Esther

"Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. 14 For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther 4:13-14 ESV

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:1-2 ESV

Read the book of Esther for the true Biblical story of Esther. Some things have been added to the movie.

The King gave a feast lasting seven days for his people. He commanded that Queen Vashti be brought before him wearing her crown so that everyone could see how lovely she was to look at. When Vashti refused to come the king was angry. His advisors told him that women everywhere would disobey their husband if he didn't deal with Vashti. His advisors encouraged the king to search out a new queen by having the young virgins from all over his kingdom brought to his harem which he did.

Esther was a Jewish orphan who was raised by her cousin, Mordecai. Her Hebrew name was Hadassah. When all of the virgins were rounded up by the king's soldiers, Esther, also, was taken captive. When the king met Esther he knew that she was the one he wanted to become the queen. Later when Mordecai overheard two men plotting to kill the king, Esther reported it and the king's life was saved.

Esther and Mordecai were in the right place at the right time. God had a plan and each was a part of it.

Haman became the trusted advisor to the king but had no peace because Mordecai would not bow to him. In his anger Haman devised a plot to destroy Mordecai and all of the Jewish people. Haman convinced the king that the Jewish people were a danger to his kingdom not realizing that the queen, Esther, was a Jew. Mordecai sent a message to Esther that she must speak to the king even though it might mean her death.

Sometimes we are called to do difficult things. What is one of the most difficult things you've ever done?

Romans 8:28 tells us, *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose."* Haman, in his hatred, had decreed the death of all the Jews. When the king recalled that Mordecai had saved his life, and renewed his love for Esther the queen, the king could see Haman's evil intent. Even though bad things happen, God can use them for good.

Have you ever trusted someone who wasn't worthy of your trust?

Although the edict that Haman had devised in the king's name could not be revoked, the Jewish people were given the right to defend themselves against their enemies which they did. While some of the Jews remained in Persia, others returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city and reestablish the nation of Israel under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah.

God wants us to trust Him that He will bring good in our lives, even when times are difficult.

When the Jewish people turned their hearts away from God they were defeated by their enemies and taken into exile. When they humbled themselves and returned to following God He brought them back to their own land. God doesn't want us to arrogantly go our own way. He wants us to listen to His word and follow Him. Like Esther, God will use us for good if we let Him.

Are you willing to let God lead you or do you insist on your own way?

Dear Lord, we confess that we need You to lead and guide us. Transform our hearts and minds through the truth of Your word and the gift of Your Holy Spirit. Show us Your good and acceptable and perfect will. Use us, like Esther and Mordecai, to protect Your people and help build Your Kingdom. Fill us with joy and victory in You. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.