

1. Opening Prayer

2. Intro: Two Female Immigrant Heroines Ruth and Esther (Hyun Chul Paul Kim. 2019)

Questions. Could you make a comparison between Ruth and Esther?

In this comparison, what can we learn?

a. Reading with the perspective of Diaspora

Diaspora: the dispersion of Jews among the Gentiles after the Babylonian Exile. (Britannica.com)

- i. In the diasporic situation where no one seemed to have a pivotal role in the community, God can lift up the people from the lowest socio-ethnic place – widows, orphans, and resident aliens – to do heroic and salvific works for the community.
- ii. It doesn't matter whether Diasporas assimilate into or separate from the dominant socio-ethnic identities. What matters is if and how they will practice the acts of love and grace especially in solidarity with the powerless, disadvantaged, and marginalized.
- iii. Diasporic reading underscores the hermeneutical reciprocity in which all of us are related to various kinds of "diasporas" (geography, status, gender, etc.) as well as the reciprocity between the outside disadvantage and the inside privilege.

b. Ruth

Status: Moabite, widow, immigrant, gleaner (Ruth 2:10. 22)

Experience: Traumatic suffering (Ruth 1:4-5)

International relations between Judah and Moab whether hostile or amicable

Moab as the most hated enemy (Katharine D. Sakenfeld)

Docile and subordinated but at the same time strong-willed and subversive

(Ruth 1:16-18, 2:2, and 3:10)

Contrast with Orpah (Ruth 1:14)

Became the ancestress of King David (Ruth 4:13-22)

c. Esther

Status: Jewish, orphan, immigrant (Esther 2:6-10, **2:18, and 10:1**)

Experience: threat of genocide (Esther 4:7-8)

Inter-ethnic relations between Jews and the Agagite/other ethnicities (1 Samuel 15:8)

Obedient but witty and courageous (2:10, 4:13-16, 5:3-4)

Contrast with Vashti (Esther Ch. 1)

Became the queen.

Question. Do Ruth and Esther remind you of any biblical character?

3. Read Esther Ch. 3

4. Discussion

- a. Why do you think Mordecai refused to bow to Haman?
- b. Why do you think the king's servants notified Haman about Mordecai's refusal?
- c. In this story can you find out personalities of Mordecai and Haman?
- d. Is there anything in the world that pressures you to compromise your faith/conviction?
- e. Do you think Christians are often harassed or persecuted in our society?
- f. How can you prepare yourself to stand up for your beliefs?
- g. Can you tell how many years passed since Esther became the queen?
- h. Haman and his people cast Pur (the lot). In the bible how was casting the lot used? Can you tell the difference? (Joshua 18:1-10, and Proverbs 16:33)
- i. Verse 12, the 13th day of the first month, would be Passover eve for the Jews (Exodus 12:18). Does this fact tell us anything important?

5. Closing Prayer