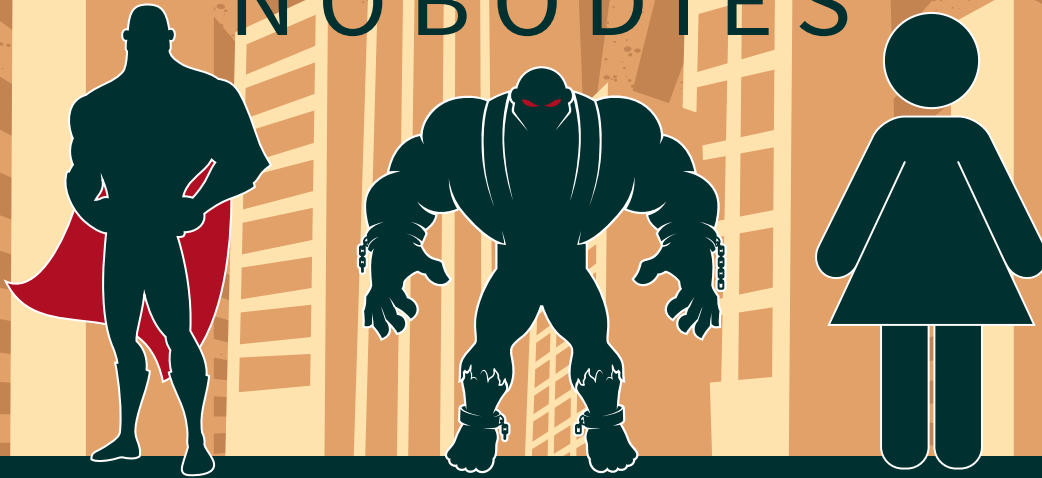


LENTEN SUNDAY SERIES

HEROES, VILLAINS, & NOBODIES



OVERVIEW: God uses all kinds of people to reach His ends. God calls on those who are able and willing to build His kingdom. We may judge those people and regard them as Villains, Heroes or Nobodies, but we would do better to see them for who they are: His hands and feet in the world.

Week 1 • Esther

Esther 4:10-16 (NIV); 1 Corinthians 1:28-31 (NIV); Matthew 13:53-58 (NLT)

Esther was a nobody. She was not born of a noble family. She possessed no great talents of leadership, wasn't a military strategist, and had mastered none of the arts. But when called upon to do what must be done, she mustered the bravery to stand in the gap. She advocated for her people & shows us that we all have a part to play, however humble our beginnings.

Week 2 • Nicodemus

John 3:1-11 (NIV); Micah 6:6-8 (NIV)

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, which makes him a villain. Aren't all Pharisees evil? Weren't they all constantly seeking to trap Jesus and undermine His authority? While Nicodemus was, indeed, a Pharisee, he didn't exhibit the characteristics we so often associate with that ilk. Nicodemus was curious, a truth seeker. He came humbling to our Lord. He knew that God was active, and rather than writing Jesus off as an interloper, he sought out truth that would shake his worldview.

Week 3 • Cyrus of Persia

Isaiah 44:24-45 (NRSV); Matthew 9:9-13 (NRSV)

The Messiah is the one person God has anointed to lead His people. He is THE agent of the LORD. How can it be that the Prophet Isaiah calls Cyrus the King of Persia the Messiah!? The Messiah, or Christ (Messiah in Greek) is a very special person. Cyrus was just that.

We think we understand what God is going to do. We think we know who God wants. We think there is a divine order that is completely understood. Cyrus the Polytheistic ruler of the blood thirsty conquering nation of Persia is a villain. But of course, no one is just one thing, even "villains." We think we know God, but we should always be ready to see Him, in all people, in any place, and at any time.

Week 4 • Joshua

Joshua 24:14-18 (NIV); Matthew 16:13-18 (NIV)

Joshua was a hero of great faith. He and Caleb were undeterred about the Giants they saw in the land. It was an exceedingly good land and the LORD saw fit to give it to them. His faithfulness was in the minority, and because of it the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years. It can be hard to stand for what you know to be true; Joshua did it for generations. 40 years later, he finally walks into the land that was given to his people and is informed that the Israelites had a reputation that preceded them. A reputation that sapped the courage of the inhabitants. Our strength comes from the LORD and Joshua knew it.

Week 5 • Centurion

Matthew 8:5-13 (NIV); Philippians 2:6-11 (NIV)

Roman oppressors are not welcome among the Jewish people. To the Roman Imperial command, the Jewish people are nothing more than a trouble and tribute. Sometimes the mold is broken, as when a Centurion sought Jesus out to heal his servant. Jesus would have been right to point out all the evil Romans had done to God's Chosen people, but instead engages and shows us that the humility of even a Roman Villain can be edifying.



CHRISTLUTHERAN
providence | online

christelca.org

