

Intro: Mon and Tue were tough days! One after the other for 48 hours the hits just kept on coming. Life altering issues kept coming across my path...for staff...for church members...for me, all very difficult. Late Tuesday afternoon Joan came to my office and said, "Can you come pray with someone...they just got blood tests back from the Dr. with their new pregnancy and it has come back with a "very high probability" of spina bifida...a genetic abnormality that can be overwhelmingly impactful."

So I stopped what I was doing went out and prayed with this newly pregnant young woman. By the time I got to Tuesday evening dinner I told my wife, I'm going to eat, then go to the bookstore and buy a science fiction book...I need to be in another galaxy! On way I called a Pastor friend of mine and said, "Tell me again why I do this? It is worth it right? Just too much!"

At that point EVERYTHING looked awful, nothing looked good, I just didn't see HOW anything good could come! THAT is where we are in Ch 3-4 of Esther. The circumstances in Esther's life, and in the life of the Jews is awful. No way out But...Listen to me here: **YOU CAN'T STOP READING IN CHAPTER 4!** Keep going to the end of the book! Keep praying, keep trusting God, keep expecting Him to intervene...no matter how bad things look!

Esther 3-4 Page 354

1. The Problem: Mordecai and The Jews Have an Enemy. 3:1-6

- Haman: The Bad guy that is proud and vengeful: Friend of King, enemy of the Mordecai, AND Jews
- Mordecai: The Good guy that is honorable and righteous Cousin of Esther, Jewish citizen, Revealed plot
- Issue: Mordecai will not bow down (false worship) Vs 5
- Problem: Haman determines it's good to kill Mordecai and ALL the Jews!

Illus: Rick Warren used to say it this way: "You aren't being paranoid if they REALLY are out to get you!" Mordecai and the Jews...they had a problem! A powerful and vengeful man wanted to destroy them

Applic: We have the same problem today. As a disciples of Jesus Christ WE have an enemy as well!

John 10:10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

- Steal: Devil wants to steal every GOOD thing God has put into your life!!
- Kill: Devil wants to kill every GOOD thing, Hope, Joy, Love, Compassion God has for you.
- Destroy: Devil want to destroy you...keep you from honoring God, loving God, serving God

Every good and holy and righteous thing God wants for you...the hope and the future, the fruit of the spirit, joy and love Satan wants to steal it, kill it and destroy it! He hates you with an undying hate...and will pursue your destruction at every turn You see that in the life of EVERY man and woman of God in the bible: The evil one is out to destroy them!

1Pe 5:8 "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

2. The Persecution: Haman determines to destroy the Jews and makes a plan! 3:7-15

- His hatred: Vs 6: Destroy: Lit = to overthrow, to cause to perish, to bring to nothing, to destroy
- His description: Vs 3:10, 7:6, 8:1, 9:10, 9:24 5 distinct times that label is used to describe him!
- His request: Vs 3:8-9 They are different; Not in YOUR best interests, lets destroy them
- His permission: Vs 10 Do with them as you please
- His plan: Vs 13-14 Kill them, young and old, men, women and children: Plunder their goods!
- City's response: **Bewildered:** Lit = to be perplexed, tangled up, unsure of where to go or what to do!

Word was used in Ex 14:3 when nation was lost in desert on way Promised Land!

Applic: Do you ever feel that way? Simply overwhelmed and confused by what is going on? Can't see ANY way out? Some days it seems like we are in the same position as Jews: totally lost and confused: **BECAUSE WE ARE!!!!** God, Where am I and where are YOU!

You can't be surprised when that comes...we KNOW it will, Jesus told us that it would!

John 16:33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble!"

Jn 15:20 "Remember 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also."

1Pe 4:4 "They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you."

1Tim 3:12 "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted..."

3. The Plan: How Esther and Mordecai Respond To The Threat. Ch 4:1-17

- Acted responsibly to do what he could do
 - ~Fast (pray?) vs 1-3
 - ~Sought wise help and counsel vs 4-8 (reached out to Esther for help)
 - ~Enlisted others to help vs 8 (go ask the king for help!)
- Refused to be immobilized by fear vs 9-14 (yes your life may be on line...already is!)
- Expected God to intervene vs 14 (for help WILL rise from another place: GOD WILL ACT!)
- Act in faith vs 15-17 (You fast...I will go...if I perish...I perish!)

Applic:

We forget too often...God is on our side! We can expect the supernatural! People of faith expect God to work! And, we don't wait for the evidence: We ACT before we KNOW!

I don't BELIEVE because I KNOW: I KNOW because I BELIEVE! Heb 11:1

REFLECTIONS ON ESTHER

- **You Can't Stop Reading In Chaper 3-4!**
When trials, tribulations and troubles come: **DON'T STOP!** Keep going to the end of the story!
We give up too soon...We throw in the towel, we get discouraged...
Because WE can't see a way...we want to quit! Don't do it!
Listen to the words of Mordecai: *"If you don't do it...relief and deliverance will arise from another place!"*

- **Stand In Faith and EXPECT God to move!** Relief WILL come!
The bible is full of men and women of faith that had to wait on God
Rom 4:18-21 *"against all hope, Abraham in hope believed!"*
When every single thing in his life screamed at him, this will NEVER happen...he believed!
We believe that God will move on our behalf...Just like Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Esther
"I go to the king...and if I Perish, I perish"

- **Trust God is doing right...even when you don't see it, understand it or agree with it!**
That is what Mordecai and Esther were doing.
Help WILL come from somewhere...God is going to do something...He will deliver His people!
The bible is full of those promises to the people of God.
Is 43:1-2 *"But now, this is what the Lord says!"*
Is 43:19 *"See, I am doing a NEW thing...now it springs up, don't you see it? Making a way in desert..."*

- **God puts you where HE wants you...for a reason and a purpose!**
Vs 14 *"Who knows, but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this!"*
When you find yourself in those places and times and difficulties...Ask: **WHY AM I HERE?**
Not, why are these bad things happening, But rather, God...What do you want ME to do here!
You know, in that awful situation...whatever it is... **YOU MAY BE THE ONLY LIGHT AROUND!**
Your faith, may be the only faith people see.
Your relationship and expectation and hope in God...may be all the hope anyone there will ever experience
Your light...might be the only light in a VERY dark place!
~ESTHER was there...so that she could Go to the King
~Why are YOU...where YOU are?
~What light...are you put there to shine?

- **Remember you are ALWAYS welcome to bring your needs to God!**
Esther walked into the presence of the King wondering...If I perish, I perish
We NEVER walk into the presence of God with that doubt!
Heb 4:16 *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*

- **Don't Ignore the Light Because of the Darkness!**
When it looks darkest around you, open your eyes to the light God has provided
I see this all the time. In the trials and troubles we lose sight of the good things...all we can see is the bad!
Esther was there...she was Queen...She at least had the opportunity to attempt to go to the king
Applic: Called my friend: "let me ask you a question: Are you hitting mark? Taking flack over the target!"
~112 people connected on Connect day...
~30+ NEW children signed up for AWANA last couple weeks
~4 students gave their life to Jesus on Sunday night

CONCL: And One more...a couple of days later I spoke with the young woman about the birth defect...

.5% one half of one percent chance that there will be any problem:

You see when I prayed...I told her...don't borrow trouble...and because working on sermon...Keep Reading
MAY look bad now...but keep reading to the end of story...God is at work

He is at work in your life to: Marriage? He can help Finances? He can Help Health He can help
I don't care how impossible it may look to you today...
Come...bring it to Him...place it in His hands

1. He will change it...bring about a different outcome
2. He will change YOU...make you able to walk through it with grace, and peace...and hope

