



A Second Appeal

Session Eight

Look Back at Last Week

- Pastor Curtis in his sermon on Esther 7 said that there is nothing wrong with having responsibility - even great responsibility, but it matters how we conduct ourselves with it. How do you conduct yourself in your sphere of responsibility however great or small it is?
- Pastor Curtis said that like Haman we crave power over, but we are called to have power under. Discuss examples of power over and power under.
- What are some of the strategies that Esther uses in Chapter 7 to persuade King Xerxes?

Read Aloud

Passage for this week: **Esther 8**

Head (15–20 Minutes)

OBSERVE THE TEXT AND THE AUTHOR'S MAIN POINTS

1. Summarize the events of “that same day” (8.1) that begins with 6.1.
2. What is the significance of the king giving Mordecai his signet ring?
3. In this passage Esther has to approach the King again. What steps did she likely go through before doing so? How do you think she felt this time?

Heart (15–20 Minutes)

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

1. Chapter 8 has a number of reversals in it. Identify a few of those reversals and give examples of reversals in your own life. How have you recognized God's activity in those reversals?
2. Why is it often difficult to consider the needs of others as being more important than our own? Discuss people who are particularly good at putting the needs of others before themselves and how this encourages you to do the same.
3. Esther was persistent in her request to the king to rescue her people. Why is perseverance in prayer requests to our God and King challenging for us many times?

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

- God placed Esther and Mordecai in two of the three most powerful positions in the Persian Empire. What does this tell us about God? Are you prone to think His involvement in your life is less important to Him? How can we steward well what He entrusts to us and be grateful for it?
- Pray individually and as a group that the Church would seek humble service rather than status and power, and for leaders to abound in wisdom and grace.
- Discuss how we can seek to serve a great God rather than be great in God's service.

Reaching Outwards: Investing in Your Neighbors

- July 20 Volunteer Training (8:45 am - 12:00 pm) for the Landing, a Ministry Partner that offers shelter and encouragement to human trafficking victims in Houston. Sign up by July 17 at the landing.org. For information about other FPC Mission Partners and volunteer opportunities go to fpchouston.org/serve/ways-to-serve/upcoming-opportunities.
- July 21 - 26 - Pray for the preparation of the High School Adventure Trip to Yosemite.
- July 25 - Pray for the next post-Alpha group meeting. May 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. For additional information, contact Emmanuel Paulpeter, Pastor of Outreach at epaulpeter@fpchouston.org.

Reaching Beyond

- **Egypt Prayer Requests:** FPC visited two Global Mission Partners in Egypt recently (June 21-July 2): Bridges of Hope (Here I Am Conference) and Evangelical Theological Seminary of Cairo. They found the trip encouraging and convicting. They returned with the following prayer requests and praises:
 - Here I Am Conference teams expressed praise and thanks for standing with them in prayer and lifting up their intense situations in places of conflict and persecution. One couple said, "We don't feel alone when we hear of your prayers for us."
 - Praises for how the Holy Spirit is moving and expanding our global family in the Middle East and North Africa.
 - Pray for an end to the horrific war in Sudan, Yemen, and to the escalation of conflict between Israel and Lebanon. May the Lord of peace reign in these regions.
 - Praises for the 153rd graduation at the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Cairo where 91 students graduated. Of the 91 graduates, 12 received the Master of Divinity degree, 26 received the Master of Arts in Theology, 11 received the Master of Media and Leadership, 31 received the Master of Leadership and Management, 4 received a Certificate in Theological Studies, and 7 received a Diploma in the Arabic Christian Heritage program. May God lead these graduates in their next steps.
 - For more details about the trip, contact Mary-Floye Federer, Director of Missions at mffederer@fpchouston.org.