

Intro: Ever heard the saying, “The calm before the storm?”

Thursday afternoon I was thinking about going out on the boat fishing.

Did the things I had on my schedule early in the day, then around 4 or 5 I started to look at going...

Looked at sky...dark. Drove over the bridge...water starting to move in the wind...Thought...NOT TODAY!

It’s not storming yet....BUT....it is definitely on the way!

That is where we are at the end of chapter 4...going into chapter 5...everything is calm...but we can sense...Trouble on horizon!

Quick Review:

- Jews living in captivity under Babylonian rule
- King Xerxes got rid of his first wife, Esther, a young woman of Jewish nationality elevated to be Queen
- Haman (bad guy) Gets upset at Mordecai (good guy) and determines to destroy not only him...all Jews
- Xerxes is duped into agreeing to allow Haman to exterminate Jews, a plan, date and time is set
- Mordecai, cousin of Esther, asks her to intervene...she agrees...but reminds him...her life is on the line if she does!
- She, her family, friends, all the Jews in Susa...fast...3 days...and the storm clouds gather on the horizon!

Esther 5:1-7 Page 356

1. The Step Of Faith: Esther Approaches The King.

5:1

When Esther decided to approach Xerxes it was an incredible step of faith!

She was trusting in God to intervene on her behalf...but there is no assurance that He will!

- Took her life in her hands when she does so: 4:10-11
- Unsure of whether or not she would be accepted (Babylonian carvings/reliefs from that day...AXE!)
- Xerxes didn’t know what her request was (He knows it is important...but that’s all)

Applic: When you read a story like this in the OT, one of the things you should ask yourself is, What Can I Learn from this?

1Co 10:11 “*These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.*”

2. Lessons @ Prayer from Esther 5.

Now, I say we learn somethings about prayer not because it is mentioned...it never is! Fasting is...not prayer

I say we learn about prayer because when we look at Esther going into the presence of King Xerxes...just like us going to God!

This an amazing illustration of prayer! When you look at this there are some similarities and differences in prayer.

When we approach God in prayer:

- We can ALWAYS approach Him in faith, expecting the best outcome!
Esther walked in unsure...afraid...hoping...but not knowing
~Pray in faith believing Mt 21:21-22 (fig tree)
“Jesus replied, ‘I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.’”
- We never have to be afraid! Heb 4:16
“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”
~**Boldly:** Lit = compound word 2 words: *to come close and be frank, blunt, outspoken, speak plainly*
Oh great and merciful holy God...highest above the heavens, dwelling in eternally light and glory...
“King of the Blind: Little girl runs in, jumps in his lap!”
Applic: The application is so clear...we are WELCOMED TO SAY: God I need some HELP!!!!
Wonderful word...continuous action verb...let us KEEP ON COMING TO God! NEVER GETS TIRED of hearing!
Father, I know I have asked 100 times before....but God here I am...asking again!
- We KNOW how we are going to be received!
~**Obtain mercy:** Lit = *to receive in our hands compassion, tenderness, caring heart:*
~**Find grace:** Lit = *to have placed in our hands blessing and benefit and goodness*
Here is what the author is saying:
We can come boldly and freely into the presence of God, because we KNOW we are going to find mercy for where we have failed and fallen short, and we are going to have placed in our hands the blessings of God.
~Mercy says: We DON’T get what we deserve: Judgement
~Grace says: We GET what we don’t deserve: Blessing and Goodness

Applic:

Where do you need mercy today? What area of your life do you need God to extend compassion?

Where do you need grace? Where do you need God to give you what you don’t deserve?

- We can ask for what we need.
~What would you have me do for you? **Matt 20:30 Blind man**
There is nothing that you can't ask from your heavenly Father!
If God were here with you today...and HE were to ask you..."What would you have me do for YOU?"
What is the desire of your heart? What are you longing for...needing...desiring?
ASK Him for it...He welcomes you into His presence

- God delights in giving us good! **Luke 11:11-13**
"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

~Xerxes offered up to half the kingdom

~God offers us all good things! **James 1:17** *"Every good and perfect gift comes down from above!"*

Listen...It is the heart of God to give you good things!

Parents: Remember what it's like to give your children the things they desperately want? God is that way with you!

Applic: Keep in mind what James says: James 4:3

"When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."
This isn't a license to go and ask for the lotto this weekend...But it IS an invitation to approach God with boldness...ASK

REFLECTIONS ON ESTHER 5

1. Are you ready to take a step of faith and ask God for what you need?
Don't be afraid...Don't be unsure...Don't draw back..Just walk into His presence...and ASK Boldly
2. Ready to ask Him for something you DON'T deserve?
Is there an area of sin that you need forgiveness...
Maybe you have asked 1000 times before...Feel like you don't deserve to ask again...He's waiting
3. Suppose God were here (He is) and He were to ask you (and He does) What would you have me do for you?
Sometimes we have not because we ask not. We pray...but we are too afraid to ask for what we really need
Because it seems to big To much to ask We know we don't deserve it
Seems impossible Asked over and over before Ask again
4. What Good thing do you need? You know He wants to bless you, right?
I'm not saying He wants to give you things to waste on yourself
Or things that YOU think are good...but He knows aren't
But I am saying...Ask...Seek....Knock...
God wants to hear from you this morning
5. Finally: Challenge you: Come forward and ask..Here...on your knees...before the king of kings
Don't be afraid, Don't be ashamed Don't embarrassed
If you get what YOU need from God...who CARES what anyone else thinks
Yes you can ask where you are...but...I know...when I move..when I'm on my knees...it STICKS Better

I don't know what you need...but I do know who can meet that need...You come as we sing.