

Esther Part 5: Justice is Served

Ignite Talk (summary)... Romans 3:21-31... We are justified through faith (made right with God) because Jesus sacrificed himself in our place to pay the penalty for our sin that we deserve (death).

Discussion Theme: God's Justice

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

1. Theme Questions for Discussion...

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

2. Read Esther 7

3. Discussing the text

- ☆ What truths are exposed in chapter 7 that were previously hidden until this chapter?
- ☆ The King, Queen and Haman all have dinner together. Take each person present and discuss how they must have each felt at the beginning of the banquet.
- ☆ How is Esther's humility and courage revealed in the way she presented her request to the king (vv 3-4)?

4. Redirection - Psalm 73

¹Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. ² But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. ³ For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ⁴ They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. ⁵ They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills.

¹² This is what the wicked are like— always carefree, they increase in wealth. ¹³ Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence. ¹⁶ When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me ¹⁷ till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. ¹⁸ Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin.

²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. ²⁷ Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you. ²⁸ But as for me, it is good to be

near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.

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.

5. 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.

- ☆ How do you see justice carried out in the lives of Esther, Mordecai and Haman?
- ☆ What should be our motivation for doing what is right?
- ☆ When should followers of Jesus expect to see justice served and when should they be satisfied with doing what is right? Give examples from your life.
- ☆ How can you seek justice in a situation where you currently see injustice?
- ☆ How will you respond if injustice happens to you and/or to someone you care about?