



June 1, 2014

Two Roads

Esther 5

Discuss: Last week we asked, “Where has God positioned you to be an influence for Him? (Work, school, family, neighborhood, etc...)” How did it go this past week?

The story so far:

Mordecai informed his cousin, Queen Esther, of Haman’s plot to destroy the Jews throughout Persia. We left Esther just as she had sent word to Mordecai that she was going to enter the king’s presence uninvited, which could mean her instant death. She instructed Mordecai to assemble all the Jews in Susa and have them fast for three days, as would she and her small group. After that, she would go to the king. (Esther 4:16)

Read Esther 5:1-2. Throne of Grace

[Q] How is the description of Esther in 5:1-2 different from her description in 2:15-16 and 4:10-11?

Esther: NIV Application Commentary: On the third day the Persian king extends the golden scepter to Esther, lest she die for coming into his presence unsummoned. Esther approaches the king and completes this gracious gesture by touching the tip of the scepter. Her safety in his presence is thereby guaranteed. This scene pictures a gracious act of a king who holds life-and-death power.

[Q] According to Hebrews 4:16, how should we approach *our* powerful King?

[Q] Read Ephesians 2:4-9. What is our King like? What did He do for us? What do you learn about His grace?

Esther: NIV Application Commentary: “On the third day” after the final judgment transpired on the cross, Jesus Christ rose to imperishable life, guaranteeing safety to enter God’s presence to all who reach out in faith to touch that cross-shaped scepter.

Read Esther 5:3-8.

Rather than answering King Xerxes directly, Esther invites him, together with Haman, to a banquet.

[Q] How is Esther’s attitude toward the king (Esther 5:3–4) similar to that of his advisers? How is it different?

[Q] What character qualities does Esther demonstrate as she assumes her dual role as God’s instrument and queen of Persia?

Read Proverbs 21:1:

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases. NIV

Fill in the blank: If God can handle a king like Xerxes, He can handle my _____.

Read Esther 5:9-14.

Track Haman's changing emotions in this section and the reasons for each one.

[Q] Read Proverbs 11:2; 29:23; 16:18. What warnings are we given concerning pride?

[Q] Why do you think God hates sinful pride so much?

Apply

[Q] Where in your own life do you see the qualities of Esther and the qualities of Haman?

[Q] What situations are there in your life that you need God's transforming grace so that you are handling them with courage, patience and/or humility? How can your Growth Group encourage you?

Approach the throne of grace with confidence.

Last week we asked people to pick a specific time each week to pray for our launch preparations for the Bristol campus from now until the launch on Sunday, October 5. Submit your name and email address to gbrundage@valleycommunity.cc and each week you'll receive two or three specific prayer topics for that week. Let's ask God to prepare the way for His grace and mercy to flow in the greater Bristol area.