

Queen Esther – Excelling in Hardship

Objectives

To learn from Esther's example on how to face hardships and use them as opportunities to excel

References

Holy Scripture

Scriptural Verse

“O My Lord, You alone are our King. Help me, who am alone and have no help but You! For my risk of danger is in my hand” (Esther 4:17k - The So-called Apocryphal Text)

Lesson Outline

Many times we are faced with difficult situations in life that bring us down and make us feel that we cannot succeed given the situation that we are in. However, Esther is a perfect example on how the Lord uses hardship for His glory and the success of His children.

1. Although she was an orphan and a slave girl living in captivity she did not neglect her spiritual life for she was still able to maintain her inner beauty regardless of the hardships she faced. Esther 2: 5-9.
2. She trusted and obeyed the counsel of her elders and guardians and did not rely on her own understanding. Esther 2:10, 15.
3. Esther was in another difficult situation, if she does not please the king, she would not be able to go back to her people and marry from her tribe but she would spend the rest of her life as a concubine in the king's palace. But God granted her grace and favor in the eyes of the king to save her from the fate of being a concubine and to use her for His glory. God has a plan for our lives and protects us from harm even in times of hardship and tribulation. Esther 2:17.
4. Esther was a content person. It may seem that Esther was living a good life but in reality her life was filled with bitterness. She, a Jewish girl, was married to an uncircumcised Gentile. For a devout Jewish girl, that was abhorrent. Yet she accepted her fate with joy and maintained her relationship with God even in the midst of a sinful world. Many times our hardships make us grumble and complain and turn against God.
5. Esther finds herself in another dangerous situation. She and her people are facing annihilation and she must intercede on her people's behalf before the king. Her first response is to call for a period of fasting and prayer. Esther 4:15-16. The spiritual person's response in times of hardships is to stand before God in prayer and supplication.
6. Esther never forgot her roots and who she was. In this time of hardship, she could have easily ignored her people and associated herself with the King and his people yet she believed in God and in His promise to Israel. She knew that God would never forsake His people and that His justice would prevail sooner or later. Many times in hardships, we chose to forget the ways and truths of the Lord

- because that is easier for us in a particular situation. However, we must remember like Esther that God's truth and justice always reigns in the end.
7. Esther was wise in her actions to save the Jews. She chose her words carefully and the right timing. She did not panic and act rashly and impulsively as we do many times in tough situations. We panic and we feel like we have to take matters in our own hands and to make quick decisions rather than waiting on the Lord with patience and thinking matters through. Rash and impulsive behavior would have most likely resulted in Esther's death and for us too unwise decisions just makes matters worse. Esther chapters 5-7.

Conclusion

Esther is a great example of how one can survive and excel in times of trouble through the help of God. Esther showed great humility, a deep love and trust for God who was her refuge in her time of trouble.

Activities/Discussion Points

1. Do you think that God puts us in certain places or times for a particular reason?
2. What are ways that we can make sure that we are not acting impulsively when faced with difficult situations?
3. What are ways that we can practice being content?