

Orphan to 1st Lady

I. Slide#1 **Announce:**

- A. **Slide#2 Easter Service** March 31st, 7:30 am outside lower campus.
1. **Communion** Good Friday 7am - **Cross walk** 11am.

II. **Intro:**

- A. **Last week** we looked at ch1 “*Operation Camouflage*”...God, more often than not, “covers up” life situations to look simply normal, ordinary, even random.
1. The old adage is true...“**The Lord works in mysterious ways.**”
 2. Again, let’s see how mysterious they are.
- B. **Slide#3 Title:** *Orphan to 1st Lady*.
1. **Outline: Esther’s Selection & Mordecai’s Detection.** We’ll see the hand of God using both back stories to accomplish His perfect plan.
- C. We move from the **weeds & thorns** of ch.1 w/its debauchery, pride, lust, indignity, & anger. **To the Blooming of a flower** in ch.2...*the beautiful Esther*.

III. Slide#4 **ESTHER’S SELECTION (1-18)**

- A. **Slide#5a ESTHER’S INTRODUCTION (1-7)**
- B. **A Lonely King (1)**
- C. **After these things – What things?**
1. **After his disastrous expedition to Greece.** i.e. his naval defeat at Salamis (480bc); his humiliation at Plataea (pla-tee-a, in Greece) [479bc]; **he returned lonely & nostalgic**
 2. The historian **Herodotus** describes the king’s life **after** his military defeat as one of **sensual overindulgence**.
 - a) **He even started messing around with some of his officers wife’s sowing an anger that led to his assassination in his bedroom in 456bc.**¹
- D. **A parting comment on Vashti – Does any principle mean so much to you that you would be willing to risk losing your job over it?**
- E. Four years w/o a Queen.
- F. **Slide#5b A Miss Persia Contest (2-4)**
- G. (4b) **What king would refuse this idea?**
- H. It’s interesting that Gods providence **pierces & penetrates** even secular events like **beauty pageants** or **drunken parties** to get his will accomplished.
1. He doesn’t need **stained glass windows** in order to work!

¹ The NIV Application Commentary, Karen Jobbs, pg.94.

2. He can work **in a pigs pen** like he did w/the prodigal; **in a harlots home** like w/ Rahab; **in a pagan kings bed** like he did w/Abimelech threatening his life so he wouldn't touch Abraham's wife. [same true today? Yep!]

I. **Slide#5c Esther's Pedigree** (5-7)

J. 1 contestants resume reads: She was young, an orphan (as mom & dad died early), raised by her cousin, she was "**lovely of form & fine of feature**" (lit.).

K. God can & will use our **handicaps, disabilities, or hindrances!**

1. **Why?** 2 Cor.12:10 **Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

L. **Slide#6a ESTHER'S ADMIRATION** (8-11)

M. (8) **Esther also was taken** – can mean *taken by force*. [prob not, over-interpreting the passive voice]

1. Maybe this is why it was **ok** for a Jew to marry a Gentile normally against the Jewish law? [no women had the right of choice with a Royal order]

a) I'm sure some ladies enjoyed the prestige of living in the royal palace; **but** I'm also sure this must have been so difficult to be apart of this **harem**...which meant, **never to marry. Might only see the king on your one night. A perpetual widow basically for life. A 2nd wife. The kings property.**

(1) **Stiff competition:** Josephus says there was 400 women. Paton said, 1 women per night for 4 years = 1,460.

b) **Sexist?** - **no** he also had **500 young boys** gathered each year & castrated them to serve as eunuchs in the Persian court. **Everyone**, male or female, was at the disposal of the king's personal whims!

N. Let's learn of her **attractive qualities...**

O. **Slide#6b She had charm & elegance** (9a)

1. Can be translated, **She lifted up grace before his face!**²

a) So she received preferential treatment!

P. **Slide#6c How she handled Promotion** (9b)

Q. Note: **the best place in the house!**

R. Sometimes God works it **the other way** also.

1. So let this not be our only check & balance system. Sometimes he places us in the "**best Palaces**" **but** other times in the "**best Prisons!**"

2. **In early America George Whitefield** was placed by God **in Selina's mansion** (not the female rock star today, but the Countess of Huntingdon) to share Bible Studies with the upper class of the day.

² Huey, Esther, pg.806

But he also was placed by God out in the fields of Moorfields, London in 1742 where a drummer & trumpeter tried to drown out his preaching; where a man stood to the side & tried to whip him; & where others threw stones, dirt, rotten eggs, & pieces of dead cats at him. [he kept preaching & 350 were awakened]³

S. Slide#6d She could keep a secret (10)

T. He didn't tell her to **lie** nor **deny** her country. He only told her **not to proclaim** her country.

1. "All truths are not to be spoken at all times, though an **untruth** is not to be spoken of at any time."⁴

U. (11) What a great *step-parent* Mordecai was!

1. He loved her & took care of her as if her own!
2. He truly became a *father to the fatherless*!
 - a) This watchful eye reminds of **Kelly**. When Zach was 1st in kindergarten at Vail school in Temecula. She would drop him off, then spy on him through the chain link fence, to make sure he was all right. [Zach in his blond mullet & black leather jacket]

V. Slide#7a ESTHER'S PREPARATION (12-14)

W. (12) Let's step backstage into the *powder room of the palace* where the contestants are putting on their makeup.

1. Slide#7b Probably stayed out of the sun to get "Lily white" – They were cleaned up & perfumed up. **Beauty paste!**
2. Slide#7c It is Interesting from culture to culture how each defines *beauty*.
 - a) **Weight** (*some*, the super model *feed me look*, *others* like more of the *full figure look*); **Type of Jewelry** & where it is placed on or in the body (diamond necklace *to a whole dinner plate in your lip!*); Length & style of **hair**; Style of **clothes**; etc.
3. Imagine being in Esther's golden slippers for a moment. What temptations do you think you would battle, if for every day for a whole year, you were pampered & primped, manicured & pedicured, w/7 servants at your beckon call, with their daily goal to make you better looking than the rest? (Everyday, "*you're so purty!*" - a little pride right?)

X. Slide#8 ESTHER'S EXALTATION (15-18)

Y. (15) Requested **nothing** – Ladies this was the shopping spree of a life time. It was like having free run of Tiffany's *or* Rodeo Drive, to have anything you wanted.

1. She requested **nothing "extra"**. All the others seemed to go for all the *artificial beauty*. The Necklaces, earrings, bracelets, anklets, nose rings, & the like.

³ Christian History, Issue 38, Vol.12, #2

⁴ Matthew Henry Commentary, pg.1127

2. **Slide#9a** How many times have we been like this **picture frame** (note: pretty gold frame but with no canvas on the inside)
 - a) **Slide#9b** We spend so much of our efforts & energies on **the picture frame**, & forget about *painting a masterpiece on the canvass* of our inner person...for the Lord.
 - b) **Do not let your adornment be merely outward;...rather let it be the hidden person of the heart**, (1 Pet.3:3,4)
 - c) You need to measure your beauty by more than what you see in the mirror.
 - d) **Read** Is.3:16,17 and hear Gods reactions to our focusing too much on the externals.
 - (1) **What was the cause of all this?** (16a - **haughtiness**)
3. **Slide#10,11** How is your painting coming? [**Sad**, So many people living **empty frame** lives!]

Z. Her **wisdom** & **virtue** were her greatest beauty, **but** it is an advantage to a **diamond**...*to be well placed in a "nice setting"*!

1. Trust **God** to control the circumstances around you!
 - a) Ps.60:11,12 **Give us help from trouble, For the help of man is useless. Through God we will do valiantly.**

AA.**Amazing** enough she would even be **invited** to the pageant let alone **win** the thing!

1. Like Hannah said in her prayer 1 Sam.2:8 **He raises the poor from the dust And lifts the beggar from the ash heap, To set them among princes And make them inherit the throne of glory.**
2. It is said of a **wife** that she either is the wind beneath her husband's wings, **or** the one who lets the air out of his tires!
 - a) Prov.12:4a **An excellent wife is the crown of her husband.**
 - b) Esther was truly to become the *Crown Jewel* in her husband's life.
 - c) She was a *stately swan in a duck pond!* Swindoll
3. **"Throughout the marble halls of ch.11 in Hebrews are statues of ordinary men & women who believe God in extraordinary ways."** Swindoll
4. **Does God want to use you in an incredible way?**

BB.What we have here is not only a story for ladies, **but** a **cultivation of character for all!**

1. We are dealing with what we are on the **inside** rather than how we appear on the **outside!**

CC.**And they lived happily ever after?**...No, the story takes a turn down a dark alley instead.⁵

IV. **Slide#12 MORDECAI'S DETECTION (19-23)**

A. **Slide#13a PLOT REVEALED (19-22)**

⁵ Chuck Swindoll, pg.28.

- B. (21a) **Bigthan & Teresh** – Don't they sound like thugs just from their names?
- C. (21b) Be careful little mouths what you say!
1. Mordecai heard from a little birdie, of this diabolical plan!
 2. Eccl.10:20 **Do not curse the king, even in your thought; Do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom; For a bird of the air may carry your voice, And a bird in flight may tell the matter.**
- D. While Esther's affair was very Public Mordecai's was very Private.
1. Both were equally important to God. Esther's Position & Mordecai's Perception!
 2. All events are important if you are living in the will of God.
- E. **Slide#13b PLOT RECORDED** (23)
- F. Mordecai wasn't rewarded right away, but he was at the right time.
1. Do your responsibility today, & let God take care of the consequences!
 2. We are not rewarded right away, but a book of remembrance is written, & thus an account is kept of every one of our "works & labors of love." (Heb.6:10)
- G. **Slide#14a Lessons?**
- H. **Paint that canvas of your inner person...for the Lord!**
1. **Where do we start?** 1 Sam 16:7 gives us the clue, **But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.**
 2. We need to find ourselves **not making our selves beautiful for** a king, **but for the King of Kings!**
- I. **Slide#14b Delivering Gods people** - as God did for **Israel**, so he will do for **His church** today.
1. So...the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against her.
- J. **Slide#14c In but not of the world** - How to **survive** & even **thrive** in a pagan culture!
1. **How do you maintain your relationship with the one true God in a polytheistic, or pagan society.**
 2. **How do you maintain your distinctives identifying ourselves as Christians?**
 3. **How do you assimilate into your culture w/o compromising?**
 4. **How do you relate your faith to your culture?**
- K. **Slide#15blank**