



Pray

What does Esther 4:1-17 inspire you to take to the Lord in prayer? Is there a decision to be made? An action to take? Courage to be found?

Esther is going to intercede for her people. You do the same when you pray for others. Will you commit to pray every day this week for specific people in your life? Who are they and what will you pray?

How does this passage move you to praise God? To thank God?



The Great Go-Between | Esther 4:1-17

Study Guide 4 for sermon on 10/18/20



Introduction

Somebody needs to do something! That's how Gladys Aylward felt in 1925 when she learned about the great need for the gospel in China (Carol Purves, *Chinese Whispers*). Gladys contacted every important person she knew and asked them to consider going to China on mission. Everyone declined. Then her own brother said to her, "If you're so keen why don't you go yourself?" Gladys finally realized that the "somebody" God wanted to do "something" was her. She prayed, "O God, here is my Bible, here is my money, here am I. Please use us, God, please use us." He did. God used her in amazing ways for the advancement of the gospel.

In Esther 4:1-17, Mordecai will challenge Esther to be the "somebody" to help meet the needs of her people, the Jews. If she refuses, it will mean the destruction of her people and herself. God placed Esther in her position for this very reason. Maybe the Lord is saying to you, "I have put you in this position; now, be faithful with what I have entrusted to you."



Overview

Context: Chapter 4 is a long conversation between Mordecai and Esther, but the contents of the discussion are delivered by Esther's servant Hathach. Mordecai informs Esther about the King's decree to destroy the Jews and pleads with her to intercede. The question that

drives the action of chapter 4 is, “What will Esther do? Will she act or will she remain silent?” That’s a difficult question for Esther, and perhaps more difficult for us. What will you do?

Structure:

- I. Mordecai and the Jews grieve the decree (vv. 1-4)
- II. Mordecai informs Esther of the danger to her people and asks her to intervene (vv. 5-8)
- III. Esther refuses to act for fear of being killed (vv. 9-12)
- IV. Mordecai informs Esther of the danger to herself and asks her to intervene (vv. 13-14)
- V. Esther commits to act even if she is killed (vv. 15-17)



Engage

1. Who informs Esther of the King’s decree? In which verse do you find this information shared with Esther? What then is Esther afraid of in verse 4?
2. In the time of crisis, how far do you have to make it down your reaction list before you get to prayer? Why is prayer always the best reaction to difficult circumstances?
3. Who is someone God has used to encourage you to be obedient to something God was calling you to do? Why do we need others who will help encourage our obedience?
4. In what ways, if any, are you currently hesitating to obey the Lord? How can the gospel fuel your obedience?
5. Mordecai and the Jewish people grieve publicly and loudly in verses 1-3. Why do we tend to conceal our grief or struggles rather than sharing them openly?
6. How might the gospel bring us to the point where we are willing to say, “If I perish, I perish, but I am going to obey at all costs”?
7. In verse 14, Mordecai says that if Esther keeps silent, *deliverance will come to the Jewish people from another place*. How does he know this?
8. Mordecai experiences intense grief (vv. 1-3), but also seems to trust that God will keep his promise to preserve His people (v. 14). How important is it to pair our grief with trust in the Lord? Can you share an experience in your life where you walked in both grief and trust in Lord?
9. Esther will identify with her people and be a mediator for them. How did Christ identify with His people? Why is He called our great high priest?