

Pastor Dave

Sunday, April 14th "A Tale of Two Kingdoms"

Ephesians 1:15-23 – *NIV*

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Esther 1:10-22 – *NIV*

¹⁰ On the seventh day, when King Xerxes was in high spirits from wine, he commanded the seven eunuchs who served him—Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Karkas— ¹¹ to bring before him Queen Vashti, wearing her royal crown, in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was lovely to look at. ¹² But when the attendants delivered the king's command, Queen Vashti refused to come. Then the king became furious and burned with anger.

¹³ Since it was customary for the king to consult experts in matters of law and justice, he spoke with the wise men who understood the times ¹⁴ and were closest to the king—Karshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memukan, the seven nobles of Persia and Media who had special access to the king and were highest in the kingdom.

¹⁵ "According to law, what must be done to Queen Vashti?" he asked. "She has not obeyed the command of King Xerxes that the eunuchs have taken to her."

¹⁶ Then Memukan replied in the presence of the king and the nobles, "Queen Vashti has done wrong, not only against the king but also against all the nobles and the peoples of all the provinces of King Xerxes. ¹⁷ For the queen's conduct will become known to all the women, and so they will despise their husbands and say, 'King Xerxes commanded Queen Vashti to be brought before him, but she would not come.' ¹⁸ This very day the Persian and Median women of the nobility who have heard about the queen's conduct will respond to all the king's nobles in the same way. There will be no end of disrespect and discord.

¹⁹ “Therefore, if it pleases the king, let him issue a royal decree and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media, which cannot be repealed, that Vashti is never again to enter the presence of King Xerxes. Also let the king give her royal position to someone else who is better than she. ²⁰ Then when the king’s edict is proclaimed throughout all his vast realm, all the women will respect their husbands, from the least to the greatest.”

²¹ The king and his nobles were pleased with this advice, so the king did as Memukan proposed. ²² He sent dispatches to all parts of the kingdom, to each province in its own script and to each people in their own language, proclaiming that every man should be ruler over his own household, using his native tongue.

Takeaway: God is always moving, even in the midst of chaos.

Questions

1. Pastor Dave mentioned that a commentary wasn’t written on Esther for the first seven centuries of the Christian church, John Calvin never preached from it, and that Martin Luther went as far as denouncing the book all together. Why do you think it’s included in the Bible?
2. Esther begins with King Xerxes throwing a massive party, a seven day festival that followed 180 days of parading around his wealth and influence. What is the biggest, most “over the top”, party that you’ve attended? What was being celebrated?
3. After showing off his wealth, King Xerxes wanted to show off his wife. Would Xerxes' "lifestyle of the rich and famous" impress you? Why or why not? Can you think of a parallel of something like this being done today? Generally, why do you think wealth and power impress people?
4. Reflect on Esther 1:13-22. What does King Xerxes ask of the law experts in his court? How do they respond? What’s the real motive behind the response from the experts?

Sermon: <https://podcast.wpcwestlake.org/services/mp3/sermon20240414.mp3>

Service Video: <https://youtu.be/EpHAemq0gk8>