

WEDNESDAY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Christ Church, Crouch End Hill

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No: 37

ESTHER CHAPTERS 3 & 4

Introduction

Life and pain walk hand in hand. You hardly can have one without the other. Pain is a fact of life in this fallen world. Our goal is not to get away from the pain of life, but to endure through it, to triumph over it while learning the lessons only pain can teach us.

So what's going on here? Mordecai is the one who saved the king's life and he is the one who told Esther, who then told the king. But look at who is being promoted. Life is not only painful, it can also be unfair!

Read Esther 3: 1-11

- What is the conflict between Haman and Mordecai which causes Haman's intense reaction to Mordecai (vv. 2-6)?

- How does Haman persuade the king to adopt his plan to destroy the Jews (vv.8-9)?

- Take another look at that bit of genealogy mentioned in verse 1: "Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite" (cf 1 Samuel 15, especially vv.32-34). Do you recognise any link between Haman and the Jews generally?

Comment

This is a good time to mention that no one is born with grudges. Prejudice is not a package deal that comes with birth. It's something we learn; we're not born hating. We must be taught to hate. Do you have someone's face on your dart board? Folks like a former spouse, former pastor, a former roommate, a church that offended you, an organization that took unfair advantage of you, someone you revered and trusted who used you and/or abused you? Do you have someone who has made life difficult for you and has never "made it right"? This nursing of anger, this lingering grudge, this refusal to forgive festers and grows. God is speaking to you. Don't go the way of Haman.

Read Esther 3: 12-15.

- Describe the orders contained in the king's edict (v.13).

Introduction to Chapter 4

God places us in situations where He wants to use us, and in those situations we will be faced with the choice of doing what God calls us to do or doing what is against God. We may never face life or death circumstances, but doing what is right includes little things: giving back extra change when a cashier makes a mistake or revealing your identity as a Christian in an environment where such disclosure may attract ridicule.

Read Chapter 4

- Describe the response of Mordecai and the Jews to Haman's plot (vv. 1-3).

- What effect has the suffering on the Jewish people?

- How would you describe Esther's response in vv 10, 11?

- Think back to the situation God called you to in which obeying meant facing great risks. What was your first reaction, and what were your feelings when God called you?

- How do Mordecai's arguments in verses 12-14 persuade Esther to go to the King?

- In this chapter, how do we see God's sovereignty and people's responses working together?

- What character qualities does Esther show in her response to Mordecai's second message?

- Think of a present context in which God has placed you to do his will. What risks do you face in doing the right thing in this context. What character qualities must you exhibit in order to do the right thing.
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Conclusion

What does it matter if I get involved or not in God's redemption? Numerous needs and issues surround us. While we will not be able to respond to all of them, the solution is not to respond to any of them!

Only when we move from the safe harbour of theory to the risky world of reality do we actually make a difference. History is full of accounts of single individuals who have made a difference. If no one joins you will you still follow Jesus?

Consider this statement that conveys the importance of one vote;

- In 1645, one vote gave Oliver Cromwell control of England;
- In 1649, one vote caused Charles 1 of England to be executed;
- In 1776, one vote gave America the English language instead of German;
- In 1845, one vote brought Texas into the Union;
- In 1875, one vote changed France from a monarchy to a republic;
- In 1923, one vote gave Adolph Hitler control of the Nazi party.

Read 2 Chronicles 16:9, Isaiah 59: 15-16; Jeremiah 5:1 to see the importance of one.