

Finding Favor in the Eyes of the King

This evening I want to take us to a profound and simple truth of God's Word. I have entitled the message "Finding Favor in the Eyes of the King. My hope is that tonight you would be challenged to contemplate the Lord's favor toward you and allow this truth to encourage, embolden and strengthen you in the love of God's redemption. The text that I have chosen to start off our study is from Esther chapter 5 verse 2.

And when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won favor in his sight, and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Esther 5:2

If I could sum up the book of Esther into a single phrase, it would be the title of this message – finding favor in the eyes of the king. This is the key element of the whole story. It is the pinnacle on which the whole story balances. If Esther fails to find favor with the king, then her and her people will suffer defeat against their enemy. But if Esther finds favor in the eyes of the king, then she will speak on behalf of her people and save them from the destruction of their foes. The truth is, finding favor in the eyes of the king, will determine either the victory or the defeat of God's chosen people.

I have decided to divide tonight's message into three sections. All of which should be the response of the believer who has been changed by the glory of God and sees Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. If you are not a believer this evening or are struggling with the assurance of your salvation, please consider the mystery we will behold tonight concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ and believe on Him as the thief on the cross believed on Him. He was not able to be baptized. He had no time to study God's Word. He had no ability to attend a local church on Sunday. But he was saved because he simply believed Jesus was Lord. But you who are able to believe and do these things, be zealous all the more for good works, so that the glory of God might be revealed through your labors.

- 1) Understanding Favor
- 2) Fighting Our Doubts
- 3) Learning Our Position

1. Understanding Favor

Esther found favor in the eyes of the king. She approached his throne to make a petition for her people who were about to be destroyed by Haman, the enemy of the Jews. There were two potential outcomes to this bold approach to the throne. First, she could have been killed immediately for not following protocol in the king's court. Second, she could have found favor in the eyes of the king and he would lower his scepter to her. By God's mighty right hand the second was the outcome.

To have found favor in one's eyes goes beyond the warm feelings of a simple "I like you," but in reality means that the one who favors you seeks your well-being and strives for your ultimate good. We can say that a husband favors his wife, or a wife her husband. Although there may be struggles and frustrations through the course of their relationship, they *should* favor one another by seeking the other's ultimate good, even in the midst of disagreements. Another way to describe favor is that one who favors another grants approval of their requests. A boss may favor you in making decisions for his company where he allows you to have the final say, or where he entrusts large decisions to you. A mother and father may favor you when they approve of your request, or give you their blessing. A third way to identify favor is by noting the attention or time one gives to hear you and listen to your request. A teacher may show favor to child by carefully listening and giving attention to what the child has to say.

Favor in its very definition can be translated this way – that one is for you and not against you. The one with whom you have found favor is on your side. Your voice is heard by them and your request is as good as granted. You have been approved of.

If this is the meaning of "favor," then we can come to grips on seeing the importance of winning favor with the king. Let me give some background to the story of Esther. Two long standing enemies have been at war with one another. A

hatred that has lasted for generations between God's people and the Amalekites. The contestants in this story of Esther are Mordecai the Jew and Haman the Agagite who is a descendant of the Amalekites. As Haman ascends to power he seeks to destroy the Jews with a swift destruction. But unbeknownst to him, Esther the Jew has grown in finding favor in the eyes of the king. Mordecai quickly instructs Esther to act now for the sake of her people and to save the Jews from their pending destruction. Now the task that lies before her is to approach the throne of the king unsummoned, an act that is punishable by death.

I think many times we can read the words on the page and not let them affect us because we are not placing ourselves within the authenticity of the story. If an amendment to our Constitution was made today to put to death all those who claim to be followers of Christ and we watched on television or online as the leaders sign for its approval, we would feel the absolute necessity and importance of winning favor in the eyes of the president. In that circumstance, we would say, "yes, now I get what the Jews were going through." They were going to be annihilated and they desperately needed someone to stand before the king as their personal representative and win the favor of the king on their behalf.

The reality is, this story actually points us to a greater reality that we, as sinners, are desperately in need of someone to represent us before the King. We too have an enemy of old that has sought to destroy us. A hatred that has lasted for generations between God's people and the Devil. And as the Devil wages war on God's people to destroy and annihilate them, God's people desperately cry out for a representative who would find favor in the eyes of the King and save them from their enemy. Much like the Jews needed Esther to represent them and win favor in the eyes of the King, so too we need Jesus to win favor in the eyes of God and claim us as His own.

If Jesus has indeed done this, died in our place and won favor in God's eyes, then we are indeed saved from the wrath of God's judgment.

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. Romans 5:9-11

Christ petitioned for us in His high priestly prayer.

The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, John 17:22

If we are one with Christ, and if Christ has found favor in God's eyes, then we have found favor in God's eyes because of Christ. We have found favor with God. His wrath and pending judgment is no longer looming over us. We are cherished in the eyes of the King. God is on our side and is not against us but for us. Your voice is heard by Him in the courts of the heavenly and your request is as good as granted. Believer, you have been approved of!

Think of it this way. In a marriage ceremony, you have the bride and the groom who are constantly mesmerized with each other and they just can't stop thinking about how much they love one another. As the bride walks down the aisle, one of the things I like to do is to look up at the groom often to catch a glimpse of his face. It's typically an enormous smile or fighting to hold back tears of joy as his bride approaches. I can't help but wonder what he is thinking. "Look at her! There she is! Isn't she beautiful! The most amazing woman on the planet." She is favored in his eyes. Beloved, this is how Christ sees you and me – His bride.

2. Fighting Our Doubts

The single greatest weapon the Devil uses to destroy our understanding of favor with God is *you*. You are his greatest weapon. The Devil cannot cause us to sin against our Lord and Savior. He has only the power to tempt you. Our doubts in truly believing that we have found favor in God's eyes is a black hole into which we have dug ourselves, one shovel full faithlessness at a time. Faithless to believe that we stand faultless before His throne. Faithless to believe that Jesus truly died to set the sinner free. Faithless to believe that my salvation is not dependent on my works alone but on Christ's. Faithless to believe the promises of God.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:1-2

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

*“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:35-39

Beloved, our doubts should cause us to cling to Christ all the more, not run away from Him. Has He not promise “I will never leave you nor forsake you”? Then our doubts should be nothing more than the fan to kindle the flame of God that He has ignited in our hearts. Take the fiery darts of the evil one and turn them into goads of truth to prod us forward into the Kingdom. Know that one day, there will no longer remain any fear and doubt. But all will see and will confess with their tongues that Jesus Christ is Lord.

As Esther found favor in the eyes of the king, the Jews had a flicker of hope ignite in their hearts. Could Esther save them from their pending destruction? If they could place their hope in mortal man, how much should we as believer place our hope in the risen Savior Who is mighty to save? Put to death the doubts you hold to, are they not weapons of the enemy to destroy you. Believe in Christ, and you will find favor in the eyes of the King.

3. Learning Our Position