

Having Courage in times of Crisis

Starter

How brave would you say you are?

Think of a time when you had to show courage. What happened?

Context

King Xerxes has remarried after his previous wife, Vashti, refused to obey his summons. He chose Esther, a young Jewish girl to be his queen. However, Esther kept the fact that she was Jewish a secret. The Prime Minister, a man called Haman, made plans to kill every Jew in the empire after he felt insulted, which would include Esther and her uncle Mordecai. By promising the king a great influx of wealth, he was given permission to murder them all.

Mordecai goes to Esther and tells her what is happening. She reveals that the king has not sent for her in a month, and to approach him without a summons would sentence her to death. The situation seemed hopeless.

Questions

Read Esther 4:12-17.

1. What was it about Mordecai's warning that gave Esther courage?
2. When faced with a crisis, do you believe that God has put you exactly where he wants you?

God has placed you in many communities. It could be work, your neighbourhood, friends and family, church groups. As you think of Esther's courage, try to imagine how you might emulate her and be God's instrument in those communities.

3. What is the first thing Esther does? Why was this important?
4. In what ways can you join with others to intercede, especially during this worldwide crisis?

Read Esther 5: 1-7. After 3 days of fasting and prayer, Esther went to the king, knowing that he could order her death.

5. What gave her the courage to take action?
6. Esther invites both the king and the Prime Minister to two banquets. Why did she not immediately beg for mercy from the king and ask him not to kill the Jews?

Read Esther 6:1-3.

7. What prompted the king to honour Mordecai? (see Esther 2:19-23 for the full story of Mordecai's discovery)

Sometimes, we can't see what God is doing in the background. God was working in the lives of both Mordecai and the King, far outside the influence of Esther.

8. How does this give you courage to face difficult situations?

Read Esther 7:1- 8:7. Finally, Esther reveals the boon she wants from the king. All of a sudden, everything changes. However, the original proclamation has to stand, and the Jew are still in danger. The king allows them to defend themselves and fight back if they were attacked.

9. In what ways do you feel that you are having to fight right now?

Not only do the Jewish people triumph, but as a result, a new holiday is instituted to celebrate their victory. Called Purim, it is a time of feasting, giving presents and parties. The story of Esther is read aloud with audiences responding with boos and cheers, and gifts are given to the poor.

God can bring triumph out of disaster and celebration out of mourning, but he calls us to have courage when all seems dark and to act even when we might fear. Think about ways you can be courageous and be a light to your communities.