

The Example of Esther

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Esther 4:13-17

The book of Esther explains how a young Jewish woman became queen of Persia and saved her people. The events of this book are interesting and Esther's actions are inspiring, yet there are also some important applications that we can take from this account.

The Setting

- Ahasuerus – wealthy, powerful, arrogant, and sometimes angry king (Esther 1:1-4, 12)
- Vashti – queen; refused the king's order (Esther 1:10-12); was removed from her "office" (Esther 1:16-21); this was what led to the process of selecting a new queen (Esther 2:1-4)
- Mordecai – Esther's uncle who raised her as his daughter (Esther 2:7); showed himself to be faithful throughout the book
- Haman – over all of the king's princes (Esther 3:1); plotted to destroy the Jews (Esther 3:2-6)

What Esther Did

- Esther listened to advice (Esther 2:12-15) – found favor with Hegai, the one in charge of the women (Esther 2:8-9); listened to Hegai's advice about her visit with the king; led to a positive result (Esther 2:16-18)
- Esther helped save the king (Esther 2:21-23) – Mordecai learned of a plot against the king and informed Esther; rather than seeing an opportunity to escape, she did what was right and reported the plot
- Esther risked her life to save her people (Esther 4:9-17) – Haman planned to destroy all the Jews because he was angry with Mordecai (3:1-15); Mordecai learned of the plot and told Esther to help (Esther 4:1-3, 8, 11-14); Esther decided to help without any assurance that it would turn out well (Esther 4:13-16); she also asked for support from her people as she prepared (Esther 4:16)
- Esther accused the enemy of her people (Esther 7:1-6) – planned a banquet for the king and Haman (Esther 5:1-8) while Haman was planning Mordecai's death (Esther 5:13-14); at the banquet, Esther disclosed the plot and identified Haman (Esther 7:1-6); if the king sided with Haman, she could have had the same fate as Vashti; the king had Haman put to death (Esther 7:7-10) and issued a new order allowing the Jews to triumph over their enemies (Esther 8:8-9:17)

Lessons for Us

- Listen to advice (Proverbs 12:15) – take advantage of the experience/knowledge of others
- Don't turn a blind eye to evil (Proverbs 24:11) – prevent harm when it is in our power to do so
- Be willing to sacrifice for others (Philippians 2:3-4) – look out for what is in their best interest
- Do what is right regardless of the consequences (Job 13:15) – this takes courage and faith in God
- Don't wait for some “sign” before acting (Ecclesiastes 11:3-6) – we simply need to do what we can do
- Ask others for support (Colossians 4:3-4) – even if it is “just” asking for prayers, others can help

Conclusion

- Each one of us has opportunities to do good in our service to the Lord
- Rather than speculate on whether or not God was involved (“who knows”), we simply need to act
- Follow Esther's example – it is not always easy to do the right thing, but we need the courage to do it