

Come Follow Me
An Elo Viz Production
Week 31
Esther

This week we get to study the story of Esther. I was so excited when I discovered that her story was coming up next. Hers is a story of great courage and Faith. Esther stood up for what she believed in and I am truly inspired by her. She put her life on the line to save her people. And When faced with the choice to either run, or stand for truth and righteousness, she chose to stand. Literally she stood there knowing she could be killed, but she did it anyway. She was able to do it because she had faith in the Lord. She didn't know what the outcome would be, whatever was going to happen to her didn't matter because she trusted in a loving Heavenly Father, and did what he asked her to do. She trusted in His plan and as a humble servant aligned her will with His.

before we discuss what we can learn from the story of Esther lets recap:

In the April 2009 General Conference president Monson shared the story of Esther in a way that shines a spotlight on this week's principle. Of having courage and being an instrument in the Lord's hands. He said:

“It is a very interesting and inspiring record of a beautiful young Jewish girl whose parents had died, leaving her to be raised by her older cousin, Mordecai, and his wife.

Mordecai worked for the king of Persia, and when the king was looking for a queen, Mordecai took Esther to the palace and presented her as a candidate, advising her not to reveal that she was Jewish. The king was pleased with Esther above all the others and made Esther his queen.

Haman, the chief prince in the king's court, became increasingly angry with Mordecai because Mordecai would not bow down to him. In retribution, Haman convinced the king that there were “certain people” in the kingdom whose laws were different from others’ and that they would not obey the king's laws and should be destroyed.¹⁴ Without naming these people to the king, Haman was, of course, referring to the Jews, including Mordecai.

With the king's permission to handle the matter, Haman sent letters to the governors of all of the provinces, instructing them “to destroy and kill all of the Jews.

Mordecai sent word to Esther concerning the decree against the Jews, requesting that she go in to the king to plead for her people. Esther was at first reluctant, reminding Mordecai that it was against the law for anyone to go unbidden into the inner court of

the king. Punishment by death would be the result—unless the king were to hold out his golden scepter, allowing the person to live.

Mordecai's response to Esther's hesitation was to the point. He replied to her saying: "Think not ... that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, ... thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed."¹⁶ And then he added this searching question: "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"¹⁷

In response, Esther asked Mordecai to gather all the Jews he could and to ask them to fast for three days for her and said that she and her handmaids would do the same. She declared, "I [will] go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."¹⁸ Esther had gathered her courage and would stand firm and immovable for that which was right.

Spiritually prepared, Esther stood in the inner court of the king's house. When the king saw her, he held out his golden scepter, telling her that he would grant whatever request she had. She invited the king to a feast she had arranged, and during the feast she revealed that she was a Jew. She also exposed Haman's underhanded plot to exterminate all of the Jews in the kingdom. Esther's plea to save herself and her people was granted"

Esther, through fasting, faith, and courage, had saved a nation.

Did you notice what Esther's first reaction was when she realized she had to go before the king? She hesitated. This is helpful for us when we are called upon or asked to do something hard, something we might not understand. Try to remember Mordecai's response when we are faced with those kinds of moments in our life. "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Esther had to reach out and rely on a source that is more powerful than herself. With courage and faith, She had to rely on the Lord for help. She fasted, and prayed and was guided by the spirit, she became physically, emotionally and spiritually prepared.

Esther's story was not luck, or chance. It did not happen just because she was in the right place at the right time. It was the plan all along. She was a humble servant of the Lord who aligned her will with the Lord's will.

I feel like the greatest battle happening in my life right now is not with me, but is with my kids. They are my whole world. So, Sending them out into the world is terrifying for me as their mom. I would rather pack them all up and head for the mountains! Hide them and keep them as safe as possible. I've seriously considered it and prayed about it. I know that heavenly father needs them to be good examples and help people in need around them. They face things everyday that require them to rely on a higher power than themselves to get through. They are needed by the Lord everyday, to be an example for good, and to help others in need. Even if it's not the popular thing to do, and even if they lose friends along the way. They battle daily to be kind and accepting to people who have different standards, values, and life choices than they do. I've watched them navigate the tricky path of loving and accepting others, while at the same time not cercoming to other people's choices, lifestyle, or behavior. Standing strong in today's mighty storms of life takes Esther like courage, faith, and trust in the Lord. It is essential that we build our firm and steady foundation on the Savior, Jesus Christ. A strong belief in Christ and His teachings, following in his ways and striving to be like him is needed now more than ever. I can see the battle between good and evil happening all around us.. When they walk through the door everyday make sure the battle stays outside and doesn't continue in your home. As parents that will take faith and trust in the Lord.

Cast Satan out continually. Get rid of everything and anything that might be inviting him in. Create a safe place for your family. A place for pure and holy purposes full of peace, comfort, love, and teaching.

What work has the Lord sent you here to do? If you're not sure, then ask him. With a humble, willing heart, Whatever you want me to do, just tell me and I will do it. He will lead you by the promptings of the spirit.

Like Esther, Heavenly Father will guide your path. We each have been born "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14) No matter your situation or station in life. He is your father and you are Hi child.

He can make You an instrument in His hands and you will then be able to experience the joy and blessing that can only come from loving and serving others.

President Kimball said-March 1981 "The Lord does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs. Therefore, it is vital that we serve each other in the kingdom"

The Lord knows you and has a work for you to do. Sometimes it is a work that only you can do.

President Uchtdorf said, "As we emulate [the Savior's] perfect example, our hands can become His hands; our eyes, His eyes; our heart, His heart."³

One thing that has helped me in my life is to get rid of all the noise. It's hard for me to hear the spirit if I am constantly entertained, or if I allow myself to become distracted. If I

want the still small voice to come, then I have to be still. Focusing on things with an eternal perspective, turning off the world and the noise around me. That includes tv, music, audio books, or social media. These things aren't bad, they can be really fun! But, sometimes we need to get rid of these distractions And sometimes this means that I simplify my life. By Getting rid of things. Take a step back and focus on things more eternal in nature.

I pray that the spirit will guide you and me. That we may have the courage to follow what we are prompted and asked to do.

When we are humble and willing to serve the Lord, we will be blessed. Our lives will be filled with love, joy, and peace.

In the name of Jesus Christ Amen.