

Weekly Reflection – Esther part 5 – “Will You Be the **Somebody**?”

- Is there something in this church or in this community you are hoping “**somebody**” will do?
- Do you ever think to yourself, “**somebody**” ought to _____ or, I wish “**somebody**” would _____?
- Will you be the “**somebody**”?
- In Esther 4 Mordecai will challenge Esther to be the “somebody” to help meet the needs of her people, the Jews.
- Main idea: As God entrusts us with positions of opportunity and empowers us for obedience, will we take a risk and in faith participate in His plan and be the “**somebody**”, or will we in fear and selfishness shy away and forfeit an opportunity?
- I believe that every day we find ourselves in positions, with opportunities, to join God in advancing His kingdom on earth. And God is asking, “Will you be the somebody who I can use in this situation?”
- Our obedience is God’s ordinary means for accomplishing His extraordinary plans.

Esther 4

Mordecai wanted Esther to intercede on behalf of all the Jews. Esther, however, wavered at her cousin’s prompting. Even though she was the queen, her access to the king was restricted. The penalty for breaking protocol was death. To add to the hesitancy, it had been a month since she was last summoned before Ahasuerus. Esther’s people were in trouble, but instead of immediately jumping at the chance to help them, she hesitated. Her first thought was not their deaths but her own. She was not certain she wanted to take such a risk. I would be the last to throw a stone at Esther. After all, like her, you and I may be hesitant to seize opportunities the Lord entrusts to us for His sake. Maybe Esther thought she could ignore the problem, or that it was not her problem. Perhaps since Esther had not been invited in to see the king for 30 days, she reasoned that she was not the right person for the task. Maybe you are there now and are listing all the reasons that you are not the right person or it’s not the right time for whatever opportunity God seems to be granting. We tend to set our gaze on our deficiencies or disqualifications rather than the Lord’s sufficient grace and empowerment.

“For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish... Esther 4:14a ESV

- It is not a choice between Esther’s delivering the Jews or God’s delivering them. Rather, it is a question of what human agency God will use to deliver the Jews, Esther or some other means.
- Regardless of Esther’s actions, Mordecai was certain God’s people would be preserved.
- ***“Deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place.”***
- I believe that every day we find ourselves in positions, with opportunities, to join God in advancing His kingdom on earth. And God is asking, “Will you be the somebody who I can use in this situation, or do I need to look in another place?”
- It should grieve us if the Lord has to work around us instead of through us.

“...And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”” Esther 4:14b ESV

- After evaluating the Jews’ problem and Esther’s placement, the lights of providence are possibly just beginning to gleam for Mordecai as he asserts that perhaps Esther’s being taken and then her

becoming queen are not a random tragedy after all. Maybe the reason she has such a position is for a higher purpose.

- Derek Prime asserts, "We should all be asking, 'What work has God especially for me to do because he has allowed me to be alive at this particular time?'" (Unspoken Lessons, 81).
- What I pray is that the lights of providence would be on for all of us.
- The Lord determines both when and where we live.
- As Paul says of God, ***"And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place," Acts 17:26 ESV***
- There is not another time period or place in which you should have lived.
- The places where we are, the positions we hold, and the people we are surrounded by have been entrusted to us for the purpose of gospel advancement.

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10 ESV

- God has a purpose for you, He has good works planned for you.
- The question is not, if God has plans for you. The question is, will you be obedient and step into those plans, even when you don't know the outcome, even if it could cost you your life.

Don't go down looking...swing away!

Esther now had a clear and life-changing choice to make, would she swing away, or will she go down looking? She could no longer live in the blurred shadows of two worlds. Up until now, she had been living as an undercover believer. Inwardly she still regarded herself as part of the covenant community, but outwardly she had become entirely separated from it. To continue to do so was no longer possible. Esther was brought to a defining moment in her life by circumstances over which she had no control. It was for "such a time as this" that she was forced to choose between identifying herself with God's covenant people or continuing to live as a pagan in the king's court. This "time" is our only time to make disciples, and the time decreases each day. Our lives should be gripped with gospel urgency.

"Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, 'Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.'"

Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him." Esther 4:15-17 ESV

- Where there initially had been reluctance, now in Esther there is resolve.
- Biblical fasting reflects dependence on God.
- When is the last time you fasted and prayed because you were seeking the Lord's direction?
- By itself, however, all the fasting in the world would accomplish nothing for God's covenant people in Persia.
- Esther therefore had to act as well as to fast.
- She did so without any explicit promises from God to protect her, or to bring about a "successful" conclusion to her mission.
- With each opportunity the Lord gives us, our responsibility is obedience, not results.
- We glorify God with our obedience not our results.

- What is needed is not our full knowledge but our faithful obedience.
- Will you be the somebody? Will you swing away or are you ok going down looking?
- Will you use the position and opportunities God has given to join Him in accomplishing the good works He has planned for you to do?

Our Great Mediator

- Esther interceded on behalf of her people, but there is no greater mediator than Jesus, our great High Priest (Hebrews 7:22-28).
- Tim Keller notes, “Esther saved her people in two ways: identification and mediation. Does that remind you of anyone? Jesus didn’t say ‘If I perish, I perish,’ He said, ‘When I perish’” (“If I Perish, I Perish”).
- Becoming our mediator did not merely require the possibility of His death but the certainty of it.
- His death purchased our eternal life as well as everything we need to do His will.
- ***“Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” Hebrews 13:20-21 ESV***
- The word used here for “equip” means to make fully ready; to put in full order; to make complete. The meaning here is, that Paul prayed that God would fully endow them with whatever grace was necessary to do His will and to keep His commandments.
- The question is not, does God have good works for you to do, and the question is also not will He equip you, empower you to do those good works. The question remains, will you step into those good works that God will equip you to do for His glory, even when you don’t know how it will turn out?

Questions:

- 1) Describe a time the Lord called you to do something, but you were full of fear rather than faith and did not obey. Why is Esther 4 a good chapter for many of us who have been in this position?
- 2) In what ways, if any, are you currently hesitating to obey the Lord? How can the gospel fuel obedience?
- 3) Are you quicker to focus on your deficiencies and disqualifications or on God’s grace and empowerment?
- 4) Who is someone God has used to encourage you to be obedient to something God was calling you to do? Why do we need others who will help spur our obedience? How can we encourage one another to be obedient?
- 5) What good work has God for you to do since He has determined for you to be a live in this time and place?
- 6) Why should it encourage us to know that God has predetermined good works for each of us to do and with those good works will give us everything we need to accomplish those good works?
- 7) How might the gospel bring us to the point where we are willing to say, “If I perish, I perish, but I am going to obey at all costs”?