

# HIDDEN GOD

A SERIES IN ESTHER

## SERMON TEXT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

NORTHVIEW COMMUNITY CHURCH

May 31, 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](http://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](http://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](http://northview.org/northview-cares)
- The Northview Care Team is looking for **volunteer facilitators for the Divorce Care program** for the new ministry year 2020/2021. Divorce Care is a 13 week biblically-based program for people who are separated or divorced || Facilitators need to be members of Northview, and have gone through the Divorce Care program at least once as an attendee || For more info email [care@northview.org](mailto:care@northview.org)
- **Prayer at Northview** || Take a look at recommended books, videos, podcasts, and websites to help you enrich your prayer life at [northview.org/prayer](http://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 God would give us a love for His Word. Ask Him to fill us with a great excitement to see the majesty of His works in the past!
- **Connect:** Pray for the people of our church who don't feel connected to our community, particularly those who felt this way before the pandemic hit. Ask that God would provide deep friendships and connections with other believers so that they might be encouraged together.
- **Care:** Pray a word of thankfulness to God for the many blessings that we experience. Ask God to help us see opportunities for us to bless others.
- **Commission:** Pray for God to increase our faith and boldness when it comes to sharing the gospel with others.

# SERMON TEXT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## NORTHVIEW COMMUNITY CHURCH

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 3:1-15.
2. What position was Haman promoted to and how did the officials respond?  
*He was given the seat of honour above all other officials (v1) and the officials responded by kneeling and honouring him (v2).*
3. How does Mordecai respond to Haman's promotion?  
*He does not honour Haman and refuses to kneel before him (v2).*
4. What does Haman plot to happen because of Mordecai's defiance?  
*He is going to have the Jews destroyed (v6) by decree of the king (v9).*
5. What was the decree that was sent to all the provinces?  
*To destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jews on the same day and to plunder their goods (v13).*

### INTERPRETATION

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

1. Mordecai is not the first person to refuse to bow when told to do so. Read Daniel 3:1-6, 12.
  - a) What are the people commanded to bow down before?  
*A golden image that was set up by King Nebuchadnezzar for worship (v1).*
  - b) What are the consequences for those who refuse to bow down?  
*They would be thrown into a fiery furnace (v6).*

Alongside these stories of civil disobedience, Scripture tells us to submit to governing authorities. Read 1 Peter 2:13-17 and Romans 13:1-7.

- c) How are we supposed to relate to the governing authorities according to these passages?  
*We are called to: submit for the Lord's sake, live freely but not evilly (1 Pet 2); and to do what is right, submitting to authorities, paying taxes, respect, and honour to whom it is due (Rom 13).*
- d) For what purpose has God given authority to the governing authorities?  
*To punish those who do wrong and commend those who do right*

e) The text doesn't tell us this, but what is the standard by which evil ought to be judged and goodness commended?  
*God is the ultimate standard by which everything must be judged.*

2. Haman sent out a decree for all the Jewish people to be killed. This is wicked, to be sure, but a similar death decree has been declared over all people. Read Romans 3:23 and 6:23.
  - a) Why have we fallen short of the glory of God? What do we all deserve?  
*Sin and death!*
  - b) What does God give to those who trust in Christ instead?  
*Eternal Life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

### 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. How do we balance these accounts of civil disobedience with passages commanding us to obediently submit to the governing authorities?
  - a) When is it hard to submit to our governing authorities?
  - b) When is it justified to be disobedient to the governing authorities?
2. Death is pronounced on all because of sin.
  - a) Do you believe that people are sinful and deserving of judgment? Why or why not?
  - b) Do you believe that God is just in His judgment of sin?

The biblical witness is unequivocal in stating that we are all deserving of judgment and death (Rom 6:23) and yet God in His grace extends life through Christ.

- c) How has God's gracious gift of life in Christ affected who you are and how you live?
- d) This is a free offer for all people. Who will you interact with this week that might not know about this free gift?

Brainstorm some practical ways you can share the good news of Christ with those people this week and close in prayer towards that end.