**OBADIAH, A FAITHFUL MAN**

1 Kings 18:1-15

Key Verse 4

“While Jezebel was killing off the Lord’s prophets, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water.”

**Introduction**

 Nothing is more important than always being faithful as servants of God. Obadiah was a man of faithfulness regardless of the situation. Although he was not a prophet, God used him to save many souls. We can not imagine God’s wisdom to place such a person in the center of Ahab’s palace. May the Lord raise up many servants like Obadiah in every corner of our society in our times so that God’s name would be glorified and God’s servants and true knowledge may be preserved the most. May the Lord help us to learn of the way of God who helps each of us to keep growing in Jesus’ image despite the hostile environment where we are living. Amen.

1. Read verses 1-6. What was the word of the Lord that Elijah obeyed again? (1, 2a) What did Ahab try to do when the famine was severe in Samaria? (2b-6) What was he supposed to do as a king instead? Who was Obadiah? (4)

1-1, Read verses 1-6.

 After a long time, in the third year, the word of the Lord came to Elijah: “Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land.” 2 So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria, 3 and Ahab had summoned Obadiah, his palace administrator. (Obadiah was a devout believer in the Lord. 4 While Jezebel was killing off the Lord’s prophets, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water.) 5 Ahab had said to Obadiah, “Go through the land to all the springs and valleys. Maybe we can find some grass to keep the horses and mules alive so we will not have to kill any of our animals.” 6 So they divided the land they were to cover, Ahab going in one direction and Obadiah in another.

1-2, What was the word of the Lord that Elijah obeyed again? (1, 2a)

 ***After a long time, in the third year, the word of the Lord came to Elijah: “Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land.” 2 So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab.***

* The word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year after a long time. It indicates that the drought was God’s will. Elijah must have prayed according to God’s will.
* Now God commanded him to go and present himself to Ahab. “I will send rain on the land.” So simply he went to present himself to him. What an obedience!
* He simply obeyed God’s command. Though it happened through his prayers, his prayers were sensitive to the guidance of the Lord.
* Prayer must be based on God’s word and not vice versa. Oftentimes, believers are focusing on prayer itself and they are driven by their own desire by ignoring the word of God. It is a great mistake. We must first rely on God’s word.

1-3, What did Ahab try to do when the famine was severe in Samaria? (2b-6)

 ***Now the famine was severe in Samaria, 3 and Ahab had summoned Obadiah, his palace administrator. (Obadiah was a devout believer in the Lord. 4 While Jezebel was killing off the Lord’s prophets, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water.) 5 Ahab had said to Obadiah, “Go through the land to all the springs and valleys. Maybe we can find some grass to keep the horses and mules alive so we will not have to kill any of our animals.” 6 So they divided the land they were to cover, Ahab going in one direction and Obadiah in another.***

* “Go through the land to all the springs and valleys. Maybe we can find some grass to keep the horses and mules alive so we will not have to kill any of our animals.” tells us about him that he is concerned about animals more than people.

1-4, What was he supposed to do as a king instead?

* He was supposed to lead his people in Israel to serve the Lord their God. He should have repented of his own sins because the drought came from the Lord.
* He should have asked others to pray together so that God may answer their prayer to turn His anger and lessen the period of drought.
* But instead of getting to the bottom of the issue and the fundamental solution by prayer of repentance, he was looking for different solutions, simply prolonging God’s wrath.

1-4, Who was Obadiah? (4)

 ***While Jezebel was killing off the Lord’s prophets, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water.)***

* First of all Obadiah was a courageous man who stood for God and His prophets in a hard time. His name means, “worshipper of Yahweh” or “servant of Yahweh.”
* He had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves and had supplied them with food and water.
* He sacrificially supplied food and water for them to survive. It was a great deed during the famine and hostile environment of the nation where the majority worshipped idols.
* According to scholars’ assumption, he might be the author of the book of Obadiah that was to prophesy against the Edomites.
* Even he was believed to be a descendant of Edom and he must have known them personally. When he served an evil king, Ahab, he must have been compassionate upon his own people and prayerfully wrote the book for them.
* Being a shepherd or a prophet does not necessarily require formal seminary training. Rather like Obadiah or David whose hearts were after God’s own heart can help others to come back to their own senses to serve the living God.
* God must have been pleased with his devotion and kept this heroic act being confidential in whatever he tried to preserve God’s people. Also God put him as one of important confidants of Ahab.
* It is God’s wisdom to preserve His remnants. All devout believers migrated to Judah a long time ago. But God still reserved 7000 believers and Obadiah in Israel to help kings and the people.
1. Read verses 7-12a. Who met Obadiah while he was walking along? (7) What was he asked to do? (8) What was his concern? (9-12a)

2-1, Read verses 7-12a.

 As Obadiah was walking along, Elijah met him. Obadiah recognized him, bowed down to the ground, and said, “Is it really you, my lord Elijah?”

8 “Yes,” he replied. “Go tell your master, ‘Elijah is here.’”

9 “What have I done wrong,” asked Obadiah, “that you are handing your servant over to Ahab to be put to death? 10 As surely as the Lord your God lives, there is not a nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to look for you. And whenever a nation or kingdom claimed you were not there, he made them swear they could not find you. 11 But now you tell me to go to my master and say, ‘Elijah is here.’ 12 I don’t know where the Spirit of the Lord may carry you when I leave you. If I go and tell Ahab and he doesn’t find you, he will kill me.

2-2, Who met Obadiah while he was walking along? (7)

***As Obadiah was walking along, Elijah met him. Obadiah recognized him, bowed down to the ground, and said, “Is it really you, my lord Elijah?”***

* The drought was so severe that king Ahab and his trusted servant Obadiah were out searching for pastureland. But God arranged this unexpected meeting between Obadiah and Elijah.
* Obadiah took notice of Elijah first, probably his peculiar attire. “Is it really you, my lord Elijah?” He called him my lord. Like the widow in the previous passage who confessed that as surely as the Lord lives, he had faith in the Lord and was confident in God’s servant, Elijah. That is why he could have bowed down to the ground with respect. It is important for us to pay proper respect to God’s servants because they preserve knowledge of the destiny of a nation, believe it or not.

2-3, What was he asked to do? (8)

***“Yes,” he replied. “Go tell your master, ‘Elijah is here.’”***

2-4, What was his concern? (9-12a)

 ***“What have I done wrong,” asked Obadiah, “that you are handing your servant over to Ahab to be put to death? 10 As surely as the Lord your God lives, there is not a nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to look for you. And whenever a nation or kingdom claimed you were not there, he made them swear they could not find you. 11 But now you tell me to go to my master and say, ‘Elijah is here.’ 12 I don’t know where the Spirit of the Lord may carry you when I leave you. If I go and tell Ahab and he doesn’t find you, he will kill me.***

* His concern to be possibly killed by Ahab sounds quite legitimate. It has been very hard to locate Elijah despite a lot of efforts from Ahab’s point of view.
* Elijah was being asked to move from one place to another according to God’s directional words. So it is very understandable for Obadiah to say so.
1. Read verses 12b-15. What did Oabdiah say about himself? (12a-13) What made him fearful about his master? (14) What was Elijah’s assurance for him? (15)

3-1, Read verses 12b-15.

Yet I your servant have worshiped the Lord since my youth. 13 Haven’t you heard, my lord, what I did while Jezebel was killing the prophets of the Lord? I hid a hundred of the Lord’s prophets in two caves, fifty in each, and supplied them with food and water. 14 And now you tell me to go to my master and say, ‘Elijah is here.’ He will kill me!”

15 Elijah said, “As the Lord Almighty lives, whom I serve, I will surely present myself to Ahab today.”

3-2, What did Oabdiah say about himself? (12a-13)

***Yet I, your servant, have worshiped the Lord since my youth. 13 Haven’t you heard, my lord, what I did while Jezebel was killing the prophets of the Lord? I hid a hundred of the Lord’s prophets in two caves, fifty in each, and supplied them with food and water.***

* Basically he reminded Elijah of what he had done for a hundred of the Lord’s prophets in two caves to save them and feed them.
* Also he identified himself as his servant and he pointed out that he had worshipped the Lord since his youth.
* He wanted to serve others sacrificially instead of focusing on being served by others and took advantage of opportunity. He was one of the true followers of Jesus. We could see his healthy perspective about himself as a servant.

3-3, What made him fearful about his master? (14)

 ***14 And now you tell me to go to my master and say, ‘Elijah is here.’ He will kill me!”***

* Still he has a fear problem in his heart. Although he secretly served prophets during the crisis in the past, still his heart was ruled by fear.
* That was why he was challenged to present himself to his unbelieving master, Ahab by putting his trust in the Lord Almighty God who is in charge of everything.
* God blessed him to promote his personal faith through Elijah. Praise the Lord who personally knows each of us to grow in our faith continually to the image of Jesus.

3-4, What was Elijah’s assurance for him? (15)

***15 Elijah said, “As the Lord Almighty lives, whom I serve, I will surely present myself to Ahab today.”***

* This passage shows that Elijah’s faith was more absolute than that of Obadiah. That was why he was able to lead him.
* Elijah said, “As the Lord Almighty lives, whom I serve, I will surely present myself to Ahab today.” What a convincing remark it was!
* May the Lord help us to grow as a man and woman of faith instead of excusing ourselves or blaming others.
* One of recent Sunday messages, our sin or lack of faith does not belong to ourselves. We must restore our true self that is Jesus Christ.
* God sent our human shepherd, like Elijah to challenge us in the society where people constantly contend with their voice and opinion. But out of great mercy and love, we are blessed to grow like Obadiah with Jesus’ great humility.
* That is why it is very important to maintain thanks to our human shepherds so that their job is not supposed to make them sorrowful and distressed but mutually happy and grow together in Jesus’ image.

**Conclusion**

 No matter how dark the time of Ahab might have been, still God has been very faithful in raising up His own servant like Obadiah who risked himself to save a hundred of God’s prophets. He was a servant or a slave of Yahweh and a worshiper of Yahweh. God is living and surely be with such a devout person who was sided with God. The darker our time becomes the brighter the star becomes. The star is not a Hollywood star but a star shining God’s truth and grace by standing firm in the word of God. May the Lord help each of us to identify ourselves to be a servant of God and humbly serve the interest of God and others so that we may be used as holy instruments for God’s salvation work.

**One word: God’s faithful man and woman!**