**Old School – Week 5 (Esther—Compassion)**

**July 3-4, 2021**

How many of you, if you were honest, have ever cried during a movie? I mean, most of these movies are totally fiction: make-believe! Yet, we feel so much compassion for the characters and we feel real emotions. I mean, sometimes it feels kind of silly!

**(Leaders Note: Tell a semi-embarrassing story, if you have one, of a movie that you have cried during. The cheesier, the better!!)**

Today, we are continuing with Week 5 of our Old School series! Since most of us live and were born in the United States, we are used to having a president lead our country. In some other countries around the world, there is something called monarchy: where a king or queen is the leader of a country.

During the time period of the Old Testament, there were several kings who ruled different parts of the world. We are going to look at a woman who became queen and helped an entire group of people avoid being attacked in a war. Just to catch you up to speed and give you the quick summary of the story, check out this video!

**(Leaders Note: Show “Queen Esther Story” message video)**

Queen Esther had a lot of awesome qualities: she was beautiful, she was courageous, but most of all, she was compassionate. When Mordecai suggests that she should go to the king and ask to spare their people from being killed, listen to her response in Esther 4:15-16: *“Esther sent back her answer to Mordecai: “Go and get all the Jews living in Susa together. Fast for me. Don’t eat or drink for three days, either day or night. I and my maids will fast with you. If you will do this, I’ll go to the king, even though it’s forbidden. If I die, I die.”*

How many of you have ever heard of the term “fasting”? This is an act of worship where you don’t eat or drink anything for an extended period of time. In the Old Testament, people would fast and also pray while they were seeking God’s direction and will. When Esther tells Mordecai to do this, it was a way of saying how serious the situation was and how much they needed God’s help.

**Here’s the most important part of that verse: Esther was so compassionate towards her people, she was willing to sacrifice her own life just so that her people would be safe! Her compassion for her people moved her to action!**

**That’s what our THP is about today! Here it is**

**THP: Compassion should move us to action!**

Compassion is not just an emotion or a feeling for someone. When we have compassion for someone, we should actually SHOW that to them by the way we live and by our actions. Queen Esther is a great example of this because she was very brave for approaching the king with her request.

**She didn’t just feel sorry for her people…she wanted to help them and save them! That’s true compassion!**

The best part of the story of Esther is that it reminds us that we serve a compassionate God. Did you know that? God is incredibly compassionate towards all people. Psalm 116:5 says, *“The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.”* Psalm 145:9 says, *“The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.”*

God doesn’t just love us with a feeling: He actually showed us His love. Just like Esther was a representative of her people and was so compassionate that she was willing to risk her life…well, God had a compassionate representative. His name was Jesus and He actually DID give his life for us so that WE could be saved. Jesus’ compassion moved him to action!

**(Leaders Note: Share a personal story where God’s compassion for others moved YOU to action and how you lived that out)**

Just like every story in this Old School series, they should encourage and inspire us. It’s a good thing to know the Bible and to learn. In fact, it’s a great thing! However, the real reason that we are doing this series is so that we will be challenged to live out our faith just like the people we are studying.

**I have a question that I want you to think about: are you compassionate towards other people? How are you living that out? How are you going to show God’s love and compassion for all people in your life? The story of Esther shows us that followers of the one true God are people of compassion.**

Let’s close with one final verse from the New Testament – Colossians 3:12: *“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.”*

**Just like our THP says, let’s allow God’s compassion to move us to action in our life!**

**Let’s pray.**