

MESSY FAITH: FINDING OUR STORY IN ESTHER

"Choosing to Take a Stand" (Esther 2:19 – 3:15)
Community Group Curriculum for the week of March 1, 2015

The Story Continues

Esther was a young Jew being reared by her older cousin, Mordecai, in Persian captivity. After banishing the current queen, a kingdom-wide search ensues and Esther finds favor with the king and is chosen to become his next queen. Mordecai overhears a plot against the king and informs the king's officials. Meanwhile, our villain Haman (boo!) appears in the story and is promptly promoted to a high position in the kingdom. He hatches a plot to destroy every single Jew all because Mordecai refuses to bow to him. Whew!

Let's Discuss!

1. If someone agreed last week to memorize Esther 2:19 – 3:15 let them **"tell the story."** After telling the story, read Esther 2:19 – 3:15. Compare the passage that was told and passage read. Regardless if the story is told or just read, now have everyone close their Bible and **rebuild** the story from memory.
2. Our story picks up with Mordecai uncovering a plot against the king. He reports it and that's it: he receives neither recognition nor reward for saving the king's life. However, God saw that the facts were recorded and He would make good use of them at just the right time. All of us at some time have **planted seeds** but have not seen the benefits. What are your thoughts toward knowing that you may not reap any benefits of the seeds you plant until a later time or even after death?
3. As chapter 3 unfolds, Mordecai draws the line – he will not bow to Haman. Read Exodus 20:3, 5 for background.
 - a) Do you agree with Mordecai's stance? Why or why not?
 - b) Give an example in your Christian life where you "drew the line" and would not **compromise**.
 - c) Give examples in today's world where small compromises have been made by Christians. Why do small compromises result in great consequences?
4. Esther is selected queen, yet she has not revealed her Jewish faith. Why? Commentator Matthew Henry states that "All truths are not to be spoken at all times." What is your reaction to this? How do you know when it's best not to speak the truth at a given time? How is this different from lying?

5. Now think about your own life and relationships. Are there situations where your silence about your faith could actually lead to a positive outcome – one that ultimately glorifies God? How might God use those moments?

6. Read Proverbs 6:16-19.
 - a) How does this passage in Proverbs apply to **Haman**? Keep these evil characteristics in mind as you read the rest of the book of Esther, for you will find them all depicted in this evil man.

 - b) If Haman (or someone like him) were suddenly hired as your boss, how would you respond?

 - c) What characters in history remind you of Haman? What are their similar motivations? What does this tell you about the nature of evil? What should a Christian's response be to such an evil person?

7. Finally, what examples of God's providence are evident in Esther 2:19 – 3:15? Describe a time when you don't see or hear God but know He's actively involved in your circumstances.

NEXT WEEK: Leaders, ask for a volunteer to memorize (the best they can) the next portion of the story told in Esther 4:1-17 and be ready to tell the story (from memory) to your group when you next meet. After telling the story, then have everyone turn to Esther 4:1-17 and read the story. Compare the telling and the reading of the story. Finally, have everyone close their Bibles and have the group rebuild/retell the story (Esther 4:1-17) by memory.

Prayer

- Focus on prayer requests made over the last couple of weeks and receive a follow-up from the group. Acknowledge how God answers prayers, often in miraculous ways! Continue praying for requests awaiting God's response as well as new requests.
- Pray that each person in our church body may become a fully devoted follower of Christ.
- Pray that each of us would be committed to being a disciple of Christ and be actively making disciples of Christ.
- Pray for those who will be attending our Easter service at the Park at the River Walk on April 5. Pray that God will bring those who need to hear the Good News and will respond by accepting Christ as their Lord and Savior, and for others to follow in obedience in baptism. Pray for all the details in planning the service.