



Civil Disobedience

Session Three

Look Back at Last Week

- Pastor Jon in his sermon on Esther 2:1-18, said that the book shows God is at work in all of life to bring about His good purposes. Discuss where you have seen this true in your life, and times when this has been difficult to see.
- Pastor Jon also suggested that when studying the Bible, approach it with these two questions: (1) what does this text say about us? (2) what does this text say about God? As you study the passage this week (Esther 2:19-3:15), discuss answers to these two questions.
- What are other Biblical examples where God has chosen to use broken people in difficult circumstances?

Read Aloud

Passage for this week: **Esther 2:19-3:15**

Head (15–20 Minutes)

OBSERVE THE TEXT AND THE AUTHOR'S MAIN POINTS

1. What did Mordecai uncover to King Xerxes that should have put him in a more favorable position than Haman?
2. What does Haman ask of King Xerxes when Mordecai will not honor him?
3. Why does Haman target not only Mordecai, but all Jewish people with his request?

Heart (15–20 Minutes)

ENVISION HOW THE TEXT—WHEN APPLIED—MIGHT TRANSFORM YOUR INNER LIFE IN TERMS OF YOUR THOUGHTS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORS

1. Recall that God is never mentioned in Esther, but the story reflects God's presence in all things. Discuss when you have felt treated unfairly like Mordecai only to see God's work later, and how to look for God's presence in difficult circumstances.
2. Haman (an Amalekite) and Mordecai's ancestors were bitter rivals. The hatred between them is more than personal. Discuss prejudices that may be harbored towards someone because of something that took place long ago. In what ways does prejudice impact a person?
3. The passage ends with Haman receiving a broad and irrevocable mandate from King Xerxes to kill not just Mordecai, but all of God's people. How does this relate to your own story and Christ's work in your salvation?

Hands (10 Minutes)

APPLY THE TEXT BY MOVING FROM INWARD REFLECTION TO OUTWARD ACTION LOOKING FOR WAYS TO LIVE THE TEXT OUT IN OUR LIVES TO SERVE OTHERS

Reaching Upwards: Growing in Your Relationship with God

1. What do you do when God seems conspicuously absent?
2. Mordecai, a Jew, will not bow down to Haman. What things are you tempted to bow down to besides God?
3. Read and discuss Proverbs 6:16-19. Reviewing the list, where are you vulnerable?

Reaching Outwards: Investing in Your Neighbors

1. Are there family members, co-workers, or neighbors who harbor bitterness towards one another over something that happened a long time ago? Discuss these situations and ideas such as a conversation, meal, or activity to encourage reconciliation and understanding.
2. Share times where animosity was carried into a situation and made it worse. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew. 5:9). Discuss in what situations we can be peacemakers, and what steps to take.
3. **VBS Prayers This Week!** Pray during your small group and throughout the week for Vacation Bible School that is taking place June 10-14. Pray for the staff, volunteers, overall logistics, the children, their parents, and good health and safety for everyone. Pray for all to feel welcome and for lives to be committed to Christ.

Reaching Beyond

1. **Post-Alpha Prayers** - Post Alpha groups will be meeting this summer a few times. Pray that the Holy Spirit will be working in the lives of those who came to Alpha, and that many will return for these post-Alpha events at FPC .The first Post-Alpha group is June 20. Pray that many will come, feel welcome, and continue their interest in and commitment to the gospel. Pray that those with unresolved questions about Jesus would sense His love and draw close to Him.
2. **Star of Hope Field Trip; June 27; 12 -1 pm** - Calendar this lunchtime Field Trip to Star of Hope Mission Women and Family Development Center at 2575 Reed Rd., Houston, TX 77051. Star of Hope is a Christ-centered community supporting Houston's homeless men, women and children. They encourage positive life changes through spiritual growth, education, employment, life management, and substance abuse. If you plan to come, please contact Madie Weir, Missions Coordinator at mweir@fpchouston.org.