

The Gathering Community Group Guide

Brave // Week 2 // Let God redeem bad choices

Paul Jenkins

April 19, 2015

Esther 2:1-18

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. TAKE TIME BEFORE GROUP TO GO OVER THIS GUIDE.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

Last week, we met a bad king who made bad decisions who is a lot like us when we try to rule our own lives. Thankfully, Jesus is a better king and bad kings must bow to him. Unfortunately, this week we found in Esther 2 that bad choices continued to trend in the kingdom, and Paul pointed out three truths about bad choices:

1. **The regret of bad choices:** Esther 2:1 is a sad verse that reveals the end of bad choices: "Xerxes remembered what he'd done." So many times we make bad choices in moments of sin, weakness or anger and then later, once the volcano of emotion has died down, we regret what we've done.
2. **The reality of bad choices:** This truth is the hardest: the reality that even though we have regret from past bad choices, more times than we'd like to admit it, we end up making more bad choices in the future. King Xerxes made some, and so did Mordecai! It's even possible that Esther – one of only 2 women to have a book in the Bible named after her – made some bad choices during one night with the King. If we need more proof of our tendency toward bad choices, remember Genesis 3:6. Every bad thing in our world came as the result of one bad choice. The struggle with bad choices is real, my friends!
3. **The redemption of bad choices:** The Bible is full of people who made bad choices: Eve and the fruit, David and Bathsheba, Abraham lying and saying his wife was his sister, Jonah running the wrong way, Peter denying Jesus, Mordecai staying in Susa and ultimately putting his cousin, Esther, in harm's way. But God is not limited by our choices; our mistakes will never paint him into a corner. In his sovereignty, he is able to still position us for his purposes in spite of bad choices.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What, if any, is your takeaway from this week's message?
- Make some choices between the following: Coke or Pepsi? Vacation at the beach or the mountains? A fast car or a dependable car? Scrambled eggs or fried eggs? Coffee or tea?
- What are some common big choices that most will make during their lives?
- Can you think of a time in your life that makes you identify with King Xerxes in Esther 2:1? Would you be willing to share a choice that led to the regret?
- Why do you think that we are so susceptible to bad choices? What light does Jeremiah 17:9 shine on the issue? What about Proverbs 28:26? Where can we get wisdom according to James 1:5 and Proverbs 13:20?
- This week's Big Idea says that our choices will never limit God's options. That doesn't mean that bad choices won't hurt us, but that they won't hinder God. Paul said it like this: our mistakes can't paint God into a corner! How is this good news? Close by reading the following passages and reflecting on the sovereign power of God to redeem even our worst choices. Proverbs 19:21; Job 42:2; Psalm 103:19; Romans 8:28.