

For Such a Time As This – Great Women of Faith

Esther 4; Hebrews 12:1-3

Intro – We are officially in Women’s Herstory Month in the midst of Lent and this year we are bringing together the Lenten season with a focus on Women’s Herstory Month. As we use this season to discern what we are called to individually and collectively we start our reflection leaning into the story of Esther who gives us our theme for this month – For Such a Time As This

Exegesis

Story of Esther –

- King Ahaseures/ Xerxes is a hot mess, but he elevates Esther because of her beauty
- She ends up in a place of privilege, but has to keep her ethnic background on the DL
- Haman is the Xerxes’ boy and investor and he hates the Jews and wants to kill them
- Mordechai finds this out and tears off clothes and sends message to Esther → You have to do something because God will figure it out, but you have to decide your role
- She sends a message to everyone join me in fasting for 3 days!!!

Lent Explanation –

- Comes from the English word Lenten meaning “spring season” connected to old festivals of preparation for spring and particularly agricultural practices of seed planting as the days became longer.
- There is a number of touch stones that anchor the time
 - Start with Ash Wednesday and a remembrance of our mortality and connection to the dirt/ash
 - 40-day period of fasting (lots of different counting methods) – This is due to Jesus’ time of 40 days of fasting before his public ministry; but also Moses and as we see Esther
 - Closes with Holy Week when Jesus has to go big or go down – he does both. Thank God for the bounce back!

Points for Reflection

1. Lent is about hearing from God - To follow God’s plan you have to be communication with the mastermind.

Esther needs God’s words and commands to be bigger in her mind than the rules and customs of the palace.

2. Lent is about Letting Go - To achieve your calling you have to let go of things that divide your attention/distract, that entice you to worship other people or things, or that keep you comfortable or away from your growth. Sin is not about a list of dos and don’ts. It is about anything that disconnects you from God. We will talk about this in more depth.

There is a danger that her privilege will cloud her judgement, so she has to let it go.

3. Lent is about Preparing for Bold Action – This is not spiritual growth for spiritual growth’s sake but in preparation to do God’s work in the world!

Esther decided to go big or go down. She was taking on the salvation of her people not just being more pious. When you are going up against tough odds you really need to get ready. If you truly reflect on the life of Jesus, then bold action is the only appropriate response.

Inviting folks into the disciplines not so you can just say you did it, but so that you can emerge on the other side ready to go big. In your small groups you are taking o

Reflections Questions

1. Are you ready to go big or are you trying to live a content comfortable spiritually safe life? How can you embrace a go big mindset in this Lenten season?
2. What are the things that are distracting you from your purpose, causing you to put other things before God or keeping you in your comfort zone? How are you using your fasting practice to eradicate or replace those things?
3. What area of action is God nudging you toward? Greater ministry? Changes at work? Leaning into some focused healing work? Social justice work? Where do you feel the Spirit nudging you?