



May 4, 2014

A Queen Trumps a King

Esther 1

Leader option: Use “*Sharing Your Story*” as part of sharing God’s story of grace and mercy.

The story so far:

Esther takes place in the time of the Jewish exile under Persian rule. The exile happened because the Jews rebelled against God – God had frequently warned them. The Medo-Persian Empire was the largest the world had seen. By the time of Esther, some Jews had already returned to Israel, though many were scattered throughout the empire.

[Q] Discuss: If you could throw the perfect party, what would it be like?

Read Esther 1:1-9.

[Q] How would you describe the banquets given by the king?

[Q] What do these extravagant affairs say about King Xerxes—his character, his rule, his values?

Read Esther 1:10-12.

[Q] Why did Vashti refuse to comply with the king’s wishes? Who was right? Why?

[Q] How does Vashti’s interaction with the king set the stage for Esther, who will become the next queen?

Read Esther 1:13-22.

[Q] Why did the “wise” men perceive Queen Vashti’s refusal to be dangerous to the kingdom? (vv.16-20)

Read Proverbs 11:14; 15:22 and 20:18.

[Q] Why is it a good idea to have advisors? Where did King Xerxes go wrong with this idea?

[Q] How does the respect commanded in the king's decree (v.20) differ from the respect commanded in Ephesians 5:21-33? Which approach is more effective? Why?

Read Mark 10:42-45.

[Q] According to Jesus, how is the kingdom of Xerxes different from the kingdom of God?

[Q] Describe the kind of king Jesus is.

[Q] Is Jesus your top advisor? In what areas of your life do you need to put Him in charge this week?

From the weekend message:

[Q] What do you think of the analogy between the main characters in the story of Esther and the main elements of spiritual influence in each of our lives?

Palace = your life

King Xerxes = the human soul, the entity that makes decisions in the "palace" of your life.

Mordecai = the Holy Spirit of God

Haman and Persian nobles = the "flesh," the desire to do the opposite of what God wants

With Mordecai at the gate and Haman and the nobles in the palace, the wrong man is in and the right man is out.

You are the decision-maker of your life. Do you see what your most important first decision is? Which man have you appointed as your top advisor: Haman or Mordecai: the desires of the flesh or the Holy Spirit of God?

The task that God gave Esther of saving the Jews is a preview of the greatest rescue mission of all – God sending His Son to save all His people, everywhere and throughout history.

Pray

Extra: Read the document *Jesus is a Better King* <http://is.gd/JesusisBetter>
Read Psalm 2. What do you think is God's view of leaders such as Xerxes?