

Lessons on Purpose from the Book of Esther...Christi Tittsworth... 3/12/23

INTRODUCTION: Purpose belongs to and is initiated out of a relationship with God.

- Romans 8:28: “Called according to HIS purpose” (it belongs to Him)
- Ephesians 2:10: We are His Masterpiece, created for good works, which HE planned long ago.
 - Definition of Purpose = Intention --- God intended for YOU to fulfill HIS purpose according to HIS plan!
 - An artist, author, or creator knows the end from the beginning and does not waiver in the creation. HE is a Masterful Creator, and YOU are a “masterpiece”, even if you don’t see the end product yet!
- What is His intention/purpose/will for you?
 - John 6:29: His will = to BELIEVE in Him
 - Hosea 6:6: His desire = to KNOW Him
 - When we know Him and believe in Him, we respond to Him, and purpose is the fruit!
- What happens when we try to pursue purpose without knowing Him?
 - Matthew 7:21-23: those using spiritual gifts were called “law-breakers,” and He said He didn’t know them.
 - **Even our most “spiritual” feats are meaningless when they are outside of relationship with Him.**
 - **You cannot separate purpose from the Person!**
 - It is from Him, through Him, for Him, and to Him!

PATHWAY TO PURPOSE: Lessons from the Book of Esther

1. Sometimes the path to purpose is poop!
 - Persia was not a happy place, and the story of Esther is not a fairytale.
 - King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) was the son of King Darius (who threw Daniel into the lion’s den) and banished his queen (Vashti) because she would not come unclothed before the entire drunken party he was hosting.
 - Mordecai was an exile and likely a contemporary of Daniel, Shadrach, Meschach, Abednego under the same Babylonian/Persian exiles, serving a pagan/tyrant king.
 - Eunuchs had their bodies mutilated in order to prevent them from having their own families and “competing with the king”
 - Esther was a young Jewish girl whose life/identity would have been wrapped up in preparing to be a wife and mother who was stripped from

her family and left with 2 equally miserable options: 1 – be assaulted for 1 night by a tyrant king and then be rejected to live out her days as a widow or 2 – to be assaulted for 1 night by a tyrant king and then have to marry that king.

- Psalm 23:4-5: We sometimes walk through shadowy death valleys, and sometimes His feasts are in the middle of fighting.
- Matthew 4:1: Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.
- **Our current circumstances may look bad, but God is at work: on purpose for His purpose!**
- John 5:17: My [Jesus'] Father is **ALWAYS** working and so am I.

2. Purpose requires positioning.

- Between the exile and the time of Esther, Cyrus had issued a decree allowing Jews to return to Jerusalem, so Mordecai likely would have had the opportunity to return, but in line with Jeremiah 29:4-13, stayed and built and planted and worked for peace of the city.
- Mordecai was positioned at the gate (Esther 2:21-23) to serve the king.
 - His willingness to serve the tyrant king, positioned him for honor and influence (Esther 6:1-11; 8:12)
 - *note, he wasn't even recognized for his service until years later.
- Mordecai likely didn't "feel" positioned for purpose when he was exiled, but he stayed faithful.
- Esther likely didn't "feel" positioned for purpose during her "one-night stand" with the king.
- You may not "feel" positioned for purpose in the job you hate, your broken family, or the city you live in, but God is always working and where He leads you is right! Stay faithful!

3. The Posture of Purpose is radical obedience.

- Esther obeyed Mordecai to keep her identity secret (Esther 2:10).
- Esther obeyed the eunuch, Hegai, when going into the King (Esther 2:15).
- Esther took counsel from Mordecai and agreed to approach the King (Esther 4:8-16).
 - Vs. 16: "if I must die, I must die" = RADICAL obedience
 - Mirrors Jesus in the Garden (Matthew 26:39): "Nevertheless, not my will, but yours"
 - Philippians 2:5-11: Have the same attitude as Christ – obedient even to a criminal's death.

4. Purpose requires Partnership.

- a. Partnership with God: What is HIS purpose? What is He doing? How can you partner with HIM?

If you're struggling to discover "your" purpose, it might be time to ask a different question: "Lord, what are you purposing to do, and how can I partner with YOUR purpose?"

- b. Purpose requires others: we are part of a BODY, born into a FAMILY.

- Esther may be the "heroine" of the story, but she could not fulfill her purpose without partnership with:
 - Mordecai: he not only raised her/trained her, but she didn't even know about the death decree until Mordecai informed her and launched her into her purpose.
 - Hatach: the eunuch who delivered the messages between Mordecai and Esther (it was risky to trust him – he could have revealed Esther's secret identity earlier to Haman or the King and cost their lives)
 - The people who gathered to fast and pray.
 - **Note: the purpose of God can never be fulfilled without prayer!**

- c. Purpose can be generational.

- Mordecai was related to King Saul (cousins, likely). King Saul was called to completely destroy the Amalekites, but he didn't, and the kingdom was stripped from him as a result (1 Samuel 15). A couple generations later, God positioned Mordecai to complete the work, as Haman was an Amalekite and he was killed along with his 10 sons (Esther 7 & 9).
- What has God purposed for your family?

PROMISE OF PURPOSE: His presence, which is our victory.

- When God is involved, victory is assured!
- Esther 9:1: Jews were given the authority to defend (defeat) AND plunder their enemies.
 - It's time for the body of Christ to step into the fullness of defeating AND plundering the enemy. Let's take back our families, our churches, our cities! (Matthew 28:18-20)

CLOSING: Acts 17:28 – in HIM we live and move and have our being. Purpose begins in Him, is fulfilled through Him, and ends in Him.