

HIDDEN GOD

A SERIES IN ESTHER

SERMON TEXT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

NORTHVIEW COMMUNITY CHURCH

May 24, 2020

INFO AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **CG Leader Resources** || Find Zoom games, training podcasts, content from the training breakfasts, along with other announcements and information at northview.org/community-group-resources
- **Daily Devotions** for our Esther sermon series || Dive into the sermon text during the week to prepare your heart and mind for the weekend sermon at northview.org/esther
- **Northview Cares** || An initiative to get everyone involved! We want to offer assistance to those in our community who are seeking to get help or give help at northview.org/northview-cares
- **Divorce Care, Griefshare, and Theology Classes** || Registration for the fall is now open || northview.org/courses.
- **Northview's Premarriage Class** || Registration is open at northview.org/pre-marriage
- **Prayer at Northview** || Take a look at recommended books, videos, podcasts, and websites to help you enrich your prayer life at northview.org/prayer.

KEEP MEETING TOGETHER - BUT ONLINE!

In the days ahead, we want to encourage you to 'not neglect meeting together' (Hebrews 10:25) even if we cannot physically gather. Our Community Department has shared some great resources which give instructions on how to connect people online. You can access this information at the link below:

How to Host a Community Group Online

It provides step-by-step directions for setting up groups via Google Hangouts and Facebook Messenger, as well as guidelines for Online Etiquette.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- **Content:** Pray that the truth of God's providence, as we see in the book of Esther, would not simply be a wonderful thought for us to consider, but that it would become a rock-solid foundation for our lives as we take on whatever challenges come our way.
- **Connect:** Pray for all of the kids who have had to be at home in this strange season. Pray particularly for the kids of our Church as they watch our kids services each week. Ask God to root His Word deeply in their hearts.
- **Care:** Pray for our new Care Ministry efforts across Abbotsford and Mission. Pray that God would open new doors of gospel-ministry through these opportunities.
- **Commission:** Pray for your neighbour! Your literal neighbour. Ask God to give you favor in their eyes as you live out a Christ-honoring life in front of them and that He would give you new opportunities to interact and share the gospel message.

SERMON TEXT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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You may need to pick and choose which questions will allow for the best discussion in your group, but it's important to work through questions from each section in order to have a firm grasp on the text at hand.

OBSERVATION

This section is aimed at helping people observe the details of the text: what is written, what words or ideas are repeated and emphasized, the text's structure and how this text fits into the wider context of the book.

1. Read Esther 2:1-23.
2. What was the proposal given to King Xerxes to replace Queen Vashti?
Beautiful women from across the land were to be brought to Susa and given beauty treatments. Whomever pleased the king would replace Vashti as queen (v2-4).
3. Who was Mordecai and who did he care for? Why?
Mordecai was a Jew who entered Babylon during the exile and he cared for Esther (Hadassah), who was his cousin, after her parents died (v5-7).
4. Why did Hegai provide for Esther? What did he provide her with?
Esther won his favour and he gave her beauty treatments, food, seven attendants, and the best place in the harem (v9).
5. What treatment was required for a woman to come before King Xerxes? What happened after being sent away?
Twelve months of beauty training, six months with oils, six months with perfumes/cosmetics, and then she would spend a night with the king and go back to the harem unless summoned a second time (v12-14).
6. How did Esther win everyone's favour (including King Xerxes)? What is the result?
She did everything that Hegai, the king's eunuch, suggested and was very beautiful (v15, 17). She is made queen and a banquet is thrown for her (v18).
7. What happens while Mordecai is sitting near the king's gate?
He uncovers a plot to have Xerxes killed which he tells to Esther who then passes it along to the king (v19-23).

INTERPRETATION

This section is aimed at linking the current text to other texts or to the bigger biblical narrative.

1. The Babylonian Exile is recorded in a couple of places. Read 2 Kings 24:8-17 & Daniel 1:1-2.
What do these texts tell us about why Jerusalem was given over to the Babylonians?
The King, Jehoiachin, did evil in the eyes of the Lord and was handed over to Babylon as the Lord declared.

2. Esther is granted the favour of Hegai, Xerxes, and everyone who saw her. Read Genesis 39:19-23.
 - a) Why was Joseph given favour by the prison warden?
The Lord was with Joseph and granted him favour (v21).
 - b) What was the result of this favour?
The Lord's presence and favour resulted in success in whatever Joseph did (v23).
 - c) Considering the story of Joseph, from whom do you think Esther's favour truly comes?

APPLICATION

This section is aimed at helping people apply what we have read in the text to our lives. It is intended to foster more open-ended discussion as people connect the text to their everyday life, and reflect on how it changes the way they think and act.

1. In Esther, God is seen working behind the scenes.
 - a) Have you ever felt like God wasn't at work in your life?
 - b) When we can't feel God working in our lives, does that mean He isn't working?
 - c) Thinking back on those moments when it felt like He wasn't at work, can you see how God was working?
2. The Lord grants favour to His people, but there is no promise that He will grant us good things this side of eternity.
 - a) Have you ever expected something from God that He didn't grant you?
 - b) How do you deal with moments when God doesn't do what you expect Him to do?
 - c) When have you experienced God giving you favour?
 - d) How do you continue to find hope in God when you can't see how He is at work?

Pray for continued perseverance for one another when God can't be seen or felt, and for continued hope that He is at work.