**Wednesday Night Bible Study**

**Wednesday 21 July 2021**

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

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

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**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 5**

**(Part 1)**

**Esther 5:1-2**

 1 On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king’s hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance.

 2 When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

* After the fast, Queen Esther adorned herself with her royal apparel
* The King was sitting on his throne, probably conducting state business with his court attendants
* All of a sudden, the King moves one of his attendants to the side. All eyes looked in the same direction that caught the king’s attention.
* It was Queen Esther who stepped out from behind a pillar or alcove—she was beautiful as ever

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**Note:** God spoke to Queen Esther during her time of prayer and fasting. God told her exactly what to do. God gives accurate direction when battling the evil spirits of racism, hatred, jealousy, anger, and injustice.

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* When a believer encounters the evil spirit of racism, hatred, jealousy, anger, or injustice; he or she must prepare like Queen Esther did in **verse 1,** “On the third day Esther put on her royal robes…”

Q = How can we be as courageous as Esther when we feel powerless?

* According to **Ephesians 6:10-17,** we must put on the “full armor of God” like soldiers in the Army of the Lord.

 10 Finally, **be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power**.

 11 **Put on the full armor of God**, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.

 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

 14 Stand firm then, with the **belt of truth** buckled around your waist, with the **breastplate of righteousness** in place,

 15 and with your **feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace**.  *[And* ***your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*** *NKJT]*

 16 In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

 17 Take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God.

 **The first three pieces of the armor of God are worn all the time.** We need to be well dressed for spiritual warfare every day **because the enemy attacks without warning.**

* Mordecai had no knowledge of Haman’s plan of approaching the King to enact a law destroying all the Jews in the entire Kingdom—it caught him off guard. **(Esther 3:8-9)**

God does not expect us to react like Mordecai **Esther 4:1**

 When Mordecai learned about all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on burlap and ashes, and went out into the city, crying with a loud and bitter wail.

* We’re to always have on the, ***belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and the shoes of the gospel of peace.***
* **Belt of Truth** Soldier typically wore loose-fitting clothes. Combat in the biblical days consisted of hand-to-hand combat. Therefore, a soldier would not wear loose-fitting clothes that would hinder his performance. The soldiers wore a belt that gird up loosely hanging clothes.
* The belt symbolizes for the believer a spiritual force that pulls all our loose ends (false doctrines and beliefs) in so we can be spiritually prepared for the enemy that comes against biblical truth.
* This is done through Scriptural memorization and self-discipline. **1 Peter 1:13**

 Therefore, **gird up the loins of your mind,** be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

* Esther most likely received teaching at an early age regarding the practice and power of prayer and fasting. Which explains her first reaction upon receiving the news from Mordecai recorded in **Esther 4:16**

 "**Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day.** My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"

* **Breastplate of Righteousness** The soldier’s breastplate was a tough sleeveless material that covered the soldier’s full upper body protecting his vital organs.
* **Righteousness and holiness** are the Christian’s chief protection against Satan’s evil schemes. Righteousness is a byproduct of faithful obedience to and communion with Jesus Christ.
* Therefore, lack of obedience and daily communion with Jesus Christ leaves the believer’s heart vulnerable to Satan.
* Esther’s holy boldness to face the king for her people was a direct result of her faith, fear of God and daily communion with God.

**2 Corinthians 7:1**

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

* **Feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace** The Roman Soldier wore boots with nails in them to grip the ground in combat and forward-movement.
* The Gospel of Jesus Christ [the Good News] gives the believer a peaceful confidence of knowing he/she is right with God through the Lord Jesus Christ—**Romans 5:6-10**

 6 When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.

 7 Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good.

 8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

 9 And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God’s condemnation.

 10 For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.

* It is that peaceful confidence that gives the believer boldness to stand firm against Satan in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ.
* This is why Esther was able to stand with confidence in front of the King with anticipation of him holding out the royal gold scepter.

 The next three pieces of armor—*the shield of faith, helmet of Salvation and the sword of the spirit* are to be at hand. In other words, they are to be picked up and used when needed.

 This is why Paul said “**take up** the shield of faith…**Take the** helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” These pieces are designed to keep near or within reach.

* **Shield of faith** The Soldier carried a large shield that protected his entire body.
* The believer’s shield of faith is his/her trust in God’s Word and promises. This trust protects the believer from every sort of sin that comes as a result of Satan’s lies.
* The Roman Soldier’s shield was completely soaked in an oily liquid so that when the enemy shot flaming arrows, the oil within the shield would quench them upon contact.
* Temptations, lust, etc. are flaming arrows Satan shoots constantly at every believer. God’s Word is the shield that every believer should use to quench what Satan throws.
* When Esther fasted, prayed, put on her royal robe and stood in the inner court of the palace **(Esther 5:1)** she was spiritually prepared to quench any fiery arrows even if it meant death.
* **Helmet of Salvation**  The Roman Soldier knew that his head was a major target in battle so he wore a helmet. Paul is speaking to believers who are already saved and not those who are seeking salvation—Why?
* Satan seeks to destroy a believer’s assurance of salvation with his weapons of fear, doubt and discouragement. A believer, however, can stand firm in knowing through Scripture that his/her salvation is secure in Jesus Christ.
* Mordecai understood and knew about God’s promise to deliver the Jews and that no one will stand in the way of their salvation—**Esther 4:13-14**

 13 Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: “Don’t think for a moment that because you’re in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed.

 14 **If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place,** but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?”

* The same applies to us as believers, our salvation is secure in Jesus Christ—**John 10:28-29**

 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. **No one can snatch them away from me**,

 29 for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. **No one can snatch them from the Father’s hand.**

* Sword of the Spirit The sword was an essential part of the soldier’s armor. Without a sword, no soldier would have regarded himself as well armed or equipped for battle.

 The sword was short, and usually two-edged, and resembled an elongated dagger

* For the believer, the sword of the spirit is the Word of God. It’s called the sword of the spirit because the Holy Spirit reveals the truth of God’s word so the believer handles it correctly.

**2 Timothy 2:15**

 Study to shew yourself approved unto God, a workman that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

* We should have Scripture within reach as Jesus did to meet the various forms of temptation.

* We should not depend on our own reason, education, or wisdom alone when dealing with a spiritual battle. We need the Spirit of God to give us the revelation of Scripture.

**John 16:12-14**

 12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

 13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

 14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

* Satan will come to tempt us but the Word should be near us even in our hearts. Scripture will drive the tempter from us.

**Esther 5:3-4**

 3 Then the king asked, “What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you.”

 4 “If it pleases the king,” replied Esther, “let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him.”

* She invited the king and along with Haman; partly because by showing such respect to the king's favorite person at that time, she might artfully place herself in the king's good graces and affection.

* Once she knew that the king was pleased with her, she would then present her request to the king.

**Esther 5:5-6**

 5 “Bring Haman at once,” the king said, “so that we may do what Esther asks.”

So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared.

 6 As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, “Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.”

* At Queen Esther’s banquet; it did not consist of food, probably because the king had already eaten before at his own table. However, a banquet, traditionally served fruits and wines.
* The King was showing favor toward Esther by repeating his question
* “Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.”

Q = Are we really in a spiritual war?