

Esther Part 2: The Story

So last week when we ended, King Xerxes had banished Queen Vashti, to never see her again. There was a King, but there was no Queen. So, the council of King Xerxes decided to throw a beauty pageant. A pageant that would bring the most beautiful women together and the King would choose his next wife. While all this was going on in the pageant there was something else going on in the city...

So again, remember that Mordecai and Esther were of the Jewish people. They had been living in exile. In the Old Testament when one country invaded another country, the conquering country would send people from the defeated country to live in the conquering countries land. This would keep the defeated country from rising back up.

Esther 2:5-7

Now there was a Jew who lived in the palace complex in Susa. His name was Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish—a Benjaminite. Mordecai had adopted his cousin Hadassah, otherwise known as Esther, since she had no father or mother. The girl had a good figure and a beautiful face. After her parents died, Mordecai had adopted her.

Here we met the star of the story, Esther. Now here it mentions Jewish name: Hadassah, but her Persian name was Esther which meant “star.” Now Esther was an easy-going girl she rolled with the punches; she was not shaken by things life threw at her. Most scholars believe at this time she is between 13-17 years old when this story gets rolling. The Bible points out as well that she was beautiful.

Ladies, she is a teenager just like you. I hope you catch this story from the heart of one teenage girl to another.

Esther 2:8

When the king’s order and edict had been proclaimed, many young women were brought to the citadel of Susa and put under the care of Hegai. Esther also was TAKEN to the king’s palace.

Okay, did you catch that one little word in there, “TAKEN.”

She was not asked.

She did not decide on her own, she did NOT have a choice.

She was forced to be in this beauty contest, whether she wanted to or not!

She was thrown in the mix with all these other women from all over the place.

Okay, girls let’s chat for a minute here. ALL OF THESE WOMEN COMPETING FOR THE KING.

The Original Bachelor show.

Can you imagine being in the mix of all these women? The judgement that was being thrown around!

Not small enough or not developed enough.

Not tall enough or not short enough.

Not the right outfit.

Too much makeup or not enough makeup.

Not the right hair color or hair type.

Only the most beautiful are considered worth. But.... Can you imagine not being CHOSEN??? Dang!

How would that make you feel to know that you were not picked!
Some of us understand what it feels like to be rejected.

One thing we can understand is that our King, our heavenly Father, always accepts and picks us.

So, you have all these beautiful women running around the palace, so the King did not want his women to be taken and used sexually, so he specifically had advisors called eunuch. Eunuch's were men "fixed, spade, natured" whatever you want to call it. To make sure they didn't do anything sexually with the women.

Esther 2:8

Esther also was taken to the king's palace and entrusted to Hegai, who had charge of the harem. ⁹ She pleased him and won his favor.

Think about that for a moment, there was something beyond Esther's beauty that made her attractive. She was not just beautiful on the outside but on the inside as well.

So many people are blessed with amazing gifts.

You can be gifted athletically, you can be gifted artistically, you can be gifted with intelligence, you can be gifted with a sense of humor and yes, you can be gifted with physical beauty!

Whatever you are gifted with, you need to use it to point people to God.

He has given you a platform to be able to use the gifts He has given you, so use it! We talk a lot about God using ordinary people to do amazing things, but God also uses extraordinary people to do amazing things as well!

So, there was something about Esther, where Hegai was drawn to her and he knew that Esther would also gain the Kings favor.

It was the beauty of who she was not what she looked like she was. It was her whole being, she was refreshingly honest, graceful and not self-seeking in all she did.

There is no doubt that a person's character and presence affect others and is appealing—or repelling.

Hegai liked her so much that he gave her more and better food than any others, gave her more maidens to help her, he even moved her from the place where everyone else stayed and let her stay in the nice part of the palace.

Esther 2:12

"Before a young woman's turn came to go into King Xerxes, she had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments prescribed for the women, six months with oil of myrrh and six with perfumes and cosmetics."

Ladies this is 12 months of getting purrrty. A whole year of spa treatments and makeovers. For a full year these women had facial scrubs, body peels, massages with expensive oils and perfumes. Now this may seem amazing but think about this. They were away from their family, away from everything they knew. They were with around 400 other women! Can you imagine the catfights, the gossip, the bickering that happened all so the King could find a Queen?

Side note for a second...

For Mordecai,” her adopted father, “had commanded her not to make it known. And every day Mordecai walked in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and what was happening to her.”

There’s one little detail we all know about Esther that most of the other characters don’t know. And it will be crucial knowledge for later. Remember, Esther is a Jew, she comes from the Jewish people. For some reason Mordecai instructs Esther to not mention this to anyone. We don’t know exactly why... but maybe because he figured she would not be selected by the King.

Now, is he worried about her? Yes or no? Yeah, because it says, “Everyday he checks on her.” So, you get the idea that Mordecai is constantly thinking, “I hope she’s okay . . . I hope she’s okay.” He’s looking through the gate. “Oh, I wonder what’s going on.” But he doesn’t say anything, and he doesn’t do anything.

When their names are called, the women would go to the palace at night to meet the King. She could take with her anything she wanted in order to make an impression. Clothes, jewelry, food, whatever. It would be a challenge for a girl to stand out among 400 other girls, so they had to make a lasting impression.

Okay, I know what people are thinking, what do you mean when you say “spend the night” with the King. Well I mean exactly what you think I mean. Yep. Each of these beauty contestants had sex with the King.

To make matters even worse, if the woman was not chosen, she was taken to live in a harem of women where she would never marry again, most likely never see the King again unless he asked. She was a prisoner in the palace.

Imagine the pressures of the first date! Man do we get nervous.

Will we do the right thing?

Will we say the right things?

Will we act the right way?

Will we be dressed the right way?

Will we smell the right way? (you know sometimes we nervous sweat, come on you know!)

Esther had spent an entire year of getting ready and the time finally came...

Esther had to meet the King, and he chose her. She got the rose! She got picked. We don’t know why the King chose her, but we do know she stood out. Maybe it was her wisdom; maybe it was the gifts she took to the King; or maybe it was her personality and her beauty. We aren’t 100% sure but what we do know is that she was it. She had won!

The King apparently fell in love immediately with Esther: “the king loved Esther more than all the women” (v. 17). The King immediately ‘set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.’ (v. 17) The King was so excited about making Esther his new Queen and wife that he threw ‘a great feast’ for her, and he also ‘made a holiday for the provinces and gave gifts according to the generosity of the king.’ (v. 18). We can imagine that it was quite an affair, because as we have already witnessed in chapter one the King knew how to throw a party.

At this time, Esther was taken to be Queen and wife, but as such she now was living a life that involved a good amount of compromise. The man who was now her husband was a wicked King who was filled with selfish pride. But she was willing to let God work in and through her in the midst of her new life as Queen.

One thing we can learn from Esther is that she is a good example to us.

Life happens sometimes and it's difficult and hard. Sometimes we have no control over it. Death happens, divorce happens, break-ups happen, financial struggles happen, friendships fall apart. Whatever it is we have parts of our lives that are hard to navigate. **We are in the middle of a story that is still being told.**

Each one of our lives is a story that is being written even now.

We have the good chapters in our lives, but we also have some bad chapters.

We have exciting points in our story, but we also have some tough chapters in our book.

The difficult chapters of our lives are the foundation for stories filled with glory and redemption. Knowing that God is an amazing author who can change a story of tragedy into triumph.

We may not know the ending of our story, but we can know the author of it.

Esther did not know how her story was going to end, but I am sure she knew who was writing it.

Esther was now crowned Queen to the King. So, the King decided to throw another party in honor of his new Queen.

Now while this whole thing was going down for Esther something else was going down as well.

A plot... to kill the King!

Esther 2:21-23

²¹⁻²³ On this day, with Mordecai sitting at the King's Gate, Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who guarded the entrance, had it in for the king and were making plans to kill King Xerxes. But Mordecai learned of the plot and told Queen Esther, who then told King Xerxes, giving credit to Mordecai. When the thing was investigated and confirmed as true, the two men were hanged on gallows. This was all written down in a logbook kept for the king's use.

So here is something that we are going to need to remember for later.

Mordecai saved the King. He heard about the plot, he got word to Esther, who then told the King what Mordecai had done and he got the credit. The two men were hung.

Now what is random is how this is placed in this story. We're supposed to be celebrating with Esther with her becoming queen, but all along we our diverted to this part of the story. Well remember what I said. **"God is always working behind the scenes on our behalf."**