

Safe Harbor Baptist Church

11-27-2022 Sunday School

Pastor Josh Montgomery

Esther Sermon 4 "The God who works behind the scenes"

"The Choice of Esther"

Esther 1- The Character of Vashti.

Esther 2- The Choosing of Esther.

Esther 3- The Commitment of Mordecai

Esther 4

Vs 1-2 When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry;

2 And came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

We are reminded of the context of the Vs 1-2 by referring back to Esther 3.

Hamman, (the enemy of the Jews) has just convinced the King to place a death sentence on all the Jews. Including Men, Women, and children.

One writer made this statement about Haman.

Haman was the enemy of the Jew, and he is a type of the Anti-christ.

- 1. Appointed to his office. (The man of sin will take control peacefully)*
- 2. Authority was from the king. (The Anti-christ will be given power from the king of Hell, Satan Rev 13:2,4)*
- 3. Attempts to exterminate the Jews. (The Anti-christ in the middle of the tribulation period will persecute the Jews)*
- 4. Adoration was commanded. (The Anti-christ will compel worship and reverence of himself)*
- 5. The Addition of his name- Haman the Wicked= 666 (Rev 13:18)*

6. *The Annihilation of God's enemies. (The Anti-christ, like Haman will be destroyed. The Jews have attended the funerals of every enemy that tried to exterminate them. Haman was no exception.* Rod Mattoon

Now it is easy for us to read the book of Esther knowing how the story ends, but these Jews in our text they have not read this book, they are living this book!

The time for this execution one be in one year from the date of the announcement.

As we approach Vs 1-2 Mordecai (Esther's cousin) has heard of this terrible plot, and he expresses his pain and agony in a public fashion in 4 distinct ways.

1. He rent his clothes.

This literally means to "tear away"

2. He put on sackcloth.

Sackcloth was a very coarse, black material which caused chaffing when it came in direct contact with the skin.

3. He placed ashes on his head.

This was a symbol of humility and acknowledged that we all come from the dust of the earth.

4. He went into the midst of the city and began to cry out with what the Bible calls a "bitter cry".

The word "bitter" gives the idea of great sorrow, great pain, and even one definition suggested great anger.

He went out in the midst of the city in this manner. He wanted everyone to know how much he was bothered and how much he disapproved of the decree.

What is interesting about Mordecai is he has already stood with boldness against Haman in Esther 3. But now we find him sorrowing with brokenness against Haman in Esther 4. Both were quite effective!!

He did not stop at the city but he even came to the King's gate, just outside the palace and expressed his sorrow.

Point: I believe it would be good for the people of God to show great sorrow and disapproval when we consider the condition of our country and even our churches.

Mordecai was upset, he was not happy with what was going on in the land!

Sadly we have learned how to “adapt” to the world’s condition, and adapting leadings to “accepting” and accepting leads to alignment.

Vs 3- *And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.*

This sorrowful spirit and disapproval was not only something that Mordecai expressed but also the Jews expressed their sorrow.

One author stated that there were some fifteen million Jews in the Persian empire during this time.

They did all the things that Mordecai did as pertaining to Vs 2 but Vs 3 tells us that these Jews began to “fast”.

Of course we know that this “fasting” refers to the Jews crying out before God over this matter!

I know that these people were away from the LORD, but I believe that God heard their prayer!

Psalm 66:18

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

This verse is often used to say that if you have any sin in your life, that God will not hear you when you pray.

But this is not what the verse states!

The word “regard” means to look at, see, regard, look after, see after.

One man stated that the word pictured a “rear guard” meaning that you have something in your heart that the Spirit of God has convicted you about, but you will not repent of that sin. And you go as far to “protect” that sin. To guard your sin!

These people were conscious of the fact that they needed the help of God in this matter.

I'm glad we can call out to the LORD when we are in trouble!

Psalm 18:6 In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.

I believe these captives remember that they could pray to the LORD in their distress!

I Kings 8:46-50 If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near;

47 Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;

48 And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name:

49 Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause,

50 And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them:

II Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

God is a God of Judgement and correction, there is no doubt about that!

But he is also a God who delights in mercy!

Micah 7:18

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

Vs 4- *So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received it not.*

The servants of Esther inform the Queen of Mordecai standing before the king's gate in sackcloth and ashes, weeping and wailing and this caused Esther to become grieved in her spirit.

Grieved- to be distressed.

In an attempt to console Mordecai, she sent him a change of raiment.

It was customary for the Persians to give a new change of clothes to a loved one who was mourning. (Perhaps Esther thought that Mordecai was mourning over the death of someone?)

Mordecai refuses the raiment, because what he is troubled about cannot be soothed or fixed by a change of attire!

Point: Many people are trying to repair inward issues, with outward means!

Vs 5-6 *Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it was, and why it was.*

6 So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which was before the king's gate.

In these verses we find that Esther sends one of her servants to Mordecai to find out the details of why Mordecai was so distraught.

Some have speculated that this is the reason why Mordecai came to the gate of the king in such a fashion for the purpose of getting Esther's attention to inform her about Haman's plot.

This very well could be the case because Mordecai knew that this situation was beyond him and he needed someone with higher authority!

Vs 6-7 *And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them.*

8 Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people.

In Vs 7-8 Mordecai tells the servant of Esther of all the plans that Hamman has devised and how he is going to financially make this happen.

The Ryrie study Bible states that this ten thousand talents of silver that Haman offered the king to pay those who were responsible for the task was around 12 million ounces of silver. At the writing of the study Bible he did his estimates at \$30 per ounce which would total to Three hundred and sixty million dollars.

Haman hated the Jews and wanted them gone!!

The purpose of this was not only to *inform* Esther about the matter but also to *involve* Esther in the matter!

Mordecai knew that Esther was only person that could get to the king and intercede on behalf of the people.

We also must note the final 2 words in Vs 8 *“her people”*

If the Hatach did not know that Esther was a Jew, he knew now!

Why did Mordecai reveal Esther’s identity?

I believe to remind her who she was. Not that she had forgotten that she was a Jew but rather to bring her back to perspective that she may be at home in Persia, but Persia was not her home!

Point: If we are not careful we will get adjusted to this world, and forget that we do not belong!

Vs 9-11 *And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.*

10 Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai;

11 All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or women, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

Hatach comes and relays the information to Esther in Vs 9 and Esther quickly responds using Hatach as a “go between”.

In Vs 11 Esther states that she can do nothing about this circumstance because she could not just go before the king anytime she pleased, but in this culture she had to be called upon.

Going before the king without being requested was punishable by death!

Esther also states that the king has not called for her in 30 days.

In other words she is seeing no “earthly” way for this to work!

“When you can see an earthly way, look for a heavenly way!”- Evangelist Brian McBride.

Vs 12-14 -*And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.*

13 Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

Mordecai is reminding Esther in this verse of a few things.

First he reminds her that just because she is the Queen does not mean that she will be exempt from the execution of the Jews. We have already seen what the king did to the last Queen.

Second, he informs her that if she does not do something to assist in delivering God's people, that God will bring deliverance from another place.

To me this is a great statement of faith on Mordecai's part.

He knew that somehow, someday God would bring deliverance to the Jew. He knew that God would indeed preserve the Nation of Israel.

But he also knew that did not mean that he and Esther would survive.

Point: If you don't want to do something for God, he will find someone that will and you will miss the blessing!

Thirdly, He reminds her of the plan of God for her life!

He says: "The only reason you may have become Queen, was for this occasion"

God did this in the life of Joseph:

Genesis 50:20 *But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*

Mordecai was exactly correct in this statement!!

I believe that Mordecai is beginning to see the hand of God working behind the scenes!!

Vs 15-17 *Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer,*

16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

17 So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

We are not sure exactly which of Mordecai statements that caused Esther to change her mind, but we do know that something changed!

She is no longer shy and timid, but she exhibits great faith in these verses!

She proclaims for their to be a fast among the Jews and that she and her maidens would fast (it would appear that Esther had a Godly influence on these maidens because they are fasting with her).

She also states that she will go before the king to plead the cause of the Jew, and notice her Faith *"If I perish, I perish"*.

Esther realized the big picture, to many of us are focused on the selfie!

As the chapter concludes, Mordecai goes and obeys the word of Esther.

Practical Lessons from Esther 4

1. It should bother us, if it does not bother us!

Vs 1-4

Mordecai was burdened for his people!

Lamentations 1:12 *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.*

2. We have an Intercessor.

Vs 5-8

Mordecai has a great problem, but he cannot go before the King. But he is related to someone who has the ability to go on his behalf!

3. There is a bigger picture.

Vs 9-14

Mordecai instructs and informs Esther of the fact that this situation was bigger than her, but there were other lives at stake!

4. Do it what is right!

Vs 15-17

Esther choose to do right, even when it was dangerous and difficult!