

Sermon Discussion

8 August 2021

Read Esther 5:1-14

Dig Deeper

In v. 3, the king offers Esther *“even to the half of my kingdom.”* The Greek historian Herodotus describes Xerxes (Ahasuerus) as making such an offer, though on a different occasion. Esther rightly understands it as a traditional, grand gesture rather than one the king expects to be taken seriously (see Mark 6:23 where Herod makes a similar offer).

Why Esther did not relate Haman’s plot at the first banquet is not stated. Perhaps she had second thoughts about telling him at all. Or she sensed that he was not in the right frame of mind for her to tell him on that day. From **a literary standpoint**, this delay raises the tension level as the story moves to its climax.

A person reading Esther for the first time would be in a high state of agitation as the tension increased. Xerxes’ response to Esther’s suggestion is not given here, but Haman’s later boasting (v. 12) shows that the king was in obvious agreement with the idea.

There was a gallows in 2:23, but this one in v. 14 is another gallows. Its enormous height (**75 feet/23 m**) reflects Haman’s “towering” rage and is probably intended to make a public spectacle of Mordecai. Mordecai’s fate now seems to depend on whose influence over Ahasuerus will prevail- Haman’s or Esther’s.

1. How do you think Esther felt as she approached the king’s inner court? (v. 1) Do you think she believed she was going to her death? Why or why not?
2. What was the significance of King Ahasuerus holding out the golden sceptre to Esther?
3. Did King Ahasuerus’ response to Esther surprise you? Why or why not? What does his reaction reveal about what was accomplished by the fast in the previous passage? Is it right to view spiritual disciplines like fasting in that way?
4. Describe a time you walked obediently in faith and experienced the Lord’s favour, provision, and blessing. How do we know He will provide all we need if we obey...even if His favour and blessing are not what we expect?
5. How does the gospel answer our need for true significance?

Application & Prayer

Because of the blood of Jesus, we can approach God's throne with confidence and boldness. Because of Jesus, we are forever accepted and promised that if we ask, it will be given to us (Matthew 7:7-8). Let us seek the approval of God, rather than the fleeting approval of man, for only then will we have life, and have it to the full.

- Confess where you have been seeking the approval of man rather than the approval of God.
- Ask God to create a clean heart in you and ask Him for the courage to stand up for what is right, in spite of man's opinions.
- Spend some time in prayer asking for God's guidance. What is He asking you to do right now? And what does He want to do for you that **only He can do**?