

Opening...

My grandson is 13 years old. **Slide** Matthew - He is active, plays little league baseball. He collects baseball cards, knows more trivia than I'll ever know. He is an amazing student who at 7 years of age could speak a lot of Latin. He plays hard, and Works hard at his chores - and he sweats!

The other day.., his Moma, my daughter...thought she got a whiff of something....she said Matt? Ha mom! "Did you remember to out on your deodorant?"

Matt had this funny face....and said...Ahhhh "some of it!"

Mom said..." Like what some...like one arm pit??"

Slide Minion

They were already in the car going somewhere so...the ripe teen would stay ripe until they returned home!

Did you realize that between perfume and cosmetics we spent over 50billion a year in our country!

The U.S. Doesn't make all the best cosmetics....of course - 25% comes from France.
My wife's favorite through the years was Lancôme of Paris.

Date night...meant Lancôme-
Did she smell good!

But what I really like about Diana, is not the sweetness of a French perfume, but the way she has graciously served her family and friends. Raising four children and now a grandma to six and one who loves serving the Lord besides me. She has braved two painful surgeries because what she really wants is to continue serving the Lord! She was brave enough to keep being a Mom when she was diagnosed with Systemic Lupis...25 years ago!

Many of the moms in this church have that kind of Esther spirit too!

It's the fragrance of Jesus!!

And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to

God. - Ephesians 5:2 **Slide**

Matthew 18:4 **Slide**

Matthew 20:27 **Slide**

Matthew 23:11-12 **Slide**

That spirit makes them smell good to God!

God smells good!

Jesus - when He gave of Himself...was a fragrant offering...

We Are Outsiders!!! - this was a different culture - different to Esther - different to us!
Men ruled with an iron fist!!!

Read Esther 1:1-9

1. the greatness of the kingdom of Persia **Slide**
2. just two years before Artaxerxes started his Greek campaign (which set the stage for Alexander to seek revenge when he conquered this great kingdom and became the forerunner nation to the Roman empire...prophesied by Daniel...)
3. King Ahasuerus ruled absolutely - (except for God behind the scenes)

A. The Former Queen - At a great party....

For Reason we don't fully understand, Queen Vashti was deposed by her husband the king. Jewish tradition was that she was to be paraded naked before the king and therefore she was a noble woman who stood up to her husband. We may never know...she is not the focus here.

B. The King

1:19 If it please the king, let a royal order go out from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes so that it may not be repealed, that Vashti is never again to come before King Ahasuerus. And let the king give her royal position to **another who is better than she.** **20** So when the decree made by the king is proclaimed throughout all his kingdom, for it is vast, all women will give honor to their husbands, high and low alike." **21** This advice pleased the king and the princes, and the king did as Memucan proposed. **22** He sent letters to all the royal provinces, to every province in its own script and to every people in its own language, that every man be **master** in his own household and speak according to the language of his people.

How prophetic this phrase...another who is better than she...

the king thought - he was getting someone he could control...

There must have been something very humble that shone through all the beauty for Hadasseah was ravishing....

C. Esther

There was a royal call for a new queen and a young girl whose Hebrew name means Myrtle and whose Persian name means star. Star she was.

Read 2:5 Now there was a Jew in Susa the citadel whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjaminite, **6** who had been carried away from Jerusalem among the captives carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away. **7** He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman had a beautiful figure and was lovely to look at, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter. **8** So when the king's order and his edict were proclaimed, and when many young women were gathered in Susa the citadel in custody of Hegai, Esther also was taken into the king's palace and put in custody of Hegai, who had charge of the women. **9** And the young woman pleased him and won his favor. And he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and her portion of food, and with seven chosen young women from the king's palace, and advanced her and her young women to the best place in the harem. **10** Esther had not made known her people or kindred, for Mordecai had commanded her not to make it known. **11** And every day Mordecai walked in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and what was happening to her.

1. she had lost both her parents
2. she was raised by her older cousin Mordecai
3. she was a knockout
4. she pleased Hegai and won his favor
5. she was made to smell really good...
6. **she knew discretion** - vs. 10 "had not made known her people or kindred for Mordecai had commanded her not to make it known. (anti-Semitism was alive at the time of Daniel - jealousy of God's choosing Israel and the blessing that rested on the people of God)
7. she obeyed her adopted Father...even when she was promoted she did not forget his words...
(she remained who she was...humble - "even your enemies will be at peace with you) When a man's

ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. Proverbs 16:7

Eventually she was chosen to be queen

Read Esther 2:12-

12 Now when the turn came for each young woman to go in to King Ahasuerus, after being twelve months under the regulations for the women, since this was the regular period of their beautifying, six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and ointments for women— **13** when the young woman went in to the king in this way, she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the harem to the king's palace. **14** In the evening she would go in, and in the morning she would return to the second harem in custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch, who was in charge of the concubines. She would not go in to the king again, unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name.

15 When the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his own daughter, to go in to the king, she asked for nothing except what Hegai the king's eunuch, who had charge of the women, advised. Now Esther was winning favor in the eyes of all who saw her. **16** And when Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign, **17** the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she won grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. **18** Then the king gave a great feast for all his officials and servants; it was Esther's feast. He also granted a remission of taxes to the provinces and gave gifts with royal generosity.

Two More Things:

1. vs. 13-15 the text reveals that Esther used what Hegai recommended- using the natural oils and ointments that would bring out her own natural beauty - others (according to Jewish commentary - chose to bedeck themselves with extravagant jewelry to try to make themselves look better than they were. Esther was in subjection not only to Mordecai but to Hegai
2. Esther found a way to bless the king - vs 17 she won grace and favor in his sight.
3. Esther - who knew discretion and humility was crowned as queen.
4. The king was so taken by her - he reduced taxes for awhile!!!!!!

Her cousin Mordecai told her to keep her identify quiet. So the king did not know she was a Jew.

What can we learn about a godly woman from the new queen?

1. Though beautiful she served others (even a pagan king) - and from the rest of the story she continued to serve....rather than lording it over people. Though given a position of authority she served rather than letting it go to her head.

3. She could have been one who chooses personal safety but willingly sacrificed herself for the greater good.

4. She made others want to be "better people." See 2:18

5. Her courage saved many twice...1st her husband's life

READ

19 Now when the virgins were gathered together the second time, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate. **20** Esther had not made known her kindred or her people, as Mordecai had commanded her, for Esther obeyed Mordecai just as when she was brought up by him. **21** In those days, as Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. **22** And this came to the knowledge of Mordecai, and he told it to Queen Esther, and Esther told the king in the name of Mordecai. **23** When the affair was investigated and found to be so, the men were both hanged on the gallows. And it was recorded in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

6. She was made a queen but she was born and lived and behaved as a child of the KING! 2:20 God knit Esther together in her Mother's womb. She had probably been separated from her mother whether it was through an early death from sickness we don't know. She still knew who she was...her identity could not be taken from her - her identity could not be given to her - it was who she was. Yet she sacrificed her claim of being of the chosen people...at her cousins request (a cousin who had adopted her)

Esther's Triumph -

Read

4 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and he cried out with a loud and bitter cry. **2** He went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one was allowed to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth. **3** And in every province, wherever the king's command and his decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and many of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4 When Esther's young women and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed. She sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. **5** Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was. **6** Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, **7** and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. **8** Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and command her to go to the king to beg his favor and plead with him on behalf of her people. **9** And Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. **10** Then Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to go to Mordecai and say, **11** "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days."

There will always be enemies of God who try to hurt God's people. We will not always get the victory over them in this world. When we do - courage will be the key.

What would Esther do?

12 And they told Mordecai what Esther had said. **13** Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. **14** For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" **15** Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, **16** "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish." **17** Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

We need a new breed of warrior Christians.

1. They must be pure before the Lord

Esther was a virgin. With her beauty Esther could have been with any man. She remained pure.

This is easily missed in our casual immoral society.

2. They must know who they are -

3. She did not do it on her own -

a. her Jewish family following Mordecai's example fasted and prayed....

b. Mordecai exhorted her - his adopted daughter.

c. Esther served her people - was loyal and courageous

Warnings:

1. Blindness to the Purposes of God is Deadly! It was to Haman who was hanged...
Israel was, is, and always will be the apple of God's eye
Obadiah
2. Linking with the powerful with bad motives is not smart!
Haman thought nothing of the Jews - he despised them...so he hooked up with Xerxes!
It didn't help though Zeresh was the most powerful man in the whole world!

Exhortation:

1. Penetrating this world with truth will save lives and bless our temporary homeland.
Many of us can't see past the smoke of outward hardness...
Our job is to proclaim to whoever we meet!!
To enter into what might repel us or disgust us and speak up for God!

Ray Stedman tells about the Italian army Lieutenant and the Kosher Jew.
Remember those guys?

here was this Italian army lieutenant who, in spite of his pagan background, knew how to pray-and even to share his pay with God's people. So God, responding to his hungry heart, made some rather elaborate arrangements to bring him to a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

God sent him a messenger with instructions to see a man named Pete who was living over on the coast.

Corn

The man from Italy obeyed immediately and sent his men to bring Pete to him.

Meanwhile, back at the seashore, Peter (the other hungry man) was waiting on the balcony for dinner to be prepared when God gave him a vision. (Whether Peter was asleep or conscious is hard to say.)

It was a very strange vision, especially to Peter, for he saw a sort of sheet come down out of heaven filled with all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds. A voice said to him, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." But this kosher Jew replied, "No, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." The voice again, "What God has cleansed, you must not call common." And three times this dialogue was repeated.

About this time Peter must have wondered what he ate for lunch that would give him such a nightmare. But right then Cornelius' men arrived from Caesarea and asked for Peter. If it had not been for the prompting of the Holy Spirit coinciding with the arrival of these men, Peter probably would have reached for the Alka-Seltzer and forgotten the whole thing.

But instead he asked, "Why are you here and what do you want?"

They explained their mission and invited Peter to go to the home of Cornelius to share his message with them. Peter invited them to stay the night and the next day they headed for Caesarea with Peter and some of his Christian friends.

Esther could have withdrawn from society...scared to be married to such a man as Xerxes!! Put off by the strange customs, and abhorrent of their pagan customs. As Christians we must ask the Holy Spirit for discernment to stay away from overtly sinful practices but at the same time we must move into situations where there are hungry people who we can feed, where there are thirsty people who need the life saving water that Jesus has given us!

A New Testament Home Bible Class

When they arrived at the house of Cornelius, what a sight greeted them! Cornelius had invited all his friends and relatives, and Peter found himself in a house full of people.

At first Cornelius, in his understandable pagan ignorance, tried to worship Peter, but Peter said, "Stand up, I'm just a man like you. And I'm sure you realize we Jews aren't supposed to fraternize with you pagans, but God showed me I'm not to consider you 'unclean' as I have all my life. Now, what do you want of me?"

We pick it up in Acts 10 Read...

34 So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, **35** but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. **36** As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), **37** you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: **38** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. **39** And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, **40** but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, **41** not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. **42** And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. **43** To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

**One more lesson....from Esther -
A Three Fold Chord**

**....some prayed, some fasted, some strategies, some penetrated...all WON TOGETHER!!
a threefold cord is not quickly broken. - Ecclesiastes 4:7-12**

7 Again, I saw vanity under the sun:

8 one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.

10 For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!

11 Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone?

12 And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken. - Ecclesiastes 4:7-12

Teams win!
Individual loners lose!!!!

we need strong courageous women!!
We need courageous men working together with courageous women!!

There is work to do for the kingdom of Christ!

God has designed the church to function with strong men leading who exercise spiritual leadership.
God has designed the church to function with strong women who exercise Spirit led leadership by modeling their royal, servant minded....

Queen Esther smelled good I'm sure with the finest oils and perfumes that Persia could afford.
But her real scent - was her spiritual scent of courage and confidence that she could make a difference if she did her part!!

She loved her people, her family above herself!

Jesus smells good, when we hang with Him it rubs off on us!
When we act like He did...we smell just like Him....

Our anointing is from the source!!!!

And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. - Ephesians 5:2

That spirit makes them smell good to God!
God smells good!
Jesus - when He gave of Himself...

Last Three **Slide**

2 Corinthians 2:15 says "For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing," to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?