**RISE UP** in 2021

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***MADE FOR THIS MOMENT***

A Study of the book of Esther

***The Plot Thickens***

Esther 2:19-3:15



**Esther 1-2:18 Recap**

King Xerxes, the ruler of 127 provinces from India to Africa, is a conceited, self-centered man who asked his wife, Queen Vashti, to be paraded around in front of all his friends. She says no and is then banned from the presence of the king and stripped of her crown. A search was then done throughout the kingdom for all of the young beautiful virgins. They are brought to the citadel and given beauty treatments for 12 months.

Esther, a Jew and the daughter of Mordecai, was also brought to the citadel. As she proceeded through the process, she found favor from the Lord and Hegai, who was in charge of the harem. During this time, she was careful not to mention that she was Jewish for Mordecai has told her not to. She soon found herself finding the favor of the king, more than any other woman. She was named queen and was given a big celebration.

**Esther 2:19-23 ESV**In those days, as Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. And this came to the knowledge of Mordecai, and he told it to Queen Esther, and Esther told the king in the name of Mordecai. When the affair was investigated and found to be so, the men were both hanged on the gallows. And it was recorded in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

**Esther 3:1-6 ESV**

After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, and advanced him and set his throne above all the officials who were with him. And all the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him. **But Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage.** Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, “Why do you transgress the king's command?” And when they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai's words would stand, for he had told them that he was a Jew. And when Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage to him, Haman was filled with fury. But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone. So, as they had made known to him the people of Mordecai, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.

**Esther 3:8-10 ESV**

Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, “There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom. Their laws are different from those of every other people, and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not to the king's profit to tolerate them. If it please the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed … So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the enemy of the Jews.

**Esther 3:12-15 ESV**

Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with instruction to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day…And the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.

WHAT JUST HAPPENED?!?!

Everything was so “right” ... then everything became “chaotic.”   
Crisis set in. Isn’t this just like our lives? Things are going well ... then   
crisis mode kicks in.

Crisis can lead to **obedience** through **surrender**.

Can you recall a crisis in your life? But more specifically, can you recall a moment when your faith was put to the test?

How do you respond in moments of crisis?

The thing about a crisis ...

* There is often not a solution right in front of you.
* You are unable to overcome it through your will.
* But rather it is about surrendering your will for His.

Christ says it best, “Not my will, but yours, be done.” Luke 22:42

Mordecai surrendered his will and was obedient, even in the face of death. And when he was pressured to conform … he stood firm in his beliefs.

When pressured to conform, **stand** **firm** in your **beliefs**.

Mordecai was told to bend the knee. At that moment, his faith was put to the test. To bow down and pay respect. Conform … or die.

When pressured to conform, remember your beliefs found in His Word…

God is **sovereign**, even when life does not make **sense**.

*The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. Psalm 103:19 ESV*

God’s **strength** is made known through our **weakness**.

*But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:9-11 ESV*

God **fights** for us.

*It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.” Deuteronomy 31:8 ESV*

What this does not mean is that we do nothing. We take a stand because God has made us for moments such as these.

But not only can crisis lead to conformity, but ...

Crisis can lead to **compromise**.

**Compromise**

Weaken (a reputation or principle) by accepting standards that are lower than is desirable. Undermine, weaken, damage, injury harm.

When pressured to **compromise**, stand firm in your **convictions**.

Convictions are often related to a strong belief or persuasion. It is where we think that we are the strongest where the enemy seeks to bring about compromise. We need to have strong convictions because we know that the plot will thicken.

Compromise can be too easy.

Compromise is a slippery slope.

Around every corner compromise is calling.

Where do you feel pressured to compromise in your convictions?

We must stand firm on our convictions to **weather** the storms of compromise.

**Matthew 7:25 ESV**

And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

The Lord is able to achieve outcomes that we cannot even imagine. For the Israelites, He parted a sea; for Mordecai, He turned his enemy’s plan upon his own head. For you, well, we have yet to see … the story is yet to be told.

When the plot thickens, we need to **stand** **firm** in our beliefs and in our convictions. Not only for ourselves, but for those that are without a voice, for our children, and for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

I am thankful for people who set an example for us as Christ followers … who stand up in the face of adversity and does what is right. For those that stand for what is right, even when it may cost them their status, their reputation, job, family, life. The plot is getting thick … are you ready to stand?