

MESSY FAITH: FINDING OUR STORY IN ESTHER

"For Such A Time As This" (Esther 4:1-17)
Community Group Curriculum for the week of March 8, 2015

The Story Continues

Ever been challenged to do something you did not feel like doing? Like confronting a friend about the path they are heading down? Like putting something in your past behind you and moving on? Many of us have something that the Spirit has put on our hearts to act upon but because of fear, comfort, uncertainty, etc. we just can't bring ourselves to do it. This week focuses on Esther facing a life threatening challenge and moving past her fears.

Let's Discuss!

1. If someone agreed last week to memorize Esther 4:1-17 let them "tell the story." After telling the story, then read Esther 4:1-17. 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/retell the story from memory.
 - a) What impacted you the most in this passage? Why?
 - b) This story touches on what you are literally willing to die for. Is there someone or some cause that you feel so strongly about that you would be willing to put your life on the line for? Why? Discuss in your group.
2. Read Esther 4:1-3 again. What is the reaction of Mordecai and other Jews to the king's edict? Why is this a common reaction to challenges we face in our own lives?
3. Believers are not immune to worry, anxiety, or fear. Read the following and list the key principles regarding uncertainty: Proverbs 3:5-6; Matthew 6:25-34, 11:28-30; Philippians 4:6-7.
4. Read Esther 4:8-11 again. Put yourself in Esther's position and consider her response to Mordecai. What would be your response in this situation?
5. Read Esther 4:12-17.
 - a) What is Mordecai saying in verse 14? What do the following verses say about God's plans: Psalm 33:11; Proverbs 19:21; Isaiah 46:10-11? What are the consequences for a believer if he/she is not obedient to God (can we all say "Jonah"!)?

b) What are the key things Esther did in preparation for meeting the king?

c) Are you seeking God's will in your life? A great example on "how to" is what Esther did. Here are key aspects with verses:

Fasting: Psalm 35:13; Ezra 8:21

Prayer: James 5:16; Philippians 4:7

Seeking Him: Psalm 37:23; John 1:7; Romans 12:2

d) What ways have you used to determine God's will in your life? Discuss!

6. Esther's life wasn't mere coincidence or fate. Esther had been placed by God in a key place and position at the right time to be able to intervene on behalf of the Jews. How do you see the circumstances that you are presently in as an opportunity to serve God?

NEXT WEEK: Leaders, ask for a volunteer to memorize (the best they can) the next portion of the story told in Esther 5-7 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 5-7 and read the story (takes about 10-12 minutes). Compare the telling and the reading of the story. Finally, have everyone shut their Bible and have the group rebuild/retell the story (Esther 5-7) by memory.

Prayer (from 1928 Book of Common Prayer)

"Almighty God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage; We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favor and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindred and tongues. Endure with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, there may be justice and peace at home...In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Final Thought: After Mordecai confronts Esther about risking her life for her people, she makes a commitment to approach the king uninvited – even though such an appearance invited death. She took the step; she informed the king; she changed his mind; she saved the day!