



Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Session Four

Look Back at Last Week

- In his sermon on Esther 2:19-3:15, Pastor Curtis quoted Oswald Chambers from *My Utmost for His Highest*, Updated Edition, “The great enemy of the life of faith in God is not sin, but the good which is not good enough. The good is always the enemy of the best.” What is your reaction to this quote? Examples from your life?
- We have all had times when someone else got what we deserved. How have you reacted in those situations?
- Consider how you feel about God controlling the toss of the dice. See Proverbs 16:33 and Proverbs 18:18.

Read Aloud

Passage for this week: **Esther 4:12-17**

Head (15–20 Minutes)

OBSERVE THE TEXT AND THE AUTHOR’S MAIN POINTS

1. In verse 14, Mordecai tells Esther that if she remains silent about the plight of the Jews, she and her father’s house will perish. Why do you think Mordecai invokes the house of Esther’s father? Why do you think Esther accepts that she may perish as a result, but not her father’s house?
2. What does Esther do in preparation for going in to the king, and what might that signify?
3. What do Mordecai’s words in verse 14 suggest about how the will of God works? Do you agree?

Heart (15–20 Minutes)

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

1. Talk about a time when you made yourself uncomfortable or put yourself at risk to intercede on someone else’s behalf. How does that compare to the way Jesus did that for us?
2. What would you have to believe about God’s love for you in order to put your life in His hands?

3. When you face weighty or risky decisions, what intentional steps do you take to deemphasize your flesh and to focus on and seek the ultimate reality of the spiritual, like Esther did by fasting?

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

- Meditate on and discuss the royal rights and prerogatives that Jesus joyfully gave up to enter into this world and suffer on our behalf.
- If you are facing a weighty or risky decision, consider fasting for a time from a physical necessity or comfort to better focus on seeking God's will and guidance.
- When have you seen yourself as part of God's larger providential plan? How have you lived differently as a result?

Reaching Outwards: Investing in Your Neighbors

- Are you remaining silent rather than intervene on behalf of someone you know who needs your help? Ask God for the courage to act and wisdom in doing so. Discuss as a group times when you have needed extra encouragement to intervene on behalf of someone you know who needs your help.
- **VBS Followup** - Praise God for a wonderful, fun week of VBS! Pray for rest and restoration for the many adult and youth volunteers. Also pray for increased interest in and love for Jesus for the children, their parents, and volunteers. May many visitors return to FPC and make it their home church.
- **Post-Alpha Groups** - Post-Alpha groups are meeting this summer. 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 gatherings. The first Post-Alpha group was June 6, and the next one is June 20. Pray that those who 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.

Reaching Beyond

- **High School Mission trip to Miami - June 16 - 23** - FPC Youth will spend this week running VBS camps with Haitian, Jamaican, and Cuban churches, serving the homeless, doing construction work, and more. Pray for safe travel, logistics, safety, harmony, servant attitudes, and that they would show the love of Jesus to all this week.
- **Star of Hope Field Trip - June 27 - 12-1 pm** - Join this 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. SOH encourages positive life changes through spiritual growth, education, employment, life management, and substance abuse. If you plan to come, please contact Madie Weir, Missions Coordinator t mweir@fpchouston.org.
- **Egypt Missions Partners Vision Trip - June 21-July 2** - FPC will be visiting Global Mission Partners from Bridges of Hope (Here I Am Conference) and Evangelical Theological

Seminary of Cairo. Prayers for smooth travel, for special times with partners and opportunities to encourage them, for good health and stamina through the long days, and for an overall, joyful time with our global brothers and sisters. For more details about the trip, contact Mary-Floye Federer, Director of Missions at mfederer@fpchouston.org.