**The Book of Esther**

**Wednesday Night Bible Study**

**Wednesday 07 July 2021**

**Queens Chapel UMC \* 7410 Muirkirk Road \* Beltsville, MD 20705**

**Instructor: Rev. Dr. Will Butler**

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

**Theme:** **“A Woman for Such a Time as This”** **(Esther 4:14)**

"…Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

**Esther Chapter 4**

**(Part 3)**

Q = Would you recognize the signs of being under a spiritual attack?

Q = When are the best times to fast and pray? Have you ever fasted and prayed before? Is fasting and praying a tool or a weapon?

 These are some of the questions we’ll consider as we study the 4th and 5th Chapters of Esther. The 4th Chapter opens with a lesson on how to handle difficult situations that’s out of our control.

**Esther 4:1-3**

 1 When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly.

 2 But he went only as far as the king’s gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it.

 3 In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

**Note:**

1. *Sackcloth*: Is a coarse loose dark colored cloth made of goat’s

 hair. Scriptures give a mental picture of its color.

 **Revelation 6:12**

 “I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.”

**Figuratively:**

 Sackcloth is a figure for heavy affliction and suffering.

 **Isaiah 15:3**

 “In their streets they will clothe themselves with sackcloth; On the tops of their houses And in their streets Everyone will wail, weeping bitterly.”

 2 *Ashes* - It was the custom in all ages to burn captured cites and

 reduce them to ashes as well as complete destruction. Therefore,

 it was the practice of a person to sit among ashes, or scatter

 them upon one’s person as a symbol of grief, mourning and a

 situation that represents complete loss

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

* In other words, sackcloth and ashes was an outward sign of inward distress and humiliation
* Mordecai put on sackcloth and ashes because he realize that he had prompted this genocidal retaliation by Haman
* Notice that there was no call to prayer but just great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing
* If Mordecai refused to bow to Haman because of his dedication to the Almighty God, why didn’t he pray to God about this situation?
* Instead, he along with about fifteen million other Jews in the kingdom were fasting, weeping and wailing about the decree.

Q = Have you ever been attacked by another person after doing the right thing? What was your reaction?

**Esther 4:4**

 4 When Esther’s eunuchs and female attendants came and told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them.

* Esther didn’t understand why her father was walking up and down moaning, wailing and groaning. In fact, she was probably embarrassed by his conduct.
* Queen Esther sends clothes for him so he could come in and talk with her directly. But Mordecai refused to accept them
* When the clothes came back to her, she knew something serious was going on.

**Esther 4:5-9**

 5 Then Esther summoned Hathak, *[ha-thak]* one of the king’s eunuchs assigned to attend her, and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why.

 6 So Hathak went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king’s gate.

 7 Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews.

 8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to instruct her to go into the king’s presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.

 9 Hathak *[ha-thak]* went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said.

* Hathak was a trusted eunuch who not only served the Queen, but he also knew of Esther’s Jewish background.
* Mordecai possessed the knowledge of the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasure because of his prominent position at the gate.

* Mordecai sends the reason why he was in sackcloth and ashes—he even sent the decree for her to read.
* Mordecai commands Esther to approach the King, implore his favor, plead with him personally on behalf of our people.

Q = How would you handle a bully who has more political, social or positional power than you?

 *Bullies* are those who prey on people they perceive as weaker and threaten them with harm, or actually harm them, in order to get their own way.

 When being bullied, a right response might be turning the other cheek, or it might be self-defense.

* When Jesus spoke of "turning the other cheek" in **Matthew 5:38-42,** He taught us to refrain from retaliating. The idea is not to return an insult with an insult.
* When someone verbally abuses us, we do not return his/her affront with insults of our own. When someone tries to assert his position of power to intimidate us or force us into a certain behavior, we can resist his manipulation without being manipulative in return
* **Romans 12:17-21**

 "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Q = Is there anyone in your family, social life or professional life that drives you crazy?

* People who drive you crazy are those that can take a person from level 1 to level 10 in a matter of minutes—they know how to push your buttons
* If we know how to deal wisely with crazy people we will come out better—it’s all about wisdom—knowing how to handle crazy people
* Many times, we provoke people into doing the things to us we don’t want
* In other words, how we respond to people is counter-productive and not wise
* Wisdom does not eliminate crazy people out of our lives but it will greatly reduce our stress in dealing with them

One of the Scriptures on relationship is recorded in **James 3:13-18** NLT

 “13 If you are wise and understand God’s ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom.

 14 But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don’t cover up the truth with boasting and lying.

 15 For jealousy and selfishness are not God’s kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic.

 16 For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.

 17 But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.

 18 And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.”

* Wisdom is a way of relating—wisdom shows up in how you treat other people

18 And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.”

* Every day in every relationship you have, you are planting seeds

* You’re planting either seeds of trust or distrust, anger or peace, love or hate, harmony or division
* In **James 3:17**, we’re given a check list—this list of words is the foundation to healthy relationships, let’s look at one.

 17 But the wisdom from above is first of all **pure.** It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.

* In any relationship, half the problem is you—it’s how you respond to a crazy person
* 1) Wisdom from Heaven is *Pure*—uncorrupted, unpolluted, untainted—another word for pure is *integrity*
* the foundation of all good relationships is integrity
* Why integrity? Because wisdom starts in the heart and not in the head
* All relationships are built on trust—trust is built on truth—truth is built on honesty
* The Holy Spirit will enable us be truthful

**Note:**

 *Leonard Keeler*— In 1924, Keeler's first handmade polygraph instrument, which he called "the Emotograph," was destroyed in a fire at his residence. On February 2, 1935, he conducted the first use of his invention, the Keeler Polygraph—otherwise known as the lie detector.

 In his lifetime he tested over 2500 people—his conclusion was “Everybody lies, human beings are by nature dishonest. They lie to God, other people and themselves”

* If we want to be wise in our relationships—we must not compromise our integrity—tell the truth

 11 “All the king’s officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to

Queen Esther realize that This was a spiritual battle and not a human one.

* Satan was seeking to destroy God’s covenant people and Haman was a willing partner in the crime

 10 Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai,  go to the king.”

 12 When Esther’s words were reported to Mordecai,

 13 he sent back this answer: “Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape.

 14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”

 15 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai:

 16 “Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”

 17 So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther’s instructions.