

## Esther 3

Do you have issues in your life for which you will always take a stand? What does standing up for those things look like?

### Esther 3:1-6 (ESV)

1 After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, and advanced him and set his throne above all the officials who were with him. 2 And all the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage. 3 Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you transgress the king's command?" 4 And when they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai's words would stand, for he had told them that he was a Jew. 5 And when Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage to him, Haman was filled with fury. 6 But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone. So, as they had made known to him the people of Mordecai, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.

Let's set the stage: there are three players in this chapter. King Ahasuerus, Haman, and Mordecai. Who are they? What roles have they played in the prior chapters?

- Verse 1 begins by saying, "After these things." What are the "these things" to which this verse is referring? What is the context of this story?

The king commanded everyone to bow to Haman, and everyone was doing it; why do you think Mordecai did not bow down?

- Have you ever been in a position to take a bold stand on something? How did that experience affect you?

How do people (not Haman) react to Mordecai's not bowing down?

- In verse four it says, "they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them." What can you infer about Mordecai's motivations and what do you suspect was the impression his stand made on the servants?

We see Mordecai take a stand as one of God's children and he gets tested for it. What are some things that you take a stand for because of Christ?

- Are there people in your life that test your resolve?

### **Matthew 5:14-16 (ESV)**

14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

What does this passage reveal about the reality of how followers of Christ are to live?

- Are there times in which this passage is easier or more difficult to live out?

How does what we stand for and *how* we stand for it affect those around us for the Gospel?

### **Esther 3:7-15 (ESV)**

7 In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, they cast lots) before Haman day after day; and they cast it month after month till the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. 8 Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom. Their laws are different from those of every other people, and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not to the king's profit to tolerate them. 9 If it please the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed, and I will pay 10,000 talents of silver into the hands of those who have charge of the king's business, that they may put it into the king's treasuries." 10 So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. 11 And the king said to Haman, "The money is given to you, the people also, to do with them as it seems good to you."

12 Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict, according to all that Haman commanded, was written to the king's satraps and to the governors over all the provinces and to the officials of all the peoples, to every province in its own script and every people in its own language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring. 13 Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with instruction to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods. 14 A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation to all the peoples to be ready for that day. 15 The couriers went out hurriedly by order of the king, and the decree was issued in Susa the citadel. And the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.

What do you think is at the root of Haman's reaction?

By the king's decree everyone was supposed to pay homage to Haman and he demanded it. It's easy to judge Haman and distance ourselves from him, however do you ever have times where you feel entitled to respect or power?

- What do your actions look like in those situations? How can you consider what is best for the body of Christ in those moments?"

What is our community application of this passage?