

Chapter Fourteen

A Time to Die

Esther 4:5 to 17

This episode opens to find a worn and broken Mordecai pleading with “...the God of Israel...”, loosely quoting from the Fifty-ninth Psalm.

“‘Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me.’ *Oy, how does this go...* ‘Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from...’ *Haman and these ‘...bloody men.* For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin...’ *My innocence, like Job ‘...O Lord...’, is before Thee.*” With a chuckle he could feel both inside and through clenched fingers grabbing sackcloth outside; Mordecai purposely LAUGHED, to coincide with the next verse. “‘But thou, O Lord, shalt LAUGH at them.... For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying which they speak. Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth.’ *...Even in Shushan!*”, he thought, “‘Selah.’” Secure in the thought that Jehovah heard his petition, he concluded, “‘But I will sing of THY POWER; yea, I will sing aloud of THY mercy in the morning: for THOU hast been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto THEE, O my strength, will I sing: for GOD is my defense, and the God of my mercy.’”

Just then, Hatach appeared to inquire “...*what* it was...” and “...*why* it was...” (Esther 4:5) he refused the Queen’s raiment in order to wear sackcloth.

“And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king’s treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them. Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that *SHE SHOULD GO* in unto the king, *TO MAKE SUPPLICATION* unto him, and *TO MAKE REQUEST* before him *FOR HER PEOPLE*. And Hatach came and told Esther *THE WORDS OF MORDECAI*.” Esther 4:7-9

“He wants me to do *what*?!”

““Go in unto the King, *my Queen*, and...”

“Doesn’t he know I could be executed for that?! First he’s howlin’ like a dog, and now he wants me to...to be put to death. *What’s the matter with him!* I’m so upset...I could just...well, you know.”

“My Lady, perhaps you should tell him your thoughts.”

“You’re right Hatach! That’s just what I’ll do!! You march right back down there and tell him, *Esther* said...”

...Before we continue this dialogue, may I remind you; quite some time has elapsed since Esther has had any *actual* contact or fellowship with Mordecai. [*All of chapter four substantiates this.*] Lack of communication, coupled with five years of hiding her *true* identity, has allowed *spiritual* amnesia to set in....

“...No change that. Tell Mordecai, that *The QUEEN* has a *good* excuse for not obeying his words. Tell him, what everyone *inside* the palace already knows, 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:....' There, *that'll get me off the hook.* So he really *knows* I can't go; add this too, *'...but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days....'* Hurry, take another¹ chamberlain with you, and go tell my cousin all these words....”

Now before you judge Esther too quickly, how green is the grass in *your* backyard? What sort of disciple are you? Remember; Jesus also *commands* us to *obey* His *WORDS!*

“Then said Jesus...If ye *CONTINUE* in my *WORD*, *THEN* are ye my *disciples* indeed.” John 8:31

After reading Luke 14:26 and 27 and 33; John 13:35; 15:8, is there still anyone in the Body of Christ, brazen enough, to deem themselves spiritually superior to Esther? I say not!

The Objection

Insufficient contact with Mordecai for the last five years has indeed made Esther a weak disciple. Perhaps this lapse of quality time was the negative transposition (a carryover from Vashti, or a bad habit she picked up in the Palace) that empowered her to tell him “NO”. Given similar circumstances, *our* response might have not been much better. How many times have *we* said, “Jesus, I can't do this...There's gotta be a *BETTER* way,” or politely, “Jesus, *'please'* don't even ask!” That's what Esther said. “*Even though I'm the Queen,*” she thought, “*...I'm only a woman. What can I do about this...I*

¹ Esther 4:12 - “they”.

can't even talk to the King, without being summoned...how can I tell him about this problem!"

If you think about it, Esther had some very good reasons to object. But those reasons didn't impress Mordecai, *nor will they impress Christ!*

The Debate

Alone, and in quiet contemplation; Esther battles it out...

[In type², the *old man* speaks:] “*Who* does *that* Mordecai think he is?! He's *still* trying to tell me what to do!!! Doesn't he know I'm all grown up now?-I'm callin' all da shots!” Almost disgusted, she concludes, “Someone needs to remind Mordecai, *I'm the one in power, NOT him!*”

A little later, after God has dealt with her about her scurrilous remarks, she continues...

[In type, the *new man* speaks:] “Oh Lord, forgive me for thinking *that* way. Mordecai loved me so much, he took me in as an orphan...And later, he sacrificed a lot for me to become Queen. The least I could do is hear him out.... I *know* he's got my best interest at heart...”

The Death

“...And Lord, if obeying Mordecai means losing my life, I trust Your wisdom.... If death is what's required, *then...let me perish!*”

² REMEMBER; WE ARE TEACHING IN TYPES. MORDECAI IS A TYPE OF CHRIST, AND ESTHER, A TYPE OF HIS JEWISH BODY. IN A STORY THAT PICTURES THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, AND NOT THE KINGDOM OF GOD; THE FULL PICTURE OF A CHRISTIAN POSSESSING TWO NATURES CANNOT BE COMPLETED. [Here, please read Romans chapters six and seven.] THE OLD NATURE IS REPRESENTED BY ESTHER'S UNWILLINGNESS TO YIELD TO MORDECAI, THE NEW, IN WHAT FOLLOWS.

The Decision

“Lord, I surrender my will to Mordecai’s. Help me to do everything he asks.” Singing as she goes, “...*I have decided to follow Mordi...I have decided to follow Mordi...I have decided to follow Mordi...No turning back,...no turning back!*”

WHAT’S THE DEBATE OVER? *OUR WILL VERSUS “THE MIND OF CHRIST”*. (I Corinthians 2:16) Until we learn to do it Mordecai’s way; we’ll never have victory over the enemy! Let’s see this in action: In verse 8 Mordecai “charges” Esther to speak to the King. In verse 10 and 11 she rebuts his wishes with a “commandment” of her *own*. And then in verse 13, Mordecai, now much tougher, outright “commands” Esther to hear him out, by giving her some good reasons to obey. (Verse 14)

Though at first Esther falters, renewed contact with Mordecai’s *WORD* has (unwittingly) made her stronger, so strong in fact; she now realizes God’s purpose for making her the Queen! (Esther 4:13 and 14)

Before she surrenders her will to Mordecai’s, Esther must first learn what all Christians do before they surrender their will to Christ. She must die to self!!!! The truth is, *death* and *surrender* are contingent on each other. This will be more evident, as we continue.

Death’s unfamiliar territory has led Esther to seek out Job. After all, “...he faced death, in the ash heap!”, she thought. Very unexpectedly, someone else came to mind—someone she recently tried to help. (Esther 4:4) “Mordecai,” she concluded, “is just like Job! He’s clothed in sackcloth and crying the bitter cry of DEATH. Thank you Lord for guiding me.... Now I know what you were trying to show me.... My own cousin Mordecai...will show me...how to *die!*”

So we can readily obey the WORDS of Jesus Christ; Scripture commands us to die to self. The Apostle Paul said, “...I die daily....” (I Corinthians 15:31) Nothing less will do!

And in that sense, NOTHING less than learning how to die to her own personal wants and desires helped ESTHER to obey MORDECAI!

Notice this time, in verse fifteen, Esther didn't *command* Mordecai to do anything. Instead of *objecting*, she "...BADE..." him "...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...” obey your words, and **“...go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. So MORDECAI went his way, and DID ACCORDING TO ALL THAT ESTHER HAD COMMANDED HIM.”** Esther 4:16 and 17. [*That's a well-oiled machine! That's TEAMWORK!! That's COOPERATION!!! You see; if we do what Mordecai commands us to do, he answers our requests too. (Vs. 17)*]

Christian, have you come to terms with your present situation? Why has Jehovah placed you where you're at, today? Let's talk some common sense here! Maybe, He has placed you in that situation, because He believes, you, and you *alone*, can do what is needed to fulfill His will. (Esther 14b) Isn't that the *real* reason Esther was made Queen? Remember; she was no more deserving, educated, or connected to the throne, than any of the other maidens. Yet, only *she* won the King's heart. God, in His “good pleasure,” called Esther to enjoy a royal lifestyle, she otherwise might have not known, for the *sole* purpose of getting Mordecai's word to the King.

Perhaps *you* are the missing link between The Father's will, and its fulfillment? Is Mordecai (Jesus) calling on you to help fulfill it? If He is-if you *know* He is-ask Him for guidance (consult your Husbands-Ladies, and your Pastor-Christian), and then bid Him this answer, “Lord Jesus, if it means my death to perform Your will-so be it. By Your grace, help me to please You, any way I can! Amen.”

Perception of the King

One would *think*; by the fifth year of matrimony, perfect knowledge of your spouse would be a guarantee. Certainly this was not the case with Esther, neither, I believe, is it representative of most marriages. Remember the spousal rule of thumb: *We know very little about them, but they know even less than nothing about us!*

As we shall see, after five years of marriage, Esther still had a lot to learn about Ahasuerus.

Though rulers and kings *must* maintain a certain level of toughness in the *public* eye, in *private*, especially when it comes to matters of the heart, that callused exterior should be expected to melt away like butter over a warm fire. Intimate moments like these should always warrant that kind of sensitivity. With this in mind, and your agreement with me that, time, place, and protocol should never hamper the daily amenities of marriage, we should be able to easily tackle the next question together. Here's the question: Why was Esther so fearful that *she* would die for approaching the King, without being summoned? And, here's my answer: Her perception of her husband!

Many times ladies, the way you view your husband *down at the job*, is the exact way you'll perceive him *at home*. *It might stand to reason, if he's a tyrant down at the job, then he MUST be one at home!* [Now don't get me wrong, *YOUR* husband *might* very well be a tyrant in *BOTH* places, but that doesn't mean *EVERY* husband is.] That's not always the case, though. Since Ahasuerus, in type, represents Jehovah, and *JUDGMENT* (not tyranny) *was* part of his "job description" (Psalms 50:6); Esther had no real reason to fear her *husband*, the King.

In Luke 19:11 to 27; someone got their perception of the King all wrong! [Since this parable, in verse eleven, speaks of the *Kingdom of God*; the Body of Christ can and *should* make personal application to the text. Ten is the number of

the Gentiles (See, Genesis 10; Acts 10; Romans 10; and Revelation 10)- thus, “*ten*” *Gentile* servants, who were given “*ten*” pounds of money to serve this “nobleman”, are, LIKE YOU AND ME, in the Kingdom of God.] Look at verses 21 and 22...

“For I FEARED thee, because thou art an AUSTERE [stern, hard, rigid, mean] **MAN: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he (God) saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant.”** Now in paraphrase,... “*If I’m the kind of man you say I am, why didn’t you follow through with what I said?*”

This servant excused his own disobedience for the *NOBLEman’s* (Luke 19:11) rough-and-tumble character (*or so he said!*); effecting judgment that issued “...out of his own mouth...” (Vs. 22) Since Esther’s perception of her *husband*-the King went awry (Esther 4:11); shouldn’t she, like the wicked servant, be judged for the *same* reason? I would say no. Let’s see why.

Like most women who “*feel* beat down by their husbands,” Esther *mistakenly put herself in the role of a servant*. [Unless Genesis 3:16b is understood in context, most women, royalty included; still feel that subservience to a man is nothing short of bondage. Marriage only serves to intensify those emotions. The truth is ladies; *you are our Queens*-sent to us by the Creator! Shame on *you* for *feeling* any less. Men, shame on *us* for *treating them* as though they are any less!!!] She revealed those feelings-putting *herself* on the level of a servant; the moment she said (at the top of verse eleven), “All the king’s *servants*...do know...”

Secondly, when in all respects she was under GRACE, Esther *mistakenly put herself under the “law”* (see verse 11 again). She *should have known*, the King would have been only too glad to see first sight of his “Poopsi-Sweetums.” (See, Esther 5:2a!!!) Ladies; never forget Esther 2:17a...

“And the king loved Esther above all women, and she obtained GRACE and FAVOUR in his sight...”!!! [Without our King’s GRACE and FAVOUR; *we Christians would all be fearful too!*]

Why shouldn’t Esther be judged like the wicked servant of Luke nineteen? BECAUSE; her loving HUSBAND was also the KING. That being said, she DID have a proper perspective of him, both in marriage and in the Kingdom. As his wife; she lacked for nothing; certainly not in the area of love. All things considered, we do though have a pretty good guess why she was so apprehensive. Let’s face it; being she was the Queen, Esther had a pretty good *firsthand* view of this King’s wrath. After all; her own *position* as Queen came from its aftermath! (Remember Vashti?) Then there was the matter of Bigthan and Teresh, who were hung on the spot for treason. (Esther 2:21-23) *No wonder she was so fearful.* These few examples taught Esther a lesson she would never forget: Though she knew her HUSBAND loved her, *THE KING* (on the other hand), was to be feared at all costs.

Silent, In the Grave

Between Esther 4:16 and 5:1, we are looking at a picture of Jesus [without food or drink-Esther 4:16] *lying quiet and still* in the sepulchre. “*Low in the grave he lay-Jesus my Saviour!... Waiting...THEY WATCH HIS BED....*”³

“...And the women also, which came from Galilee...BEHELD THE SEPULCHRE, and how his body was laid.” Luke 23:55

³ From, Christ Arose; Robert Lowry 1826-1899

For “...three days, night...” and “...day...” (Esther 4:16), The Son of man laid in the tomb. The grip of death held him just long enough, to accomplish the Father’s will. Conversely⁴, *in type*, Mordecai, also dies. He is buried for “...three days and three nights...” (Jonah 1:17; Matthew 12:40), suspended in the state of death.

“Now it came to pass ON THE *THIRD DAY*, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king’s house, over against the king’s house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in his royal house over against the gate of the house.” Esther 5:1

This *WAS* the third *DAY*. [The full *day* of the third day was not over. Time wise; this was *still* the “graveyard shift”! Don’t forget, the fasting of Esther 4:16 *BEGAN* at *night* (See, Matthew 27:57; Genesis 1:5, 8,13, 23, and 31), therefore, *NIGHT came FIRST!*] In anticipation of Mordecai’s resurrection; Esther went into the King, *while she was STILL fasting*.

CONCERNING CHRIST...

At the end of the third day, “...as it began to dawn...”, two came “...to SEE the sepulchre....” But He wasn’t there. He was risen, “...as he said....” (Matthew 28:1 and 6)

CONCERNING MORDECAI...

“On *THAT NIGHT* could not the king sleep.” (Esther 6:1) Which night? *THE NIGHT THE FAST WAS OVER-THE NIGHT OF THE RESURRECTION!* No wonder the King couldn’t sleep. A resurrection had just happened in his kingdom, and he was going to be the one [after dawn] to

⁴ Conversely: “A theorem formed by interchanging the hypothesis and conclusion of a given theorem [in this case, *FACT-I* Corinthians 15:3].” If Christ died *literally*, Mordecai died (at least) *IN TYPE*.

announce it to the world [but not before sticking it right in the Devil's face (Esther 6:10)-when he wasn't looking. (Esther 6:12b)

In the same sense that three full days of fasting with Mordecai taught Esther about death and dying; suffering and self-denial teaches a Christian how to die with Christ. (See, Philippians 3:10b.)

“For though *HE* [Christ-Mordecai in type] was crucified through WEAKNESS, yet he liveth by the power of God. For *WE* [Christians-Esther in type] also are WEAK in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God...” II Corinthians 13:4

“For when I am WEAK [in myself], then am I strong [in a resurrected CHRIST].” II Corinthians 12:10b

Do you see it now? Before we are ready to approach the royal King, we must first spend time with a *dying* Saviour. Dying to self, and resurrection power,⁵ got Esther an audience with the King!

⁵ Esther was no dummy. She waited till the following day (Esther 5:8b!), to use the *full* power of Mordecai's resurrection, to triumph over her enemy-Haman!

