unemotionally attached to something or someone or a context. Most of the time we forget that Jesus is divine.

We forget that when we go through our daily lives on Monday, Tuesday, and we're not just Sunday Christians at that point. And that's why I try at youth most of the time in saying, you know, there's more to a Friday and a Sunday.

It's daily, it's devotion. So yeah, I think it's very tricky because there's lots of distractions in this world. Like we said, there's lots of vices.

So yeah, it's a tricky world out there.

Before we hit record, we were having an interesting conversation about something that you and I are very passionate about, which is expanding our view of the gospel beyond a ticket to heaven gospel, which is Dallas Willard calls it the sin management

gospel. Jesus forgives me of my sins so that I can go to heaven when I die. The Bible seems to be teaching that God's intention is to get heaven into us before we die, to change us into people who live and love and lead like Jesus.

And so that leads us to this idea that Christianity is not only the forgiveness of sins, but lordship, living under a different lord. We also referred to, just before we hit record, this, was it a devotional book?

Yeah, a course that came out, a book in the course called Not a Fan.

Provocative line, not a fan of Jesus, completely committed follower. So what does it mean for us to be not fans of Jesus, not just ticket holders into heaven thanks to Jesus, but completely committed followers, those who profess his lordship?

What does that mean?

We demonstrate whole hearted allegiance to him. That's lordship.

I think what it looks like for us is we go from being a fan or a ticket holder to actually becoming shareholders in the Kingdom. We invest ourselves in the Kingdom.

So we just have that little bit extra of commitment where it's just, you don't lose passion for it. And you get involved, you like, immerse yourself in the Kingdom. And that's, yeah, that's what it is.

It's full immersion.

Building on this sports analogy that we're working with, I wonder if you could say that it's the difference between having a ticket to the game and sitting in the grandstands watching the game versus being on the field playing the game.

As in, God, I mean, you talked about the Kingdom, God at work here and now doing stuff. Lordship is living with Jesus being a part of what God is doing today to renew this world, which is like playing the game rather than holding on to your ticket.

Kind of a cool image.

Yeah.

So moving on to the second point, Kingdom Consequence.

This, you brought this up earlier, Tristan. Standing aloof is a phrase to, which means to be detached and to stand by. Coming from the context of the people of Edom, which is the descendants of Esau, stood aloof when Israel was being attacked.

And so you reference this idea of what you might call sins of omission, not doing the good that we are called to do. In fact, you quoted James 4 verse 17, if anyone then knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

So in what ways do you think we stand aloof and we omit doing the good that we ought to do?

It's one of the more probing relevant challenges for the church in the 21st century. It's just that we have so much access to daily content.

How can you not be a bit aloof to multiple parts of the world where there is detailed information that is true? Not necessarily like fake news, but just true information about injustice. I think it's hard.

It's hard to not be a bit aloof. It's a huge challenge that we all have. And different people get fired up about different issues.

And they, you know, out of their allegiance and their passion for justice and for the kingdom, they want to do something about it. But it's sort of hard to keep track of everything.

I've heard people talk about compassion fatigue. Yeah. That you just, we just can't carry the kind of weight of this broken world all the time.

Which is a cool kind of plug for the body of Christ. That my thing may not be a great burning passion for this particular humanitarian cause. My thing is kind of this cause.

But together as the body of Christ, the things which capture our heart that God has given us a passion to advocate for justice for, we get to do that together as the capital C church, working for the kingdom. We don't all play the same part.

And one of the big parts of that point is God cannot be mocked. We reap what we sow, just an idea. And it's very clear in Obediah that God says, you thought you could do this and it wouldn't matter.

But it's going to come back on you exactly as you have done, it will be done to you. And so we talked about, it seems historically that about 30 years after the destruction of Jerusalem, Edom had a similar thing happen from someone else from Babylon.

So what God said through the prophet came true. And so I just wanted to hang out there a bit. Well, I was reminding people of the series, We Did Roads to Ruin, that there is a way that seems like it takes us to life, but it takes us to death.

And there's small incremental decisions that take you down different pathways that have consequence. And so that's a really powerful and disturbing idea.

Just to go, you know, am I moving down a pathway that will lead to consequences that I'm I'm just not really aware of. And in Christ, there's always an answer to those consequences. Certainly grace for them.

But as we see with many characters in the Bible, it doesn't mean you don't have to suffer some of the consequences that your actions lead to. So that's just sort of an important part of the reflection of Obadiah because it's about judgment.

Because of this, so you will receive this judgment. And the Kingdom of God is like that, too. Actions lead to results.

Yeah.

And I think that's why, to answer your earlier point of why don't we look at these books of the Bible that often, is because I think it taps into something in our hearts that doesn't want to be pressed on.

It's something where, in today's world, we don't really have the weight of what it means to have judgment brought upon us. Like, we haven't had that sort of Old Testament judgment upon us.

And yes, people go through difficult seasons and trials and go through different sorts of struggles, but it's not something that is tangible for us to hold onto.

And that's why we take a loop so lightly most of the time, is because it's like I'm just over there. Like, I'm hanging out there for a second, but there's still a chance for me to come back.

But that's the same mentality that will take you deeper the other way. That leads to ruin, that leads to death.

The ruin thing is challenging, that I think we intuitively understand that our actions could lead to ruin. But what was unique about your point in the sermon is that our inaction can lead to ruin as well.

That the omission of doing the good can lead to ruin. In fact, I want to read a quote from the sermon and just invite response, because it's so sharp and pointy.

You said, Our lives have consequences before God, and not just for the things that we have done, but the things we refuse to do.

The phone call we never made, the person we chose to ignore, the injustice we witnessed but couldn't be bothered confronting, the neighbor who's suffering we knew about but decided was somebody else's problem.

Yeah, it's describing a lot of God's disappointment in his people. The Old Testament is often best understood as broad brush strokes. You know, the big strokes of the paintbrush painting the story.

They're bold colors. And I think Obadiah is like that. It's just saying very clearly from God through the prophet, I don't like it when people stand aloof.

And then you fast forward to Jesus and this stuff like the Good Samaritan, just these poignant stories. It's like, who was the righteous one? And it's this Samaritan, the hated one, who does right in God's eyes.

So, yeah, a big part of life is finding out what God's like, isn't it? Yeah. And God is someone who is interested in justice.

He enjoys it when people help others. And He is disappointed when we don't, when we stand aloof. I've not come across that word in the Bible.

Is there anyone else?

Aloof.

Aloof. It's just a cool word. Stand aloof.

Don't stand aloof.

Yeah.

It's what the priest did in the Good Samaritan story, didn't they? They crossed to the other side and walked aloof.

Yeah.

Well, to finish with the good news, Kingdom Deliverance. The sermon is Christ in Obadiah. Yeah.

And there's a great finish. Verse 21 of Obadiah says, Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom will be the Lord's.

This picture of what Jesus did for us in ascending the mountain of Golgotha to bear our sin on the cross. Both our sins of evil that we have done and the good that we have failed to do, He has saved us from.

But as we said earlier, the heart of the gospel is not only forgiveness for the bad that we've done, but transformation into different types of people. So how do you think kind of the cross teaches us to not stand aloof and transforms us?

Yeah, the main lesson of the cross is, for me, it's that it's active. It's not something that is like aloof or standing still. It's always moving and that's what Christ did.

Christ moved throughout people's hearts and He was active in making disciples. So when we stand aloof, we always know that there's someone on the move that we can follow.

There's someone on the move that is active and it's not just lost in the darkness. Like He's the light that we follow. That's the cross that we follow to get away from being aloof.

Yeah, to not be aloof is to be courageous and often to be humble, I think.

You're getting yourself involved, sort of getting your hands dirty. I started the sermon by talking about this fantastic trip I did in 2010 with another ministry colleague.

And, you know, that we'd done this huge trip from Egypt through Jordan, across to Israel, over to Turkey and Greece. But we'd been going a long time. We had about eight days in Israel.

And at the very end of that process of that time, all going around Israel and putting together the story of the Old Testament, the journey of the people of God up through Mount Sinai, sort of where the Red Sea was.

And we stood on the edge with our toes in the water going, wow, this is where, somewhere here, the Red Sea opened up. And so the sense of story was epic.

And then we finally came to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which was the Church of the Cross and the Empty Tomb, like that's sort of traditionally where the Great Holy Site is.

And it's gold everywhere, and there's just lions up, and it was pomp and ceremony. And then the very last day, we went to the Garden Tomb, which is another location.

And there's an empty tomb there, and there's a suggestion that that could be the tomb where Jesus was.

But the thing that really gets you is you go to the back of the garden, that this area, and you look over, and you see this rock, and it looks like a skull. And you're like, wow, that looks like skull rock, that looks like Golgotha.

And it's a Muslim bus shelter. There's all these old buses there. And I was really moved because it sort of felt like, wow, that may not be the spot, but it certainly feels like it could be.

That the holy spot where Jesus was crucified had so much humility surrounding it, that even 2,000 years later, it's just this bus shelter over in the corner.

And I think that that speaks to this passion that God the Father has, that his kingdom, that his people would be humble and courageous, not stand aloof, but get involved and do what needs to be done to bring the kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

Yeah, thank you, Lord, that you did not stand aloof from us in our sin and suffering.

Yeah, pray that we might be people who were transformed by the power of the cross to do the good that we know that we ought to do the way that you did it for us. And we'll see you in the next episode.