

LIFE GROUP LESSON

That's What She Said - Week of June 30

Introduction

The book of Esther is a remarkable story of two courageous Jewish people during the reign of Persian king, Xerxes (486-465 BC). It is a story of how one young woman, Hadassah, and her relative, Mordecai, are both willing to put their lives on the line to save the Jewish people from annihilation. Both Esther (Hadassah's Persian name) and Mordecai are in a unique position of authority. Esther had been selected to replace deposed queen Vashti. And Mordecai, her older cousin who has raised her as his own daughter since the death of her parents, had become a palace official.

When an underhanded plot against the Jewish people scattered across the empire is decreed – that on an appointed date nearly a year later all Jews were to be killed – Mordecai tears his clothes, puts on burlap and ashes, and begins crying out in agony. In fact, there is great mourning among all Jews. Esther hears of Mordecai's despair and initially responds with averment for she doesn't understand the severity of the decree (Esther 4:1-12). However, when Mordecai sends a message assuring Esther that her once her Jewish identity is revealed – though unbeknownst to the king at present – she will suffer the same fate as her Jewish people:

“Don't think for a moment that because you're in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?” (Esther 4:13-14)

Background

It was Mordecai's refusal to bow before a colleague, Haman, a powerful official and enemy of the Jews, that had stirred Haman to devise this horrendous plot (Esther 3:1-11). The wicked man Haman was aware of Mordecai's nationality, and thus, decided not only to punish Mordecai but the entire Jewish race. Once Esther is aware of the magnitude of this proclamation, she has a decision to make. Will she do the right thing and resolve to lay her life on the line? Or will she continue in a state of insulated comfort and isolation in the luxury of the palace, pretending that all will work out? She chooses to rise up:

“Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go into see the king. If I must die, I must die” (Esther 4:16).

Read Esther 5:1-8; 6:1-8; 9:1-4; 10:1-3

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

Esther teaches us to spend time in preparation before approaching the throne. The story of Esther and Mordecai also teaches us that families, and yes, extended families, have the responsibility to prepare young women for leadership. In a time when many women are silenced, it is incredible how the Bible lifts up a plethora of stories regarding the courage, wisdom, and faithfulness of women. The Lord desires *all* people to be saved and *all* people to call upon his name *anytime*. However, your prayers will often have greater impact if you first search your heart before approaching the King of kings. Reflect upon the following Scriptures and write down one takeaway (one thing you learn) from each passage:

Ecclesiastes 5:1-2

Proverbs 17:27-28

Psalm 46:10

Matthew 6:7-9

2. What are you going to do about it?

Assess your prayer life. Ask yourself –

- Do I pray? If so, what do my prayers sound like... am I only offering up petitions, asking for problems to be solved or bad situations to be worked out?
- Are my prayers like 'drive-through' orders at a fast-food restaurant... or do I truly desire to sit at the Lord's feet – in his presence – and simply worship and spend time with Him?
- What part do I play in bringing my prayers into reality... partnering with the Lord to answer them?
- What might a new prayer life look like for me?... how can time with the Lord be more special and effective?

“Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results” (James 5:14-16).

3. What are you going to do about it?

As far as women prophesying, we must take the whole counsel of Scripture. The prophet Joel says that in the last days God will pour out His Spirit on *all* people – sons, daughters, old men, young men, even on servants – men *and* women alike; Peter stands on the day of Pentecost and preaches this very text (Acts 2:17-21, also Joel 2:28-29). At the close of the apostle Paul’s letter to the church in Rome, he said: “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deacon in the church.... Welcome her...God’s people... and... Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in the ministry of Christ Jesus” (Romans 16:1-3). Women should never usurp the role of men and men should never usurp the role of women. The Lord Jesus Christ gifts each of us uniquely. While we should always honor true spiritual authority, and out of reverence for Christ submit to one another in love (Ephesians 5:21), our ultimate submission is to the Lord Jesus. Let’s ask God to raise up bold Esther’s and Mordecai’s today – men and women courageously willing to lay down their lives for the cause of Christ.



Text: Esther 11:11-17, Acts 2 & Acts 21:7-9

PLAIN TRUTH

Esther teaches us to spend time in _____
before approaching the _____ and for
families to prepare young _____ for
_____.

Power Point: It starts at _____.

One Year Bible Reading For This Week:

June 30: 2 Kings 17:1-18:12, Acts 20:1-38, Psalm 148:1-14, Proverbs 18:6-7

July 1: 2 Kings 18:13-19:37, Acts 21:1-17, Psalm 149:1-9, Proverbs 18:8

July 2: 2 Kings 20:1-22:2, Acts 21:18-36, Psalm 150:1-6, Proverbs 18:9-10

July 3: 2 Kings 22:3-23:30, Acts 21:37-22:16, Psalm 1:1-6, Proverbs 18:11-12

July 4: 2 Kings 23:31-25:30, Acts 22:17-23:10, Psalm 2:1-12, Proverbs 18:13

July 5: 1 Chronicles 1:1-2:17, Acts 23:11-35, Psalm 3:1-8, Proverbs 18:14-15

July 6: 1 Chronicles 2:18-4:4, Acts 24:1-27, Psalm 4:1-8, Proverbs 18:16-18

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