

“For Such a Time as This”

Esther 3 - 4

Introduction

In Esther chapters 3 and 4, Esther discovered that Haman, the highest advisor to King Ahasuerus, was planning a massacre of all the Jews. Haman became aware that Esther's uncle Mordecai, refused to bow down to him when passing by (Esther 3:2). This angered Haman (Esther 3:5) and he reacted by planning to take out his anger on Mordecai's entire race (Esther 3:8-9). Esther was then faced with a difficult decision- would she use her position as the queen to influence the outcome of the Jews and put herself in danger or would she keep her mouth shut to save her own life? Her dilemma was not just a political problem; rather it was a spiritual problem. The problem was spiritual because the circumstances threatened to harm God's program and purposes. God had promised to preserve His people, now the king's decree threatened to wipe them out (Jeremiah 29:7, 10-13). When we find ourselves in difficult situations like Esther, we must look for the spiritual implications. Spiritual problems always require spiritual solutions. We can trust that our God is always working to bring us to our purpose by virtue of His sovereignty and providence, even if at times He is working behind the scenes.

While Esther was initially hesitant to beseech the king on behalf of her people, in the end she decided to value the potential benefit to others over the personal risk of approaching the king uninvited. She decided to trust in God's providence even if that meant personal inconvenience and sacrifice. She welcomed the possibility that the very reason she was currently queen was to be uniquely used by God, “for such a time as this” (Esther 4:14). When God is going to use us, He will do so to allow us to be of spiritual benefit to others; therefore, your purpose is never solely about you. God allowed Esther to be placed within the intersection of Haman and Mordecai's personal problems so that she could use her position and opportunities to advance His kingdom program of preserving the Jews. God's purpose is always about advancing His kingdom.

Esther's idea of faith was stretched because she decided to take a risk. God's purposes will *always* stretch us beyond what we can naturally do. He often calls us to do things that will require us to need Him. Esther chose to move past her selfishness and recognize God's bigger purposes, and in turn God uses this woman to deliver an entire race of people. We must remember that God wants to use you and me for His purposes, yet how will we respond when God calls our name? Will we be willing to use the opportunities, positions, gifts, talents and skills He has given us to fulfill a purpose bigger than ourselves?

Getting Started

1. In what ways has the story of Esther helped you in understanding or discovering your purpose thus far?
2. Have you ever experienced being stuck between a rock and a hard place – something you felt obligated to do as a Christian and something you personally didn't feel like doing? Share your experience with your group.

Let's Get Personal

1. Esther found herself in the middle of spiritual warfare. Satan was busy doing his best to thwart God's plan but God was busy operating in His Sovereignty with a solution for preserving His people. Meanwhile, Esther had a choice to obey God yet she wrestled with that decision. Share a time when you wrestled with God's direction in your life as part of a spiritual battle. What was the outcome, what lessons did you learn from this?
2. Notice that Esther's choice meant that she had to risk her own life in order to fulfill God's purpose. Why is it so hard for us to consider self-sacrifice when we operate for God's Kingdom purposes? Have you ever had to sacrifice something in order to follow God's will? What was the result of this sacrifice?

Take the Next Step

1. Are you at an intersection of circumstances that are unique, unexpected or opportune? If so, how will you proceed to act on the opportunity God has given you based on this sermon.
2. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: Gen. 50:19-21; Gen. 12:1-3; Jer. 31:35-37, 1 Sam. 15:1-23.

Renew Your Mind

"...And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14

