

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Nothin' But Net – Week 4
March 23rd and 24th, 2024
Speaker: Pastor CJ Johnson

Opening Questions

- Welcome! Today, we are looking at the story of Esther, where God's timing and Providence truly shine. When have you dealt with a situation where you were uncertain of how God was moving? Looking back (maybe even years removed), you can clearly see God's hand was at work in your story. How has that impacted your faith and your relationship with God? How can you use that story to strengthen and encourage others?

Open Your Group with Prayer

- Ask someone to open in prayer and bless your discussion together.

Scripture Passages

- Groups will begin the discussion by reading some of the message's key scriptures aloud. Please assign the following to read: Esther 1:1-4, Esther 4:12-14, Esther 5:9; Esther 6:1-14; Esther 9:1-2, Romans 8:28

Initial Discussion Question

- What stood out to you from the sermon? Did you have any initial takeaways from this week's message?

Questions from the Message

- The story of Esther starts with a drunk and pretentious King Xerxes, wanting to show off the beauty of his bride, Queen Vashti, to the nobles of his court. After she denies his command, he agrees to banish his wife, which he almost immediately regrets. It also leads to Esther becoming the new Queen. God's Providence is evident; while this situation may not have been from God, God used it to serve His purposes. How have you seen God appear in a situation that didn't seem of Holy origin? What does this say about how God works?
- In Esther 4:14, Mordecai shows tremendous faith in the Providence of God and does so while greatly encouraging and challenging Esther. Mordecai knew that God would save his people, but he didn't want Esther to miss an opportunity to be used by God "for such a time as this." What can we learn about how God works from this? How can we be sure not to miss an opportunity to serve God and join Him in His work?
- God's Providence is always at work! Discuss the three ways God's Providence frequently works: Preservation (safe-guarding), Governance (administration, orchestration), and Concurrence (ability to weave multiple situations together seamlessly). In what ways do these show up in Esther? How or where have you experienced any of these work in your life?
- In the story of Mordecai and Haman, we have one of the Bible's most extraordinary reversals and ironies. Haman, working to kill all the Jewish exiles, builds a pole to hang Mordecai. This same pole is used to hang Haman with Mordecai, taking his position of honor in the court of King Xerxes with the Jews being saved. What about this part of the story in Esther so brilliantly highlights God's Providence? How can that encourage us?

Challenge and Application

- What is God challenging you to do in response to this discussion? Get practical. What will you do this week?

Close Your Group with Prayer

- Pray together for your application and response points from your discussion as a group. Share any praises, joys, or areas of concern. How can this group be praying for you and your family this week? *(Please ask someone to distribute these via GroupMe, text, or email so you can pray for one another throughout the week.)*