

Life Group Discussion Questions

April 15, 2012

Series: Esther

Sermon Topic: How Much Is Your Sin Going to Cost Me? - Esther 1 & 2 - Dr. Matt Cassidy

Introduction: We begin our 5 week series on the book of Esther, a story of one woman, one mission and one very critical choice. This week Dr. Cassidy opened our time with the historical context of King Xerxes that sets the mood and scene of what Esther is being thrust into.

Sermon Questions:

1. Matt gave us some insight to the power of the story of Esther and how Nazi Germany had forbidden the Jews in the concentration camps from reading or reciting the verses from it. Why do you think Nazi Germany was afraid of this book, especially in the light that God's name is never mentioned in it? Of all the books of the Bible, why forbid this one? Share your insights amongst your group.
2. Read Esther 1 & 2. Matt spent some time expounding on the character of King Xerxes from the Scriptures and other related resources to fully paint for us the picture that King Xerxes was a volatile sociopath. Why is it important that we clearly grasp the reality of who King Xerxes is at the beginning of Esther? In contrast, Matt also taught us who Esther was, an innocent young orphan girl. Again, why is this important, why such a drastic contrast? What is God trying to convey in these opening chapters of Esther?
3. Esther's fate is all but settled for her at a young age by other people's sin. She's an orphan, then orphaned again in a sense by being taken forcefully from her uncle, Mordecai. She is fully aware that she will be sexually violated by the king and she will either be discarded like a piece of trash, or worse, will become his wife and live with him for life. Yet, with her fate all but determined, the bible makes no mention of her being bitter, hateful or angry. What it does mention is her wisdom to do exactly what Hegai, the king's eunuch recommends. How is this possible? What is her secret?
4. Has your life, your fate, been challenged or changed by the sin of others? Share with your group a struggle you have been through as a result of someone else's sin. Also share how you made it through, how did you respond? Just like Esther, we do have a choice, not in the fate but in our response to our fate. We can choose to be...1) a victim and become resentful and embittered with a hard heart, 2) be tough and power through it but losing our tenderness towards God and others in the process, or 3) be faithful and trust in the sovereignty (plan & power) of God. If you responded with 1 or 2, what did it cost you? How are you managing now? Any lessons learned that you would like to share? If you choose 3, how did God redeem

that fate? Do you see now God's sovereign plan? Share your experience with your group.