

This Is Your Laurel Berry of Success

Meditate on these things as you contemplate your future

Esther 4.10–14

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Scripture Reader and Reading: Dan Calvert – Esther 4.10–14

Prelude:

I. The meaning of baccalaureate

A. One theory says that the word “baccalaureate” comes from the Latin

1. “bacca laureus” meaning “laurel berry.”

“In ancient times, heroes and scholars were crowned with wreaths made of its leaves” (Webster).

2. Thus, it came to be a mark of honor and distinction.

B. However, a literal laurel berry wreath would soon fade.

II. We give you laurel berry wreaths that never fade.

A. Remember these words,

B. then what you have learned in school

C. shall help you to seize the moment.

Persuasion:

I. God Times His Providence Perfectly

A. Winston Churchill once said,

“There comes a special moment in everyone’s life, a moment for which that person was born. That special opportunity, when he seizes it, will fulfill his mission—a mission for which he is uniquely qualified. In that moment, he finds greatness. It is his finest hour.”

B. Andrea Pinkston, a friend of my daughter Stephanie in high school said,

“God has us doing what we’re doing for a reason, and everyone has the choice to be motivated to succeed in life.”

C. The Lord needed to make Jeremiah realize this truth,

- 4 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying:**
5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;
Before you were born I sanctified you;
I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”
6 Then said I:
“Ah, Lord GOD!
Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.”
7 But the LORD said to me:
“Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’
For you shall go to all to whom I send you,
And whatever I command you, you shall speak.
8 Do not be afraid of their faces,
For I am with you to deliver you,” says the LORD.
(Jer 1.4–8).

D. What if these men had failed to seize the opportunity?

1. God would have found someone else, but
2. they would have gone down in shame,
3. just as Mordecai said to his cousin Esther.

II. Esther and Her Time on Earth

A. In Esther 4, a plot was revealed to Queen Esther

1. that would exterminate her people.
 - a) Mordecai, her cousin who revealed the plot to her,
 - b) could have kept his identity secret,
 - (1) He could have encouraged Esther to do likewise.
 - (2) He was a man of principle who lived
 - (a) for a cause and
 - (b) for a people greater than himself.
 - c) Finally, Esther had to reveal her secret identity.

B. Esther 4.13–14 – Mordecai responded to his cousin,

13 ...“Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews. 14 For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

1. Jesus was in a similar situation.

- a) Should He, and Esther, ask to escape the very moment
- b) for which they had come into the world?

27 “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour” (John 12.27).

2. Mordecai saw Esther’s life in a new light.

- a) Do you think, Esther,
 - (1) your beauty and exaltation to queen
 - (2) were merely for your own sake?
- b) Would Esther prove to be a leader when her people needed her?

3. It is at this point

- a) that it will be determined whether the Book will be called
 - (1) The Book of Esther, or
 - (2) The Book of...Betty, or...

4. Mordecai’s words come close to mentioning God.

- a) Most of us do not see a divine connection in our lives
 - (1) unless it is mentioned directly.
 - (2) For example,
 - (a) when we are in worship,
 - (b) reading the Bible or
 - (c) praying.

- b) What about when at work?
 - (1) Living in your neighborhood?
 - (2) All the other connections in your life?
- c) Does God have to come right out every single time and say
 - (1) here is an opportunity
 - (a) to glorify Him,
 - (b) to help your neighbor?

III. The Overwhelming Task Before Joshua

- A. Moses had just died
 - 1. after leading several million people out of Egypt and
 - 2. through a wilderness for 40 years.
 - a) Then the Lord had Joshua replace Moses.
 - b) Joshua would take the people through the Jordan River, and
 - (1) into the land of Canaan,
 - (2) where they would fight wars for seven years,
 - (3) conquering the land.
- B. Then he would have to oversee
 - 1. the distribution of several million people into their new homeland, and
 - 2. he would be their leader in the new land.
 - a) What kind of guidance
 - b) would Joshua need to fulfill this work?
- C. Do you realize what a job was before this new leader?
- D. Do you realize what a job is before you in our community?

IV. The Overwhelming Task Before You

- A. Sometimes what you will have to do will seem overwhelming.
 - 1. You will learn much more complicated things.

2. You will form new and varied relationships.
 3. You will marry.
 4. You will raise your own children.
 5. You will have to make heavy decisions.
 6. You will wonder how you are going to make it.
 7. You will be confused by some people.
 8. You will have problems to solve that make high school look like kindergarten.
 9. You will look back and realize God has been with you.
- B. On the negative side you are going to discover:
1. that often life is not fair;
 2. that the world does not care about how you feel about yourself;
 3. that you will not make \$40,000 a year right out of high school;
 4. that if you thought your teachers were tough, wait until you get a boss;
 5. that if you make a mistake, it is not someone else's fault;
 6. that you will not be able to try as many times as you want to get the right answer;
 7. that life is not divided into semesters, and you do not get summers off;
 8. that your problems will not all be solved in 30 minutes, minus time for commercials;
 9. that there can be depressing episodes in life.
- C. On the positive side you are going to discover:
1. that life will often favor you when you do not understand why;
 2. that people will seek your wisdom;
 3. that there is joy in work;
 4. that you are glad someone else is the boss;
 5. that your mistakes will be unexpected growing experiences;

6. that you will see your own growth when you get the right answers;
7. that you do not want time off constantly;
8. that problems will make you into a wise person whom others will seek;
9. that there can be exhilarating episodes in life.

V. What Did God Tell Joshua on How to Succeed at His Task?

A. Joshua 1 has the instructions

1. that God gave Joshua
2. to insure that he would be successful in the endeavor before him,

7 “Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Jos 1.7–8).

B. For success God told Joshua to follow the teachings of the Scriptures.

1. To know the Scriptures,
2. he would need to meditate on the Scriptures day and night.

VI. God Tells Us the Same Thing

A. The Scriptures present

1. the only reliable and
2. always relevant manual
3. on how to succeed in life, because
 - a) it is a Book from God.
 - b) He created you,
 - (1) knows how you operate best, and
 - (2) he knows how this world operates.

4. He gave you this Book to show how to operate best in this world.
- B. Therefore you should:
1. read teachings of God,
 2. meditating on the 66 books of the Bible
 - a) to discover for yourself
 - b) God's teachings.

Exhortation:

I. Joshua Succeeded

- A. As you continue to read in the Book of Joshua
1. you will see that Israel conquered the land, and
 2. they were successful in living there,
 3. as long as they remained loyal to the Lord.
- B. 21.43–45 gives a good summary,

43 So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. 44 The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. 45 Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass (Jos 21.43–45).

II. Your Success Is Guaranteed in the Same Way

- A. God keeps His promises.
- B. Follow His leadership and you will do well.

III. Who knows why you live where you do or where you will?

- A. Who knows why will you have the job that you get?
- B. Who knows why will you know certain people?

IV. Esther's new attitude will lead you to do the right thing.