



## Esther: Behind the Scenes - Part 4 Sermon Discussion Notes

### Opening Thought

A few weeks ago I was watching a baseball game on Sunday afternoon. The Baltimore Orioles were playing the Florida Rays. The Orioles were behind and a young batter came to bat. He took his stance and waited for the pitch. He passed up several pitches until a fast ball came straight over home plate. His swing was perfect as he kept his eye on the ball and followed through on his swing. The baseball soared over the infield, soared over the outfield and went deep over the center wall for a homerun. The instant replay of the homerun highlighted how perfect the swing was. I noticed how his timing was perfect as well. He met the ball in front of the plate and had the perfect rhythm to send the baseball into outer space. Likewise in life when our timing and decisions are spot on, we score big.

### Scriptures

#### Esther 5:3-8

3Then the king asked, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you." 4"If it pleases the king," replied Esther, "let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him." 5"Bring Haman at once," the king said, "so that we may do what Esther asks." So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared. 6As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, "Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted." 7Esther replied, "My petition and my request is this: 8If the king regards me with favor and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king's question." (NIV)

## Discussion Questions

1. The message discussed how it is important to not just take action but to take effective action. The goal in any enterprise is not just to do something but to do something that works. Discuss the importance of doing wise things for good results.
2. Xerxes was an unpredictable personality which made it delicate on how to approach him on a special request. What elements in the book of Esther reveal Xerxes' unpredictable nature?
3. Esther invited Xerxes to dinner with Haman. Why didn't she just come out with her request when she was in front of him when he sat upon the throne?
4. Discuss the principle of giving something first before asking for what you need. Why do you think this principle works in human relationships?
5. There were two dinners that Esther prepared for Xerxes. What are some of the possible reasons that she pulled back and didn't ask what she needed when Xerxes asked her what she wanted? He seemed to be so ready to grant her whatever she wanted.

**Esther 5:6-8** *6As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, "Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted." 7Esther replied, "My petition and my request is this: 8If the king regards me with favor and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king's question." (NIV)*

6. Have you ever chickened out of doing something that you knew you should do? Share an example with the group.
7. Discuss how reason and intellect are not enough to make great decisions involving the heart and the mind.
8. Look at some of these scriptures to discuss how the Holy Spirit prompts us to do certain things and to not do other things, as well as to wait before we do certain things. **Philippians 4:6-7, Psalm 32:8-9, Isaiah 11:1-4.**
9. What was the Urim and Thummim in the Old Testament? **See Exodus 28:30, Leviticus 8:8, Numbers 27:21, Deut. 33:8, 1 Samuel 28:6, Nehemiah 7:65, Ezra 2:63.**
10. What happened between dinners number one and two that made Xerxes predisposed to grant Esther's request? See **Esther 6:1-10 & Esther 7:1-6.**

## Concluding Thought

"Every time I've tried to do something that doesn't feel right, it's ended up not being right."  
-Mario Cuomo, former Governor of New York