



## **ESTHER** (Week 3) - Bravery in Action

*I pray that our love may abound even more and grow us in knowledge and every kind of insight into Your Word so that we can know what is best and be sincere and blameless for the day of Christ. We thank you for the gift of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ and pray that all we do will be to His glory as we pray in His name. Amen. (Philippians 1:9-11)*

- **The proposal**

**So far in our study in the book of Esther, we have looked at bravery in circumstances — and we found that the only way to be brave in circumstances is to have brave**

**convictions. (Convictions are beliefs that have taken root. They go so deep that they shape your identity, your mission, your security and your hopes.)**

*A man really believes not what he recites in his creed, but only the things he is ready to die for.*

**Wurmbrand, Richard. Tortured for Christ (p. 89). Living Sacrifice Book Company. Kindle Edition.**

**Now, today we discover that brave convictions lead to brave actions.**

**So, let's pick up where we left off last Sunday.**

## **Esther 3**

8 Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus (hash-sue-wear-us), "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom. Their laws are different from those of every other people, and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not to the king's profit to tolerate them. 9 If it please the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed,

**The above statement is a mixture of lies and truth, which is the most difficult kind of statement to refute.**

**First, the Jews were scattered aboard (that is true), but he doesn't identify them as Jews.**

**Second, "their laws are different" — there is nothing in the Bible (the Torah) that prohibits Jews from obeying state laws. This is a half-truth.**

**Third, "they do not keep the king's laws." This is an outright lie. He makes it sound like there is continual conflict between the Torah and the state laws. He only has one example of this — Mordecai.**

9 If it please the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed,

**Haman wants to destroy an entire people group. Now, to a lot of modern people before World War II, this was unthinkable. This account in Esther would have caused them to doubt the Bible, because it was beyond their experience that people did such things.**

**It was even unthinkable to some during World War II who were slow to believe the reports of the death camps. But after the holocaust, it is historical reality to us. Still, many thought it an aberration of the human race (a departure from what is normal). Then we had the**

**Rwandan genocide. These are only two well-known genocides. There are others.**

**What is often overlooked is that this is still going on today — a spiritual war against people in general, and Christians in particular — a spiritual war that manifests itself in the physical abuse and sometimes murder of Christians around the world.**

*When Christians in free countries win a soul for Christ, the new believer may become a member of a quietly living church. But when those in captive nations win someone, we know that he may have to go to prison and that his children may become orphans. The joy of having brought someone to Christ is always mixed with this feeling that there is a price that must be paid.*

**Wurmbrand, Richard. Tortured for Christ (p. 26). Living Sacrifice Book Company. Kindle Edition.**

*At the age of eleven, Mihai began to earn his living as a regular worker. Suffering had produced a wavering in his faith. But after two years of Sabina's imprisonment he was allowed*

*to see her. He went to the Communist prison and saw his mother behind iron bars. She was dirty, thin, with calloused hands, wearing the shabby uniform of a prisoner. He scarcely recognized her. Her first words were, "Mihai, believe in Jesus!" The guards, in a savage rage, pulled her away from Mihai and took her out. Mihai wept seeing his mother dragged away. This minute was the minute of his conversion. He knew that if Christ can be loved under such circumstances, He surely is the true Savior. He said afterward, "If Christianity had no other arguments in its favor than the fact that my mother believes in it, this is enough for me." That was the day he fully accepted Christ.*

**Wurmbrand, Richard. Tortured for Christ (p. 64). Living Sacrifice Book Company. Kindle Edition.**

**Now, in this account, we have someone else who wants to do away with God's people.**

9 If it please the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed,

**"If you tolerate these people with this different worldview you will only be giving their worldview credibility and in doing so you will**

**be undermining our way of life, because how they see the world is directly opposed to how we see the world.”**

- **They don't believe all religions are equal.**
- **They believe Jesus is the Truth.**
- **They believe His authority is greater than any authority in the universe.**
- **They believe the Bible is the truth about the Truth.**
- **And they believe that God has clearly revealed this truth to humanity so that we are without excuse.**

**So, Haman has a plan.**

and I will pay 10,000 talents of silver into the hands of those who have charge of the king's business, that they may put it into the king's treasuries.” 10 So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. 11 And the king said to Haman, “The money is given to you, the people also, to do with them as it seems good to you.”

**The enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy.**

**Even though God is not mentioned, nor Satan, nor angels or demons or principalities or powers in the spiritual realm, this attack against God's people is complete and total spiritual warfare.**

**Don't think this spiritual war is only against Christians. The enemy wants to steal, kill and destroy every and any human life.**

12 Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict, according to all that Haman commanded, was written to the king's satraps and to the governors over all the provinces and to the officials of all the peoples, to every province in its own script and every people in its own language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring. 13 Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with instruction to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews,

## **John 10:10**

**10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.**

**Manifestations of spiritual death vs. spiritual life:**

- **spiritual blindness, apathy, coldness vs. understanding, care, passion**

- **oppression vs. justice**
- **possession vs. freedom**
- **death, especially when you see humans rejoicing in someone's death vs. life**
- **life stolen away vs. life given away**
- **time stolen away vs. replacing the years that have been lost**
- **meaninglessness vs. meaning**
- **destruction of life, of relationships, of marriages, etc. vs. blessing of life, relationships and marriages**

**But look at how pervasive it is — no age, no race, no gender is immune to spiritual attack.**

young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.

**This is probably where he's going to get the money he promised the king, from plundering all the Jews he plans on putting to death.**

**But what is interesting here is — and it is no small coincidence — that the day they chose to put all the Jews to death is the day the Jews celebrate Passover,**

**commemorating the day that God saved the Jews out of the hand of the Egyptians who wanted them put to death also.**

**This is a sign of God's grace in the situation.**

14 A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation to all the peoples to be ready for that day. 15 The couriers went out hurriedly by order of the king, and the decree was issued in Susa the citadel. And the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.

**Talk about not having your finger on the pulse of the people or whistling while Rome burned. They sat down to drink while everyone else was in confusion. The enemy used the egos of these men and blinded their leadership. They did not care because life was good for them.**

**We have a situation of life and death.**

## **Esther 4:1-17**

4 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and he cried out with a loud and bitter cry. 2 He went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one was allowed to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth.

**This was peaceful public protest (civil disobedience) and prayer.**

3 And in every province, wherever the king's command and his decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and many of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

**They faced a desperate situation. There was no program. There was no method. There was fasting and prayer.**

**What exactly does fasting do? It's not a trick. It's not a way to manipulate God.**

**Fasting:**

- Expresses sorrow for sin
- Shows dependence upon God
- It's a public contrast to the philosophy of "eat, drink and be merry."
- Reminds us that our normal state is not fullness, but hunger.
- Hunger pains can serve as reminders to pray.
- Creates space to pray.

**It is the same today. If we want to see God move, we need to fast and pray. If there is a reason that the church today is powerless, this is it. We are quick to enact programs, but there is little fasting and prayer for people (if any).**

**Why don't we fast and pray?**

**One possibility is that we are simply not distressed enough. We don't see the situation as desperate, because we are isolated from the grim realities of life. This was life and death.**

**Life is comfortable. Things are good.**

**If we fast and pray, it must first be for the burden that we lack. Do we know enough about the situation of the world? Do we know anything about the burden of others? Do we know anything about our own hearts? Do we believe people who die without knowing Christ go into a Christless eternity?**

4 When Esther's young women and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed. She sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth,

**She wants him to take off his sackcloth. "Don't burden me with your burden."**

but he would not accept them. 5 Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was.

**She didn't turn a blind eye. She inquired. She asked, "What is the situation?"**

6 Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, 7 and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. 8 Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and command her to go to the king to beg his favor and plead with him on behalf of her people.

**This is the story of the gospel. There is a death sentence upon us. Duped by the enemy of our souls, we believed his lies and willingly turned from a good and loving God putting ourselves under a death sentence. "The wages of sin is death." As rebels we cannot just waltz into the presence of the King of the universe. The gospel shows us there is a better mediator. The same way Esther was the mediator between a condemned people and the king, the Lord Jesus Christ is the mediator between a condemned humanity and the God who loves them. God sent His Son to intercede on our behalf, the One who died in our place, and removed the death sentence of our sin from our heads.**

**That's the first application. If you have not had this death sentence removed from your**

**head, call upon the name of the Lord. You will be saved.**

**But the second application is for Christians. In this account, we are like Esther. The people around us have a death sentence, but we have direct access to the king. We can beg and plead for their salvation. But we have to understand the situation. We have to believe. We have to have enough conviction to take action. But Esther shows us that we must take action with wisdom.**

9 And Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. 10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to go to Mordecai and say, 11 "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days."

**In other words, "he hasn't wanted to see me in over a month, so chances are he probably doesn't want to see me now. If I go to him there is a good chance I will die."**

12 And they told Mordecai what Esther had said. 13 Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. 14 For if you keep silent at this time, relief and

deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. **And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"**

**This is an amazing reply.**

**You have the opportunity to be used in a great way by God. Will you take that opportunity? If you don't, God will use someone else. And you will perish. You've shown your true heart. In truth, you speak about what you really believe. You never spoke to anyone about the gospel because you didn't really believe the gospel. I hope that's not the case with you.**

**Let's apply this to other circumstances.**

**There are two Christians in an office environment. One speaks his or her mind and the other is more tactful. The one who speaks his or her mind is gossiped about by the coworkers. The more tactful Christian believes they have more favor in the eyes of their coworkers. "Do not think to yourself that you will escape their scorn any more than the outspoken Christians in your office."**

**If you keep silent, deliverance will rise from another place. You have the great**

**opportunity to be used by God. You can have an influence upon people's lives. Who knows? Maybe you're the chosen vessel for just such influence at this particular time.**

15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, 16 "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day.

**Notice that Esther didn't just lunge out with a "we'll see what happens" mindset. She strategically sets prayer and fasting in motion.**

**Likewise, as Christians we mustn't think that just because an opportunity for the gospel arises that we can stumble in without thought, without considering the circumstances and the context. Cultural sensitivity shows wisdom.**

I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish."

**Now this is not a statement of fatalism. This is a statement of great faith in God, our unmentioned subject. When we take brave action, the results are in God's hands. But because we take the action based upon our trust in the Lord, He is glorified. So, whether she lives or whether she dies — God is glorified.**



17 Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

### **Bravery takes the lead... Bravery takes action.**

*The Communists convened a congress of all Christian bodies in our Parliament building. There were four thousand priests, pastors, and ministers of all denominations—and these men of God chose Joseph Stalin as honorary president of this congress. At the same time he was president of the World Movement of the Godless and a mass murderer of Christians. One after another, bishops and pastors arose and declared that communism and Christianity are fundamentally the same and could coexist. One minister after another said words of praise toward communism and assured the new government of the loyalty of the Church. My wife and I were present at this congress. Sabina told me, "Richard, stand up and wash away this shame from the face of Christ! They are spitting in His face." I said to her, "If I do so, you lose your husband." She replied, "I don't wish to have a coward as a husband." Then I arose and spoke to this congress, praising not the murderers of*

*Christians, but Jesus Christ, stating that our loyalty is due first to Him. The speeches at this congress were broadcast and the whole country could hear proclaimed from the rostrum of the Communist Parliament the message of Christ! Afterward I had to pay for this, but it was worthwhile.*

**Wurmbrand, Richard. Tortured for Christ (pp. 14-15). Living Sacrifice Book Company. Kindle Edition.**

## **Esther 5:1-14**

On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, in front of the king's quarters, while the king was sitting on his royal throne inside the throne room opposite the entrance to the palace. 2 And when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won favor in his sight, and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

**The story could have ended right here. Here is Esther putting her life on the line simply by approaching the King.**

3 And the king said to her, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom." 4 And Esther said, "If it please the king, let the king and Haman come today to a feast that I have prepared for the

king.” 5 Then the king said, “Bring Haman quickly, so that we may do as Esther has asked.” So the king and Haman came to the feast that Esther had prepared. 6 And as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king said to Esther, “What is your wish? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.” 7 Then Esther answered, “My wish and my request is: 8 If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my wish and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come to the feast that I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said.”

**Why two feasts instead of one? What was her strategy? Was she just scared? Did she want to butter the king up twice as much?**

9 And Haman went out that day joyful and glad of heart.

**This reminds me of a line from the movie *The Godfather*: “Keep your friends close and your enemies closer.” It doesn’t say that’s her strategy, but her hospitality is working.**

But when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he neither rose nor trembled before him, he was filled with wrath against Mordecai. 10 Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home,

**Maybe he restrained himself because he was in such a good mood.**

and he sent and brought his friends and his wife Zeresh. 11 And Haman recounted to them the splendor of his riches, the number of his sons, all the promotions with which the king had honored him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and the servants of the king. 12 Then Haman said, “Even Queen Esther let no one but me come with the king to the feast she prepared. And tomorrow also I am invited by her together with the king.

## **Proverbs 27:2**

Let another praise you, and not your own mouth;  
a stranger, and not your own lips.

## **2 Corinthians 10:18**

18 For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

## **Luke 6:26**

26 “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

13 Yet all this is worth nothing to me, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.”

**Haman did not care why he was being opposed, only that he was being opposed. The wise person listens to rebuke. The wise person inquires as to why someone opposes**

**him or his ideas. Haman is shown to be a fool in the classic sense of Proverbs.**

14 Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, “Let a gallows fifty cubits high be made, and in the morning tell the king to have Mordecai hanged upon it. Then go joyfully with the king to the feast.” This idea pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made.

**Haman also took action, but there was no bravery in the action he took.**

## **Esther 6:1-13**

6 On that night the king could not sleep.

**Here again, if we have an inkling of the Bible’s teaching on the sovereignty of God, we will understand this is not a coincidence. There is a reason the king could not sleep, because there is someone orchestrating the events of his life whether he knows it or not.**

## **Proverbs 21:1**

21 The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.

And he gave orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, the chronicles, and they were read before the king. 2 And it was found written how Mordecai had told about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold,

and who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. 3 And the king said, “What honor or distinction has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?” The king's young men who attended him said, “Nothing has been done for him.” 4 And the king said, “Who is in the court?” Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to speak to the king about having Mordecai hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for him. 5 And the king's young men told him, “Haman is there, standing in the court.” And the king said, “Let him come in.” 6 So Haman came in, and the king said to him, “What should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?” And Haman said to himself, “Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?” 7 And Haman said to the king, “For the man whom the king delights to honor, 8 let royal robes be brought, which the king has worn, and the horse that the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown is set. 9 And let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble officials. Let them dress the man whom the king delights to honor, and let them lead him on the horse through the square of the city, proclaiming before him: ‘Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.’” 10 Then the king said to Haman, “Hurry; take the robes and the horse, as you have said, and do so to Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Leave out nothing that you have mentioned.” 11 So Haman took the robes and the horse, and he dressed Mordecai and led him through the square of the city, proclaiming before him, “Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.”

12 Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered. 13 And Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, “If Mordecai, before whom you have begun

to fall, is of the Jewish people, you will not overcome him but will surely fall before him.”

**In other words, if you have to honor one of Jews whom you want exterminated in such a way, then you’re going to have a difficult time exterminating them.**

**Every action Haman took was to advance himself and his position.**

**Every action Esther took was for the sake of others. Not only that, but she could lose her life for taking such actions.**

**Convictions motivate brave hearts.**

**And brave hearts take action for the sake of others.**