

February 14, 2024 – Sermon Notes

“Dying to Self or Living for Self”

Esther 5:1-14

Prel Rmks

Text ~ Title ~ This chapter gives us a clear contrast between those to paths

(1) Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on *her* royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house.

(2) So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, *that* she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that *was* in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter.

(3) And the king said to her, "What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom!" **(4)** So Esther answered, "If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him." **(5)** Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly, that he may do as Esther has said." So the king and Haman went to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

(6) At the banquet of wine the king said to Esther, "What is your petition? It shall be granted you. What is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!"

(7) Then Esther answered and said, "My petition and request *is this*: **(8)** If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said." **(9)** So Haman went out that day joyful and with a glad heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and that he did not stand or tremble before him, he was filled with indignation against Mordecai.

(10) Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh. **(11)** Then Haman told them of his great riches, the multitude of his children, everything in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king. **(12)** Moreover Haman said, "Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king." **(13)** Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." **(14)** Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it; then go merrily with the

king to the banquet." And the thing pleased Haman; so he had the gallows made.

INTRO

We get to see 2 real life illustrations.

- One of Dying to Self – Queen Esther
- One of Living for Self – Haman

Luke 9:24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.

I. Dying to Self – (Illustrated by Queen Esther) 1-8

Esther 4:16 "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"

Cliffhanger ...

Queen Esther presents a picture of what it means to die to self:

She Had a Willingness to Literally Die 1-2

(1)

Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house.

Commercial break – we'll be back with more of our story

This was real life! Real history.

It must have been a nervous time for a young woman like Esther!

This was a very brave thing that Queen Esther did!

Esther 4:11 "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, *he has* but one law: put *all* to death, except the one to whom the

king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days."

(2)

So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter.

Whew!

No doubt Esther didn't want to die ... But she had a willingness to literally die, if necessary, for her countrymen – for the preservation of her people.

She Was Not Driven By Covetous Desires 3-5

She was content with her lot in life and with what she had.

(3)

And the king said to her, "What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom!"

This was a real test for a young woman – instant billionaire!

Mark 6:23

He King Herod on his birthday also swore to **her, the daughter of Herodias – Salome**

"Whatever you ask me, I will give you, **up to half my kingdom much less ...**"

(4)

So Esther answered, "If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him."

(5)

Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly, that he may do as Esther has said." So the king and Haman went to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

She Was Willing to Literally Die

She Was Not Driven by Covetous Desires

She Had Patience Concerning the Timing of Unfolding Events 6-8

(6)

At the banquet of wine the king said to Esther, "What is your petition? It shall be granted you. What is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!"

(7)

Then Esther answered and said, "My petition and request is *this*:

(8)

If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow

I will do as the king has said I'll tell you my request tomorrow."

Esther 1:20 "... the king's decree ... all wives will honor their husbands ..."

Esther 1:22 "... that each man should be master in his own house"

Suspense builds!

What happened here?

She slowed things down.

Didn't push ahead hastily and rush to get what she wanted.

The King had received her. But she hasn't achieved her desired outcome yet. And in that regard she still has a tall order to get across: THE LAWS OF THE MEDES AND PERSIANS ...

She used this first banquet to size up the situation.

She wasn't expecting this unbelievable offer from the king.

Esther: "Let's slow this down and think it through."

That's usually a wise choice – not to push ahead and want everything NOW ...

Queen Esther, in this chapter, presents a picture of someone who is willing to lose her life:

literally lose her life,

lose material gain that she might have wanted

even let go of control over the timing of events in her life

She illustrates what it means to die to self.

II. Living for Self – (Illustrated by Haman) 9-14

If there was ever anyone who presents the picture of someone who loves himself and is living for himself – Haman is that someone!

He Had a Heart Controlled by Covetousness 9

He wasn't content unless he had everything he wanted and unless he had his way in every way.

(9)

So Haman **went out** that day **joyful** and with a **glad heart**; **but** when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and that he did not stand or tremble before him, **he was filled with indignation** against Mordecai.

He Had A Heart Filled With Pride and Arrogance 10-13

He is absolutely filled with pride and arrogance!

(10)

Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and **went home**, and he sent and called for his **friends** and his **wife Zeresh gold**.

(11)

Then Haman told them of **his great riches profit, the multitude of his children posterity – well regarded**, everything in which **the king had promoted him promotion**, and how **he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king power**.

(12)

Moreover Haman said, **"Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared position and prestige**; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king.

(13)

Yet all this avails me nothing never content, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

He Had a Murderous Heart – A Heart With No Regard for the Lives of Others 14

(14)

Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him **bad advice**, "Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it; then go merrily with the king to the banquet." And the thing pleased Haman; so he had the gallows made.

Cliff-hanger – we'll have to wait for next week's installment. Chptr. 6

Implications / Applications

1. We are called to die to self in all the ways that are illustrated by Queen Esther in this chapter.

- **Luke 9:23-25** Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. **(24)** For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. **(25)** For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?

2. Even as believers, there is often a lot of Haman in each of us. We need the Lord to continue to work on our hearts.

- **Trevor Kirkland:** "All of us would be like Haman if we didn't have grace, mercy and peace. Haman is merely a reflection of every sinner – egotistical to the point that the least slight to our reputation brings murderous thoughts ... Hamanism is alive and well."
- **Philippians 2:21** For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.
- **Trevor Kirkland:** "These words are not spoken of heathens who knew not Christ; nor of apostates who had forsaken Christ, but of fellow Christians who sought their own things not the things of Christ. These words are not spoken as prophecy nor in days of declension, but in the golden age of the church – in the days of the Apostles. If it was true then, how much worse now when the Apostolic age is over."

3. Our King is not like King Ahasuerus.

- a. He bids us to come to Him without fear.

Matthew 11:28-30 Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **(29)** Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **(30)** For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

- b. He offers us all of the Kingdom as joint-heirs with His Son

Luke 12:32 "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. **Ephesians 1** – "every spiritual blessing"