

The Wise and The Fool > Esther 5:1-14

5:1-4 Esther approaches the king and – just as the people were hoping and fasting for – the king extends his scepter, and his favor, to her. The king then offers to provide anything she could desire, but in response, all she asks is for the king and Haman to come to a feast that she will have prepared.

5:5-8 At the feast, once again the king asks for Esther’s request. Yet, again, Esther delays – instead asking that the king and Haman return the next day, when she will answer.

5:9-14 Haman should be happy – he has been honored by the queen, after all. Yet, everything turns sour when he spots Mordecai, who still refuses to bow down to him. This sets in motion a plan – given by Haman’s wife and friends – to have Mordecai put to death.

Context: In the story, we thought that the stressful point would be seeing if Esther would survive going before the king or not. She does, and yet the fate of the Jewish people remains unresolved. In fact, it gets worse: now Mordecai’s life hangs in the balance as well.

Aim: We see two pictures of life here. Esther shows us wisdom by her respect and faith. Haman shows us only foolishness, through his pride and hatred.

Gospel: Just as Esther displayed humility and respect in the midst of a terrible situation, how much more so did Jesus: He embodies wisdom in how He goes to the cross and rescues us from our sins. His obedience displays the ultimate in wisdom.

Applications: Walk by faith rather than foolishness.

Here is how I will apply these truths: _____

Announcements

1. Board members: remember that we will have an online board meeting tomorrow evening – look in your email for the link or contact Dave Sherrill if you have any questions.
2. If you weren't here last week, let me give two reminders about fall ministry: we have made the difficult decision to not have in-person DiscipleQuest this fall. Instead, letters with Bible lessons, fun inserts, and surprises will be mailed out weekly. The hope is that we can resume in-person DQ sometime in January. Contact Terry Hinders if you are interested in being a part of this effort.
3. We have been working on a plan to resume Sunday school classes for children, youth, and adults in some form. Plans are still tentative, but we hope to be able to offer classes in October should the situation allow it. We'll keep you posted as we get closer to that time.
4. Lastly, a challenge: look for ways to build relationships at this time. I know that seems backwards: the call is for us to socially distance, and so it would seem like relationships should be put on hold. But I would say that this isn't the time to back away from relationships; instead, it is the time to double-down. Figure out some way to grow alongside another person from this congregation. Do it in a way that you are both comfortable with – socially distanced is just fine. But whatever form it takes, do it. Call up somebody just to chat and, at the end, ask how you can pray for them. Write a letter or card and tell that person that you are praying. Send an encouraging text. Share something that encouraged you or that you found amazing, perhaps out of God's Word or the beauty that you saw in His world. My point is this: just because we are six feet apart doesn't mean that we can't still grow closer together. Coronavirus may be keeping us physically apart – but that doesn't mean it has to keep us relationally apart.

Prayer

Father, we need to be taught how to walk by faith and not by sight. The temptation for us each day – and certainly during these uncertain and confusing times – is to walk, to live, to make decisions, and to think and give opinions based upon what we can see. Forgive us for that, we pray. Create in us hearts and minds that want to see how you would call us to see. Who want to live in the pattern that Christ set for His disciples. What a blessing, a treasury, that you have given us in Your Word! Would you give us minds that want to read and understand, hearts that want to feast on what You – the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and of our own soul – have preserved for us? And Lord, would you also work in us that we would not just believe in the idea of the Gospel, or like the teachings of Jesus, but instead would you convince us top to bottom, that the Gospel is Good News for we who believe? That we aren't somehow saved by grace but then preserved by our works, but instead that it is grace and mercy all throughout. Only that goodness applied to us will truly change us. Only that wonderful truth will convince our stubborn hearts to live with the joy and gladness and gratefulness that we so desperately need. So then: we pray that you would do the work right now, in this service. Work Your miracles, do the supernatural in these very ordinary things of singing and saying, of preaching and praying. Let us leave this place changed by You, and see ourselves and the world through eyes of faith. Amen.