

FUSION Q's... Esther Part 6: A Prickly Ending

Discussion Theme: Be prepared

Purpose of Discussion: To understand God's sense of justice compared to our own "give-it-to-me-now" sense of justice.

1. Theme Question for Discussion

- ☆ Give an example of a situation when justice was not served. How did that make you feel?

2. Discussing the Message

- ☆ Why was Esther throwing a banquet for the king and Haman?
- ☆ What did Esther reveal about herself to the king that was previously hidden?
- ☆ What was the King's reaction to Esther's request?
- ☆ What was Haman's reaction to Esther's request?

3. Redirection – Psalm 73 (Option for older groups – read entire Psalm – it's very powerful!)

Truly God is good to Israel,
to those whose hearts are pure.

² But as for me, I almost lost my footing.

My feet were slipping, and I was almost gone.

³ For I envied the proud

when I saw them prosper despite their wickedness.

⁴ They seem to live such painless lives;

their bodies are so healthy and strong.

⁵ They don't have troubles like other people;

they're not plagued with problems like everyone else.

¹² Look at these wicked people—
enjoying a life of ease while their riches multiply.

¹³ Did I keep my heart pure for nothing?
Did I keep myself innocent for no reason?

¹⁶ So I tried to understand why the wicked prosper.
But what a difficult task it is!

¹⁷ Then I went into your sanctuary, O God,
and I finally understood the destiny of the wicked.

¹⁸ Truly, you put them on a slippery path
and send them sliding over the cliff to destruction.

²⁶ My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak,
but God remains the strength of my heart;
he is mine forever.

²⁷ Those who desert him will perish,
for you destroy those who abandon you.

²⁸ But as for me, how good it is to be near God!
I have made the Sovereign LORD my shelter,
and I will tell everyone about the wonderful things you do.

The Psalmist in this passage really struggles with the fact that often it appears as though justice does not actually get carried out; instead the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. In a similar way Esther and Mordecai have done what is right but they still face annihilation at the hands of the evil Haman. Yet, Haman, who is full of pride, bitterness and anger, is wealthy, successful and succeeding in his plan to destroy the Jews.

4. Digging Deeper

Leader's key thought... In Esther we see justice carried out with the wicked being punished and the righteous rewarded; however, this is not always the case in our own personal experience. Sometimes it seems that justice does not happen and the wicked are rewarded for their wickedness. In fact, sometimes when we choose to do what is right we are not rewarded and our situations may get even worse because of our choice. Our motivation for doing what is right begins with love (love your enemies and pray for them) and a knowledge that ultimately justice will occur. We may not witness that justice in this life time, but we know from the Bible that justice will be done. In the end, we must continue to do what is right and just whether or not justice happens now.

- ✧ What stuck out to you from the talk tonight?
- ✧ What part of the Psalm did you identify with? Have you ever felt the way the Psalmist felt?
- ✧ How do you react to a situation where it seems that bad people are getting away with their wickedness?
- ✧ What changed the Psalmist's perspective and helped him see things more clearly?
- ✧ How does remembering who our God is help us to deal with situations that feel or are unjust?
- ✧ What are some ways you can help friends who might be struggling through a situation where it seem like God was absent and injustice is happening?