



CENTRAL SHELBY CHURCH OF CHRIST

working and worshipping together to serve the Lord



*"Jesus answered and said to her,
'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst
again, but whoever drinks of the water that I
shall give him will become in him a fountain of
of water springing up into everlasting life.'" (John 4:13, 14)*

STANDING BY ON THE OTHER SIDE

The book of Obadiah is God's indictment of the nation of Edom. Judgment is first pronounced on them for their pride. *"Though you exalt yourself as high as the eagle, From there I will bring you down," says the Lord* (v.4). But even further, Jehovah condemns them for their spirit of indifference while other nations ransacked Israel, their "brother" nation. God's choice of words is eye-opening: *"For your violence against your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever. In the day that you **stood on the other side**-- In the day that strangers carried captive his forces, when foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem-- **Even you were as one of them**"* (vss.10-11).

The lesson is simple: We cannot afford to stand idly by ("on the other side") while the enemy wreaks havoc on those to whom we have an obligation. To do so makes us "as one of" the enemy.

We cannot stand by "on the other side" when those we have some influence with are in need of the soul-saving gospel. They are sin-sick people in need of a remedy, and we have a responsibility to try and bring them to Christ.

We cannot stand by "on the other side" when we see our brother in Christ "overtaken in any trespass" (Galatians 6:1). Rather, our obligation is to "restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness." The one who "turns him back" to the truth should know that he by so doing "will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20). But what is to be said of the one who stands by and says nothing to the erring?

We cannot stand by "on the other side" when we see our brother in need of life's necessities. Listen to the Scripture: *"But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?"* (1 John 3:17). As the next verse implies (*"let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth"*), we must cross over to the "other side" and help such a one in need. Remember the story of the good Samaritan? Yes, there was one who stopped to help the man beaten by robbers, but he was preceded by two who

“passed by on the other side” (Luke 10:25-37). Which of those three are we most like?

We cannot stand by “on the other side” and do nothing when a false teacher comes into our midst. To do so makes us a willing accomplice to that which is “destructive” to others (2 Peter 2:1). The Bible says, “*If anyone comes to you, and does not bring this doctrine [of Christ], do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds*” (2 John 10-11).

Will the Lord one day judge us as He did Edom for our indifference to the plight of our brethren and fellow-men? May He help us to see our responsibilities and to take action when we have the opportunity.

--Mike Noble