

## Esther: An Unlikely Hero

### Super Hero Sunday

*Here is a definition: a hero is a person of great strength & courage who is regarded by others as an ideal or a role model.*

There are so many inspiring stories of true heroes of faith spoken of in our bible. And, if you pay attention you will often find a common thing. Their life was marked by some kind of tragedy, unpreventable loss, or personal failure.

- 1) Abraham (Father of the Jewish Nation) agonized for decades over his inability to have a child.
- 2) Joseph (from Prison to Prime Minister of Egypt) had a great dream but his brothers hated him.
- 3) Moses (Use His Staff to Part the Sea) but he almost let his speech impediment stop him from his calling.
- 4) David (the Giant Killer) was called the Israel's greatest and most heroic king and yet he shamed God's name by committing adultery.
- 5) Simon Peter (Water Walker) was called to be a rock for the church and yet he was by nature rash, impetuous and impulsive.
- 6) The great Apostle Paul (he Raised the Dead) but he couldn't get his own healing from what many think was an eye disease.

***It just seems like God delights in using ordinary people to do extraordinary things.***

In ancient history we find that God often times used an obscure woman in world dominated by males to bring about his plan and purposes. When you see how many times God used a woman to save his people from utter destruction you have to see that if courage is a mark of heroism many of our heroes were true life **Wonder Women**. Here is a few: Sarah; Rahab; Deborah, Ruth and Esther.

### Esther

Esther fits our definition of a hero. She was a person of great strength & courage who would indeed be regarded by others as an ideal or role model to follow.

Esther, a Jew living among the exiles in Persia, became queen of the empire in about 480 bc. Haman, a Persian official, sought to eradicate the Jewish minority, but God had prepared Esther "for such a time as this" to save his covenant people.

Esther had something on her that made her stand out... **The Favor of God!**

Esther found favor (2:9) in the eyes of Hegai, the Eunuch, and she was promoted to the best place in the Harem with the best food, and the best cosmetics and 7 maids to attend to her every need.

2:15c "... Now Esther was winning favor in the eyes of all who saw her."

2:17 "the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she won grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti."

Esther became Queen... the makings of a Superhero! The orphan girl becomes a Queen!

### Superhero Lessons

1) Believe in Your Hidden Powers

- a) Esther's name means "hidden" in Hebrew. In Persian language it means "star." She kept hidden her identity as a Jew in the palace of the Persian king. She also didn't lose hope when it seemed that God's protection of the Jewish people was in doubt.

2:10 Esther had not made known her people or kindred, for Mordecai had commanded her not to make it known.

b) Our Hidden Power is the indwelling power of the Spirit

This is the ultimate favor of God.

Luke 24:49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Acts 1:8 “... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you...”

Esther 4:13,14 Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not think to yourself that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. **14** For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

2) Embrace your Destiny

a) Her struggle was real.

i) Perhaps she had gotten comfortable with her position as queen.

ii) If she acted as Mordecai asked there was a good chance she could end up like the Queen she replaced.

b) But the bible says “For such a time as this”

i) God is always at work in the life of his people.

ii) There are kingdom purposes that go unseen until the timing is right! Then you understand why you work for that company, or why you moved into that neighborhood or why you became a member of that church?

c) Sometimes your Kingdom Destiny is tethered to times of difficulty.

Here is a young girl who was orphaned as a child, and now her husband rules the world! Heroes refuse to let their hardships determine their destiny, they find a way to rise above it.

Esther 4:16 Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.” (But I am going to see the king)

3) Take the Lead... Action is always required.

a) Once she heard from God through Mordecai she went into action.

i) Heroes don’t seek greatness, they just seize the moment.

b) Kingdom action: Seek God First!

i) Fasting water and food for 3 days is a serious fast.

4:16 Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do.

ii) I love that she understood the need for some prayer covering!

c) Pray first - Plan second.

4) Don't Go It Alone... Even Superheroes Need Help.

4:17 Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him

- a) Teamwork
- b) Don't go it alone.

Esther 7:3-6 (NRSV): Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me—that is my petition—and the lives of my people—that is my request. For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king." Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?" Esther said, "A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen."

Esther 8:1-2 (NRSV): "On that day King Ahasuerus gave to Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews; and Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told what he was to her. Then the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. So Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman."

**IN THE KINGDOM OUR HEROES ALWAYS TRUST GOD WHEN THE RISK IS GREAT.**

5) Trust God When the Risk is Great!

- a) Esther's heroic actions were extremely risky.
- b) It is right to take risk for the Kingdom causes.
  - i) The risk of authentic confession.

Proverbs 28:13 says, "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy." And James 5:16 says, "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed."

- ii) How we use our money and possessions: Esther could have lost it all by playing it safe.

Luke 21:1-4 Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, **2** and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. **3** And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. **4** For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

- iii) The risk of our testimony.

Luke 21:12-13 NIV "But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. And so you will bear testimony to me."

Heroes refuse to play it safe, they risk it all because they have faith in God.