

MORDECAI RESPONDS TO ESTHER'S RESISTANCE

Esther 4.13-14: Vexing the Spirit of God Results in a Swift Response

Theme: When the Spirit of God responds to being quenched, you have a decision to make...

In the interaction between Esther and Mordecai, we've seen several different aspects of how we interact with the Holy Spirit.

1. (Eph 4.30) Just as Mordecai was grieved by the decision to follow Haman, so the Holy Spirit is *grieved* when we decide to follow the flesh.
2. (1Thes 5.19) Just as Esther “quenched” Mordecai's charge to seek to save those who are perishing, so we can “*quench*” the Spirit when refuse to do as He instructs us (through Hatach, the truth: Scripture).
3. (Acts 7.51) We can also continue “*resisting*” the Holy Spirit...
4. (Isa 63.10) And that will lead to “*vexing*” God's Spirit (irritating, annoying, provoking Him). And we see a little bit of this in our passage for today...

Esther's resistance to Mordecai's instructions (v10-12) earns her a bit of reproof (v13-14).

- Mordecai gets a little vexed with Esther and responds appropriately: He reprovcs, rebukes & exhorts her.

I. (v13) **Rebuke:** Mordecai rebukes Esther

A. A **rebuke** is a sharp, stern expression of disapproval. It's a slap in the face to wake you up to your mistake, and that's just what Mordecai gives Esther first...

B. Mordecai is a bit vexed (irritated) with Esther's response, and he very quickly lets her know.

1. Esther just threw out a bunch of reasons and excuses for not doing what Mordecai said, and Mordecai just pushes all that aside and gets right down to the core of the problem.
2. Esther is thinking of “thyselr” and “thou.” She's indifferent toward the plight of the condemned.
3. And the same is true of us...

C. When we vex the Spirit of God by quenching and resisting Him, He'll quickly let us know.

1. When we grieve Him, He'll let us know. When we quench Him, He'll quickly let us know! When we continue resisting Him... He'll definitely let us know.
2. (2Tim 3.15-17) That could be through the Scripture (our personal reading, a sermon, etc.).
3. (Gen 6.3; John 16.8-11) That could be through the personal convicting work of the Spirit in us.
4. Regardless of how it comes, the rebuke of the Spirit will be clear and distinct, and it will get right down to the root problem very quickly (none of this “I feel guilty”; it will be specific!).

D. After the rebuke (the sharp “slap in the face” to wake us up to our problem), there comes reproof...

II. (v14a) **Reproof:** Mordecai reprovcs Esther

A. A **reproof** is more gentle than a rebuke, and it's meant to caution, counsel, or advise against something. So, after Mordecai rebukes Esther, he reprovcs her (he gives her a warning).

1. If Esther continues in her resistance and rebellion, if she insists that she cannot go in unto the king to intercede for the Jews, then she is the one who is going to suffer.
2. God does not need Esther to fulfill His plan and His will concerning Israel. He gave Abraham certain unconditional promises in Genesis 12.1-3, and He will fulfill those promises regardless.
3. Mordecai knows this and he states it clearly: “*then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise.*”
4. Who will lose in this scenario? Esther! God won't. The Jews won't. If Esther refuses to submit and do the will of God here, she is the one who has everything to lose. And Mordecai warns her of that.

B. Doctrinal Application: Remember your doctrinal pictures and types.

1. Haman is a picture of the coming Antichrist who will gain global authority (Est 3) after the rapture of the Church (Est 1; pictured in the removal of Vashti, the Gentile queen, from the throne).
2. (Rev 12.17) Like Haman, the Antichrist will attempt to exterminate the Jews (all of them).
3. (Acts 3.19-21) But, like Mordecai said: *enlargement and deliverance shall arise for the Jews!*
4. (Rom 11.1) God has not cast away His chosen (elect) people: Israel. They hold the same privileged position as always—they are central to God's plan in this world.
5. (Rom 11.25-31) God will save all Israel (Jews from each of the 12 tribes). In spite of their disobedience and rebellion, the calling and election of Israel by God are without repentance.
6. Mordecai knows God will deliver His people. And we should never lose sight of the fact that God will, ultimately, deliver His people from all of their enemies (at the second coming of Christ).

C. Historical Application: Remember the providence of God!

1. One of the greatest lessons we can learn from the history we see recorded in the Book of Esther is the lesson of God's providence.
 - a) Even though we don't see God mentioned by name in the entire book, we see Him everywhere!
 - b) There are four things we can see here that should remind us that God is in charge, always.
2. First, God has a plan and purpose that He is working out in this world today (just like in Esther's day). He has not left us to ourselves; He is still here, and He has a plan.
3. Second, God has chosen to fulfill His plan and purpose in this world through men.
 - a) Sometimes He uses wicked (lost) men, like Haman or Pharaoh, to accomplish His purposes.
 - b) Sometimes He uses “good” men (saints), like Mordecai, Esther, Peter, or Paul.
4. Third, God will accomplish His plan regardless of His people—regardless of our choices to be submissive and obedient, or rebellious and disobedient.
 - a) If Esther chooses to continue in her rebellion, that's fine. God is not up in heaven wringing His hands saying, “*Oh, my! Oh, my! What shall I do?*”
 - (1) If Esther doesn't want to obey Mordecai and participate with God in the saving of the Jews, God doesn't lose anything. Esther loses!
 - (2) God will accomplish what He has determined to accomplish some other way.
 - b) And we need to understand, too, that God's plan and purpose are not tied to us, the laborers.
 - (1) If we do not want to submit to the will of God and participate with Him in the work He is doing today in the world, that's fine. “Enlargement and deliverance” shall come.
 - (2) It's like **John Mark** in Acts 13.13. He quit and stepped out of the will of God. Did God's plan stop? No. God simply replaced John Mark with **Silas** in Acts 15.36-41.
 - (3) Or it could be that if we continue to refuse to submit and obey, that God will discipline us until we do (Heb 12.5-11). That's **Jonah's** testimony! God said, “*Go!*” and Jonah said, “*No!*” So, God beat the tar out of Jonah until he submitted to God and obeyed the charge.
 - c) So, let's not think that God is held captive by man's free will and bad choices. God will accomplish His plan and purpose.
 - (1) If we so choose, we can participate with Him in what He is doing in the world today.
 - (2) Or, if we so choose, we can say, “*No.*” God may replace us or beat the tar out of us until we submit and obey. But, God will accomplish His plan and purpose. We can't stop that.

5. Fourth, we don't have to *see* God to know that He is in control.
 - a) Remember, we don't “see” God throughout the entire Book of Esther. He is not mentioned once by name. But, when you get to the end of the book, you can see God all over the place!
 - b) So, when you find yourself thinking that God is nowhere to be found in your life (just because you don't “see” Him), you need to remind yourself that He is there, and He is involved!
6. And so that brings us to a personal application in all this...

D. Personal Application: God will do what He has purposed to do... regardless.

1. The only question that remains is: “Do *you* want to participate in what God is doing, or not?”
2. Each one of us, like Esther in this passage, has the opportunity to get involved, or get out.
 - a) Many of God's people (for whatever reason: indifference, cowardice, lack of faith, selfishness) will refuse to get involved. They are the “church goers” who never get involved in ministry.
 - b) And you know what? That's fine. God does not need any of us to accomplish His plan!
3. No one is indispensable in the ministry.
 - a) It's obvious that God can use Esther in this situation (it'd be safe to say He “wants” to). But, if she refuses, then He will bring deliverance some other way. Esther is not indispensable.
 - b) And the same is true today: No one is indispensable because God can use anyone He wants!
4. So, who's going to “lose” if we don't choose to get involved?
 - We are! Just like Esther, we are the ones who risk losing everything! God won't lose; He will accomplish His plan and purpose some other way through some other people.

E. Mordecai *rebuked* Esther (a sharp “slap in the face” to wake her up to her problem), and then he *reproved* her (a warning; pointing her toward the consequences).

1. God will preserve His people—He will fulfill His promises. Esther's decision to participate in that plan or not will never change God. She is the one who has everything to lose.
2. And so, after the *rebuke* and the *reproof*, Mordecai *exhorts* Esther...

III. (v14b) Exhortation: Mordecai exhorts Esther

A. To *exhort* someone is to give them urgent advice or recommendations. And that's where Mordecai ends up with Esther.

1. He shows her how she ought to be looking at this situation—the proper perspective. Who knows if she has come to the kingdom just for this time?
 - a) Esther is the *right person*: She's a beautiful young lady that's married to the king (he loves her).
 - b) Esther is in the *right place*: She is in the palace and has access to the king anytime she chooses.
 - c) Esther is the right person, in the right place, at the *right time*: She came to the kingdom right before Haman issued his decree of death for Esther's people. Perfect timing!
2. We could say that there is a “*divine design*” in Esther, and in the circumstances of her life.
3. The only thing she lacks is her choice to act according to that divine design and obey the charge.

B. In every Christian there is a “*divine design*,” also.

1. (1Cor 12.18) We are all members of the Body of Christ, and God Himself is the one who set each and every one of us members exactly where He wants us!
2. (1Cor 12.11) And God has given to each member (every one of us) exactly what we need to accomplish the task He has given us.
 - a) (1Cor 12.7) That “empowering” of the Spirit is given to each of us “to profit withal.”
 - b) (1Cor 14.26) And that “profit” is the edification of the Body of Christ.

3. (Eph 2.10) You see, God made each and every one of us (in Christ) *for* good works. He has a “divine design” in every one of us that has prepared us for the work He has for us to do.
4. (Eph 4.16) And every member (every joint, every part) of the Body does its work “to profit withal”—the profit of the edifying of the Body in love.
5. My Point: You are the *right person* in the *right place* at the *right time*... for a work that needs to be done in the ministry of edifying the Body of Christ (making it grow through evangelizing the lost or edifying the saved).
 - a) If you say, “*God can't use me because I'm not like... whomever,*” then you would be like the person who would say, “*I can't use my feet because they can't hold a fork.*”
 - b) Each of us is different... ***on purpose!*** God's purpose (God's design: divine design).
 - c) What's holding us back? The same thing we see in Esther: filthiness of the flesh and spirit.

C. Many Christians need the same exhortation Mordecai has given to Esther!

1. (1Cor 15.10) By God's grace you are what you are. So, labor according to that divine design!
 - a) What are you designed to do? What do you do well? What do you desire to do in the charge given us by God? What is your “default” ministry (what you always end up doing anyway)?
 - (1) I may be able to walk on my hands for a little while with great effort and concentration, but when I just relax and operate according to the “design” in my body, I use my feet to walk. My feet automatically “default” to walking (not my hands).
 - (2) That's how God has made each of us; there is a divine design in each member of the Body.
 - b) Mordecai exhorted Esther to labor according to God's design in her and in her circumstances.
 - c) We would do well to consider the same exhortation.
2. By God's choice and design, He wants to use us today in the fulfillment of His plan in the world to save those who are condemned to death.
 - a) But, we need to understand, too, that we are not indispensable. If we choose to not participate with God in the work, He'll find someone else... and probably discipline us along the way!
 - (1) God has nothing to lose if we choose to not get involved.
 - (2) (Rom 8.17) We, however, have a lot to lose if we don't “suffer” with Christ in the work He is doing in the world today to edify the Body of Christ.
 - b) So, what's it gonna be...?

Conclusion:

God is doing a work in this world, and He has given you everything you need to participate with Him in that work.

- So, really, the only question that remains is this one: What do you want to do?
 - ✓ (2Tim 4.6-8) Do you want to finish the work God gave you to do and hear, “*Well done, thou good and faithful servant*”?
 - ✓ (2Tim 4.9-10) Or do you want quit and do nothing like Demas?
- We **prepare** ourselves for the work God gave us through discipleship (learning the Bible and learning how to apply the Bible practically to our lives). If you need that, then do that!
- We **do** the work God gave us to do through making disciples... and that (like we'll see with Esther) has to be an intentional choice... because it's uncomfortable and takes effort and planning.
- But the most important question this morning is this: What do you want to do? That's where it all starts.