



Series: Esther
An Appointment with Death
Esther 3:1-15
Speaker: Pastor Mark Burch

Check out the sermon here: <https://northview.org/an-appointment-with-death/>

A Note from Pastor Dan: Hello! Welcome to our sermon reflection. This is intended for you to spend time reflecting upon the weekend teaching of God’s Word. So, it’s important to have watched or listened to the message from the previous weekend. In the coming weeks, I would encourage you to use one of our Sermon Guides as you watch/listen to the sermon in order to keep focused and to note important information.

As you work through this lesson, feel free to ask your parents any questions and include them in your observations.

Opening

- Every story has key elements: characters, the setting & some type of struggle between good and evil, a crisis/tragedy that faces our characters

Esther follows this model:

- Characters:
 - King Xerxes: the vain, selfish king
 - Vashti: The queen who is cast aside
 - Esther: the rags to riches Cinderella story
 - Mordecai: the stalwart family member
 - Haman: the enemy
- setting: Persia
- Crisis: Haman’s plot to kill the Jews

► Read Esther 3:1-6 (NIV)

Haman’s Plot to Destroy the Jews

3 After these events, King Xerxes honored Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. ² All the royal officials at the king’s gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor.

³ Then the royal officials at the king’s gate asked Mordecai, “Why do you disobey the king’s command?” ⁴ Day after day they spoke to him but he refused to comply. Therefore they told Haman about it to see whether Mordecai’s behavior would be tolerated, for he had told them he was a Jew.

⁵ When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged. ⁶ Yet having learned who Mordecai's people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.

- What position was Haman promoted to and how did the officials respond (v1-2)?
- How does Mordecai respond to Haman's promotion (v2)?

***Haman's reaction would appear to be an overreaction to Mordecai's refusal to honour him, but Mark pointed out that there was a long history of enmity between the Jews and Haman's people.

► **Read Esther 3:8-12 (NIV)**

⁸ Then Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. ⁹ If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents^[a] of silver to the king's administrators for the royal treasury."

¹⁰ So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. ¹¹ "Keep the money," the king said to Haman, "and do with the people as you please."

¹² Then on the thirteenth day of the first month the royal secretaries were summoned. They wrote out in the script of each province and in the language of each people all Haman's orders to the king's satraps, the governors of the various provinces and the nobles of the various peoples. These were written in the name of King Xerxes himself and sealed with his own ring.

¹³ Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.

- What does Haman plot to happen because of Mordecai's defiance (v6,9)?
- What was the decree that was sent to all the provinces (v13)?

► **Mark's landing points:**

1. In the darkest day God is still working

Romans 8:28 (NIV)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^[a] have been called according to his purpose.

2. God orchestrates the macro events of history for His glory
3. Don't confuse the micro crisis with the macro story

"our challenge is to keep the small things small & the big things big, and the wisdom to know the difference"

Digging in:

- What does it mean for you to stand up for your Christian beliefs in a grace-filled way?

Luke 9:23-25 (NIV)

²³ Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. ²⁵ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?

- Believers have the privilege and incredible responsibility to live **a life that influences people positively**. What is the opposite of being a positive influence? Can you think of an example from your experiences where a person influenced you negatively? Have you ever been a negative influence on others?
- Believers who choose to be a positive influence in the world point the way to Jesus!

Matthew 5:13-16 (NIV)

Salt and Light

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

- When you do this you are making an effort to be careful to live wisely and use the opportunities that God gives you each day to be a positive influence rather than a negative influence. When believers are walking closely with Jesus and obeying Him they will recognize **opportunities** to be living examples of God’s grace.

John 10:10 (NIV)

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

- Followers of Christ who are being careful to walk wisely and use every opportunity to be a positive influence should never allow anger to stay in their heart. Read the following verses and think about your own heart towards others. Do you tend to get angry easy? Why? And do you hang onto your anger?

Psalm 37:8 (NIV)

Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil.

Proverbs 29:22 (NIV)

An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins.

Proverbs 15:1 (NIV)

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Ephesians 4:26 (NIV)

“In your anger do not sin”^[a]: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,

Ephesians 4:31 (NIV)

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

2 Timothy 2:23-25 (NIV)

²³ Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. ²⁴ And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. ²⁵ Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,

Prayer Time:

Spend time in prayer asking for God by the power of the Holy Spirit to help you live grace-filled lives which are filled with kind thoughts and words for others instead of angry, hurtful ones.