



Esther 2:7-10, 17; Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother. This young woman, who was also known as Esther, had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died. When the king's order and edict had been proclaimed, many young women were brought to the citadel of Susa and put under the care of Hegai. Esther also was taken to the king's palace and entrusted to Hegai, who had charge of the harem. She pleased him and won his favor. Immediately he provided her with her beauty treatments and special food. He assigned to her seven female attendants selected from the king's palace and moved her and her attendants into the best place in the harem. Esther had

not revealed her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so... Now the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins. So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

Esther 3:6; 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.

Esther 4:1-3; 11-13, 16; When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. But he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.... "All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king." When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

Esther 7:2-3; So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet, and as they were drinking wine on the second day, the king again asked, "Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted." Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, **grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request.** For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king.[a]"

5 King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, "Who is he? Where is he—the man who has dared to do such a thing?"

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Icebreaker

- Tell about a day that started out ordinary and turned out Extraordinary.

Conversation Starters

1. We all have a royal purpose. A purpose bigger than we are. Tell about a time you glimpsed your purpose that is bigger than yourself.
2. How do you or could you look for God's presence in both the ordinary and extraordinary moments of life? Is there a time in your life that you were living like this? What gets in your way?
3. Mordecai urged Esther to speak! To use her voice, position and privilege that comes with her royal position to speak to the king on behalf of her people. What is your royal position? How are you using your God given position and resources? What keeps you silent? What blinds you to your royal position, keeping you from using your gifts and talents for the sake of others in a time such as this?
 - a. **Watch Jeff's teaching starting at 24 minutes thru the end of teaching. How do you need to grow in your understanding of the history or oppression and racism? How can we better work together to end oppression and racism?**
4. Who plays the role of Mordecai in your life? Who can speak bluntly and honestly to you? Who can offer a new perspective?
5. What gives you courage to live into your role as part of the Royal Priesthood 1 Peter 1:29 references?