

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 1ST - 2ND, 2022 // BOOK OF ESTHER

JUSTICE & IRONY (ESTHER 7)

WHAT GOES AROUND...

After all of Haman's scheming to get Mordecai and the Jews killed, he now finds himself in a banquet with Esther, who had a divine plan to save her people.

- Xerxes tells Esther that she can have "whatever you seek," and this now opens the door for the deliverance of the Jews.

A VERY SMART APPROACH

She answers the king, "spare my life..." which sets up the real request, "...and spare my people." In this moment, she was banking on God's provision because identifying herself as a Jew could've gotten her killed.

- **We must live in a balance of obedience, dependency, wisdom, and taking action.**

"WHO WOULD DEVISE SUCH A SCHEME?"

Esther said if the Jews had just been threatened to be slaves, she could have handled it, but they faced extinction. After hearing this, Xerxes was outraged (as he had a reputation for) and asked for answers.

- In a dramatic turn of events, Esther replies, "this evil Haman."

"HAMAN STOOD TERRIFIED"

After being exposed, Haman knew his fate. So, after Xerxes stormed off in anger, this violent and arrogant man begged a young Jewish girl for his life.

- In another twist of irony, when Xerxes came back into the room, it looked like Haman was sexually violating Esther.

TYING YOUR OWN NOOSE

One of the king's eunuchs told him that Haman had built a 75 ft tall gallows for Mordecai. This would now be used to hang Haman.

- We don't believe in karma, but we do believe that **we reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7)**. We also believe that **God's justice will always prevail, even if it's in the afterlife.**

A REVERSAL (ESTHER 8:1-8)

"THAT SAME DAY..."

After Haman's execution, Xerxes gives Esther his estate and Mordecai his signet ring. Esther then made Mordecai the estate manager. The problem is Xerxes never addressed the real issue.

- **It's tempting to mask the deeper issue with a quick fix, but if we don't get to the root, it will resurface.**

THE VILLAIN IS GONE, BUT THE PROBLEM REMAINS

Esther eventually lets her emotions show by weeping and begging her husband to spare the Jews. Though her emotions open up, she still knows the game.

- She said, "If it pleases the king...and I am still pleasing in his eyes." This is a direct reference to her beauty and his attraction.

"SHREWD AS SERPENTS, INNOCENT AS DOVES"

In Matthew 10, Jesus commissions the disciples to "go out like sheep among wolves." If they are to succeed in living out His will and sharing the truth of God, they would also have to be **repentant of sin and possessing sharp powers of judgment and wisdom.**

"WHATEVER PLEASES YOU"

Because of Esther's humility, dependence on God, and wisdom, God continued to show her favor. Xerxes grants her request and lets them write an irrevocable edict that will save their people.

- **If we will humbly follow God and His Word, we will see miraculous provision.**

RIGHT TO PROTECT (ESTHER 8:9-14)

MORDECAI IN A POSITION OF POWER

Not only was Mordecai allowed to craft an edict, but he was given staff to copy and distribute the letter to the empire.

- This part of chapter 8 almost mirrors chapter 3 when Haman wrote the first edict. Notice one difference: Mordecai had "mounted couriers" who could deliver the news much faster.

THE RIGHT TO ASSEMBLE AND PROTECT

This edict didn't stop attacks on Jews, but it gave them the right to defend themselves. However, there were still restrictions to their right to arm themselves.

- The Jews were not to initiate violence or participate in hostile situations. This was simply the right to defend themselves.

WE MUST TREAD LIGHTLY ON THIS

There is **a balance that must be struck between defending ourselves and trusting in the protection of God.**

- Persecution and random violence are two different things. We're to anticipate persecution, but we're free to protect ourselves and others from violence.

MULTIPLICATION (ESTHER 8:15-17)

THINGS HAD DRAMATICALLY CHANGED

These verses summarize the crazy reversal of situation after Haman's death. Mordecai was mourning the possible death of his people, but now his people were safe, and he was honored.

- His blue and white outfit showed his new position with the royal family. His crown and purple linen showed his promotion.

SUSA CELEBRATED

The celebration in Susa after Mordecai's edict contrasts the utter confusion after Haman's edict.

Confusion is always attached to evil.

- **God is not the author of confusion; He brings clarity and peace. As Christians, we are to be catalysts for clarity and peace, not chaos.**

JOY ALSO TOOK PLACE

Though Esther, Mordecai, and the Jews went through a time of fear, questions, and sadness, they remained faithful to God. Because of their perseverance, they had "gladness and joy."

- **God doesn't promise us ease in life, but He promises contentment regardless of what life brings if we will trust in Him.**

MANY PEOPLE BECAME JEWS

The provision of God was so obvious throughout this story ("fear of the Jews had overcome them"), many people became followers of the true God.

- **When we live in a relationship with God, people will see His power work through us. This is most often the initial step in non-believers becoming Christians.**

WE WILL REAP WHAT WE SOW

- Galatians 6:8 says, "the one who sows to their flesh will reap destruction." This simply means that **our choices have consequences.**
- Christians do not, and should not want to, subscribe to karma because **we have no ability to tilt the scale in our favor.** Only Jesus could do that.
- This can also be positive. **If we invest in the things of God, we reap the things of God in ways we couldn't have imagined** (Ephesians 3:20).
- Prioritizing prayer, reading the Bible, and church community are so important! This will also change how we live, which will yield more of the things of God.

TRUSTING IN GOD'S PROVISION

- We are called to be "**shrewd as serpents, but innocent as doves.**" **If we will distance ourselves from sin and pray for the gift of wisdom, God will provide what we need when we need it.**
- Part of trusting in God is doing our part to be obedient and faithful.

"BECAUSE FEAR" (ESTHER 9:17)

- Proverbs 9:10 says, "**the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.**" This means **we must understand that God is all-powerful and all-knowing, and we are destined for chaos and self-destruction if we don't choose to humble ourselves and follow His lead.**

SEEING THE KINGDOM GROW

- If we will follow Christ and live in the teachings and principles of the Word, others will be positively affected.
- It is a culmination of **our example, our testimony, and the power of Jesus working through us that will overcome evil and set people free** (Revelation 12:11).