

where do these attributes of human existence come from? They are rooted in our God in whose image we are created. Goodness is one of the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatian 5:22-23). The Greek word that was once translated as “goodness” is now translated as “generosity” in the New Revised Standard Bible (NRSV). This goodness, or generosity, is reflective of what we have received from our loving creator. Meditate on these ideas and write your thoughts here.

### Thursday, July 25

The next two lessons from Esther spoken about in the message are that goodness is wise and innocent as well as always directed toward others. In its most basic understanding, this means that goodness does not mean that we can allow ourselves to be taken advantage of in our relationships. Christians, often trying to be meek and mild, become a doormat for others – taken advantage of and treated horribly. Think of what it would mean if the second lesson for today was always on our minds; what if we always sought to be good to others? Think of the deeper implications of being good and generous toward others. What a world we would live in! Write your thoughts here praying for God’s guidance.

### Friday, July 26

There was a final lesson in that goodness does not seek martyrdom. Some say that Jesus the Christ came into our world to die for us. But the truth is Jesus came to “be about his Father’s business” meaning that he wanted us to live a life of love for others. Goodness truly is a powerful force just as love is the most powerful force in the world. The best meaning of Esther’s story is that God is with us always even though God might not be mentioned or may seem far away. What does this mean for your life? What does this mean for your daily dealing with others? Pray for goodness and love to always be reflected in you as a means of living a Godly life! Write your reflections here.

## Message Notes – July 21, 2024

### *Women of the Bible – Queen Esther\**

- I. The dramatic story of Esther in our Hebrew scriptures is one of intrigue, powerful \_\_\_\_\_, deceitful \_\_\_\_\_, an unlikely heroine and her equally unlikely \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. Esther is one of two books in the Hebrew Scriptures that bear the name of the \_\_\_\_\_ about whom the narrative centers.
  - B. Another interesting fact about the Book of Esther is that it one of two books in the Bible that does not explicitly mention \_\_\_\_; the other book is the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - C. The setting is \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ is now modern day \_\_\_\_\_.
- II. In \_\_\_\_\_ B.C.E., a king named Ahasuerus came to the Persian throne.
  - A. The Queen before Esther was a woman named \_\_\_\_\_.
  - B. Esther by this time was orphaned and was taken into the home of her cousin, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - C. Sometime after Esther was made Queen, her cousin Mordecai overheard a plot to kill the \_\_\_\_\_.
    1. \_\_\_\_\_, who, in the name of Mordecai, warned her husband.
    2. The plotters were \_\_\_\_\_.
- III. During all these developments there was a devious man named Haman who was highly placed in the king’s \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. Haman hated \_\_\_\_\_.
  - B. In a calculated response, Haman persuaded the king to issue a \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ against “a certain people” living in the empire.
  - C. Haman did not tell the king the targets were \_\_\_\_\_.

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\*Esther 4:1-14

- D. In the end, Haman was \_\_\_\_\_ on the very gallows on which Haman had planned to execute Mordecai.
- IV. By considering Esther's actions, however, we can learn some things about the nature of \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. First, Esther shows us that goodness is \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. Second, Esther shows us that goodness is rooted in \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. Third, Esther shows us that goodness is "wise as \_\_\_\_\_ and innocent as \_\_\_\_\_," to use Jesus' phrase (Matthew 10:16).
- D. Fourth, goodness is oriented toward \_\_\_\_\_.
- V. One more thing: Goodness does not seek \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. Goodness is a \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_. It can be a way of loving our \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. Rabbi Philip Pohl makes the observation, "The \_\_\_\_\_ word for 'I will hide my face from them' is '\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_.'" "
- C. You can see how close it is to the name of the biblical heroine after whom this biblical book is named, \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. Just as the word "ah-steer" means \_\_\_\_\_, so is God's name and presence missing from the text in the book of Esther.
- E. It is always a safe assumption that \_\_\_\_\_ is with us.

## ***Daily Devotional Guide***

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

## **Monday, July 22**

Biblical scholar and author, Edith Deen, writes that this story begins with, "all the oriental splendor of an Arabian Nights tale. Some scholars call it a historical novel; others term it a festal legend." Historical fiction is a very popular genre of literature in which a story is told within a certain historical context. Not only is the story of Esther celebrated in the Festival of Purim, it is a great story within the very real context of King Ahasuerus' reign in Persian, now Iran. There are many different types of literature in our Scriptures. Take the time in the first two days of this week to read the entire Book of Esther; most can read it in less than an hour but take your time. Afterwards, return to the space below and write how you would classify this well-known Biblical narrative.

## **Tuesday, July 23**

Pastor Jack began the message with, "The dramatic story of Esther in our Hebrew scriptures is one of intrigue, powerful rulers, deceitful villains, an unlikely heroine and her equally unlikely sidekick." While genocide and evil are very serious issues historically, Esther is a thrilling story to read and the people in the story are very real. It is a compelling story good over evil as well as the constant presence of God and God's goodness, even when God isn't mentioned. If you haven't already fully read Esther yet, take some time to read it today. Enjoy the story! Write any reflections you have about it here.

## **Wednesday, July 24**

Read Esther 4:1-14. There were five lessons that were presented from the story of Queen Esther. The first is goodness is courageous and the second is goodness is rooted in God. It is always best to do what is right; it is not always easy but it is always best. In doing what is right we exhibit much more than being good to others; it also involves character and integrity. And