Discussion Guide Esther 2:12-23

Understanding the Text

1. The book of Esther is not a "Persian Jane Austen romance." What can we conclude from textual clues regarding Esther's pursuit of the crown? Where might our previous understanding of the book need correction and how is the saving work of Christ the ultimate story?
2. The sermon stated that "God can make a straight line with a crooked stick," meaning He uses ugly, compromised, or even sinful situations to accomplish His good purposes. Looking at Esther's pursuit of marriage to a wicked king, how do we see God working through these flawed human choices without endorsing the sin itself? How is the gospel the ultimate example of this (Acts 2:23)?
3. From a worldly perspective, one could argue that Esther's moral compromise was justified because it ultimately put a Jewish woman "in office" to save her people. Why is it dangerous for Christians to adopt this reasoning?
4. The vocabulary shifts from Mordecai "pacing anxiously outside" to Mordecai formally "sitting at the King's Gate." What does sitting at the gate signify historically? Why was it critical to the unfolding story that Mordecai moved into this position?
5. Mordecai uncovers an assassination plot, saves the king's life via Esther, but receives absolutely no reward. Only a written record in the royal chronicles. Humanly speaking, this looks like an oversight. But how was God working even through this to guarantee his people's future safety?

Practical Application

1. When you look at the "dangers, toils, and snares" in your life right now, do you view God as reacting to your problems day by day, or orchestrating all things for His glory and your good? How does considering God's absolute sovereignty equip you to trust Him more?
2. Like Esther, you may find yourself in a broken, secular, or compromising environment. Where are you tempted to adopt a "the ends justify the means" mentality? How can you seek to be successful yet without compromising the truth or hiding your identity in Christ?
3. Esther made a disastrous choice to marry a pagan king. Do you live in shame for past sins and, if so, how can you give those things to the Lord and rejoice in his grace this week?
4. Do you ever feel like God does not care about you or is only interested in the "big things" in your life? How does the book of Esther remind us that God is at work in every area of our lives?