

HIDDEN GOD

A SERIES IN ESTHER

SERMON TEXT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

NORTHVIEW COMMUNITY CHURCH

June 7, 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
- 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
- **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 for God to use His Word to do the work of "rebuking" and "correcting" His Church (2 Tim 3:16). Ask God to reveal our sin to us through His truth and to equip us to put it to death.
- **Connect:** Pray that God would open doors for us to meaningfully share our lives (joys, troubles, hopes, etc.) with one another even with government restrictions being what they are.
- **Care:** Pray that we would be reminded of the wonderful example of loving one another that we have in the life of Christ. Ask God to help our church see the ways that we can be more loving toward one another and toward our neighbours.
- **Commission:** Pray for the people of our Church! That together we would succeed in the part of our commission that is "teaching [disciples] to obey all that [Christ] commanded." (Matt 28:20)

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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 4:1-17.
2. What stands out from this text? What seems important to notice?
 - Mordecai and the Jews cry out in mourning at the edict and cover themselves in sackcloth and ashes (v1-3)
 - Esther inquires into what is wrong and tries to give Mordecai new clothes (v4-5).
 - Hathak reports to Esther what he has learned from Mordecai (v9).
 - Esther cannot approach King Xerxes unless she is summoned, or else she might be put to death (v11).
 - Mordecai trusts that God will deliver the Jews whether by Esther's intervention or anothers, but believes that she has been placed in the palace 'for such a time as this' (v12-14).
 - Esther agrees to entreat Xerxes even if it means she might die (v15-16).

INTERPRETATION

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

1. "There was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing." Read Joel 2:12-16.
 - a) How does Joel 2 echo Esther 4?
The people are called to fasting and weeping and mourning [wailing] (vs 12 / 1-3). Esther calls the people to fast and gather together (vs 15-16 / 16)
 - b) What is the Lord calling His people to do?
Return to the Lord for He is gracious
 - c) If the people return, how will the Lord respond?
He will relent from sending calamity and judgment
 - d) Why can the people trust God to do what He says?
Because He is gracious, compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love
 - e) How does this help us think through the scene in Esther 4?

2. Esther had been raised up "for such a time as this" (4:14). There are similarities between this moment and the story of Joseph.
 - a) Read Genesis 37:26-28. What happens to Joseph?
He is sold into slavery by his brothers and taken to Egypt.
 - b) Read Genesis 41:41. What happens when Joseph is in Egypt?
He rises up and becomes second in command in all of Egypt.
 - c) Read Genesis 45:1-7. How does this end up helping Joseph's family?
When his brothers come to him, he is able to provide for them because of the stature he was given.
 - d) Read Genesis 50:18-21. How does Joseph explain the situation to his brothers?
He is in the situation that God has placed him in, and what was initially meant for evil will be used for good.
 - e) How does this help us think through the scene in Esther 4?

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. The Lord calls His people to return to Him with their whole hearts and in repentance. Have you turned to God?

What is stopping you from returning to Him?

What is it about sin that causes us to think He will not forgive us?

How does God's character reassure you that He will still relent if you turn to Him?
2. Remaining silent to the sins of those around us may deliver us from momentary backlash but will place us under God's judgment. Why do we often find comfort in staying silent rather than calling out sin?

How can you begin to speak up for those being oppressed?

In what ways has God placed you 'for such a time as this' in the communities you are in?