

Sermon Series Title: "The Church of God"

Sermon Series Summary: The Church of God is the people of God throughout the ages, redeemed by Jesus Christ. We're going to take a look at who we are and who we are called to be as the church of God. More specifically, we see that who we are is directly connected to whose we are in Christ.

"We are in our "The Church of God" sermon series, and we see that we are defined not by who we are but whose we are as the Church."

Call: Luke 1:53

Text: Esther 4

Title: "The Humility of the Church"

Next Week's Call: Luke 1:54-55

Next Week's Text: 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

Next Week's Title: "The Draw of the Church"

Future Calls: Luke 1:68-69, 70-73, 74-75, 78-79; Luke 2:13-14, 29-32; Revelation 5:6-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14; Revelation 15:3, 4; Revelation 21:1-4, 5-7, 22-23

Future Titles: "The Distinction of the Church" (1 Peter 2:11-12), "The Instrumentality of the Church" (1 Peter 2:9-10), "Church as Building" (1 Peter 2:6-8), "Church as City" (Ephesians 2:19-22), "Church as Body" (1 Corinthians 12:12-31), "Church as Family" (John 1:12-13), "Church as Bride" (Ephesians 5:22-33), "The Eternality of the Church" (Revelation 21:1-7)

Fallen Condition Focus: We don't trust the Lord and serve in sacrificial faith.

Christ redeeming FCF: Christ is the One who walked by faith and perished for our sake.

Central Truth: "Let us walk in the humility, faith, and grace of Christ."

Summary: Humility is not thinking less of oneself, but it is thinking of oneself less. We see this humility in the life of Esther who was willing to perish for the sake of her people in suffering. She walked by faith, trusting in God's sovereignty. This points us to the greater Esther in Jesus who walked by faith and humility to the point of death on the cross for our sake.

Reflective Questions:

1. What does this story teach us about faith in God's sovereignty over His people in the midst of suffering?
2. How does this faith lead us to humble service for one another?

## I. Introduction

### A. Hook- Humility

1. Truly knowing who we are and who God is; confession- 1 John 1- importance of confession in fellowship
2. Not thinking less of oneself but thinking of oneself less- Esther

### B. Transition- setting of the book

1. Last book of the Historical books of the OT; after 1,2 Kings; 1,2 Chronicles; Ezra; Nehemiah, Esther
2. Over 500 years after King David; less than 500 years before Jesus' time
3. Ahasuerus (Artaxerxes- 300)- Persian king; Babylonian captivity then Persian captivity after the fall of Babylon; Judah/Israel has been ruled by foreign rule for at least 120 years at this point (Japanese occupation- 35 years)
4. No mention of God in this book; major theme of this book- trusting that God is sovereign and is working even when we don't see him anywhere. We see God's sovereignty in Esther's humility

### C. Proposition

### D. Points

## II. The Setting (vv. 1-10)

- A. Ahasuerus is the Persian king and banishes his Queen, Vashti, because she did not come at her bidding.
- B. At the counsel of his young advisors, he brings young virgins from all over the kingdom, and whoever pleases him the most becomes queen. Esther becomes that queen after a long process.
- C. Mordecai who is Esther's cousin but became her adoptive father advises her not to tell anyone of her ethnicity.
  1. This is love. She has fame and power, and yet, Mordecai does not try to use her for his pleasure, power, and fame.
- D. Mordecai does not pay his respects to the rich prime minister, Haman, by not bowing down to him (faithful obedience), and Haman is enraged to the point that he not only wants to kill Mordecai but his people.

- E. He deceitfully gets the king to sign and seal an edict to kill the Jews in a mass genocide (Holocaust but for all the Jews); take their wealth as well as their lives; Haman is willing to offer much money to kill all the Jews.
  - 1. Scripture- enmity between the seed of the woman and Satan; different cases of possible genocide- Pharaoh, Haman, Herod
  - 2. Once the king signs and seals an edict into law, it cannot be taken back.
- F. Once Mordecai and the Jews in the empire hear about this, they are devastated. They cover themselves with sackcloth and ashes (pointing to utter devastation and distress).
- G. Mordecai gets the attention of Esther eventually and gives her all the information.
  - 1. Mordecai may feel bad about all this since this is his fault.
  - 2. Esther has no idea of the edict.
  - 3. She wants to just cheer Mordecai up at first but sees the gravity of the situation.

### III. The Solution (vv. 11-17)

- A. The text implies that Mordecai asks Esther to essentially go to the king and intercede on behalf of her people.
- B. He is asking her to:
  - 1. Approach the king without being summoned which could result in death
  - 2. Without saying a word, convince the king to pardon her with the scepter by her looks even though she would have fasted, which would make her look malnourished
    - 1. Also, it has been 5 years since their marriage and he hasn't summoned her in a month (willingly not see wife for a month? Not a good thing); may feel like he is getting tired of her
  - 3. Convince him to take back his oath which is not possible
- C. Esther sees the impossible task before her and initially resists.
- D. Mordecai responds with four reasons:
  - 1. She's not safe in the palace.
  - 2. God will deliver His people whether through her or some other means.
  - 3. You and your father's house will perish.
    - 1. Maybe Mordecai is implying that they will find out her ethnicity because of his relation to her.
    - 2. Connotation in the Hebrew is that God will punish her for her lack of advocacy for her own people.
  - 4. Maybe in God's sovereignty, she has been placed in her position for His purposes.

- E. She calls for a fast since she will approach the king.
  - 1. She knows that it is not a guarantee that she will live. God can use another way.
  - 2. She is willing to lay down her prosperous, pleasurable, and powerful life to serve her people.
  - 3. She knows her people need an intercessor... a mediator.
- F. This is our call as the church. We are called in Scripture to intercede for one another. We are not THE mediator since we have Jesus, but we are priests that minister to one another and this world. We are called to lay down our rights, to not consider ourselves, to die to our comforts/pleasures/power, and to serve the world.

#### IV. The Savior

- A. How can we lay down our rights to serve and love one another in this way?
- B. It's to know that we have a greater Mediator/Intercessor/Servant/Esther who has laid down His rights to save us.
  - 1. He is the ultimate Humble One- Philippians 2
- C. Because of our sin, we are not allowed in the presence of our holy God. We deserve death.
- D. But Christ went before the King on our behalf and took on that death for us.
  - 1. Jesus didn't say, "IF I perish..." He said "When I perish, I perish." And He still went.
  - 2. He is our Mediator who reconciles our relationship with God. He is our Intercessor who prays for us. He is the Servant who saves us. He is the scepter for us to enter into God's presence.
- E. How does the story of Esther end?
  - 1. Haman's wicked plot is revealed and is hanged on the gallows... which can also be translated as the tree. On the flip side, Mordecai is honored and elevated to prime minister (2nd behind only the king).
  - 2. The king's edict cannot be taken back, but another edict is written: that the Jews are allowed to gather, defend themselves, and kill any who are against them. They end in victory.
- F. God's story ends the same way for us.
  - 1. Even though we might feel like we cannot see God around us, God is working, moving, and redeeming. Vashti's rebellion, Esther being made queen, Mordecai overhearing and reporting Ahasuerus' potential assassination, Ahasuerus' pardon through the scepter, Haman's gallows, etc. are all the fingerprints of God in this story.
  - 2. We see Him working through the work of redemption through our great Mediator, Jesus Christ.

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3. We are now empowered to be humble, trusting in His sovereignty, resting in our salvation, and serving our church and this world.