The Great Reversal Begins – Esther 4:18-6:14

SET UP: Today we will do something a little different. As we read about the Great Reversal for the Hebrew people during the time of Esther, we will look at the Global Impact ministry of FBNO.

**Esther 4:15-16 – Start on your knees - PRAY:** *Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 16 “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.”*

 Review: Last week I talked about Esther’s request for prayer and the power of prayer that she harnessed for the moment of her need. We want to harness the power of prayer for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are sharing the gospel around the world. We have a prayer strategy for you to follow over the next 12 months. You will be praying for people you have never met. But you will also be praying for many people who have passed through our congregation on their way to mission fields around the world.

1. DAVID: Esther had heard from God through the challenge of Mordecai, and she knew that now was the time and she was the person. She was an ordinary Jewish girl in exile who had become a queen – she knew she could not do this on her own!
2. DAVID: She knew that she must seek God – so she asked Mordecai to have all of the people fast - and this implies that she was asking them to seek God in prayer, and she and those closest to her did the same.

**Esther 5:1-2 - Go to the need - GIVE and GO:** *On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king’s hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. 2 When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.*

 Review: Last week I talked about that critical moment that Esther focused upon in her prayer request to her people. She wanted prayer for the moment she appeared, without invitation, before the king of Persia. She knew that the possibility was that she would be executed. But she also knew that there was at least a chance that the king would extend his scepter to her and spare her life.

 We GO TO THE NEED as a congregation. We give as we go—of our time, our talent, our love, and our resources.

 The NEEDS WE ADDRESS TODAY are related to Christmas. We have senior adults at the Jefferson Healthcare Facility that need the love of God. We are in touch with many foster children who need practical items for Christmas. We know homeless people by name who are in need of the basics of life. We have young people in prison and in trouble whose lives may be changed by our expressions of care this Christmas. We know families who would benefit from a Christmas Basket of food and children in our public schools who are at risk of hunger.

1. DAVID: There was great personal risk in what Esther did next, but she did it. She had no how-to manual, no example to follow, just what we assume was divine direction. She didn’t rush it and run ahead of God, and she wasn’t afraid or limited by her own resources, and she began to see favorable results

***Our Go Projects will be our Christmas Giving Projects. These will include:***

1. *Jefferson Health Care Gifts for Senior Adults*
2. *Foster Care Gifts for Children*
3. *Warmth Bags for OZ and Gentilly Lowes*
4. *Christmas Goodies for Rivarde, Nursing Home, ESL, Bunny Friend, etc (foil pan, date due back)*
5. *Donation list for Inward*
6. *Teacher Bags for Dibert*
7. *Sign up to deliver Christmas Baskets on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
8. *Bibles (mark and return for Care Effect/Sign out up to 10 to give away in your neighborhood, etc. as you share your faith*

**Esther 6:1-11: 1 That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. 2 It was found recorded there that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king’s officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes.**

**3 “What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this?” the king asked.**

**“Nothing has been done for him,” his attendants answered.**

**4 The king said, “Who is in the court?” Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about impaling Mordecai on the pole he had set up for him.**

**5 His attendants answered, “Haman is standing in the court.”**

**“Bring him in,” the king ordered.**

**6 When Haman entered, the king asked him, “What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?”**

**Now Haman thought to himself, “Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?” 7 So he answered the king, “For the man the king delights to honor, 8 have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. 9 Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king’s most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, ‘This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!’ ”**

**10 “Go at once,” the king commanded Haman. “Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king’s gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended.”**

**11 So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, “This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!”**

**Brace for surprise – SEE GOD WORK: *That night the king could not sleep* (Esther 6:1).**

 THE CORE TEACHING TODAY:

**A. God may DISTURB OUR SLEEP.**

 1. Xerxes could not sleep. I don’t know if this is common with kings. I know that lots of us have a hard time sleeping sometimes.

 2. Not being able to sleep is sometimes disturbing. It can be dangerous to your emotional health and even be life-threatening.

 3. Xerxes has done many things to regret. But tonight he cannot put his finger on the thing that is disturbing his sleep. It is God, but he does not know it.

 4. Can you name the trouble that disturbs your sleep? Or do you have enough anxieties that you cannot really identify one.

**B. God prompts us in the night.**

 1. Ideas come to mind and heart that need to be preserved, written down, and acted upon. That is part of what God does at night in our sleep and in our sleeplessness. If you do not keep a pencil beside your bed, you may want to start doing so. The ideas you have for your work, your family, and your teaching ministry may not come to you later, when you are wide awake.

 2. Xerxes feels compelled to REVIEW the RECORD of his reign (v1). He wakes up someone else, presumably, and they come in with the history book that is his own personal chronicle, like an official log of his activities, and they read to him.

 a. No one would have thought of this, not Mordecai or Easter.

**C. God is at work: Our Affirmation.** God was at work in ways that Mordecai or Esther could not facilitate or predict. This is always true in your life as well.

 1. Any time you are praying for the reversal of a person’s behavior or direction, ask God to intervene in their lives through people you don’t know and circumstances you could never orchestrate. God speaks through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and his people.

 2. God brings to Xerxes’ attention that Mordecai saved him from an assassination plot by two of his officials.

 3. Xerxes realizes that he never gave proper recognition to the Mordecai, the Jew who sat at the gate. IT IS THE TURNING POINT, right here. Here begins the GREAT REVERSAL. God is going to change the course of history through this king who is not a believer but is still susceptible to the activity of God.

**D. God Honors His People: *What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this? The king asked* (v3).**

 1. Haman is pulled into the King’s nighttime activity simply because he happens to be in the palace. He is solicited to help with the plans: ***What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?* (v6).**

 2. In his arrogance, Haman assumes that he is the very man the king delights to honor. So he gives the king a litany of ideas that are truly amazing.

 3. Haman is SHOCKED to learn that Mordecai, the man is was about to request be hanged, is the man the king delights to honor (v4). He suddenly realizes that he, Haman, is the one who will implement the plan to honor Mordecai, the very one he intended to hang.

E. God Turns Life Inside-Out: ***So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, “This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!”* (v11).**

**Conclusion**: God honors his people, those who trust in him. He has blessings in store both now and in the life to come. Oh how blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness—the will be filled!