

Esther Part 3:

-RECAP-

So last week when we ended, Esther was named Queen. The King had fallen in love with her. He chose her out of 400 women.

Also, there was a plot to kill the king, but Mordecai heard about it and he saved the king, by telling Queen Esther what had happened.

I talked about how **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. We know 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.

TAKEN FROM THE BOOK- ESTHER THE ROLE OF A LIFETIME

*Now let me ask you a question? In the school that you attend. **Are there cliques in your school? Like groups of people.***

A lot of the times we see students that will break off into different types of groups.

The nerds, the popular kids, the potheads, the immature, the overly mature, the athletic group, the nobodies and then the ones that just blend in and make it.

I am not sure how it is at your school or what group you fell in, but no matter what group you are in there is always some type of competition with the other groups. Sometimes you have to stand up for the nerds, or stand up for your friends, but my question is will you stand up for what you believe?

USE WILL YOU STAND QUIZ FROM BOOK. ABOUT 6 SLIDES WITH QUESTIONS.

How did you do? There isn't really a wrong or right answer to some of these. We just want to see where you are at. The quiz was designed to make you think. Do you stand up for what is right? Do you do the right thing when it needs to be done?

Now let's jump back into the story and see what is happening. But before we do that, remember, Mordecai had just saved the king's life.

Here we are going to meet the bad guy, remember Haman. This dude is B A D !

Esther 3:1-6

1-2 Some time later, King Xerxes promoted Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, making him the highest-ranking official in the government. All the king's servants at the King's Gate used to honor him by bowing

down and kneeling before Haman—that's what the king had commanded.

²⁻⁴ Except Mordecai. Mordecai wouldn't do it, wouldn't bow down and kneel. The king's servants at the King's Gate asked Mordecai about it: "Why do you cross the king's command?" Day after day they spoke to him about this but he wouldn't listen, so they went to Haman to see whether something shouldn't be done about it. Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew.

⁵⁻⁶ When Haman saw for himself that Mordecai didn't bow down and kneel before him, he was outraged. Meanwhile, having learned that Mordecai was a Jew, Haman hated to waste his fury on just one Jew; he looked for a way to eliminate not just Mordecai but all Jews throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.

Have you ever met someone who really, really, really likes themselves? Like they had no problem with being insecure. They have no problem with ego. They 100% absolutely love themselves. Like they know they are awesome. I have met some people in my life. **They are the most humble people they know!** Eyeball.

Haman has a huge ego and he thinks everyone should bow down to him just like if he were King. He was trying to steal the spotlight. Trying to be "the man." He goes to the city and has a huge parade for himself; he wants people to bow down to him but one mad does not. Mordecai.

Mordecai is not having it. He refuses. Some Bible scholars believe it was because Haman's ancestors hated Mordecai's ancestors and so there was no way he was going to bow. Some believe it was because Mordecai was a Jew and wouldn't bow to anyone but his God.

Imagine how awkward this is, you have masses of people bowing down to Haman, but then you look, and Mordecai is standing there like NOPE. Not happening bro.

The King promoted Haman for whatever reason, but what never happened was a reward for Mordecai. Remember that dude that saved the life of the King! He was never rewarded. No money, no gift, not even a thank you. Instead, for some reason, Haman got a parade.

Week after week they would try go get him to bow and he wouldn't. The people warned him something bad would happen if he didn't. And, you guessed it, Haman was not happy. He was outraged.

Do you not know who I am? This guy must think he is special? We're going to do something about this.

Standing alone sometimes will have consequences. Standing alone sometimes will make you the odd one. Standing alone will make you feel like no one else is in agreement. Standing alone is hard.

Your integrity is more important than people's opinion about you.

Can I be honest for a moment... sometimes I have to admit, I have wished bad things on someone. I have a little bit of Haman in my heart.

Sometimes I can be prideful, because I love to be right. I love to win. I love to be the best. I love to be better than other people!

When someone cuts in front of me in traffic and speeds down the road, I want them to get a ticket.

When someone is cheating in a game, I hope they get caught and exposed to the point of embarrassment.
When the person making fun of someone finally gets a beatdown.
When I don't like the way someone is, I hope they get theirs.
Maybe you wished your brother or sister got in trouble and not you.
Maybe you wished your teacher got the flu the day you have a test so you don't have to take it.

I believe that we all have a little Haman inside of us. That prideful side of us that hides at Refuge or church but it's there. I am not saying that Haman was right in what he thought but I am saying we are more like him than we admit.

Pride can make the most beautiful person ugly. We have to be careful to not be prideful but to be humble.

Well, if you didn't like Haman now, you are really going to hate him for what he does next.

8-9 Haman then spoke with King Xerxes: "There is an odd set of people scattered through the provinces of your kingdom who don't fit in. Their customs and ways are different from those of everybody else. Worse, they disregard the king's laws. They're an affront; the king shouldn't put up with them. If it please the king, let orders be given that they be destroyed. I'll pay for it myself. I'll deposit 375 tons of silver in the royal bank to finance the operation."

10 The king slipped his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, archenemy of the Jews. 11 "Go ahead," the king said to Haman. "It's your money—do whatever you want with those people."

Haman, what a dirtbag! This dude was just piece of work.

He lied to the king and told him that the Jewish people infiltrated the city and were going to try and take it over. He then said they need to be exterminated like they were a bunch of bugs or rats. Oh, but it was for the King's best interest if he did so... yeah uhuh ok!

Haman even offered up his own money to do it. Do you think this dude had an agenda! I think so! And not only that but he was going to take the money belonging to the Jews he would kill! So, he would use the money of the people he would kill, to kill them.

At this point, you are like, "what the heck is going on?" Why would the King allow this to happen? This King isn't making the best decisions, that's for sure.

So, when Haman suggests to the king that he should sign a decree to exterminate a whole group of people, here are some questions that the king DOESN'T ask:

- Who exactly are these people? What race are they?
- How many people are we talking about?
- What exactly have they done that is so wrong that it requires death?

He is prideful and arrogant.

He gets drunk and bans his first wife because she won't come before him and his drunk friends.

He then throws a beauty pageant to try and find a beautiful wife that can be his dime piece. Out of 400 women.

He finds one, throws another lavish party.

He then allows Haman to make this law, a decision that would kill the Jewish people! He didn't ask any questions he just did it. He said, "Yeah bro, here is my ring, make it official!"

This dude didn't show any wisdom at all! None. He is being a complete dummy. Now what the King had ordered would be carried out and thousands of people would die. All because Haman didn't like the fact that Mordecai wouldn't bow down to him. These innocent people would be killed because of a man's pride.

That brings us to the end of chapter 3. Haman's plan for revenge is coming together. The empire is in chaos. Xerxes is sitting in his easy chair, unaware of the pain and indifferent toward it. It looks like a hopeless situation. It looks like God is out of control. It looks like evil is going to win. But that's just because no one sees how God is working behind the scenes to accomplish His plan. We'll learn more of that plan next week. For now, I want to ask you some questions based on what we have looked at today.

Esther 3:15

The king and Haman sat back and had a drink while the city of Susa reeled from the news.

1. Do you care about truth?

Haman didn't. If he faced the truth, he would have to give up his prejudice. **Prejudice is always based on lies** – lies that say that one person is more valuable than another because of race, culture, background or whatever other reason. The truth is that every person is equally valuable before God and needs to be equally valued by us. The truth is that every person is loved by God and needs to be loved by us.

And loving someone is more than just not hating them. It is caring about them; it is refusing to listen to the lie that everything is okay in the lives of the people around you so that you can excuse your indifference to their needs.

2. Do you care that your actions are affecting others?

Mordecai's actions and Haman's actions had a far greater impact than they ever intended. So do yours. You can't sin or live a rebellious lifestyle and expect that the only person that it will affect is you!

Your actions are like ripples in a pond. They start small, but they spread out in ever widening circles touching more and more lives. There is no such thing as a small decision and definitely no such thing as a small sin.

3. Do you care about a confused world?

Xerxes didn't care what was going on in the kingdom of Persia or even the city of Susa that surrounded him even though they were confused and really needed him at that point. As long as he was comfortable and safe, that was all that he really cared about.

All around us, there are people who are confused – confused about the meaning of life, about how they can be in right relationship with God, about where real joy and satisfaction comes from. These people, like the people of Susa and the Persian Empire, have a death sentence hanging over their heads. Do you care about that? Prove it!

What have you done lately to show that you care about people who are lost, confused, and going to hell?

Have you prayed for them?

Have you invited them to church?

Have you gone out of your way to show them that you are thinking about them?

Unlike the Jews, we don't know the day or the hour when their time will be up. We have to care now, or the opportunity will pass us by.

King Xerxes didn't care. He maybe even didn't know that his people were hurting. I tell you that King Jesus does know and does care that His people are hurting. He knows and cares about what is going on in your life. When it seems that everyone else is going on with business as usual while you're dying, take comfort in the fact that Jesus does care. He cares so much that He died for you.