

GOD HONOURS, EVEN WHEN OTHERS OPPOSE

ESTHER'S COURAGE

“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. ³ Then the king asked, “What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you.” ⁴ “If it pleases the king,” replied Esther, “let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him.” ⁵ “Bring Haman at once,” the king said, “so that we may do what Esther asks.” So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared. ⁶ As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, “Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.” ⁷ Esther replied, “My petition and my request is this: ⁸ If the king regards me with favor and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king’s question.” - Esther 5:1-8

- Esther went to see the king although it could have cost her her life.
- The king was pleased to see Esther and offered her anything. (*Favour?*)
- She requested a banquet with the king and Haman. It was granted.
- The king knew that something else was on Esther’s mind, so at the banquet he asked what she really wanted.
- She (oddly enough) requested a second banquet with the same group.

HAMAN'S EMOTIONS

“Haman went out that day happy and in high spirits. But when he saw Mordecai at the king’s gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with rage against Mordecai. ¹⁰ Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home. Calling together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, ¹¹ Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honoured him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials. ¹² “And that’s not all,” Haman added. “I’m the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow. ¹³ But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king’s gate.” ¹⁴ His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, “Have a pole set up, reaching to a height of fifty cubits, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai impaled on it. Then go with the king to the banquet and enjoy yourself.” This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the pole set up.” - Esther 5:9-14

- He was happy (because of the banquet).
- He was filled with rage (because of Mordecai).
- He was proud (his wealth; his sons; his position; his banquet).
- He was empty (because of his hatred).
- He was told he could be happy by killing his enemy and he was delighted.

THE KING'S INSOMNIA AND MORDECAI'S REWARD

“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 honour 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 honour?” Now Haman thought to himself, “Who is there that the king would rather honour than me?” ⁷ So he answered the king, “For the man the king delights to honour, 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 honour, 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 honour!’” 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 honour!” - Esther 6:1-11

- When the king couldn’t sleep, he asked for a “bedtime story”. It just so happened that the story of Mordecai and the plot was read to him.
- The king learned that Mordecai had never been rewarded. (5 years)
- It so happened that Haman was there and suggested the reward (actually thinking it was for him) and then was asked to honour Mordecai.

HAMAN'S GRIEF

“Afterward Mordecai returned to the king’s gate. But Haman rushed home, with his head covered in grief, ¹³ and told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, “Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him—you will surely come to ruin!” ¹⁴ While they were still talking with him, the king’s eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esther had prepared.” - Esther 5:12-14

- Haman returned to his home in grief and reported his bad day.
- His wife and advisors said that Haman was ruined because Mordecai was a Jew.
 - Either they knew that Queen Esther was a Jew.
 - Or they understood the concept of a “chosen people”.
 - Or the “wise men” were prophets.

LESSONS:

- There are 3 ways to be honoured: by yourself, by others, or by God.
- There are several ways to deal with success: pride or faithfulness.

OUR KEY THOUGHT

- Only God can honour you when others oppose you.

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