

1 Spatial Disorientation

- The importance of attitude when we are in the fog.

2 Tonight's Scripture Reading

- So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther, and as they were drinking wine on that second day, the king again asked, “Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.” (Esth 7:1–2 NIV)

3 Tonight's Scripture Reading

- Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor with you, O king, and if it pleases your majesty, grant me my life — this is my petition. And spare my people — this is my request. (Esth 7:3 NIV)
- “For I and my people have been sold for destruction and slaughter and annihilation. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king.” (Esth 7:4 NIV)

4 Tonight's Scripture Reading

- King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, “Who is he? Where is the man who has dared to do such a thing?” (Esth 7:5 NIV)
- Esther said, “The adversary and enemy is this vile Haman.” Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. (Esth 7:6 NIV)

5 Tonight's Scripture Reading

- Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, “A gallows seventy-five feet high stands by Haman's house. He had it made for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king.” The king said, “Hang him on it!” (Esth 7:9 NIV)
- So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's fury subsided. (Esth 7:10 NIV)

6 Tonight's Scripture Reading (Purim)

- Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Xerxes, near and far, to have them celebrate annually the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration. (Esther 9:20-21)
- He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor. (Esther 9:20–22 NIV)

7 Shopping Malls

- We Americans love our shopping malls, those temples of consumerism where every conceivable materialistic need can be satisfied.
- But not one of the ten largest malls on the planet is located in the United States.
- Instead, you'll find them in Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur or Istanbul.
- The largest three in terms of gross space available for leasing are in Quezon City (Philippines), Beijing and -- the largest -- in Dongguan (China) with 659,612 square meters of leasing space.

8 Shopping Malls

- The Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota, narrowly misses the top 10 list.
- More than 40 million visitors come to this mega-mall and it hires 11,000 workers year around, and 13,000 during peak seasons. It's huge.
- When you go to such a mall, one of the first things you look for is an IDEO marker, i.e., a sign that says YOU ARE HERE.

9 IDEO Marker

10 Disorientation

- These IDEO markers are not just for Shopping Malls but anywhere where a maze of buildings, shops, and counters obscure vision or orientation.
- In the summer of 2014, Logan Airport in Boston finished a renovation costing over 170 million dollars.
- However, the renovation created 10 new gates and 97,000 sq. feet of new territory.
- People who were once familiar with the airport were now totally lost and disorientated.

11 The Story of Esther

- If ever there was a person who wondered where she was going and why, it was Esther.
- She had a vague sense of where she was: in the king's court. But that's about all she knew.

12 What?

- The story takes place in the 5th-century B.C. somewhere in the 470s or so. Xerxes I (519-465) is the king in Persia.
- You might call him "king of the world." He is known as Xerxes the Great.
- He invades Greece in 480 and is a monarch with absolute power and authority.
- Even today his legend is immortalized in Hollywood in movies such as 300 (2006).

13 What?

- So, one day he decides to throw a party. But his queen refuses to attend.

- Her actions have the effect of publicly humiliating the king. The king is infuriated.
- He decides that he needs a new queen, someone who will be more attentive to his royal needs, someone who looks good on both television, Facebook, and YouTube.

14 What?

- He calls his media people in for a conference. They toss some ideas around. They decide to produce a television show, sort of the Persian version of The Bachelor.
- Teenage girls from all over the country will vie for a chance to be queen.
- They'll fill out a preliminary questionnaire, go through a screening process and sit for interviews.
- His staff will be looking for beauty, poise, intelligence and so on, to see how the chemistry works.

15 What?

- Meanwhile, out in a province somewhere, or perhaps a suburb of the capital city, Susa, there's a Jewish fellow named Mordecai who gets wind of this, and he thinks his young cousin, Esther, should give this Bachelor thing a go.
- The Bible says she was "taken." Did she go voluntarily? We don't know the details. But suddenly, she's in the running. And what's more, she "pleases" the king.
- He sets her up in the harem. And there she spends a year.

16 What?

- If you're Esther, what's not to like about this?
- She's pampered and taken care of. She gets free spa treatments for a year. She's lathered with the latest in oils and cosmetics. She has a raft of maids attending to her every need. Very cool.
- In a sense, it's a "Cinderella" "reversal-of-fortune" story.

17 What?

- So, although our text is Chapter 7 in Esther, at the end of Chapter 2, we find Esther, who is, no doubt, just a teenager, as a girl who has been elevated in status and who finds herself queen of the realm!
- Here's the breath-taking reality of her situation: She doesn't have a clue as to why this is happening.
- She sees the YOU ARE HERE sign, but she doesn't know why.

18 So What?

- Aren't we often in the same situation? We try to follow the will of God. Our journey has taken us hither and yon. We see the sign YOU ARE HERE. But honestly, we don't know why.
- We're often confused as to why we are in our present situation—which often we describe as a predicament.
- Somehow, we often feel out of place. We're experiencing a sort of spatial vertigo.

- Perhaps this is because we're not residents of this world, this culture. It seems alien to us. Esther, remember, was an expatriate. Persia was not her home. And we, too, are not at home either.

19 **Providence**

- In the course of time, Esther learned her purpose.
- She had risen to the position of influence not by chance but by God's divine providence.
- So when Haman sought to conspire against Mordecai and have King Xerxes put to death all Jews—throughout his kingdom, it was Esther who had the chance to be used by God.

20 **Providence**

- However, this was not going to be easy for Esther as there would be danger, if one entered the king's presence without an invitation.
- Esther wrote to Mordecai saying . . . “All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that he be put to death.” (Esth 4:11 NIV)

21 **Mordecai's Reply**

- When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: “Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape.” (Esth 4:12–14 NIV)
- “For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?” (Esth 4:12–14 NIV)

22 **Esther Steps Up**

23 **Places of Influence**

- The point of the story is that God knew what He was doing in Esther's life long before she did.
- He had prepared and given her a place of influence not just for herself, but for all God's people.
- Even though the exercise of her influence would take her out of her “comfort zone,” she nevertheless was found faithful.
- Whether we know it or not, we too have been given places of influence as well. In our families, work places, and in our church.

24 **Such a Time as This**

- Who knows that the time will come where we too might be called upon to stand for what is right and be a light of revelation to those around us.

- While we right now might not be sought after, the day may come where the fog lifts and we see that God has been preparing us for “such a time as this.”
- So if you feel lost and in a fog, don’t panic. God may very well be strategically placing you where He will greatly use you in the future for His glory.

25 Spatial Disorientation

- One of the number one killers in General Aviation is “Spatial Disorientation.”
- It is when a pilot—who is not instrument rated, flies into limited visibility and finds he or she has lost all orientation to what’s up and what’s down.
- A lot of times when this happens, pilots panic and lose control of the airplane and fly it right into the ground.
- If only they would fly by their instruments this wouldn’t happen.
- But because they flew by their instincts and feelings they crashed.

26 Spatial Disorientation

- To keep a pilot from being disorientated, their primary instrument is the “Attitude Indicator.”
- In the same way, the number one thing we need to always keep in check in our life is our attitude.
- For when we’re flying in a state of confusion, the last thing we want to stop checking is our attitude.
- Who knows God may be ready to use us, but our attitude is all out of whack—because we’re flying by our feelings and not our faith.

27 Opportunity

- Last week, Sally and I sat down with Joe Girdler who is the Kentucky District Superintendent of the Assemblies of God.
- Along with several other pastors and from the Bluegrass Section, we discussed things about our church and the challenges and opportunities that were before us.
- One of the things that Sally and I took away from the meeting was how the vision and format of our church was highly esteemed.
- In fact, never before has our church drawn more support from the District than it did last week—and this coming from ministers who are very traditional.
- What particularly was appealing to them was the flexibility we have not only with our Small Groups but with our Large Group Gatherings as well.

28 Opportunity

- This all came in sharper focus the next day, when I talked with Bill McDonald—missionary to Ecuador—who is also heading up Church Planting in Kentucky until he returns to the mission field later this year.
- According to him, Church Planting has taken a new direction in Kentucky and they want to use our model of ministry as their blueprint.
- In other words, planting House Churches and then networking them together is the way to go and they may need our help and expertise to network with these new churches that may start up in Central Kentucky.
- BTW - Bill McDonald will be speaking at Ekklesia on October 17th.

29 **Opportunity**

30 **Opportunity**

- Already there are 12 to 14 couples in Kentucky planting new House Churches and some of these pastors may want to come to Ekklesia for training and networking with our church.
- In fact, it is a real possibility that our Celebration Services would be times where several of these House Churches might want to come together and enjoy a corporate service—especially if it is in a banquet like setting.
- However, the question is going to be, will we be willing to take this kind of responsibility on and trust God to use us.

31 **Opportunity**

- When Mordecai heard that Esther might be having “cold feet” he said to her, “For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place . . . but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?” (Esth 4:14 NIV)
- I don’t want to give people false hope, but real hope that God may want to use the vision, format, and people in our church to be the model for church multiplication throughout Kentucky.
- So then, let us fly straight and level—making sure our attitudes are where they should be.
- For if God is pleased with us and how we’re able to let go of offenses, there is no telling how much we can be used by God.

32 **Communion**

- Tonight as we remember how Jesus laid down his life to redeem a people to be His disciples, let us lay aside all “unusual attitudes” that conflict with this calling.
- For if we have harmony and love in our church, there is nothing that the Lord can’t do through us.
- So then, let us reflect upon these things and think the best about each other and keep our attitudes straight and level.

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