

**THE BIG IDEA:** Jesus alone made a way to the throne.

### The Take-Off

One thing that we've learned so far in our study of Esther is that the author absolutely understands how to write a good story.

There are surprising turns, unexpected twists, and almost unbearable dramatic pauses.

It's like watching a television show that you're totally sucked into and then you see the 3 words nobody wants to see: "To be continued..."

You just need to know that from now until the end of the book, that's going to happen a lot more.

In fact, to this point it's all been like that, hasn't it?

Chapter 1 ended with one queen gone and no new queen picked.

Chapter 2 ended with Mordecai uncovering an assassination plot and then being forgotten.

Chapter 3 ended with an order from the king to kill the queen's people (although he didn't know that) and his entire city in confusion.

Last week, chapter 4 ended with all the Jews in sackcloth and ashes and fasting for 3 days in hopes that Esther wouldn't be killed when she showed up uninvited to see the king.

Think about this: of all the things that require us to be brave, perhaps waiting in faith in between need and answer requires the most.

And so here we are, at the start of chapter 5, which is the end of the 3 day fast started in chapter 4.

What we'll see in this chapter is a great contrast in how 2 people approached the throne.

### 1. Esther approached the throne as an advocate

a. Let's read the first 8 verse of chapter 5 and then I'll point out a few observations about Esther

b. How did Esther approach the throne?

a. With confidence

i. she stood in the inner court

ii. this is a woman who isn't wavering, who isn't freaking out

iii. she is standing in full view of the man who holds her life in his hands and she is, standing

iv. Ephesians 6:13

b. With preparation

i. she was careful with what she wore

ii. she had fasted and considered what she would say

iii. she wasn't flying by the seat of her pants

c. With purpose

i. this was a woman on a mission

ii. there may be times to "hang out" with the king, but this wasn't one of them

d. With expectation

i. she was willing to die, but she didn't expect to

ii. notice in verse 4 that she invited the king and Haman to "come today to a banquet I have prepared"

iii. she had already made the preparations for what she'd hoped for

iv. how many times do we approach the King not even really expecting him to do what we ask?

v. Esther wasn't like that

vi. when I spent time as a salesman, the hardest part for me was the ask

vii. that moment when you had to simply ask them to buy what you were selling

viii. the ask is easy with our King, because he already knows what we need BEFORE THE ASK

(Matthew 6:8)

e. With patience

i. she was ready for the ask, and she asked for...another chance to ask!

ii. she may have gotten nervous, but maybe she was sensitive to timing

iii. Why put off until tomorrow what you can do today? Because sometimes God leads you to.

iv. we need to be sensitive to God's timing and not be impatient with delays

c. In this first case study on approaching the throne, we see that Esther approached the throne as an ADVOCATE

- d. She was going at great risk on the behalf of others
- e. Call me crazy, but that sounds like a mom to me, right?
- f. Moms go to bat for their kids all the time, they will stop short of nothing to make sure their kids are ok
- g. Some start advocacy programs, like Candice Lightner who started MADD in 1980 after her 13 year-old daughter was killed by a drunk driver.
- h. Others take a different course of action to ensure their kids are safe, like this mom who went viral getting her son out of the Baltimore riots (show video)
- i. Esther approached the throne as an advocate

**2. Haman approached the throne as an opportunist**

- a. Haman - we met him in chapter 3, the biggest shark in the water - offers us a different case study
- b. If Esther approached the throne as an advocate, then Haman approached the throne as an OPPORTUNIST
- c. Let's read the rest of the chapter and see how this plays out
- d. How did Haman approach the throne?
  - a. With pride
    - i. he boasted about his wealth, heritage, and position (v. 11)
    - ii. "I'm the ONLY one..." (v. 12)
    - iii. being near great people is only important if it makes HIM great
    - iv. selfies with famous people as a way to be discovered
  - b. With an agenda
    - i. there is something that he wants
    - ii. on the surface, he wants Mordecai to bow
    - iii. in reality, he wants EVERYONE to bow - he wants a throne
    - iv. agendas can keep us from enjoying blessings - "but all this gives me no satisfaction" (v. 13)
  - c. With bitterness
    - i. simply put, he hates Mordecai and wants him dead
    - ii. forget that he would die soon anyway in "the purge"
    - iii. Haman can't wait that long
    - iv. bitterness has a way of working through us until nothing satisfies us but the downfall of others
    - v. eating with the king and queen, having money and a good family and a great job didn't satisfy Haman, but seeing one man hanging impaled 75 feet in the air does (v. 14)

**3. Do you have tunnel vision or funnel vision?**

- a. Let me ask you a question as we begin to wrap this morning up: do you have tunnel vision or funnel vision?
- b. Tunnel vision sees only one thing and loses all perspective of the greater plan God is working
- c. Tunnel vision leads to idolatry, and Haman has tunnel vision
  - a. it's funny how this can turn anything into an idol
  - b. when what YOU'RE doing (even if it's for God) cause you to lose sight of what GOD'S doing
  - c. suddenly we talk about MY ministry, MY blessings, MY hopes, MY dreams
- d. Funnel vision, though, recognizes a greater plan and that we are a piece of it - a funnel, if you will, that God moves his plan through
- e. Funnel vision leads to humility, and Esther has funnel vision

The Landing

Funnel vision allows us to always see that we are a part of the plan, not the heart of the plan.

Jesus is at the heart of the plan, and when we understand that, we will find ourselves courageously - and with humility - approaching the King's throne.

Esther had begun to see that Someone greater than herself was paving a way to the throne.

Today, I want you to see that Someone greater than you or I has paved a way to the throne, too.

Hebrews 4:14-16

Jesus went before us to pave a way for us. **Jesus alone made a way to the throne.**

He was the best advocate, and he did it so that today you could find mercy, grace, and salvation instead of death.

Let's pray.