

Esther: Reflection of Submission

Mother's Day

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Bible Text: Esther 2:15

Preached on: Sunday, May 8, 2005

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..morning and what I want to do is move from motherhood and move to just some glories of being a woman of the Lord. Lord willing, if the Lord continues to lead, on Father's Day I am going to do a biographical sketch of the man Daniel and apply it to our men.

But this morning I want to do a biographical sketch on a woman that is not heard of very much when it comes to talking about godly women and yet is a woman as I have read through my Bible several, several times has always struck me as a reflective start of Christ in a dark, dark world.

So I want you to take your Bible and turn to the book Esther chapter two and I want to do a biographical sketch on this woman and I have entitled my message, "A Submissive Star." And I use the word "star" here because the word "Esther," her name, means star. And as you go through here the primary purpose of the book of Esther is not to magnify Esther's character traits, it is glorify the providence of God here in this book and the workings and dealings of God upon men even though in this book God is not even mentioned. Isn't that unusual?

But there are subthemes in this book and one of those subthemes is the contrast of a woman who had the spirit of submission. So what I want to do, I want to read one sentence out of one verses, Esther chapter two verse 15 and outside of one passage we are going to stay right there within this book and look at this woman as a role model of godliness for our ladies.

I want to read the last sentence in Esther chapter two verse 15.

"And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her."¹

As I have mentioned before, today being Mother's Day we understand what a blessing and a privilege it is to be a highly favored mother. And yet a highly favored mother flows out of God's creative purpose for all women. And that is if it be so in the will of God for a woman to be a highly favored wife.

¹ Esther 2:15.

In Genesis chapter two we have the creation of the woman and the woman was created suitably for Adam and she was created to be a what? A help. A like to use the word “help” instead of using the word “help meet” because the word meet just means suitable. Eve was created to be a help. So if a woman wants to be a highly favored mother, it is all rooted and flows out of being a highly favored wife. And you can see that.

Turn back to our Scripture reading in Proverbs chapter 31 because we noted at the end of that chapter where it talks about her children rising up and calling her blessed. Proverbs 31 and verse 28 it says concerning this rubied mother, it says, “Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.”²

So here is a lady who is industrious, who is, as it were, the jewel of Proverbs, the jewel of wisdom seen in this woman a woman that is a rarity and as her children grow up in life you will recognize this highly favored mother because her children give praise unto her. And yet the origin of all of this chapter concerning this virtuous woman begins in chapter 31 and verse 11 with who? Her husband.

It says here in verse 11 that:

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.³

Now do you think that a woman and a wife, a highly favored wife who out of that becomes a highly favored mother, do you think that a husband would give great blessing to the woman who would be a help to him, a help in this way, doing him good and not evil, how much? All the days of her life.

Of course, we do understand before you could be a highly favored mother you should be a highly favored married woman.

Now there are mothers here in our congregation who are without the comfort of a husband for various reasons. It could be the tragedy of divorce. It could be death. It could be other reasons that are there. And yet your value as a mother is seen in your worth to those around you in the church and to those that God has placed authority over you. So you may not have a husband to have that comfort, but God has given you a local New Testament body of believing people and he has placed authorities over you so that if you want to be a highly favored mother, then you ought to be a highly favored lady to whoever God has placed over you.

In other words, those things just flow right out of her character.

Now Esther was such a woman. If you would sit down in one sitting and read through this book several times, you will note a character quality in this woman that is a rare thing

² Proverbs 31:28.

³ Proverbs 31:11-12.

among ladies. It is a rare thing among men. But in Proverbs 31 she said, “Who can find a virtuous...”⁴ what? Woman.

So if you are going to find, young men, this woman to marry, you are going to have to keep your eyes wide open and search for her on your knees, because this is a rare thing on the face of this earth.

The glory that we see here in this book of Esther is the glory of the shining reflection of Christ in this woman, in the midst of pagan darkness. I want us to note her background. She was a woman who had her name changed.

Look in chapter two and verse seven. Her name originally was Hadassah. It says in verse seven, “And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther.”⁵

The word “Hadassah” means Myrtle. But the word “Esther” would have been her pagan name and that is a name that means star just like Daniel was renamed, so Esther or Hadassah was renamed in her day and she was renamed after a pagan. She lived in the midst of pagan bondage, just like Daniel did. Daniel lived in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, walked and lived and had his ministry and his vocation in the darkness of the world of Babylon. So, too, this woman was there in a day of darkness, just like today.

Esther was married to an unbeliever. Many of our ladies, sometimes they got saved after they were married. Sometimes they made the tragic mistake of marrying an unbeliever. Sometimes they married a person they thought was saved and later on found out that he was an unbeliever. But in any case Esther married an unbeliever. And, folks, this man was a powerful man. And this man was a ruthless man. If this man said, “Off with your head,” you what? You are gone.

She was married to a man who was exposed in espoused the heathen practices of that day. She lived in very, very difficult circumstances, circumstances that were made more difficult by this fact. She was an orphan.

Look in Esther chapter two and verse seven again.

“And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle’s daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were [what?], took for his own daughter.”⁶

Her upbringing early on was of the supposed tragic circumstances of having both her parents die. And we don’t know if they died all at the same time. But in any case some time in her childhood she was orphaned and was raised by this man Mordecai, who was a relative, but was not a direct relative.

⁴ Proverbs 31:10.

⁵ Esther 2:7.

⁶ Ibid.

Would you say that that would be difficult? So here is a woman. She is raised. She is an orphan. Her parents have died. She has had to deal with that and the circumstances of the Lord. She is raised by Mordecai. She ends up marrying by force. She ends up marrying a king who is an unbeliever who is a rank pagan, a ruthless, powerful man and she lives in the realm of darkness and idolatry and here is this woman Esther, a star in the midst of all of this.

Esther had the privilege, even though she was an orphan, she had the privilege of growing up in a family that loved the Lord out of conviction and not convenience.

In Esther chapter three and verse two we have Mordecai being ordered to bow down to Haman. Mordecai was a Jew who serve Jehovah, who served the one and true living God. He was not going to worship a man.

And so in Esther chapter three and verse two, “All the king’s servants, that were in the king’s gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai...”⁷ That is the one that raised up Esther, he didn’t what? He didn’t bow and he didn’t give him reverence.

Now, folks, is this man serving Christ out of convenience or conviction? Conviction.

And, folks, we have got to understand that when he didn’t do that, not only could he lose his job, he could lose his what? His life. And later on his act of being unsubmitive to a man but submissive to God, that act not only brought him and his family under possible tragedy, it also exposed every Jew in that kingdom to potential death.

Would you say that man’s action had ramifications? And yet the Bible says that he would not cease. Look at verse three of Esther three.

Then the king’s servants, which were in the king’s gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king’s commandment? Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai’s matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew. And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.⁸

Now here is a man by conviction. He doesn’t bow down. He is not going to give worship that is rightfully God’s unto a mere man of dust and of clay. And yet every day people were coming to him and say, “Now, look. You ought not to transgress the king’s commandment. I mean, there is going to be ramifications to this, Mordecai.” And they came after him day after day after day after day and the man stood firm. He must have been a Fundamentalist. He stood firm. He didn’t waver.

⁷ Esther 3:2.

⁸ Esther 3:3-5.

And, folks, did you notice that when I read those passages that everybody in Mordecai's sphere was watching to see if he would waver. And he didn't waver.

Esther grew up in a family that loved the Lord by conviction and not by convenience. And in Esther chapter two and verse seven—we have already made mention of this—but the Bible does bring this out, that Esther was a beautiful woman.

It says in Esther chapter two and verse seven that, "...the maid was fair and..." What? Beautiful. She was gorgeous. She was a knockout. And people took notice of it and, folks, not only did people take notice of it, God took notice of it because he wrote it down in our what? In our Bible.

Now there was in this book a woman who was also beautiful that in this book contrasts herself with Esther. That was this woman Vashti.

Go back to Esther chapter one and you will note here this other woman. The king had a feast of wine in which they were conducting that feast according to the law. In other words, men could drink as much as they want or they could not drink as much as they want. Whatever. There was leadership there and there was high royalty there.

Verse nine. "Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king."⁹

And so there is two feasts going on here and "On the seventh day," verse 10, "then the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded [here] chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king..."¹⁰

Verse 11. "To bring Vashti the queen before the king with..."¹¹ her what? Her crown royal.

Now, folks, here is the reflective light of the glory of Christ that is brought out as a subtheme to this book. It is this. It is the rare jewel of being submissive.

Is that a rare jewel today? We live in a nation where everybody things they are equal to everybody else. The word submission means to bring yourself under. Now, folks, if I bring myself under, am I declaring myself equal or subordinate? I am declaring myself subordinate. And the in America, everybody things I am equal with everybody else, that my voice has equal opinion with everybody else, that he president, surely, he ought to call me on the phone and ask my opinion, because, I mean, he is just a man, right, and we are all equal.

⁹ Esther 1:9.

¹⁰ Esther 1:10.

¹¹ Esther 1:11.

Well, folks, that is what this American country is striving for, but it is a falsehood, because men and women aren't equal.

Do we understand that?

Young people, do you understand that? When I was a young person I couldn't wait to be an adult because I wanted to be an equal. And, you know, I got to be an adult I found out I wasn't an equal. There is no such thing as equality on that level. We are all different by God. We make different wages. We have different vocations. We have different intellects. We have different positions. We have different authorities.

Now here is this woman Vashti and she, too, is having a feast for the women in the royal house and the king commands her in the presence of all that leadership. He commands her chamberlains to go to her, his wife, the queen and to have her come into his feast with her crown royal.

Verse 11. Now know why. Verse 11.

“...to shew the people and the princes here...”¹² What? “...her beauty: for she was fair to look on.”¹³

Now, folks, there is teaching that has gone on out there that says that what was happening here was this, that the king was wanting to physically abuse his wife in the presence of all of those men. I mean, they had been drinking how many days? Seven days.

But, folks, there is no indication in the Scripture that that was the reason. The reason the Scripture gives is this. That king was proud of what aspect of his wife? Her what? Her beauty. And he wanted to showcase that beauty. He wanted to show case that treasure that he had.

Well, look at verse 12.

“But the queen Vashti...”¹⁴ Now what is the verb? Refused.

“[She] refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains.”¹⁵

Now anybody who is an authority in here, if you give a command and the one doesn't do it, how do you feel? Angry.

And so the king, verse 12, “was very wrong, and his anger...”¹⁶ What? His anger burned

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Esther 1:12.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

in him. I mean, not only had he wanted to show the honor of his treasure of his wife in her beauty, but when he sent for her in the presence of all of these men, when he sent for her the chamberlains came back and told the King Ahasuerus, “Your wife, the queen, refuses to come.” And he was ashamed and his anger burned in him.

Now let me ask you this question. Was Vashti submissive?

In other words, folks, did the king, as far as we know, did the king ask her to do anything sinful? Yes or no? No. He told her to come. He told her to come and be clothed. He told her to come with the crown royal. He wanted to honor her by showcasing her as Christ would showcase the Church and put her on exhibition. He wanted to showcase because of her what? Her beauty.

She openly, publicly, rebelled against her husband. And not only did she openly rebel against her husband, she openly rebelled and disobeyed not only her husband, but the commanding of a who? What was his vocation? He was the king.

And that was the concern of the leadership of that nation. . You see in chapter one and verse 15 when those princes came together in order to find out what to do about this, verse 15.

“What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of...”¹⁷ Who? The king.

Verse 19.

If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she. And when the king’s decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) [here is the purpose, that] all the wives shall give to their husbands [what?] honour, both to great and small.¹⁸

Not only did Vashti openly rebel against her husband, not only did Vashti disobey the commandment of the king, Vashti publicly dishonored him.

And, ladies, I want to remind you that in the New Testament at the end of Ephesians chapter five the Bible says, “Ladies, you see that you reverence your husbands.”

The issue here wasn’t her beauty.

Was Vashti beautiful? The issue wasn’t her beauty. It was her person. And her outward beauty became marred by the ugliness of her Spirit toward authority.

¹⁷ Esther 1:15.

¹⁸ Esther 1:19-20.

In other words, folks, here is this man who married her because of her what? Her beauty. He recognized that. The Scripture recognized that. But when that beauty, no matter how beautiful that woman was, when that woman didn't shine forth the reflected spirit of Christ in submission, that beauty fled away and all the king could see was ugliness. And his anger burned within him.

Many, many a man that I have talked to in counseling situations who are in difficult marriage situations have said and implied to me that their wives were at one time the most beautiful thing in their sight, but now it has changed.

Ladies, it is not because you got wrinkles now. It is not because you got older now. It is because the character has robbed your beauty in the sight of your husband.

Now, folks, Esther in contrast to Vashti was the exact opposite. I want you to note here, first of all in Esther chapter two and verse 20 that this woman developed by the grace of God a habitual obedience from her youth.

Look at Esther chapter two and verse 20.

“Esther had not yet shewed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had [what?] charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him.”¹⁹

And, folks, remember, Esther was an orphan. Esther could have said to Mordecai, “Well, you are not my parents.”

But this woman, by the grace of God working in her life developed that habitual submissive spirit of obeying the one that God had placed over her, Mordecai. And this was an habitual practice from her youth so that when she went in to those chamberlains in order to be selected as queen. When Mordecai told her, “Now don't tell anybody that you are a Jew,” she didn't. She was a submissive woman.

In chapter two and verse 10 we had the same statement made.

“Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it.”²⁰

And, folks, I want to remind you that Esther didn't show who her people or kindred was all the way till when? I mean, folks, she was already the queen. Haman had already designed to destroy the people, the Jews. Her husband the King didn't even know that she was a Jew until that day she sprung by wisdom that trap of Haman and said, “Oh, there is a person here who is out to destroy my people.”

¹⁹ Esther 2:20.

²⁰ Esther 2:10.

And that person just happened to be at the feast, Haman.

Esther could have said, “Well, I am an adult now. I get to do things my way.”

She could have been, as a young girl, opinionated, stubborn, rebellious against her authorities, against her parents. But all it would have resulted in was an ugliness about this person.

Folks, submission begins in the days of your youth. If you were saved later in life, as I was, you begin to learn the value and the glory of that submission much, much later in life. Folks, that submission ought to be just poured into our children. It ought to be poured in our children by a mother who is already exuding that submission to her authorities and to her husband if she has one in her household.

In other words, folks, it is not just do as I say and not as I do, they have got to what? They have got to see it. They have got to be part of your character, who you are. Esther was this submissive start. Not only that, but her submissiveness manifested itself in a contentment.

We are here in chapter two. Look down in verse 13 because what happened here is that Esther got brought before the king and she had to go through a year of purification. And during that year of purification all the days of purification would happen. Look at verse 12. She had “...six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women.”²¹

Here is this woman. She is not in Mordecai’s home anymore. She is being prepared to be submitted unto the king as a potential wife and queen. And look at verse 13.

“Then thus came every maiden unto the king.”²²

Now, ladies, how would you like to have this?

“Whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king’s house.”²³

How would like to have that? How would you like to have someone come up to you and say, “Now, you are going to be presented to the king. And I just want to let you know. Anything you want, I will get it for you”?

I would hate to see the book that some women might give. But Esther’s spirit was a spirit was a subissve spirit and it was a spirit that manifested itself—now look at verse 15.

²¹ Esther 2:12.

²² Esther 2:13.

²³ Ibid.

“Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required...”²⁴ What? Nothing.

In other words, folks, a submissive spirit manifests itself with a contented spirit, a non demanding type of spirit. Esther was content with whatever the king’s chamberlains decided was best for her.

Folks, did she voluntarily arrange herself under? There are people that I know whose husbands are literally putting themselves in an early grave to supply the demands of their spouses. A submissive spirit is a contented, non demanding spirit.

Now what do you think would happen if a woman who is beautiful had also in her spirit the beauty of submission and the beauty of a non demanding contented spirit. What do you think in general the response of authorities would be to this type of woman? Favorable or unfavorable?

Well, look at verse 15, our Scripture statement.

“And Esther obtained...”²⁵ what? Favor in the sight of how many? “All them that looked upon her.”²⁶

And, folks, it just wasn’t her beauty. It was her character that went along with that external vessel. It was the fact that she was non demanding. It was the fact that she wasn’t opinionated. It was the fact that she submitted to that which was around her. It was the fact that she had that obedient spirit. And that obedient spirit not only showed up in the chamberlains before she was queen. Look in chapter five and verse three. This characteristic showed up with her husband.

Look in verse three. Here is Esther. She goes in to the king. She is going to make a request for her people, but look at what the king says.

“What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.”²⁷

Now, folks, please. Nobody says that unless there is a character behind that that makes you comfortable making such a statement. I mean, if Queen Esther said, “I want the eastern half,” the king would have what? The king would have gave it to her.

²⁴ Esther 2:15.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Esther 5:3.

This woman found favor and grace in the sight of her husband. And that is continued also in verse six when she comes back into the king. He makes the same statement, “What is your request? What do you want? I will even give you up to half of the kingdom.”

And in chapter seven in verse two, on the second day of the banquet of wine he says the same thing.

“All right, Esther. What is your petition? What do you want granted unto you? What is your request? I will do it, even unto the half of the kingdom.”

He never changed his mind the whole time.

And, folks, here is a truth that I believe that if you would develop the spirit of submission the best spirit of submission ultimately will return good to your soul. You sow submission and you will reap kindness and favor from your authorities. That is a scriptural response and Esther is the shining star of this [?] because remember her husband was a believer or an unbeliever? He is a what? He is an unbeliever and he is ruthless and he is powerful. And she is living right there in the place in the midst of pagan darkness and idolatry. And here is this shining star in contrast to Vashti. That is submission.

And she just sows that seed of submission everywhere she goes. And, folks, that submission ultimately calls her to give credit to where credit was due, because at the end of everything she didn't exalt herself. She honored those people who helped her and Mordecai obtained position in that nation because she gave credit to other people.

Now, folks, that submission was grounded, that submission to earthly authority was grounded in her relationship to Christ. Esther respectfully honored and sought the Lord. Remember her uncle Mordecai. Was he a godly man? He was a man of conviction. And in chapter four in verse eight here we have her going in. And she tells Mordecai after she got the copy of the writing of the decree that all the Jews would be destroyed and Mordecai has showed it unto the Queen Esther and declared it unto her. He said, “I want you to go and make supplication before the king and make request.”

And Esther comes back and he says, “Now, you better understand,” verse 11, “that I just can't go in unto the king without him calling for me, because if I go into that room and he doesn't extend the scepter of his favor, I die. And he hasn't called me,” verse 11, “for 30 days.”

And so Queen Esther tells Mordecai, verse 16, “I want you to go and gather together all the Jews that are present and I want you to fast for me and I want you to neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. And I also and my maidens are going to fast also and I am going to petition the God of heaven and I want you to petition the God of heaven and if I go in there and I die, I die. But I want to seek the Lord first.”

Now, folks, her submission to earthly authorities was grounded in the root of being submitted to God.

You show me an unsubmitive person. I will show you someone that is not submissive to God.

Esther honored and sought the Lord. And, folks, that submitted spirit caused her to be zealous for her people and her God against those that were not submitting.

I want you to notice in chapter five when she goes in to see the king... Now, remember, the king was also her who? Her husband.

In Esther chapter five verse one.

“Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king’s house, over against the king’s house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house. And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained...”²⁸ What? Favor.

And, folks, it just wasn’t because of her beauty. It was because of her person. Now note this.

“The king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and...”²⁹ She what?

It doesn’t say that she bowed, but she comes in and the king holds out the scepter and Esther goes down and does what? She just touches it because she is acknowledging that she is not equal with him. He is the king and he is her what? Her husband.

And, folks, that is a beautiful picture of our going to God in prayer. The Church is likened to the bride of Christ and we don’t go to Christ as his equal. We go to Christ in submission to who he is.

And, folks, when she did that, I just see in my mind’s eye a radiance of submission coming out of her. It wasn’t hypocritical. It was genuine. It was sincere. It had been developed from the days of her youth. She obeyed because she obeyed the Lord.

Would you agree with me as we close that Esther is a shining star in the midst of a dark nation? And would you agree with me that this woman Esther, when Proverbs 31 said, “Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies,”³⁰ you want to say, “In King Ahasuerus’ palace you can find one.”

²⁸ Esther 5:1-2.

²⁹ Esther 5:2.

³⁰ Proverbs 31:10.

And, ladies, whether you are married, whether you are a child and really whether you are male or female if we were to ask the question, where can I find a submissive young man, could we say, in that home. Where could we find a submissive young girl in that home? That is her nature. That is her character, that is the radiance we can see coming out of her, the radiance of Christ, because it is a rare thing on the face of this earth.

The help that Esther gave to Mordecai blossomed into the spirit of submission to an unbelieving king.

This spirit communicated and intermixed in every area of her life. And, folks, I don't know if Esther had children or not. The Scripture doesn't say. But would you just speculate with me that if this woman had that spirit all the days of her life, would you think that her children would rise up and call her blessed, yes or no? Yeah.

A woman like this is a reflection of Jesus Christ as he submitted unto death for the Father's will. And, folks, here is the exciting thing to me. You have 66 books in your Bible. Here is a woman that all throughout a book that is entitled after her, that the sub theme that is predominant in her life is the radiance of submission.

In other words, folks, the radiance of submission is eternally remembered by God. It is eternally remembered by God for the memory of all his saints throughout all the ages, world without end, because, folks, his Word lasts how long? Eternal. And who wrote Esther? God by the Holy Spirit.

Praise the Lord for the ruby of this woman. And, ladies, if you would go against the grain of our culture and if you would breathe the culture of Christ, you may not get much honor on this earth. You may get ridicule and shame, but I want to assure you that in the books it is all written down for eternity, for your glory.

Praise God for the ruby of the star Esther.

Let's stand.