

Too Tired?

Read: Esther 7:1–10

ROSA LOUISE PARKS was tired. The petite African American woman sat quietly, grateful to find a seat on the bus after spending most of the day on her feet. When a white passenger demanded she give up her seat, Rosa looked up. Segregation was the law in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955. Blacks were expected to yield their seats on public transportation to whites. To refuse meant arrest. Rosa stayed seated, and her actions helped change the landscape of the United States. Years later, Rosa wrote that it wasn't physical weariness that gave her such inner strength. She said, "Our mistreatment was just not right, and I was tired of it."

Centuries earlier, another woman was faced with a decision. Like Rosa, Esther had two strikes against her in the Persian Empire: She was female and a member of an oppressed people, the Jews. Although King Xerxes had chosen Esther to be queen, she was forbidden to approach the powerful king without an invitation. And an evil prime minister named Haman was plotting to annihilate the Jews. Esther's cousin Mordecai's plea to intervene meant risking her own life. It took courage for Queen Esther to take a stand, just as it took courage for Rosa Parks to remain seated. Both women's actions opened the door to freedom for their people.

Many of us may think we're safe from the type of persecution Rosa Parks and Esther faced. But Christians are being persecuted throughout the world in places like China, the Sudan and North Korea. Every day people die for the privilege of worshiping Jesus. It is estimated that more Christians died for their faith in the twentieth century than all the previous 19 centuries combined, and the numbers appear to be rising in the twenty-first century. Even in places where there is no outright persecution, many people think Christians are naive and out of touch with so-called reality. Some people do not really know or understand the person and mission of Jesus and will take every opportunity to slander his followers.

Wherever God has placed you, he can use you to speak his truth—words of love, justice and faith to a lost world—even if it means being misunderstood or ridiculed. Yes, it may be difficult and you may be weary; but, sister, "never tire of doing what is right" (2 Thessalonians 3:13).

Esther 7:3–4

Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor with you, O king, and if it pleases your majesty, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. For I and my people have been sold for destruction and slaughter and annihilation. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king."

reflection



- 1 How did reading about Rosa Parks and Queen Esther inspire you?
- 2 Have you ever felt God nudging you to speak up about a situation? What happened?
- 3 What do you need to take a stand on in your home, neighborhood or in the political arena?

RELATED READINGS

Psalm 118:6–9;
Luke 21:5–19;
2 Timothy 3:10–17

Monday

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