

"Esther's Opportunity"

Esther 4

Introduction: Last week in our study of Esther we closed in the middle of a conversation between Esther and Mordecai. They were not talking face to face but instead their messages were being carried back and forth by Hatach one of the king's chamberlains. When Mordecai heard of the decree that was issued by the king as presented by Haman, that all the Jews were to be killed on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, it was then that Mordecai dressed in sackcloth and ashes, and he came before the king's gate.

Notice Esther 4:1-2

When Esther heard this, she was deeply grieved and she sent him a change of clothing, but Mordecai refused the clothing.

Notice Esther 4:3-4

When word came back to Esther that Mordecai refused the new garments, she then summoned Hatach to go to Mordecai to discover what had put him in such a state of grief. Living in the palace she was isolated from what went on in the city and she was unaware of the death sentence on the Jews.

Notice Esther 4:5-8a

Mordecai sent word and a copy of the of the decree with Hatach to deliver to Esther.

This is where we stopped last week. I want to remind us again that Hatach plays a very important part in this story. We know very little about him. But he is used by God in a great way to carry the messages back and forth. The application here is that we do not need to be wealthy, highly educated, or someone who holds a top position in society to make a difference and be used by God. All we need to be is available and willing to serve.

This now brings us to where we are in our study tonight.

Esther's Testing

Notice Esther 4:8

Mordecai sends not only the news of the decree back to Esther, but he also exhorts her to go into the king and make a request for her people. Here we see that Mordecai makes it known to Hatach that Esther is a Jew.

Notice Esther 4:9-11

When Esther received word, she put forth an objection to Mordecai. For her to go to the king without being called could cause her to lose her life. She knew what the king was like. She knew of his past reputation of murder. She also knew what happened to Vashti. To ask her to go into the presence of the king was a request that brought great concern to her.

This practice which Esther spoke of was designed to protect the king from would be assassins. The king would only extend the golden scepter to those he knew who or those who were invited.

Application:

Esther was guilty of something that many Christians are guilty of. This is seen in Proverbs.

Proverbs 29:25

²⁵ The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

Esther was allowing the fear of man to keep her from doing what was right. This fear has kept many believers from serving the Lord. Let us notice the Words of our Lord concerning fear:

Matthew 10:27-28

²⁷ What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.

²⁸ And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

We need to keep in mind the Words which God gave to Joshua after the death of Moses:

Joshua 1:5-8

⁵ There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

⁶ Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them.

⁷ Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper withersoever thou goest.

⁸ *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

When God places us in a position to serve Him let us remember that we do not need to fear man because the fear of man brings a snare.

Notice Esther 4:12-14

Here are the popular verses from this letter. As we examine them, we shall see that there is much to learn from what is recorded here. We shall not uncover anything new, and neither will we exhaust what is here.

As Mordecai responds to Esther, he reminds her that she also shall fall under the death sentence.

Application:

We do not fully know what Esther was thinking at this time but there is something that comes to my mind that needs to be said. It makes no difference where we live, how much money we have, nor what connections we have in this life, there are two things that are sure:

1. We are going to die.
2. We will have problems in life.

Jobs puts both of these Truths forward in 5 verses.

Job 14:1-5

Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.

² *He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*

³ *And doth thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?*

⁴ *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.*

⁵ *Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;*

Notice Esther 4:14 again.

In this verse we see several points:

1. Mordecai had faith in God's covenant promises.

Mordecai told Esther that relief and deliverance **WOULD** come from another place if she refused to do her part. Mordecai knew that God would not permit this death sentence to be carried out, but instead God would be true to His promises. We cannot be sure of the exact promises that Mordecai was thinking of, but we can know that there are several that he would have been aware of.

Genesis 12:1-3

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

² And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

³ And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Genesis 13:14-16

¹⁴ And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

¹⁵ For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

¹⁶ And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

Jeremiah 31:35-37

³⁵ Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name:

³⁶ If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

³⁷ Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

Mordecai expressed his sorrow in sackcloth and ashes but deep down on the inside he knew about the faithfulness of God based upon his Word.

Application:

This helps us to see again the importance of knowing God and His Word.

Hebrews 11:1

Now *faith is the substance of things hoped for*, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith in God's Word, His Person, and His faithfulness is the solid foundation we need for when our world gets turned upside down.

Notice Esther 4:14 again.

2. Esther had an opportunity to be used by God right where He had placed her.

Esther stood at a crossroads. She could step forward and trust the Lord or she could shy away from the opportunity. Let us consider two thoughts from this:

a. If she shied away the opportunity God would raise up someone else.

Let us understand that God places opportunities before us and if we refuse to walk by faith there may come a time when the Lord will set us aside and He will raise someone else up to serve in our place. God's work will go on and we must understand that He does not need us to fulfill His plan, but He gives us opportunities to serve Him and to be used by Him. He gives us the opportunity to be part of His plan just as Hatach. There is no greater privilege entrusted to us. Whether we have an opportunity to teach, preach, or clean the floors, each opportunity is for the Lord, and each is a great privilege.

b. Esther needed to serve God right where He placed her.

Esther could have most likely thought of helping her fellow Jews in a less stressful way, but God had raised her up for that which was before her. She did not need to look for another place to serve. She was to serve Him right where she was at.

Application:

There is a great lesson for us in all of this. We too are to serve the Lord right where He has placed us. We do not need to be looking outside of where we are. God has placed us where we are to serve Him right where we are at.

Notice the words of Spurgeon:

"If you are sitting at the King's gate there is something for you to do there, and if you were on the queen's throne, there would be something for you to do there; do not ask to be either gate-keeper or queen, but whichever you are, serve God therein. Are you rich? God has made you a steward, take care that you are a good steward. Are you poor? God has thrown you into a position where you will be the better able to give a word of sympathy to poor saints. Are you doing your allotted work? Do you live in a godly family? God has a motive for placing you in so happy a position. Are you in an ungodly house? You are a lamp hung up in a dark place; might you shine there.

Esther did well, because she acted as an Esther should, and Mordecai did well, because he acted as Mordecai should. I like to think God has put each one in the right place, even as a good captain well arranges the different parts of his army, and though we do not know his plan of battle, it will be seen during the conflict that he has placed each soldier where he should be. Our wisdom is not to desire another place, nor to judge those who are in another position, but each one being redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus, should say, "Lord, what would thou have me to do, for here I am, and by Thy grace I am ready to do it." Forget not then the fact that God in His providence places His servants in positions where He can make use of them."

Conclusion:

Mordecai said to Esther, **"Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"** Esther was not the queen by chance. She had been placed there by God for the situation at hand. In the same way we too are not here by chance. We live in the day we do because God has a purpose for us being here. I can assure you that we are not here to just cruise through life and live to satisfy our own desires. God places us in strategic places to glorify Him as we surrender our lives to Him.

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.