

THE **crossing** **small groups**

Keith Simon **Esther 5-7** Sermon Discussion Participant's Guide

Purpose of Discussion: God brings reversal in the characters of Esther pointing us forward to the great reversal that Jesus makes on behalf of his people.

Icebreaker: What is your favorite underdog story?

Discussion:

Transition: The story of Esther continues with a set of circumstances no one saw coming. Esther, even as queen was unsure if Xerxes would listen or kill her as she entered the court. Mordecai was still distraught about the fate of his people, the Jews and Haman was ruthlessly attempting to wipe out an entire people group through his position and power. No one knew that everything was going to be reversed, that each person's fate takes a turn unexpected in the story. Everyone, except God.

Read:

Esther 5:1-2

“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. 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. “

1. Esther was not sure how this encounter would go. Yet in faith she decided that trying to save her people was more important than the fate that could come on her.

Has there been a time in your life when you were in a position like Esther? You needed to make a big decision, that could go wrong or put you in a tough place?

Keith helped us see that Haman was driven by his identity. In chapter five he brags to his wife and friends about how great, wealthy, and powerful he is. He sits in a seat that many other

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Persians would want, the right-hand man of the King. As the story unfolds, we see that he is blinded by this, and it drives him to make rash and naïve decisions. A man in this position did not get there by chance, Haman was likely a very intelligent and sharp leader, so it's safe to say he was acting out of character.

2. As you navigate life in the grey, what are driving motivators for you that might lead you to act out of character?

Haman had everything, but he was missing a deep faith in Yahweh. Keith reminded us of the equation 'everything-Jesus = nothing'. Meaning we, like Haman have 'things' we aren't willing to let go of, sometimes even for Jesus. We are more willing to hold on to the 'things of this world' and sacrifice a relationship with the King of this world.

3. What 'things' in your life are hard to let go of?
4. What does the story of Esther tell us about letting go of these things?

Read:

[Esther 6:4-10](#)

⁴The 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.

⁵His attendants answered, "Haman is standing in the court."

"Bring him in," the king ordered.

⁶When 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?" ⁷So he answered the king, "For the man the king delights to honor, ⁸have 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. ⁹Then 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."

5. In what ways do we see God at work through this situation?
6. Keith reminded us that God primarily works through the mundane choices in our lives. How have you seen God at work in your life, like the encounter in chapter 6 above?

The moment of reversal comes at this point in chapter 7. Esther has been building to this point. She finally reveals to the King that she is a Jew, like Mordecai and that there is a plot against her. She shares all of this with the King, and he inquires who it is that is making this plot she points to Haman. His fate is sealed, and so the great reversals in the book of Esther are complete.

Read:

[Mark 10:41-45](#)

⁴¹When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. ⁴²Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

7. Esther is pointing forward to Jesus, the great reversal. Name some ways that Jesus is the great reversal.

Keith ended by challenging us to consider how we live in light of Jesus and his great reversal.

8. In what areas of your life is God challenging you to live out the great reversal? In other words, where do you notice the tension between the way our culture wants you to live and how God has called you to live?

Sharing and Prayer:

First, rejoice and pray together through the ways Jesus is at work through your lives, just like the characters in Mordecai.

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Then, consider and share what grey areas God is putting on your heart this week. Spend time praying, maybe in pairs or smaller groups that Jesus would give you the strength to engage the difficult, grey areas of this world.