



CROSSROADS

2015 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Study 4

Brave Choices

Esther 4

*I will go to the king, which is against
the law; and if I perish, I perish!*



Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia Children's Ministry

Brave Choices

Objective

To show that we need to obey God and trust Him, even when we are scared, or really don't want to.

Key Verses

Esther 4 - Main Teaching Passage

2 Timothy 3:16

Exodus 21:12

Proverbs 11:14, 21:1

Memory Verse - 1 Cor 16:13-14

"Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love.

Hook

Review yesterday's memory verse, Proverbs 29:25

Ask the students:

"Is it ever okay to break the law? Why or why not?"

"What do you do if man's law tells you to break God's law? For example, in some countries around the world it is illegal to go to church."

Finally, "Have you ever been afraid to do something, even though you knew it was right?"

BOOK

The story of Esther is 10 chapters in length, which is much too long for one study. Our focus will be on chapter 4 and the decision that Esther makes to go before the King, which will put her life in very real jeopardy. Obviously context of the earlier passages needs to be given, as well as the result of Esther putting God's will above her own. Please be careful not to allow peripheral passages to divert you from the main focus of the study.

Chapter 4 begins with Mordecai becoming aware of Haman's plot to destroy the Jews and crying out to God in despair. Esther is told that she is the only person with the ability and opportunity to stand for God and His people, and that she has been raised up "for such a time as this." Esther fears that if she goes before the King, she will be put to death, as this is the law. Yet she decides, despite her fears, to honor God and do what is right. God graciously strengthens her and moves the king's heart to extend the scepter and give her an audience. Because of her bold choice to trust God, Esther is responsible for saving the entire Jewish nation from destruction.

LOOK

Doing what's right is not always easy. In fact, sometimes it is really, really hard. For Esther, doing what was right meant breaking the law and putting her own life in danger. Even though she was the new queen, the law in the land of Babylon was that anyone who approached the king uninvited was to be put to death unless the king held out his scepter and granted them access. Esther was faced with a dilemma: on the one hand her people were in grave peril and might all be killed. On the other hand, if she went before the King uninvited *she* might be killed, and then would not be able to do anything else to save her people. Naturally, Esther was very afraid and did not want to go before the King. (v. 11)

When confronted with this very difficult decision, Esther does two things that we should all take note of. First, she seeks advice from a wiser, older relative. Esther shares her worries with her uncle Mordecai. The Bible tells us that God has put certain things in our lives to help us make tough decisions. One of those things is the Word of God (2 Tim 3:16), another is our parents (Eph 6:2; Ex 20:12). God has placed experienced, wise people in our lives so that we can seek counsel and get wisdom from them.

LOOK

Proverbs 11:14 tells us “In the abundance of counselors there is victory.” In other words, when we don’t know what to do, we should look for advice in God’s Word, but also from wise, experienced people, like our parents. Esther does this and is told by Mordecai that God has raised her up for such a time as this. This means that God had put in place all of the incredible events surrounding Esther’s life, even becoming queen, so that she would have this opportunity to save her people. The second thing that Esther does is trust that God will watch over her and protect her.

Proverbs 21:1 tells us “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, He turns it wherever He wishes.” Esther knows God’s Word, trusts God’s love toward her and her people, and acts accordingly. Even though she is afraid, she states “I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!” She chooses to believe that God’s way is better than her own.

The King extends the scepter to her and grants her access, even stating that she can ask whatever she wishes and He will give it to her. Truly God was watching over her and strengthening her cause. There are times when we might have to do the right thing even when we are worried about what the repercussions might be. When those times come, we need to remember God’s Word, trust it, and seek wise, godly advice from the people that God has put around us. You and I might have been raised up by God “for such times as these.”

TOOK

As a class, memorize 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

Pray: Pray over the students, and ask that the Lord would hold them and strengthen them for the days that they have ahead. Pray that these students would be able to stand for truth even if that means going against the prevailing culture, or even taking a stand against ungodly laws.

Parent Question: Who are the people in your life that help you make decisions?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Esther 4 by David Guzik

Esther 4 - Esther's Decision

A. Mordecai's mourning.

1. (1-3) He and the rest of the Jews lament their fate.

When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one *might* enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, *there was* great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

a. **He tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes:** Though Mordecai was anguished at all this, we remember also that his integrity was the cause of it. He **cried out with a loud and bitter cry**, but he would not change his mind grovel at the feet of Haman to save himself or his people.

i. This was not only because of the personal integrity of Mordecai, but also because he knew the character of the laws of the Persians - that they could not be changed once decreed (Esther 1:19).

b. **There was great mourning among the Jews:** Mordecai's reaction was imitated all over the Persian Empire in public expressions of grief and horror.

2. (4-7) Mordecai explains the problem to Esther.

So Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her, and the queen was deeply distressed. Then she sent garments to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but he would not accept *them*. Then Esther called Hathach, *one* of the king's eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordecai, to learn what and why this *was*. So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square that *was* in front of the king's gate. And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews.

a. **Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her:** Esther, living in the isolation of the palace, had not yet been made aware of this decree. Before she understood the decree, she could not understand why her cousin Mordecai made such a spectacle of himself.

b. **And the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews:** Mordecai was well aware of the money motive that made king Ahasuerus receptive to this evil plan.

B. Mordecai's request.

1. (8-12) His first request and Esther's appeal to him in response.

He also gave him a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people. So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai. Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai: "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." So they told Mordecai Esther's words.

a. **That he might show it to Esther and explain it to her:** After giving a copy of the decree to Esther through a courier, Mordecai challenged her to intercede on behalf of her people before the king.

b. **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:** Esther explained the difficulty behind this - she was only allowed to come to the king when called, and if she came on her own, she could be executed for daring to approach the king without an invitation.

i. Apparently, the life of a queen of Persia was not one of great intimacy with the king. Esther said, "**I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days**" – meaning she had not seen her husband for an entire month.

2. (13-14) Mordecai's second request.

And Mordecai told *them* to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?"

a. **Do not think in your heart that you will escape:** Mordecai reminded Esther that she could not remain insulated from this decree anymore than anyone else.

b. **If you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place:** Mordecai's trust was in the faithfulness of God, not in the faithfulness of Esther. He knows that God will not let His people down, even if individuals let God down.

c. **But you and your father's house will perish:** Mordecai reminded Esther that though the fate of God's people rested in God and not in her, her *own fate* depended on her own faithfulness to God.

d. **Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?** Mordecai knew that God had promoted this orphan in exile for a reason - and Esther must have the courage and wisdom to see that reason and fulfill it.

i. This principle applies to us also. God promotes us or puts in a place for a reason, and we need the courage and wisdom to see that reason and to walk in it.

ii. "You have been wishing for another position where you could do something for Jesus: do not wish anything of the kind, but serve him where you are." (Spurgeon)

iii. "I believe that in dark times God is making lamps with which to remove the gloom. Martin Luther is sitting

by his father's hearth in the forest when the Pope is selling his wicked indulgences: he will come out soon, and stop the crowing of the cock of the Romish Christ-denying Peter. John Calvin is quietly studying when false doctrine is most rife, and he will be heard of at Geneva. A young man is here this morning – I do not know whereabouts he is, but I pray the Lord to make this to be an ordination sermon to him, starting him on his life-work. I feel as if I were Samuel at Bethlehem, seedlings for David, to anoint him with a horn of oil in the name of the Lord." (Spurgeon)

3. (15-17) Esther's decision.

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!" So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him.

a. **Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me:** Taking the determination of the Lord, Esther decided that she would go and make a bold appearance before the king, but only if she was supported by prayer and fasting.

i. Jesus reminded us that special spiritual battles sometimes require special preparation with prayer and fasting. Regarding a stubborn case of demonic possession, He said *this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting* (Matthew 17:20).

b. **And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!** Esther carried a bold attitude towards her mission. She was determined to be obedient, no matter what the cost.

i. Jesus exhorted us to have the same attitude: *Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul* (Matthew 10:28). Paul was also an example of this attitude: *To live is Christ, and to die is gain* (Philippians 1:21).

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