

“Strangers & Pilgrims”
Esther

Introduction:

1. This Morning - We Are Going To Be Wrapping Up Our Series:
 - In The Book Of Esther:
 - Yet - Before We Head Back To Esther:
 - I Want To Begin By Turning To The New Testament Book Of 1 Peter!
 - So Please Turn In Your Bibles There With Me!
 - 1 Peter 2:11-17 - Where Peter Writes To Believers In Christ:
 - And Says - “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; / Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. / Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; / Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. / For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: / As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. / Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king!”
2. What We Learn From These Verses:
 - As Well As Several Others:
 - Is That The People Of God:
 - Are Living In This World:
 - “As Strangers & Pilgrims!”
 - That Is - “This World Is Not Our Home!”
 - And - “We’re Just A-Passing Through!”
 - Followers Of Christ Are Citizens Of Another Country – Of Heaven Itself:
 - And So - We Are To Conduct Ourselves Accordingly:
 - While We Live In This World Filled With Sin & Strife!
 - But This Description:
 - Does Not Just Apply To Those Who Are Christians:
 - Today – And In The Time *After* Jesus Lived & Died & Rose Again On This Earth!
 - It Applies To God’s People Even Before!
 - In Hebrews 11:13 - After Telling Us About The Faith:
 - Of The Earliest Patriarchs - Abel, Enoch, Noah, & Abraham & His Wife, Sarah – We Are Told That:
 - “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth!”
3. So - All Of God’s People:
 - Are “Strangers & Pilgrims” In This World!
 - And This Would Apply Especially To The Jews:
 - Including Mordecai & Esther:
 - Who Were “Strangers & Pilgrims” Also:
 - In The Land Of Persia!
 - And So - As We’ve Been Exploring:
 - The Book Of Esther Together:
 - Since The Beginning Of This Year:
 - I Have Grown To See This Inspired Book As Something Of A Special Manual:
 - Of How To Live As “Strangers & Pilgrims” In A World That Is Growing More & More Hostile To God & His People!
 - 4. So - What Does It Take:
 - To Live As “Strangers & Pilgrims” In:
 - This Kind Of World?
 - Consider 6 – Really 7 – Ways Together!

* First:

1. ***It Takes A Great Confidence!***
 - A Great Confidence & Trust:

- Not In Yourself & Not In Any Other Man:
 - But In The Lord Himself!
 - Psalm 118:8 - "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man!"
 - This Is What We Looked At Last Sunday Morning!
- And How When It Seems As If God Is Missing Or Absent:
 - We Can Still Trust In:
 - The Lord & His Character:
 - As He Has Revealed Himself To Us In The Rest Of His Word!
- And I Believe:
 - Based On The Kind Of Character We See:
 - In Both Mordecai & Esther:
 - That They Had A Great Trust & Confidence In The Lord!
- And So - First & Foremost:
 - To Live As A Stranger & A Pilgrim As A Child Of God:
 - You Can & Must Trust In:
 - The Lord!
- As A Sovereign God!
 - Who Is In Complete Control!
- As A Sympathetic God!
 - Who "Ever Loves & Cares For His Own!"
- As A Scrupulous God!
 - Who Considers The Little Details Of Our Lives!
 - Nothing Is By Accident!
 - Nothing Is Mere Coincident!
- As A Saving God!
 - "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance!" (2 Peter 3:9)
 - And:
- As A Steadfast God!
 - Because - "Great Is [His] Faithfulness!"
- And So:
 - No Matter Where You Are:
 - And No Matter What You Face:
 - Put Your Trust & Confidence In The Lord!
 - Proverbs 3:5-6 - You Can - "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. / In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths!"
 - And When This Happens - These Other Characteristics & Traits:
 - Will Take Their Proper Place In Your Life!
 - Because Along With A Great Confidence In The Lord:

* Sometimes:

2. ***It Takes A Great Caution!***

- Even Though Our Confidence & Trust Is In The Lord:
 - We Also Need To Remember - As Strangers & Pilgrims:
 - That We Live In A Hostile World!
 - And There Is A Battle Going On All Around Us!
 - After All - This Is Why We Find Mordecai & Esther In The Capital City Of Shusan / Susa At The Beginning Of The Book Of Esther!
 - They Were There:
 - Because Of The Battles & Captivity Of Their Ancestors! See This In:
 - 2:5-6 - "Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite; / Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away!"
 - Mordecai Knew All-Too-Well What It Was Like:
 - To Be A "Stranger & Pilgrim" In A Foreign Land!
 - And So - At First - We See Him Living A Relatively Cautious Life!
 - To Live This Way Required:
- Great Patience!

- Often Waiting To See What God Was Doing!
 - Get A Sense Of This In 2:7-8 - “And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle’s daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter. / So it came to pass, when the king’s commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king’s house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women!”
- Mordecai Had A Great Love & Affection:
 - For Esther - As His Own Adopted Daughter!
 - And So - When The King’s Beauty Pageant Begins - Esther Does Not Appear To Be The First To Arrive - But One Of The Last!
 - He Seems Reluctant To Give Her Up To The King - But - Even When There Was No Alternative:
 - We Further See:
- Great Perception!
 - And Wisdom!
 - 2:10 - “Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it!”
 - Now - Was This Fear Or Faith:
 - That Caused Mordecai To Do This?
 - Hebrews 11:23 - “By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment!”
 - Sometimes Faith Will Act In A Cautious Manner:
 - As We Patiently Seek After God’s Wisdom In Our Lives!
- Jesus Even Told His Disciples In:
 - Matthew 10:16 - “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves!”
 - To Live As A Christian “Stranger & Pilgrim” Will Sometimes Take:
 - Great Patience & Perception - As We Cautiously Seek After God’s Will! Also:

3. ***It Takes A Great Commitment!***

- And We Can See This Commitment:
 - Especially In The Life Of Mordecai!
 - He Had A Great Commitment:
- To The Law Of The Lord!
 - In 3:8 - When Haman Was Trying To Persuade The King:
 - “And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king’s laws: therefore it is not for the king’s profit to suffer them!”
 - Haman Recognized That The Jews Had Different & Diverse Laws:
 - From All The Rest Of The Kings Subjects!
 - And Who’s Law Was It?
 - It Could Only Have Been The Law Of The Lord!
 - And It Was This Same Law That Caused Mordecai To Refuse To Bow Down To Haman In:
 - 3:1-4 - “After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. / And all the king’s servants, that were in the king’s gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence. / Then the king’s servants, which were in the king’s gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king’s commandment? / Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai’s matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew!”
 - It Seems Clear That Haman Wanted To Be Honored In A Religious Way – Not Merely In A Civil Way!
 - And So - For Mordecai To Bow Down To Haman Was A Matter Of Conviction & Commitment:
 - To Obey The Law Of God Over The Law Of The King!
 - Also - Commitment:

- To The People Of The Lord!
 - Even Though His Refusal To Bow Down To Haman:
 - Was The Cause Of Haman's Desire To Destroy All Of The Jews:
 - How Could Mordecai Have Known?
 - But When He Learned Of The King's Decree:
 - 4:1-2 - "When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; / And came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth!"
 - And Then - He Did Everything He Possibly Could:
 - To Save His People From Destruction:
 - Including Asking His Beloved Daughter, Esther, To Put Herself Into Extreme Danger!
 - To Be A "Stranger & Pilgrim" Requires:
 - Great Commitment To The One Who:
 - Brought You Into His Kingdom & Family!
 - 1 Peter 2:9-10 - "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: / Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy!"
 - The Lord Deserves Your Commitment:
 - To Him, His Word, And His People!
 - Are You Willing To Follow The Lord No Matter What The Consequences May Be?

4. ***It Takes A Great Courage!***

- Yes - There Are Many Times That We Need To Be Cautious:
 - And Seek After God's Wisdom & Will In The Matters Of Our Lives!
 - But Then - There Are Times That Are Clear:
 - About What Must Be Done!
 - And Then - Our Confidence In The Lord Will Drive Us With Great Courage To Do His Will!
 - And It Takes Great Courage:
- When It Is Time To Stand!
 - Even When Mordecai Stood On His Feet:
 - Most Literally - Whenever Haman:
 - Passed Through The King's Gate!
 - Mordecai's Confidence In The Lord:
 - Is The Only Thing That Could Have Given Him:
 - This Great Courage!
 - And So - "His Refusal Was Pious, Conscientious, And Pleasing To God, For The Religion Of A Jew Forbade Him!" (Matthew Henry)
 - It Also Takes Great Courage:
- When It Is Time To Seek!
 - As Esther Did In Esther 4:11-16 - "All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days! / And they told to Mordecai Esther's words. / Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. / For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? / Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, / Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish!"
 - Esther Was Willing To Die For Her People!
 - And She Then "Placed Her Life In The Hands Of The Unseen, Unheard, And Unrecognized God!" (Ian Duguid)
- What Courage! To Go Against The Greatest Powers On Earth:

- At That Time!
 - But This Kind Of Courage Could Only Come:
 - From Strong Confidence In The Lord!
- Perhaps She Remembered The Lord's Word To Joshua:
 - In Joshua 1:9 - "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest!"
 - Even In The Far-Away Land Of Persia, The Lord Was Still With Her!

5. ***It Takes A Great Character!***

- Back In 1 Peter 2:11 - Peter Tells Us To - "Have Your Conversation / Lifestyle Honest Among The Gentiles!"
 - This Is How A Believer Is To Live In This World!
 - To Let The Light Of The Lord Shine In & Through Our Lives & Character:
 - Which Is To Be Molded After The Character Of Christ Himself!
 - This Character Will Include:
 - A Right Heart!
 - Like The Kind Of Heart Mordecai Possessed:
 - When He Took Esther, His Younger Cousin:
 - To Be His Own Daughter!
 - Love & Tenderness & Affection!
 - And The Kind Of Heart Both He & Esther Possessed:
 - When They Had Compassion:
 - For Their People – God's People:
 - When Their Lives Were In Danger!
 - This Character Will Also Include:
 - A Right Honesty!
 - 2:21-22 - "In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. / And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name!"
 - Mordecai Was Going To Be Faithful & Loyal To The Truth & Righteousness:
 - No Matter What! Also:
 - A Right Humility!
 - Even Though The King Forgot To Reward Mordecai:
 - He Remained Faithful In His Post:
 - At The King's Gate!
 - Also - Both He & Esther:
 - Were Not Ashamed To Be Seen:
 - Crying & Mourning:
 - When The Lives Of Their People Were In Danger!
 - This Is The Kind Of Character:
 - That Needs To Be On Display:
 - When We Are Living As "Strangers & Pilgrims" In This World!
 - It Is Really A Reflection Of The Character Of The Lord Himself!
 - But Also:

6. ***It Takes A Great Cause!***

- Find This Toward The End Of Esther:
 - When - After Their Deliverance From Haman:
 - And Their Enemies - And After The Promotion:
 - Of Mordecai:
 - 9:30 - "And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth!"
 - This Was The Great Cause:
 - Of Mordecai & Esther!
 - "Peace & Truth!"
 - For His People:
 - And For Others To Become Part Of His People!
 - Which Also Took Place In Esther!

- 8:17 - “And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king’s commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them!”

Conclusion:

1. These Six Things Are What It Takes:
 - To Live As “Strangers & Pilgrims” In This World!
 - A Great Confidence:
 - In The Lord!
 - A Great Caution:
 - As We Seek After The Wisdom & Will Of God!
 - A Great Commitment:
 - To The Word Of God & To The People Of God!
 - A Great Courage:
 - Based On The Power & Promises Of God!
 - A Great Character:
 - Molded After The Character Of The Lord Himself!
 - And A Great Cause:
 - Sharing The “Peace & Truth” Of The Lord:
 - With Each Other:
 - And With The Rest Of The World!
2. Do You Have What It Takes?
 - If We Are Honest With Ourselves - The Answer Is No!
 - We Don’t Have What It Takes:
 - Within Ourselves To Live & Survive As “Pilgrims & Strangers!”
 - It Is A Hard & Difficult Life!
 - Like Paul - “We Are Troubled On Every Side, Without Are Fightings, Within Are Fears!”
 - We Need To Go Back To The First Point:
 - “It Takes A Great Confidence” And Faith:
 - In The Lord - “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son!” (Colossians 1:13)
 - He Is The One Who Will Enable Us & Empower Us:
 - To Live & Survive:
 - As The “Pilgrims & Strangers” That He Has Called Us To Be!
 - Remember To Keep Your Faith & Your Focus:
 - On The Lord Jesus Christ!
 - Hebrews 12:1-3 - “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, / Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. / For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds!”
3. In Order To Live As A “Stranger & Pilgrim” In This World:
 - 7th - It Takes A Great Christ! And If You Belong To Him – He Belongs To You! (“Now I Belong To Jesus”)

Grace Baptist Church
Stephen Elmer, Pastor
4245 North 200 West
Greenfield, Indiana 46140
317-326-2362
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace
www.growatgrace.org
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com