

Message #7

Esther 3:1-6

WHEN A GODLESS MAN IS PROMOTED AND ONE GODLY REFUSES TO DO THAT WHICH IS GODLESS, THE GODLESS MAN WILL HATE THE GODLY INDIVIDUAL AND TRY TO DESTROY HIM.

If we stand for truth and righteousness on our job, in our society, in the classroom and, at times, even in the church, we can expect that there will be those who will hate us and try to eliminate us.

Doing what is right is often very lonely. When we decide to do what is right, it can be very costly and we may discover there are those in high positions who hate us and want to get rid of us. That is precisely what happened to Mordecai.

In chapter 3, we are introduced to an evil, power-crazed man who is mentioned 53 times in the book who hates the Jews and tries to exterminate them. His name is Haman. Haman is the type of man who aggressively hates Jews. He hates God and God's people.

POINT #1 – Mordecai's faithfulness is not initially promoted. 3:1

The words "after these events King Ahasuerus promoted Haman" is a real slap-in-the-face to Mordecai. We may remember that it was Mordecai who literally was responsible for saving the king's life. Not only did he not even receive a thank-you, now he watches the king promote the most godless and ruthless man in the kingdom.

Haman would have especially been a real slap-in-the-face against Mordecai because of his ancestry. We do not know much about the fact that he was "the son of Hammedatha," but we do know much about the fact that he was an "Agagite." Agag was an Amalekite king. God had promised to utterly wipe out the Amalekites clear back in Moses' day (Ex. 17:14). When Saul was king of Israel, God commanded him to destroy all of the Amalekites (I Sam. 15:1-3). However, Saul disobeyed God and he spared Agag, who was an Amalekite king (I Sam. 15:8-9). Mordecai, we may recall, was of the line of Kish (Esther 2:5), who was the father of Saul (I Sam. 9:1-3).

Some 500 years later, an Agagite named Haman, who should have been exterminated by Mordecai's ancestors is now promoted and will try to exterminate him. When Mordecai saw Haman promoted, it probably reminded him that if his relatives had obeyed God, Haman wouldn't be in this position and if he had obeyed God and gone back to Jerusalem, he himself wouldn't be in this position.

- 1) Our loyalty and faithfulness to those in authority over us may initially seem to be unnoticed.
- 2) Those who are most godless initially may achieve more and succeed more than those who are godly.
- 3) If we persist in not obeying God, it will eventually come back to haunt us.
- 4) Ultimately, God will elevate the godly and eliminate the godless.

POINT #2 – Mordecai’s faithfulness is not quickly honored. **3:2a**

It was not unusual for a Jew to bow in recognition of rank. David bowed to Saul (I Sam. 24:8); the woman of Tekoa bowed before David (II Sam. 14:4); Bathsheba bowed before David (I Kings 1:16); Abraham bowed before the Canaanites (Gen. 23:7); and Jacob bowed before Esau (Gen. 33:3).

It was not that the Jews were too proud to honor someone in authority or even to bow to someone; it was that apparently there was a godless man who was demanding that all bow to him as some “god.”

POINT #3 – Mordecai’s faithfulness is lonely. **3:2b-4a**

Three suggested reasons why Mordecai would not bow:

- 1) Because of a lack of humility.
- 2) Because it would be idolatry.
- 3) Because it would honor an enemy.

He was not about to let God or His people down any longer and perhaps because of his prestigious position as a Jew, he would not bow.

As I see it, it was a combination of Mordecai sensing his own neglect and responsibility and the neglect of his family according to the Word of God that caused him to say, “Enough is enough, I am not bowing to Haman.” It was time for him to stand for God and he did stand for God.

It is not too late to change. You may have previously blown it big time. You may have done just exactly the opposite of what God wanted you to do. If you will start today doing what is right before God, even though it may be very lonely, God will use you to accomplish great things.

POINT #4 – Mordecai’s faithfulness is questioned. **3:4b-5**

Mordecai had made it known that the reason he would not bow to Haman was because he was Jewish. Mordecai was hiding his identity no longer. He had played the political game too long and it was time for him to come out of the closet and let everyone know he was a Jew.

Daily the other people challenged Mordecai to bow to Haman, to yield, to give in and daily Mordecai refused because he was Jewish. Word spread through all the people and finally some went to Haman to see whether or not this Jewish nationality should exempt one from Persian law.

Don’t be surprised when you stand for what is right if you aren’t questioned and challenged by others who themselves are giving into what is wrong. Faithfulness to God is a lonely proposition and very few are faithful to God.

POINT #5 – Mordecai’s faithfulness is hated. **3:5-6**

The word “destroy” is a key word of the book which means to cut off, to wipe out (Gesenius, p. 833). Haman wanted to “wipe out” the whole nation. He wasn’t just interested in getting rid of Mordecai, but he wanted to eliminate the entire Jewish nation. He was out to annihilate Israel.

Josephus says the reason for Haman’s intense hatred was because he remembered that the Jews had nearly exterminated the Amalekites. The old problem of not obeying God and eliminating the Amalekites was now reversed in that Haman wanted to completely exterminate the Jew.

There can be no doubt that behind this Jewish hatred was the work of Satan. Satan wanted to exterminate the line of people through whom the Messiah would come.

Practical lessons to remember:

- 1) The godless may initially be elevated, but it will be the godly who will ultimately be elevated.
- 2) Our faithfulness is not determined by what others are doing; it is determined by our own obedience to God.
- 3) When we stand for what is right, we may stand alone; but we stand with God.
- 4) God will ultimately honor the one who stands for Him.

Are we obeying God? Are we standing for God? Are we like all the rest?