

I.N.I.

21<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

October 17, 2010

Esther 4:13-17

In Christ Jesus, who has used us to spread His Word by setting up and maintaining this congregation, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

There is a statement that I came across in my reading many years ago that I have used in Bible class and sermons over the years that aptly describes the events of our sermon text this morning. The statement is this: **GOD IS NOT SO MUCH CONCERNED ABOUT OUR ABILITY OR OUR INABILITY BUT ABOUT OUR AVAILABILITY!** The Lord wasn't concerned about whether Queen Esther would have the ability to persuade her husband the king, but that she would be available to do so.

And the same can be said about every single one of us. God wants us to be available to Him so that He can work His abilities through us.

Our theme for this morning is:

**GOD MAKES USE OF HIS CHILDREN TO ACCOMPLISH HIS WILL.**

How many of us wouldn't have thought just like Esther did when first confronted with the problem by her cousin Mordecai. Esther's response was very human. 4:11 **ALL THE KING'S SERVANTS AND THE PEOPLE OF THE KING'S PROVINCES KNOW THAT ANY MAN OR WOMAN WHO GOES INTO THE INNER COURT TO THE KING, WHO HAS NOT BEEN CALLED, HE HAS BUT ONE LAW: PUT ALL TO DEATH, EXCEPT THE ONE TO WHOM THE KING HOLDS OUT THE GOLDEN SCEPTER, THAT HE MAY LIVE. YET I MYSELF HAVE NOT BEEN CALLED TO GO IN TO THE KING THESE THIRTY DAYS.**

In other words Esther is saying, Mordecai "I'd like to help, really I would, but I'm not able to. If I present myself before the king unannounced he would have the right to put me to death, and besides it's been a whole month since he has called for me!" That to me is a completely normal, rational human reaction to a situation. "I'd like to help, I'd like to serve, but I'm not able to."

But again, God wasn't concerned about Esther's ability or inability just her availability. And that she was! She was the queen. She was made available by God for just this circumstance and this situation.

And that is exactly what her wise cousin told her. First he warned her by saying, **DO NOT THINK IN YOUR HEART THAT YOU WILL ESCAPE IN THE KING'S PALACE ANY MORE THAN ALL THE OTHER JEWS.** Someone will find out in the palace that you too are a Jew and the law of the Medes and Persians cannot be changed, queen or not. You're included in this too! But his next words of advice were even more important...vs. 14: **FOR IF YOU REMAIN COMPLETELY SILENT AT THIS TIME, RELIEF AND DELIVERANCE WILL ARISE FOR THE JEWS FROM ANOTHER PLACE, BUT YOU AND YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE WILL PERISH. YET WHO KNOWS WHETHER YOU HAVE COME TO THE KINGDOM FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS?"**

Mordecai trusted that the Lord would somehow rescue them, even though things looked awfully bleak. No doubt his knowledge of the Old Testament led him to believe that the Jewish nation could not perish, because its continuance was guaranteed by the divine promise that from their seed the Messiah, the Savior would come. If Haman had his way and the people killed all the Jews throughout his kingdom which also included those who had returned to Israel and Jerusalem, the promises of the past, the promise of salvation would fail and come to an end.

So Mordecai is saying "someone will rise up to deliver us, but it will be to your shame Esther. For who knows whether you have risen to this position in your life for just this very reason, at this very time." What wise words, what sound Christian advice. Looking back on her life she no doubt wondered how and why all of this came about. Here she was a simple, common Jewish girl, one who did not return to Jerusalem but remained in Babylon, who was suddenly caught up in a beauty contest, and then chosen by the king to be

his queen. Fate, chance happening, luck, good karma? NO! It was the very hand of God guiding and leading the life of this young lady to accomplish His will!

These words of Mordecai are the key words of the whole book of Esther. The Lord was directing the affairs of Persia, so that one of His people could be in a position to help Israel in their time of peril. Yet even at this moment the LORD wasn't dependent upon Esther. For all of creation is under His control. If Esther had failed to use her position to help her people, the LORD God would have provided another deliverer, and His will would have been done with or without Esther. But what a shame it would have been upon Esther. What a blessing she would have missed in her life.

These words apply directly to us also. God provides us our positions in this life; as parents, spouses, children, teachers, employers, employees, self-employed, retired. He provides us our possessions; money, houses, cars, goods. He provides talents and abilities. And He does all of this for **ONE VERY IMPORTANT REASON! TO SERVE THE CAUSE OF THE GOSPEL!** Repeat that!

We should not let opportunities pass us by. We dare not squander our chances to be of service to our Lord because we are too fearful to risk our position or even our life for the sake of Christ and His Word. If we are fearful and unfaithful, God will take those opportunities away from us and give them to someone else who will use them for God's glory. If we don't cling with might and fervor to the truth of God's Word, the Lord will raise up someone else who will, but we might then lose the truth for ourselves. If we neglect the task of world-wide missions, the Lord will pass His Word on for others to spread it, but it may be at the risk of our losing it completely. The way you keep the Word alive in your heart is by hearing it and then giving it away to others.

Like most of us, Esther at first had trouble seeing that her being chosen as queen was by God's direction, had trouble seeing that God had called her to this important position not for her own glory, or welfare or comfort, but for God's glory and the welfare and comfort of His people. How often don't we too have trouble realizing that our position in life has been given to us to be used for the glory of God?

We can apply these same thoughts to ourselves this morning. God hasn't chosen us as His members here at Peace Thru Christ, hasn't brought about the past years of grace and worked in and through us for our own glory, but for His glory and for the welfare of all of His people. Over the years He made use of you, His children to accomplish His will. Why do you think you are here this morning? Why are you in the position you are at work, or in your family or in this your church? Because God has called you to this position to accomplish His will.

Why was Mordecai, Esther's surrogate parent? Why was Esther so beautiful to be chosen as queen? Why were the people fasting and praying for Esther in her calling? All of this was the way to accomplish God's will in their lives.

During the Revolutionary war a man named Thomas Paine wrote articles to encourage the 13 colonies in their struggles with powerful England. He began his first of these articles with these words, "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country..." Many said "I'm glad to be a soldier in the summer when the sun shines, when there is no conflict or war, and I'll be a patriot as long as it doesn't cost me anything."

Well in Christ's army, how many of us are summer soldiers and sunshine patriots? Christians who profess Jesus as our Lord and Savior and are willing to serve as long as and only if it is convenient and not too costly. Esther could have said; "Don't bother me Mordecai, I'm comfortable here as queen. I've got everything I need. I like my lifestyle, why should I rock the boat. Let someone else do it."

So also when we are confronted with service to the Lord how easy it is for us to say; "I like my lifestyle the way it is. I'm comfortable with what I do, no more no less; let someone else do it." And thankfully there usually is always someone else that the Lord provides to pick up the slack and do the work. But what a shame upon us and what spiritual blessings we miss out on.

When our faithfulness to serve our Lord is tested, are we available? Christ has placed us here on this earth as His children! Our highest calling is to live as His children. And along with that we are called to be His servants, His ambassadors, His soldiers. Everything we do in this life should flow out of this all-

encompassing reason for being here on this earth.

We need to remember that Jesus Christ served us with His whole life, He lived a perfectly obedient life for us and He willingly took up the cross for each of us and with His death paid for all of our sins. His entire reason for coming into this world, being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary was to serve and not to be served; was to give and not to get, was to save those who were lost. That means me and you. He was not a summer soldier or sunshine patriot, but a perfect substitute for us totally imperfect, sinful rebels.

Now He has placed us into this world for one purpose, to serve Him by also serving our fellow human beings. Paul tells us in II Cor. 5:14-15..**FOR THE LOVE OF CHRIST COMPELS US, BECAUSE WE JUDGE THUS; THAT IF ONE DIED FOR ALL, THEN ALL DIED; AND HE DIED FOR ALL, THAT THOSE WHO LIVE SHOULD LIVE NO LONGER FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR HIM WHO DIED FOR THEM AND ROSE AGAIN.** In our work, play, recreation, study, in our families our highest calling as His children is to live for Him in everything we think, say or do. That's why He created us, redeemed us, and has sanctified us as His own.

That is also why He has called us here together as one family in Peace Thru Christ. We as blood-bought family members are to be concerned with each other's welfare--to love each other as we love ourselves, to share each other's sorrows and grief as well as our joys and happiness. We are to bolster one another in the Word and in prayer, prayer for me as your pastor, prayer for our teachers in our day school and Sunday school, for our church officers, for our members, for our sick and shut in, for those being born and for those dying. Peace Thru Christ did not begin by chance. We have been called together here as a congregation of believing Christians, soldiers of Christ not by fate or luck or chance, but by our loving Triune God.

We have been called together by Him to serve Him, to live for Him, to spread His Word, to support and build His Church; to give of our time, talents and treasures for His kingdom work, in other words out of love and thanksgiving to give of our **LIFE** for Him who so lovingly and willingly gave of **His LIFE** for us.

If and when we don't do this, it is a sign of spiritual breakdown, of spiritual laziness, apathy and indifference, of faithlessness and it may lead to eternal destruction if not checked. Then we need to cry out with repentant hearts and ask for forgiveness and the strength to once again live as faithful soldiers and servants to our Conquering Captain and Hero, Jesus.

The Lord used Mordecai, with his sound Christian advice. The Lord used Esther, the beauty queen to become the spokeswoman for the Jewish people. The Lord used the people with their prayers and encouragement, all to accomplish His will.

You and I have been called, no less than Mordecai, Esther and the Jewish people of their day to action, to service. We probably will not be, nor should we expect to be in such a prominent position as Esther so that through our actions such a glorious grand result will take place; but we are placed in this life by God, in whatever position we have, for a very important reason. We are what we are and we are who we are, blood-bought and redeemed Children of God, living not for our own glory but for His glory and for the welfare of His people to do and to fulfill His will.

May the Holy Spirit working in our hearts always make us **AVAILABLE!**

Amen.