

ONE STEP BACK & TWO STEPS FORWARD

Esther 4.4-6: Esther works through two different solutions to a problem

Theme: Don't think dealing with the symptoms will solve your problem; let the truth establish communication between you and the Holy Spirit!

We've all heard the saying “one step forward and two steps back” (lamenting vain effort in a task).

- Well this morning, I want you to see how Esther first takes one step *back*, and then gets things right and takes two steps *forward*.
- She starts out poorly, but ends up making a very good decision with regard to Mordecai's grieving.

Remember that in chapter 4 we are seeing the beginnings of Mordecai's plan...

- Haman's decree of “sin and death” in chapter 3 led to the “grieving of Mordecai” in chapter 4 (v1-2; a picture of our decisions to follow the flesh, and how they grieve the Holy Spirit).
- (v3) That decision to follow Haman (the flesh) also affected the Jews in Ahasuerus's kingdom: the “lights went out” as the “testimony” of the Jews was ruined (who wants to be a Jew now?!).
- And throughout all of this, Ahasuerus is totally oblivious to what's going on. He is a picture of the soul of a Christian when that Christian is following the desires of the flesh: he has no idea what's really going on!
 - ✓ The soul that spends time with Haman (the flesh) is the soul that has caused division between himself and the spirit (Esther, and ultimately Mordecai).
 - ✓ Ahasuerus has no idea what's going on because he's not spending time with Esther (and Mordecai).
 - ✓ Ahasuerus is spending his time with Haman... and so Mordecai begins to work behind the scenes.

(v2) Mordecai, in his state of grief, cannot enter into the king's presence.

- So, in order to bring about victory for God's people and Ahasuerus's kingdom, he has to go through Esther because Esther does have access to the king.
- And the same thing happens with us: The Holy Spirit (Mordecai) communicates with us (our souls; Ahasuerus) through our spirits (Esther).

But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. [1Cor 6.17]

- And that means that when the Spirit is grieved, we will first become aware of that in our spirit (vs. soul).

But, sometimes when we become aware of a problem, we'd rather deal with the symptoms... like Esther...

I. (v4) A Superficial Solution: Dealing with the Symptoms (“one step back”)

A. The first thing Esther does is the first thing most (or all) carnal believers will do: Cover it up!

1. Mordecai is grieving, weeping, wailing, sitting in sackcloth, and covered in ashes.
2. Esther is a Jew, also. She grew up with Mordecai. She *knows* something is wrong—something is very wrong—and that has Mordecai very upset.
3. But, instead of finding out what it was that got Mordecai grieving, she sends him a change of clothes. She doesn't deal with the problem. She tried to take away the symptoms: Just change your clothes, Mordecai, I'll feel better, and we can talk about it!

B. This is the “Band-Aid” solution to a problem... a superficial (and selfish) attempt to make life comfortable again.

1. Esther is a picture of our spirit and we need to “...*cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*” (2Cor 7.1).

2. What's the problem we see here, in Esther? Apathy and indifference (superficial spirituality).
 - a) When the Holy Spirit is grieved, and we become aware of that, we can't just "cover it up." We can just deal with the symptoms thinking that the problem that caused them will just go away.
 - b) But, sadly, this is how most Christians deal with their problems.
 - (1) They choose to continue in their superficial spirituality, looking for new ways (each day, each week) to cover up the Holy Spirit who sits at the gate grieving.
 - (2) For most, it's getting all "juiced up" through entertainment (whether that's out in the world, or in a "church service"). They cover up the grieving Spirit with emotional experiences.
 - (3) Most Christians (most churches) don't want to deal with the root issue of carnality (which is a lack of holiness). They'd prefer to go from one emotional experience to the next.
 - (4) It's a superficial solution. It's like throwing a change of clothes at Mordecai. It's apathy and indifference toward the Spirit who is grieving over the bad decisions we've made!

C. But the problem persists: "...but he received it not."

1. Esther thought she could make the uncomfortable situation just "go away" by throwing a change of clothes at Mordecai. But, he'd have nothing of it.
2. And the Holy Spirit will not let the true Christian rest with just a superficial covering-up of the problem. You may be able to "feel good" for a while with your entertainment (or whatever other superficial solution), but if you don't deal with the problem, the Holy Spirit will not just "go away."
3. And, so Esther took "one step back": She made a quick decision that wasn't the right decision. But, once she sees that that decision is not going to work... she takes "two steps forward"...
 - She makes a good decision: She establishes communication with Mordecai through Hatach...

II. (v5-6) An Essential Communication: Delving into the Problem ("two steps forward")

A. (v5) Hatach's Role: He is set apart to serve.

1. When Esther sees that her superficial attempt to just cover up the symptoms of the problem didn't work, she calls on one of her chamberlains (servants, eunuchs) to help her.
 - a) She wants to find out "what it was" and "why it was"—she wants to get to the bottom of it.
 - b) And so she calls out this servant, Hatach, to establish communication.
2. Hatach is a picture of the Word of God in our lives.
 - a) First, the name "Hatach" shows us three different aspects of the God's Word (ref. NTSK):
 - (1) **Hatach** means *gift*.
 - (a) And that is exactly what Scripture is in our lives: a gift from God!
 - (b) In the Bible, we have God's gift of His revelation to us that we might know Him.
 - (2) **Hatach** means *he that strikes*.
 - (a) This, too, is like the Word of God: it strikes, like a hammer!
 - (b) Jeremiah 23.29: *Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*
 - (3) **Hatach** means *truth*.
 - (a) And this, of course, is the meaning that stands out over and above the other two.
 - (b) Hatach is truth, just like the Lord said in John 17.17: *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*
 - (c) (John 16.13) This is how we (Esther) establish communication with the Holy Spirit (Mordecai): Through the Truth ("Hatach").

- b) Hatach is the means of communication between Esther and Mordecai, just like the Word of God is our means of communication between our spirit and the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) Hatach was set apart as a chamberlain (servant) to serve Esther in her needs.
 - (2) The Scripture is “Holy” because it was set apart to serve us in our needs.
 - (3) And when Esther wants to get to the root of the problem that has caused Mordecai to grieve, she establishes communication with him through Hatach.
 - (4) The first step in cleansing ourselves of the filthiness that is in our spirits (apathy, indifference, superficiality, selfishness, or whatever else) is to establish communication with Mordecai (the Holy Spirit) through Hatach (the Truth—the Word of God).
- 3. [Review] Hatach's role: He's a chamberlain whose name means “truth” and he's set apart to serve the queen in her needs. And so in that we see his purpose, also...

B. (v5b-6) Hatach's Purpose: He is sent to communicate.

- 1. (v5) Hatach was sent to “*to know what it was, and why it was.*” Esther needs to “know,” and so she sends Hatach.
- 2. This is the purpose of the Word of God in our lives: That we may know certain and specific things, the things of God.
 - a) (John 16.13-15) God has purposed to use the Truth (the Word of God; John 17.17) to communicate with us during the dispensation of the Holy Spirit (the Church Age).
 - (1) And I call it that (the dispensation of the Holy Spirit) because of the marked difference out dispensation has with all other: Marked by the unique presence and work of God's Spirit.
 - (2) (Acts 2) It began with the coming of the Holy Spirit in a totally unique way to dwell in believers.
 - (3) During our dispensation, we see a totally unique work of the Holy Spirit in believers.
 - (a) (1Cor 12.13) He is uniquely present in every believer, making them “born again” and “alive” spiritually.
 - (b) (Eph 1.13-14) He is uniquely present in every believer, sealing them and “guaranteeing” their eternal salvation and inheritance in Christ.
 - (4) (2Thes 2.7) Our dispensation ends in a reversal of the event that began this Age. Just as the Spirit in a moment, a twinkling of the eye, to dwell in those who believed, so it will end in the same way. The presence of the Spirit in believers will be taken away in our Rapture.
 - (5) And, so, the Church Age could just as easily be called the Dispensation of the Holy Spirit because of His unique presence and work in the world and among believers today.
 - b) (1Jn 2.20, 27) The “unction” and “anointing” spoken of here is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer (every believer), and we see that He was sent to teach us, to communicate with us through truth (through “Hatach”).
 - c) (1Cor 2.10-13) If we want to know the “what” and the “why,” we need to establish communication with Mordecai (Holy Spirit) through Hatach (the Truth; the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth).
 - d) If we want to establish and maintain communication with God today (the Holy Spirit who lives in us and works in the world around us), we must do that through Hatach, the truth (Scripture).
 - e) With this in mind, let's look at one more aspect of Hatach before we conclude...
- 3. Hatach is “one of the king's chamberlains” (he's one among many).
 - a) In it's most simple form, the Bible is a book. And it's just one book among many (obviously we know it is unique among the many, but it is one book among many all the same).

- b) What made all the difference in the world for Esther was when she singled out Hatach and sought communication with Mordecai through him.
- (1) Hatach was not the end, but the means. Esther did not communicate with Hatach, she sought communication with Mordecai through Hatach.
 - (2) And the Bible is not the end, but the means (we do not believe, like some have said, in the “Father, Son, and Holy Scripture”).
 - (a) The Bible is God's inspired and preserved Word because it contains the certain, inspired, and preserved words of God.
 - (b) But, we do not worship the Bible; we worship and serve God.
 - (c) And so we communicate with God, primarily, through Scripture (as we read His words we can understand His will and desires, and then we can pray accordingly; and that is communication: listening and conversing).
 - (3) But, again, let's remember that our inspired Book is just another book on the shelf..
- c) What will make all the difference in the world is taking this one book off the shelf (one of many), opening it, and seeking to establish communication with God through it.
- d) The Bible will be like any other book to you (Hatach was one of many other chamberlains) until you open it and seek to know God through its pages (until you single out Hatach—TRUTH—and through him communicate with Mordecai).
- e) (v6-9) When we do that, Mordecai will speak to us (and he will do so through Hatach/Truth).

How many Christians today are turning to anything and everything except truth to solve their problems?

- How many “pastors” are given to “counseling,” so much so that churches seem like psychiatric centers.
- How many “Christians” are given to hunches, feelings, intuition, vision, dreams, or whatever else is the new fad in “cool, hip, relevant Christianity”?
- Anything but the Bible! Anything but truth (and “thy Word is truth”)!

(2Pet 1.3-4) Scripture (the knowledge of God; where you “know” the *what* and the *why*) is sufficient for...

1. All things that pertain unto *life*: The Scripture is sufficient to make you wise unto salvation (the forgiveness of your sins and the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ).
2. All things that pertain unto *godliness*: The Scripture is sufficient to make you godly (Christ-like). It is all you need to be like Jesus Christ and live like Christ today.

(2Tim 3.15-17) Scripture is sufficient to make you perfect.

- (Eph 4.11-13) And “perfect” means being like the perfect man, Jesus Christ.
- (Rom 8.29) Scripture is sufficient to fulfill all the will of God in conforming you to the image of His Son.

The whole of Christendom has gone insane! Doesn't it seem like that sometimes...? Why is that...?

- They are like Esther, seeking for the quickest way to put a superficial Band-Aid on their problems, rid themselves of the discomfort caused by a grieving Holy Spirit in their lives because they are following the flesh instead of the Spirit.
- The only way to stop that process is to pull Hatach out from among the other chamberlains, and send him to Mordecai to find out what it is that Mordecai needs to tell you!
- Pull the Bible off the shelf. Open it and establish communication with God (the Holy Spirit). Seek God through the truth of His Word!
- That is the first (and an essential) step toward true spiritual victory. Without Hatach (Truth), you have no way of communicating with Mordecai, because He is outside and cannot get in (carnality separates).