



MOMENTS TO PONDER

ESTHER

Episode 70: Esther 2:21-23

Hi Friends, welcome to Moments to Ponder a podcast designed to help you spend a few moments in God's Word, breathe, and take away something to ponder.

I'm Betsy Marvin and I'm grateful for the few moments we have together to ponder the book of Esther. This is episode 70.

(music fade out - pause)

Today's scripture focuses in on a short story within the fabric of Esther. It's one of political intrigue, secrets, plots, and informants and our main character is Mordecai.

Mordecai is from the tribe of Benjamin, a descendant of King Saul. He has adopted his cousin Hadassah, Esther, and we can see he cares for her as a daughter. Most likely born in Susa, I find it interesting that his name means, 'little man'. Was he a short? A petite man? If so, that brings some interesting insights later on in the story. Yet, no matter his stature, we are told he was 'on duty' at the King's gate.

To help you visualize the setting, picture a large palace compound with great buildings of columns and ornate carvings, the compound had a moat around it. There was a bridge that crossed the moat and to enter the compound you would pass through the King's Gate.

In 1970, the King's Gate at Susa was discovered. The gate was actually a large building, set as the way into the palace area controlling all access into the palace complex. This gate building was massive, larger than most houses today, with walls 10 feet thick standing 30-50 feet high.

The gate was a sign of power and authority and would have been guarded. Across the from the palace compound, would have been a gathering place for businesses, debates, and news to be shared. If anyone wanted an audience with the King, they would have to go to the gate, be questioned by those at the gate and then wait to be admitted into the courtyard beyond. Messengers (including eunuchs) would carry the information back and forth between the courtyard and the audience hall.

This sets the stage for our passage today from Esther 2.

²¹ One day as Mordecai was on duty at the king's gate, two of the king's eunuchs, Bigthana (big-thawn') and Teresh (teh'-resh) —who were guards at the door of the king's private quarters—became angry at King Xerxes and plotted to assassinate him. ²² But Mordecai heard about the plot and gave the information to Queen Esther. She then told the king about it and gave Mordecai credit for the report. ²³ When an investigation was made and Mordecai's story was found to be true, the two men were impaled on a sharpened pole. This was all recorded in The Book of the History of King Xerxes' Reign.
Esther 2:21-23 (NLT)

(Pause)

I would imagine that those working at the gate would have access to a lot of information as well as hold the authority to admit or deny an audience with the King. This is where we find Mordecai. He could have been a judge or held another position, but we do know that by being in this place he overhears a plot to assassinate the King.

Looking through Persian history, assassination plots abounded, many were successful. Bigthana^[a] (big-thawn') and Teresh (teh'-resh) —who were guards at the door of the king's private quarters could have had any number of reasons to want to kill the king. As they were waiting to carry messages to the audience hall, did they have a little side conversation? The building was definitely large enough for little side conversations to occur. Maybe they were being paid off, maybe they didn't like how he treated them...whatever the reason, Mordecai hears of their plan and gets word to Esther. When you think about it, he didn't have to do this – he could have turned a blind eye and let the guards go through with their plan.

Mordecai was a loving father, astute judge, loyal citizen, and wise man. He has been ever faithful to Esther. In his revealing of the plot, was there an element of concern for the queen? If they attempted their plot while she was with the King, would she have been killed as well?

Queen Esther tells the King giving Mordecai the credit for uncovering the plot – and an investigation ensues. It is found to be true, thus saving the King's life. The plotting eunuchs are killed, and the story is recorded in the history book. The Persians were careful to document everything, and rewarded loyal people, but Mordecai isn't given any accolades at this time. But the author of Esther is giving us a bit of the story we need so that we understand a key moment later on.

What can we take away now? What we see here is a man that did the right thing, he was faithful right where we was, even though he received nothing in return. Was he in place for such a time as this?

From this passage, Mordecai gives us an example of what it means to serve where you are and be faithful in the process. Although he is a Jew in a pagan court, he maintained his character and protected his daughter's husband.

This brings to mind a verse from Romans 8, "all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28) Here in the middle of the story God is putting pieces in place that will be vital later, but they are unseen in the moment. This is the working all things together piece that we often don't see until we can look back on it. I'm sure Mordecai didn't think this was good in the moment – but he remained faithful.

Another verse that comes to me is Deuteronomy 31:6. God says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." As Esther serves as Queen, as Mordecai serves at the gate, God is with them creating opportunities, leading them, helping them right where they are.

You are probably not serving in a King's court or Queen of a vast empire, but the same verses apply to us. He is at work bringing all things together for good in his time for those that love him, and in the meantime God doesn't leave us or forsake us as we do the next right thing.

If faced with a choice between silence and doing the right thing – what would you do? Would it depend on the person? Situation?

Has God placed an opportunity before you that is just waiting for you take a step?

(music fade in)

May God grant you the courage to walk faithfully. May you seek to stand and do the next right thing even when it's hard. God will not leave or forsake you. he is at work in and around you whether you can see it or not. I pray that you will be found faithful in the meantime.

Amen.