



COMPROMISE OR COURAGE?

(Esther 2 & 3)

Most Christians tend to think of Esther and Mordecai as rock solid examples of what it means to faithfully follow God. They were spiritually strong all the time, right? They were constantly consistent in their Biblical beliefs, right? You could always count on them to fill in “the gap” for God, right? After all, 2500 years ago, the Lord used them to save the Jewish nation from extinction by crazy King Xerxes. I’d vote to carve their faces on the Hebrew Mount Rushmore! These two took a courageous stand when it truly mattered. **But, not before they didn’t.** Actually, when they first had their opportunities to stand for God, they totally “chickened out.” Their faith in the One true God collapsed because it was compromised. They chose to hide that they were members of God’s chosen people, to “blend in” with the crowd, to shrink away from God, and to cover over their faith. However, and this is so cool to see, while they gave up on God, He did not give up on them. He helped them rediscover their faith and fulfill the spiritual destiny He had created them to achieve. And here’s what you have to know: This is how God works with us. You see, our faith walk with Jesus often falters. Our faithfulness to Christ is often flawed. However, **2 Timothy 2:13** gives us some great news ... **“Even if we are faithless to Him, He remains faithful to us.”** Listen: Every Christian struggles with spiritual **compromise**. All of us have found it easier “to cave” in terms of our faith than to stand up in the raw **courage** of our faith. But the truth is, the cost of compromising our faith is too great to bear. The blessings of courageously following Jesus by faith are too great to pass up!

THE COMPROMISED COUSINS

(2:1-7)

THE TRUTH ABOUT COMPROMISE

(2:8-19)

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

(2:20-23)

THE FIRST FLICKER OF FAITH

(3:1-4)

THE NEED FOR COURAGEOUS FAITH

(3:5-15)

TODAY’S GUARANTEES

1. Whether you are compromised or courageous ...
2. When you live a compromised faith ...
3. When in faith you step up ...

FOR THOUGHT & TALK

In your small group take 5-10 minutes to review the main points of Pastor John’s message. Discuss the following questions, taking your time as the Spirit leads, realizing you don’t have to cover them all.

1. Regarding the Jews, **Deuteronomy 7:6** says, *Israel, you are the Lord’s chosen people. Out of all the nations on earth, the Lord God chose you to be His special ones!* In what ways did God view the Jews as being special? Now read aloud ... **1 Peter 2:9** - *You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.* Obviously, the Lord considers Christians today to be special as well. How are we, the Church, special to God and special for God? Why does it take a courageous faith to be the special people God has called us to be?
2. Someone once said, **“Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.”** Put that into your own words and explain what that means. What are some of the ways the world, Satan, or our own flesh tries to get us to compromise our faith? Where have you personally struggled with compromising spiritually? Do you agree that compromise can sometimes yield some profitable results for us in the short term? What regrets do you feel over those times your faith was compromised?
3. What does **Galatians 6:1-2** and **Romans 15:14** say to us about helping one another when we are living compromised lives? Who are some of the people who have helped you to not compromise your faith? What did they do to help you? How can we go about building courageous faith in ourselves and encouraging it in others?
4. Though God is never once mentioned in **Esther 2 & 3**, it is so apparent that He is working behind-the-scenes, on behalf of Esther, Mordecai, and the Jewish people. What are some of the ways you can see that from these chapters? In terms of your own life, what ways have you recently experienced God working, behind-the-scenes, on your behalf? How does it make you feel to know He is working for us? Why does it make sense to cooperate with what He is doing rather than compromise? What does the name **Abihail** mean and why should it be important to you?