



Mustard Seed Children's Summary for February 15, 2009
Released on Wednesday, February 11, 2009

"Courage to Do Right"

DEVOTIONAL READING: Philippians 1:20-30

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Esther 3 - 5

PRINTED TEXT: Esther 4:1-3, 9-17

MEMORY VERSE: "So will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16)

Esther 4:1-3, 9-17

1 When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry;

2 And came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

3 And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

.....

9 And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

10 Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai;

11 All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

12 And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

13 Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

15 Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer,

16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

17 So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

THE OBJECT IN VIEW:

Teach that God wants us to do right, even when that doing is hard, and leave the results to Him.

TRUTHS TO STRESS:

1. Esther models being more concerned about doing what God wants than about saving oneself.
2. God knows how to place His children where He wants to use them.
3. God wants us to trust Him for the outcome of our obedience.

PLANNING LESSON AIDS:

For Telling the Lesson, find pictures of Esther, Mordecai, the king, and Esther wearing a crown. Also take a sample scepter or a picture of one.

For Helping to Remember, provide a new yellow ("gold") pencil for each student and enough yellow modeling clay for each to shape an ornamental end for his pencil scepter.

LESSON BACKGROUND:

Time: 474 B.C.

Place: Shushan

The Old Testament book of Esther tells the exciting story of how a Jewish man named Mordecai helped to save the day when one of the king's advisers talked him into killing all the Jewish people in the kingdom. Mordecai had a cousin who was married to the king, and he knew that she was the only one who could ask the king to stop the killing.

Esther had won a beauty contest that gave her the right to be the queen. Unknown to the king, Esther was Jewish. The order to kill all the Jews would also include his queen. Esther's courageous story tells how she risked everything, even her life, to approach the king to save her people.

TEACHER'S NOTES:

Every lesson should leave the children thinking well of God. The story of Esther certainly highlights reasons to think well of Him. First, He is seen as a wise orchestrator. He began preparing Esther to deliver His people long before she was needed, and He had her in the right place at the right time. Then, He requires obedience, but we need not fear to obey, because He has the outcome under His loving control. The God who is sovereign is also good.

Esther trusted the character of such a good and sovereign God. She then witnessed what He could do.

BEGINNING THE LESSON:

Helen went to Sunday school every Sunday; so she had heard many Bible lessons about kings. There was the king who tried to kill all the baby boys in Egypt. There was the king who tried to catch two spies. There was the king who loved God but still did some very wrong things. We remember hearing those stories too.

"Why are there so many kings in the Bible?" Helen asked. "Why do we never hear about any queens?"

Well, there *are* queens in the Bible, and today you are going to hear about one of them. This queen's name was Esther.

TELLING THE LESSON:

Esther was not always a queen. (Show Esther.) She had no mother or father, and the Lord gave her Mordecai to take care of her. He was like an uncle to her. (Show Mordecai.) Mordecai was one of God's people, so it was probably Mordecai who taught Esther to believe the Lord and want to please Him. God knew He would need a woman like Esther in the palace someday. He used Mordecai to help get her ready.

Esther grew up, and it happened that the king was looking for a new queen. (Show king.) When he saw Esther, he chose her! And that is how she got to the palace. You see, God knew

that someday He would need Esther to be where she could talk to the king, so He made her the queen. (Show Esther wearing crown.)

Mordecai was still close by. (Show Mordecai.) One day he heard some bad news. A man named Haman hated him. Haman knew Mordecai was one of God's people, so he told the king that God's people (the Jews) were all troublemakers. He said the king should get rid of them. Well, the king believed what Haman said. (Show king.) He sent letters to the leaders in his country. The letters said, "On a certain day you must kill all the Jewish people."

Right away Mordecai was sad about the letter. He cried and prayed and sent a copy of the letter to Esther. "Go talk to the king about this," he told her.

Esther sent a message back to Mordecai. (Show Esther wearing crown.) "How can I? You know what the rule says. Nobody goes to see the king unless the king invites him - not even the queen. People who do that are killed— unless he holds out his golden scepter to them." A scepter is that special stick that kings hold sometimes. (Show sample scepter.)

Esther said, "The king has not asked me to come to him for many days." She was really saying, "Trying to help God's people is not safe for me. The rule says I could be killed if I go to the king uninvited."

Mordecai sent her another message: "Esther, maybe the Lord made you queen just so that you could do this."

This time Esther said, "All right. Have the people fast and pray for three days. My helpers and I will fast and pray too. Then I will go to see the king. And if I die, then I will die."

You can tell what made Esther so brave. She knew that the Lord always does what He sees is best.

So for three days God's people fasted (did not eat). When people did that, it usually meant they were praying instead of eating. At the end of the three days, Esther put on her pretty queen's dress and went to see the king. (Show Esther with crown.)

What would the king do? Well, he held out his golden scepter to her! That is what he did. (Show scepter.) He said, "What would you like me to do for you, Queen Esther?"

And that is how the lives of all God's people were saved. First, the Lord put Esther where she needed to be, and then she bravely did what was right instead of worrying about what could happen to her.

The king granted Esther's request. He could not reverse his first order, but he did have Haman put to death and issued a new order that allowed the Jews to defend themselves. God used Esther and Mordecai to save a whole nation.

TELLING HOW TO LIVE:

When we have something hard to do, let us say, "I will do right because God wants me to. I will let Him take care of what happens. He knows what is best." People who think like that do brave things. People who think like that have the courage to do what is right.

HELPING TO REMEMBER:

Tell the children they will be making small scepters. Each should press a clay ball onto the writing end of a pencil and then shape the clay to make it attractive.

EXPLAINING THE MEMORY VERSE:

"So will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16).

Esther knew that if she went to the king and he did not want to see her, she would be killed. But she was saying, "I want to help my people, so I will go to the king anyway, even if that is the rule. And whatever happens to me, that is all right."

CONCLUSION:

Each year in early spring, Jews have a celebration called Purim. It is a celebration of the

survival of God's people. It is a celebration of the events that happened in the days of Queen Esther.

Queen Esther found herself in a situation where she had to risk her life to save the people of God. Esther took the risk. But before she did, she called for an extraordinary season of fasting and prayer. Esther did not feel comfortable approaching the king until the great prayer was made.

This gives us a very important lesson. Risk is part of God's work. But the rule to remember is that great risk calls for great prayer.

PRAYER:

Father God, we thank You for the plans You have for our lives. Help us to commit to do Your will. Give us the courage to do what is right. In Jesus' name, amen.

ANTICIPATING NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Next week's lesson is "Answering God's Call" and focuses on the call of the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah saw an awesome vision of God on His throne, and he answered God's call to serve Him. Study Isaiah 6:1-13.

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The KJV Parallel Bible Commentary, by Nelson Books.

LESSON ACTIVITY

"Courage to Do Right" (Esther 4:1-3, 9-17)

Find the following keywords from the lesson:

JEWS

QUEEN

RISK

PRAYER

GATE

KINGDOM

ESTHER

THREE

FASTING

PERISH

COURAGE

SCEPTER

DECREE

MORDECAI

KING

TIME

C O Q N E E I R A S A R R F E I R I D D P E K
H D G D M E H M E C C G E R A F R R D K R I E
Y T S S C E P T E R E E G A E S H I I T A C R
A A M O D G N I K P E I M M K G T W P I Y O E
G H S E E R E E H E Y O I E E Q A I G M E R G
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Solution to Lesson Activity:

"Courage to Do Right" (Esther 4:1-3, 9-17)

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E P E R I S H E H
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I U H R
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