

**"Mordecai's Sorrow"**

**Esther 4**

**Introduction:** When we ended our study in Esther last week the Jews in the city of Shushan were perplexed. This means there was much confusion. It happened overnight. One day all was well and the next morning the decree was sent out that all the Jews were to be killed on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month.

**Notice Esther 3:13-15**

Now as we enter into chapter 4, we shall see that Mordecai has received the news.

**I. Mordecai's Reaction**

**Notice Esther 4:1-2**

When Mordecai received the word of the death sentence, he was not able to be silent. He dressed in sackcloth and put ashes upon himself to express his sorrow. The sackcloth was a rough material such as burlap. To dress in sackcloth and ashes was an outward expression of the inward sorrow which Mordecai was feeling. Possibly Mordecai understood that the decree had come about because he would not bow to Haman. If he understood this or if he didn't, he was still under an extremely heavy burden because of the death sentence upon the Jews and he knew the decree was irreversible.

We are told in verse 2 that he came EVEN before the king's gate. This expression of sorrow was not permitted anywhere near the king. We learned before that the king would only surround himself with joyful people. If someone enter into the presence of the king with a visible sorrow, they were then putting their own lives at risk.

**Nehemiah 2:1-2**

*And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.*

<sup>2</sup> *Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid.*

Mordecai felt such an overwhelming sorrow that he refused to hide it even in the forbidden presence of the king's gate.

**Application:**

Mordecai sets forth quite an example for you and me. There are people all around us that are under a death sentence because of sin. Not only are they under a sentence of physical death but they are also one heart beat away from hell. If they die in their sins they are lost forever. We too should be like Mordecai in that we should use every opportunity given to us to speak out and warn them and just as Mordecai our hearts should be heavily burdened because of where our friends and family are headed.

Let us notice the account of the rich man who died and went to hell.

**Luke 16:23-28**

*23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*

*24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*

*25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

*26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.*

*27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:*

*28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*

There are 4 things in hell that should be in the church:

1. Tears - Tears for the unsaved.
2. A burden for the unsaved.
3. A desire to go and tell the unsaved about hell.
4. A realization that the material things of this life mean nothing in eternity.

**Notice Esther 4:3-4**

Not only was Mordecai overwhelmed with much sorrow but so were all the Jews in every province. Word of Mordecai's sorrow made it to the palace and to the ears of Esther and

when she heard she was fearful for Mordecai. She then sent clothing to Mordecai so that he could put aside the sackcloth, but he refused the clothing from Esther.

**Application:**

There is much for us to see in these first 4 verses of chapter 4. I had shared with you how Mordecai is a picture of the new nature/divine nature in the believer but here the typology changes. Here we can see Mordecai as a picture of Adam. It was the one act of disobedience of Adam that brought the entire human race under a death sentence. Here in our study it was one refusal to bow that brought all the Jews under a death sentence. The Jews in this text are a picture of the entire human race and how we have all been placed under the sentence of death. The Jews are also a picture of how every unsaved person SHOULD feel because of their sin and the judgment of God which they are under.

There is also another picture here that is a sad reminder of what goes on today. When Esther heard of the sorrow and the brokenness of Mordecai, she sent a change of garments to him. Esther is a picture of the spirit of every individual, and this is what the spirit of man attempts to do when he comes under the conviction of the Holy Spirit. The spirit of man often attempts to change something on the outside. The spirit of man convinces many that a change of garments will set a person free from the death sentence which man is under. This is RELIGION! The spirit in man grasps after religion for salvation. The outward change can be good works, church membership, changing the lifestyle by giving up some sin, or getting baptized. This is all outward and none of these will bring salvation or peace within the sinner's heart. It is not a change of garments that is needed but a change of government. The sinners problem is not what is on the outside but what is on the inside and that is a heart contaminated with sin. Just like Mordecai's sackcloth was a manifestation of what was in his heart so too the sin in people's lives is the manifestation of what is in the heart.

**Matthew 15:17-20**

*<sup>17</sup> Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?*

*<sup>18</sup> But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.*

*<sup>19</sup> For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:*

<sup>20</sup> *These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.*

Before we leave this thought I want to also remind us that the sorrow and the bitterness the Jews were felling here in chapter 4 is also what every sinner needs in order to be saved. It is not until a sinner comes to hate their sin that they can be saved. It is not until a sinner understands that because of sin they are facing the judgment of God, that they can be saved. There are many false conversions today because sin is not explained, and the sinner is not repentant because the Holy Spirit has not convicted them. In the book of Romans, Paul presents the Doctrine of Condemnation before the Doctrine of Justification. The reason is because man must see his sinfulness and his condemnation before he can see his need of a Savior.

**Matthew 19:16-22**

<sup>16</sup> *And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?*

<sup>17</sup> *And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*

<sup>18</sup> *He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,*

<sup>19</sup> *Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

<sup>20</sup> *The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?*

<sup>21</sup> *Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.*

<sup>22</sup> *But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.*

Jesus pointed this man to his sin, but he refused to acknowledge it and he therefore walked away unsaved.

**II. The Obedient Messenger**

**Notice Esther 4:5-9**

Here we are introduced to a man by the name of Hatach. We know very little about this man, but he plays a major role in the story of Esther. His responsibility is to carry messages back and forth between Esther and Mordecai. He is an obscure man. At first glance it would be easy to overlook Hatach but when we slow down, we begin to see just how important he was.

**Application:**

Hatach is a picture of what we are to be as believer's and that is obedient messengers. We have been entrusted with the greatest message of all time, THE GOSPEL, and we are to carry this message from person to person.

**Mark 16:15-16**

<sup>15</sup> And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

<sup>16</sup> He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

God could have used a very prominent person to do what Hatach did but instead he choose to use an ordinary individual. This is exactly what God desires to do today. He wants to use you and me who are ordinary people to carry the Gospel to the lost world. God delights in using obscure people for it is then that He gets all the glory.

**1 Corinthians 1:27-29**

<sup>27</sup> But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

<sup>28</sup> And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

<sup>29</sup> That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Let us notice some of the people whom God used to do great things.

**John 6:5-9**

<sup>5</sup> When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

<sup>6</sup> And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

<sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

<sup>8</sup> One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

<sup>9</sup> There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

We do not know this lad, but he was used by God to bring about a miracle.

### Acts 9:24-25

<sup>24</sup> But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

<sup>25</sup> Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.

We do not know who these men were that rescued Paul, but they played an important part in God's plan.

### 2 Kings 5:1-3

Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.

<sup>2</sup> And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife.

<sup>3</sup> And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.

We know nothing about this little maid, but she made a great difference when she spoke up.

### Conclusion:

These individuals were ordinary people who were not afraid to do what was needed when there was a need. This is what God wants to do with us today. He just desires for us to do what is needed when there is a need.