CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
OCTOBER26 2024

Scripture Story: Esther 1–4.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings*, chapter 49.

a story of faith



TERRILL THOMAS

flashlight

"The trying experiences that came to God's people in the days of Esther were not peculiar to that age alone. The revelator, looking down the ages to the close of time, has declared, 'The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.' Revelation 12:17. Some who today are living on the earth will see these words fulfilled" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 605).

keytext

"Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: '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!' "

(Esther 4:15, 16, NKJV)

what do you think?

How would you respond if you were facing persecution for your Christian beliefs?

___ Remain faithful to God and His truth regardless of the consequences.

___ Pray earnestly and fast, trusting God with the solution.

___ Encourage your fellow Christian friends and ask them to join you in prayer.

___ Pray for those who persecute you that they may experience the love of Jesus and accept Him as their personal Savior and Friend.

___ Take matters into your hands and deny your Christian faith for fear of punishment or death.

did you know?

Christian martyrs are people who willingly give up their life because they refuse to renounce their faith. Most of today's Christian martyrs are unnamed. It's easy to remember martyrs from the Bible days and from centuries ago; however, most of today's martyrs we may never hear about. In the story of Esther we will learn how she trusted in God and put her faith in Him, even though she knew she could perish. She knew that she must put her faith in her Creator in order to keep her people and their faith from being destroyed. God was with her, and He gave her the strength to face the king. She went before the king even though she knew it might end her life. It is this kind of faith that has been placed in the hearts of millions, even when face to face with death.

INTO THE STORY

"After these events, King Xerxes honored Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor."

"When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged."

"Then Haman said to King Xerxes, 'There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents of silver to the king's administrators for the royal treasury.'

"So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. 'Keep the money,' the king said to Haman, 'and do with the people as you please.' "

"When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. But he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. . . .

"When Esther's eunchs and female attendants came and told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress. . . . Then Esther summoned Hathak, one of the king's eunuchs assigned to attend her, and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why. . . .

". . . Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews."

"Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 'Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.'

"So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions."

(Esther 3:1, 2, 5, 8-11; 4:1-7, 15-17, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

In what way did Esther demonstrate true faith in Jesus Christ?

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What was Haman's reaction toward Mordecai when he found out that he would not bow down before him?

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What was the driving force that caused Esther to go before the king, even if it was against the law, and risk her life?

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What do you think made Haman so eager to persecute the Jews?

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Why do you think King Xerxes listened to Haman and granted him his wish?

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Name some ways that Esther can be an example to us:

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What can you learn from Esther's example when you face major crisis situations? What examples and promises from the Bible strengthen your faith in such times?

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Describe an event during which you or someone you know experienced God's miraculous answer to prayer:

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punch lines

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding" **(Proverbs 3:5, NIV).**

"Everything is possible for one who believes" **(Mark 9:23, NIV).**

"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong" **(1 Corinthians 16:13, NIV).**

"But someone will say, 'You have faith; I have deeds.' Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds" **(James 2:18, NIV).**

"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" **(Luke 11:9, NIV).**

"He replied, 'Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, "Move from here to there," and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you' " **(Matthew 17:20, NIV).**

further insight

"The crisis that Esther faced demanded quick, earnest action; but both she and Mordecai realized that unless God should work mightily in their behalf, their own efforts would be unavailing."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 601

Sabbath

Read Mark 9:23.

God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Fundamental Belief 3, The Father).

A lot of us probably look at Esther's amazing leap of faith and wonder what we would do if we were put in that situation. It has to do with trust in God. If we put our lives in His hands and commit ourselves to Him fully, He will give us the strength to stand up and do the right thing.

List five situations in your life in which you demonstrated faith in Jesus Christ.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Sunday

Read Joshua 1:5.

God will always be by our side, whether we feel Him there or not. Sometimes we are so caught up in our own lives and problems that we forget that it's Him we should depend on, and not ourselves. However, as in every good relationship, there needs to be consistent two-way communication. God communicates with us through His Word, through the influence of His Holy Spirit on our conscience, and through His unnumbered blessings. In response, we communicate with God through prayer, obedience to the teachings of His Word, and trust in Him for everything that preoccupies us.

What steps will you take to maintain your communication with God regularly?

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Monday

Read Esther 4:16.

Esther is quoted as saying, "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16, NIV). It was through faith that God helped Esther save her people from being destroyed. How important is faith in God to you? Are you willing to trust God both in the small and in the great matters of your life?

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Tuesday

Read Matthew 10:39 and Philippians 1:20, 21.

The *Flashlight* quote reminds us that one day we may all be faced with a life-and-death situation because of our faith. Based on Matthew 10:39, what do you think it means to lose your life for the sake of God's cause?

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What do you think is the connection between living for Christ and being ready to give your life for Him? If you surrender your life to Jesus, how will your perspective on death change? Look at Paul's affirmation in Philippians 1:21. Do you have such a living connection with Jesus?

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Wednesday

Read Proverbs 3:5, 6.

We must not lean on our own understanding but lean on God and His Word. God sees the big picture. He knows the end from the beginning, and He has our best interest at heart. Therefore we can trust Him with everything that concerns us.

Read through the entire book of Esther and try to find more examples of faith and trust. Write down three of them that could apply to your life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Thursday

Read Psalm 9:10; Psalm 31:14; and Daniel 3:16-18.

What are some trials, whether big or small, that you've gone through and decided to put your faith wholeheartedly in God?

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Friday

Read Hebrews 11:1.

If your life was ever in danger because of your Christian beliefs and you had to defend your faith or the faith of others, what would you say in defense of your faith? Write down three different sentences.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1, NKJV).

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings, chapter 49.

**Royalty and Ruin* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it by going to www.cornerstoneconnections.net and clicking on "Conflict of the Ages series." By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.