

LIFE GROUP LESSON

Don't Forget to Remember • Week of July 30

Introduction

Where do you find yourself today?

Who helped you get to where you are?

What have you accomplished or achieved?

Why are you successful?

The answer to these questions vary for each of us. The truth is we are created for a purpose and destiny, but too often, we forget to remember that we did not get to where we are all on our own. Perhaps we have been put in the positions where we are *for just such a time as this* – with the express purpose to live into a call that is bigger than ourselves, a call over which our response has the capacity to affect many people.

Background

There was a man in the Bible who discovered his destiny was bigger than he imagined when he took in his young cousin, Hadassah. This man, Mordecai, adopted his young cousin, into his family and raised her as his own daughter upon the death of her parents (his uncle). They were Jewish and lived in the fortress of Susa during the Persian empire. Their ancestors had been among the Jews exiled by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, during the time of king Jehoiachin of Judah (see Esther 2:5-9).

After the Medo/Persians overthrew Babylonian rule, a king by the name of Xerxes rose to power (486-465 BC). The queen of this Persian king, was dethroned from her position when she had refused to parade before Xerxes' nobles at an opulent feast he had thrown for the leaders in his kingdom (Esther 1). Upon the irrevocable order to banish queen Vashti, king Xerxes began to regret his decision. Advisors suggested a decree be made to gather beautiful young virgins from across the kingdom to be brought before king Xerxes so that he may select a new queen (Esther 2:1-4). Mordecai's young cousin Hadassah also known as Esther, was one of the girls taken to the palace to prepare for the search for a new queen. While there Esther does not tell anyone of her nationality or background, for Mordecai had instructed her not to do so.

Read Esther 2:15-3:6

Haman hates Mordecai for not bowing to him, and thus, devises a plan to annihilate all Jews throughout the entire empire. Haman convinces Xerxes that there "is a certain race of people scattered throughout all the provinces of your empire who keep themselves separate... and they refuse to obey the laws of the king. So it is not in the king's interest to let them live" (Esther 3:8). Not realizing his own queen is Jewish, Xerxes agrees to the horrific plan and the decree is proclaimed. "Dispatches were sent by swift messengers into all the provinces of the empire, giving the order that all Jews—young and old, including women and children—must be killed, slaughtered, and annihilated on a single day."

Read Esther 3:14-4:17

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

Mordecai was an honorable man. He refused to bow to man; yet, now he humbles himself in the sight of all in the city (4:1-2). And though Mordecai loved Hadassah, he understood the seriousness of the decree – it was life and death of the Jewish people. Mordecai would not let Esther (now queen) remain indifferent to the people of her nationality. Mordecai knew the little girl he raised, now queen, was placed in her position 'for just such a time as this' – this would be the time to reveal her identity and fight for her people. After Mordecai's persistent admonition, queen Esther, resolves to do what must be done. She asks Mordecai to call together all the Jews of Susa and fast. Vowing to do the same, they courageously seek strength and wisdom from on high. Radical humility gets heaven's attention.

Read Esther 5:1-10

2. What are you going to do about what the Holy Spirit is saying to you?

When we humble ourselves in prayer, heaven will step in on our behalf. We should check our motives and make sure our petitions and requests are aligned with God's bigger picture, and not presented for selfish reasons; but pray earnestly for God to move on your behalf. The night of the first of two banquets, the king can't sleep. This was before the second banquet, when Esther would disclose her identity and unveil Haman's wickedness. As the journal of Xerxes' reign is being read to him in the night, the king learns of how Mordecai once upon a time had rescued the king from an evil plot upon his life. So now, at the very time Haman is devising the destruction of Mordecai, king Xerxes is now suddenly wanting to honor Mordecai. Haman's evil scheme is destined to be reversed (Esther 7:1-10, see also Psalm 37:10-15).

3. How can we help you with what the Holy Spirit is speaking to you?

When king Xerxes understands the degree of Haman's wickedness, not only does the king order his annihilation, but upon Esther's request, gives all Jewish people the right (freedom) to unite and defend themselves when the day of the enemies arrives (see Esther 8:11-14). Though the first decree is irrevocable (Esther 3:12-13), the second decree had the power *backed by the king* to reverse the first.

"So on March 7 the two decrees of the king were put into effect. On that day, the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but quite the opposite happened. It was the Jews who overpowered their enemies. The Jews gathered in their cities throughout all the king's provinces to attack anyone who tried to harm them. But no one could make a stand against them, for everyone was afraid of them. And all the nobles of the provinces, the highest officers, the governors, and the royal officials helped the Jews for fear of Mordecai. For Mordecai had been promoted in the king's palace, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces as he became more and more powerful" (Esther 9:1- 4).

In Closing—

An enemy has come to steal, kill, and destroy. But in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have been given authority to fight back. We fight from a place of victory. The only way we lose to the enemy is if we refuse to fight. Who is in your sphere of influence for whom the King is calling you to fight? Are you willing to surrender yourself in radical humility and pray? In the name of Jesus, pray and equip yourself and your family with power from on high. Rise up and tread upon the darkness with all the authority your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, has given you. Christ has the power to reverse the plans of the enemy. Trust Him. Don't forget to remember that *reaching* and *developing* the people God is raising up around you is what equips us to push back the darkness. We unite and fight as a team and fight together. And it starts on our knees.

One Year Bible Reading

July 30: 2 Chronicles 26:1-28:27, Romans 13:1-14, Psalm 23:1-6, Proverbs 20:11
July 31: 2 Chronicles 29:1-36, Romans 14:1-23, Psalm 24:1-10, Proverbs 20:12
August 1: 2 Chronicles 30:1-31:21, Romans 15:1-22, Psalm 25:1-15, Prov. 20:13-15
August 2: 2 Chronicles 32:1-33:13, Ro. 15:23-16:9, Ps. 25:16-22, Prov. 20:16-18
August 3: 2 Chronicles 33:14-34:33, Romans 16:10-27, Psalm 26:1-12, Prov. 20:19
August 4: 2 Chronicles 35:1-36:23, 1 Corinthians 1:1-17, Ps. 27:1-6, Prov. 20:20-21
August 5: Ezra 1:1-2:70, 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5, Psalm 27:7-14, Proverbs 20:22-23

DON'T FORGET TO REMEMBER

Text: Esther 4:10-16

PLAIN TRUTH

Today's _____ and _____ brings
tomorrow's _____.

1. Pre-revival _____ precede spiritual
_____.
2. The _____ continues, but the _____ has
been _____.
3. The King's _____ is the Follower's _____.

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