

March 1, 2020 - Esther 4: 1-17 - “Mordecai Appeals for Esther’s Help”

Introduction

Chico and the Man was an American sitcom television series that aired on NBC for four seasons from September 1974 to July 1978. It debuted in the top 10 and remained in the top 30 for its second season. It starred Jack Albertson as Ed Brown (the Man), a cantankerous owner of a run-down garage in an East Los Angeles district, and Freddie Prinze played Chico Rodriguez, an upbeat, optimistic young Hispanic who comes into Ed’s garage looking for a job. Whenever Ed had a dirty or distasteful job Chico would often use the catch phrase "man, that's not my job". Well in chapter 4 of Esther we find her giving this Chico of an excuse to Mordecai her cousin who basically is telling her speaking with the king is her job. She said, “it’s not my job in fact I haven’t seen the King is 30 days. We all make these kinds of excuses...

I. Mordecai Reaction vv.1-8

1. Chapter 4 unfolds with the first reaction of Mordecai to Haman's plot in a demonstration of what is known as divine grief. When Mordecai learned the choice the king made he knew this edict or law would annihilate the people of God throughout the Persian Empire. Mordecai was moved with deep sorrow, and he cried out in heaviness of heart and put on sackcloth with ashes! For one to do this in the Jewish culture is a display of great grief.

Sackcloth is a coarse, black cloth made from goat's hair that was worn together with the burnt ashes of wood as a sign of mourning for personal and national disaster, as a sign of repentance and at times of prayer for deliverance. This of course was the Jewish people dilemma.

2. Nonetheless Mordecai was anguished remembering his integrity and refusal to submit was partially the cause of this hateful edict of genocide. **He cried out with a loud and bitter cry**, He could not grovel at the feet of Haman to save his people because Mordecai knew the nature of the laws of the Persians - that they could not be changed once decreed. In verse two it appears that he is in this condition at his position as porter at the Kings gate but was prohibited to enter.

3. Please note in verse three that in the Persian provinces there were these great episodes of weeping, wailing and people in sackcloth and ashes. Word would of spread of the horror of such screaming and crying throughout the land. However word did not get to Esther until her maids and her chamberlains witness her cousin in this dreadful dress. It appears Esther was applauded and sends him clothes that he refuses to wear. The word conveys troubled.

3. Esther used Hatach (hay tac) to get to the bottom of this (verse 5) and that is when the two-way communication developed between Esther and her cousin and things begin to happen. Mordecai knew the whole story. He knew the exact sum of money that Haman, in secret, had told the king he would put into his treasuries, and he had a copy of the decree. He revealed the whole plan in specifics and in exact detail to Esther.

II. Mordecai’s Request vv. 8-14

1. After giving a copy of the decree (verses 8-10) to Esther through a courier she responds back to Mordecai's challenge to intercede on behalf of her people before the king. Esther explained the difficulty to her cousin (vv. 11) in relationship to this. This was not something you do. She was only allowed to come to the king when called, and if she came on her own, she could be executed for daring to approach the king without an invitation.

2. Apparently, the life of a queen of Persia was not one of great intimacy with this king. Esther said, **"I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days"** - meaning she had not seen her husband for an entire month. He was most likely being entertained with other women and back to his wicked ways. Again we note the dialogue back and forth in verse 12 and he responds.

Application:

God entrusted Esther with this position of opportunity and it was her call. Folks this principle applies to us too. God promotes us or puts us in a place of affluence for a reason. That is when we tell God, "that's not my job". We need the courage and wisdom to accept the divine assignment and to walk in it. Too many fail here!

Maybe the Lord is saying to you, "I have put you in this position; now, be faithful with what I have entrusted to you." If God has done so, I hope stewardship and faithfulness outranks selfish ambition in your list of concerns.

Perhaps since Esther had not been in the king's presence for thirty days, she reasoned that she was not the right mediator; it's not my job". Maybe you have been there!! Maybe you are there now and are listing to all the reasons that you are not the right person for whatever opportunity God seems to be granting. We tend to set our gaze on our deficiencies or disqualifications rather than the Lord's sufficient grace.

3. Mordecai (vv.13-14) reminded Esther that she could not remain protected from this decree any more than anyone else. These words of Mordecai are the best known words from the book of Esther, **"and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"** He said to her, "Look, though you may not act, liberation for the Jews will arise from another place," that is, God has an infinite number of ways to accomplish his will.

Application:

Remember this when you are completely boxed in with life troubles and can't see a resolution. God is never hindered by man's failure. But we may miss out on the benefit of God's perfection for us.

4. Mordecai reminded Esther that though the fate of God's people rested in God and not in her, her own fate depended on her own faithfulness to God. Mordecai knew that God had promoted this orphan in exile for a reason and Esther must have the courage and wisdom to see that reason and fulfill it trusting God completely. God would preserve his people through Esther's and Mordecai's obedience.

III. Mordecai and Esther's Resolution vv. 15- 17

1. Esther decided that she would go and make a bold appearance before the king, but only if

she was supported by prayer and fasting...Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: "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!" So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him. She was determined to be obedient, no matter what the cost.

Jesus reminded us that special spiritual battles sometimes require special preparation with prayer and fasting. (**Mark 9:28-29**). Jesus exhorted us to have the same attitude: We see that Peter was set free from prison as the church prayed and fast. The devil does not want you or me or the church to pray. Why? -- 2Co 10:4

(For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.

Satan does not quit he keep on the attack we know this because anti-Semitism has continues centuries later.

Conclusion:

Haman put this all into motion prompt by Satan the Evil one, hatred and greed. "Haman the Agagite" is a label given him as a "descendant" of King Agag the Amalekites. They were enemies of Israel. The Amalekites were persistent and relentless enemies of the Israelites. When the Israelites sought to enter the Promised Land, the Amalekites stood in their way (Exod. 17:18-16). Once the Israelites were in the Promised Land the Amalekites joined the Midianites to torment the Hebrews in the days of Gideon (Judg. 6:3). It was an Amalekite that caused the downfall of King Saul (1 Sam. 15:9, 28).

The Amalekites continually sought to hinder the progress of God's people and to rob them of God's blessing. Thus God swore His hostility against them for eternity. As you move forward in your pilgrimage with the Lord, there will be "Amalekites" that will seek to distract and defeat you. God is determined to remove anything that keeps you from experiencing Him to the fullest. Don't make the same mistake as King Saul. He did not take the Amalekites seriously enough, and it cost him dearly.