

Sermon Title: **For Such a Time as This!**

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Scripture Reference: **Esther 4:1-17**

Thesis: **Haman convinced the King to allow him to execute all the Jews in the Kingdom where Esther would now be called upon to use her influence with the King to save her people;**

Purpose: **Today, we will see that God is in control of all situations involving His people.**

Key Word: **"God's Power"**

## I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **Esther 4:1-17**

### A) The Setting:

#### 1) **We are continuing our study of Esther.**

- (a) In our Summer of looking at some of the women of the Bible.
- (b) Ruth and Esther are the only two books named after women and thus certainly warrant our attention.

#### 2) **You will remember that Esther is a beautiful Jewish woman who lives in Susa, the capital of the Persian empire.**

- (a) She was the one picked by King Ahasuerus (**Ah-HAS-yoo-ayr-uhs**) to be his Queen;
- (b) But, he did not know that she was a Jew.

#### 3) **In chapter 2 Mordecai, who raised Esther after her parents died, learned of a plot to assassinate the King.**

- (a) By passing this on to Esther, the King investigated and found that this was true.
- (b) The King then had the conspirators executed.

#### 4) **In Chapter 3 we introduce a new character by the name of Haman (**Hay-man**).**

- (a) Hayman was an Agagite whose people were also concurred by the Babylonians dragging many back to serve the Empire.
- (b) But now he was promoted to Prime Minister to the King likely due to a vacancy left by one of the executed.
- (c) Haman was put over ALL the other appointed officials; and by King's order, was to be treated with all the dignity ascribed to that position.

#### 5) **As we told you last week Mordecai would hang around the King's gate to keep an eye on how Esther was doing.**

- (a) Perhaps he had some lowly service position that keep him in the area?
- (b) As Haman would come and go all would bow before him and pay him respect as the Prime minister.

#### 6) **All except for Mordecai who would have felt that this was a form of worship not allowed by God's commandments.**

- (a) Others noticed that he was not following protocol; and of course, felt a responsibility to report it to Haman.
- (b) Haman was greatly offended and learning that Mordecai was a Jew and wished to rid the world of him.
- (c) But not only Mordecai, but all of the Jews.

#### 7) **Haman's hatred for the Jews went beyond the snub of this one man, it had roots in history.**

- (a) The Agagites and the Hebrews had fought many battles to the death over the years dating back to the days of Joshua and Saul.
- (b) Much the same way the Israelites and the Palestinians do today.

#### 8) **Haman thought it would be beneath him to deal with Mordecai himself; and so he hatched a plan to get rid of all of the Jews.**

- (a) Going before the King he said that the Jews in his kingdom were causing trouble.
- (b) He said they did not obey the king's laws and turned others against the king.
- (c) Continuing, Haman reported that their customs are different and it wasn't appropriate for the King to tolerate it.

- (d) And to sweeten the deal, Haman said if the King would allow them to be exterminated he would donate \$10,000 dollars to the King's treasury.
- 9) **So, King Ahasuerus, signed the law for the day of execution determined by casting the Pur which is another way of saying casting lots.**
- (a) Now it was the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the first month and the cast of the lot led them to set the day of execution for the 13<sup>th</sup> of the twelfth month . . .
- (b) 11 months away.
- 10) **So, the decree went out to be read in all 12 providences of the Persian empire.**
- (a) Sending the empire into much confusion for there were many Jews living in the kingdom.
- (b) This brings us to the point of our scripture reading for today in **Esther 4:1-17.**

B) *Sermon Prayer*

C) (The Hook)

- 1) **Have you ever faced a time in your life where you were asked to take some sort of a risk?**
- (a) Maybe a financial risk in an investment or trusting someone with a personal loan?
- (b) Maybe a risk of embarrassment such as performing in a play or singing in church or asked to speak to someone you didn't know?
- (c) Maybe a physical risk such as rock climbing? Firefighting?
- (d) Maybe a life and death risk such as jumping out of a window during a fire, working as a Bomb Technician, or fighting for your life in a battle?
- 2) **Taking a risk means becoming vulnerable is some way that could be humbling.**
- 3) **So why take a risk? Why do we want to risk any of these things?**
- (a) That is because Risk always involves some kind of a reward?
- (b) Often, the greater the reward . . . the greater the risk involved.
- (c) Some people risk their lives for the reward of saving others.
- 4) **This is what Esther is being asked to do in today's reading.**
- (a) As the citadel of Susa was thrown into confusion by the King's edict, the Jews knew what to do.
- (b) Today, we are going to see that God is in control of all situations involving His people.

TS: **The very first thing the Jews did was to . . .**

II) Body: (Key Points)

A) Key Point #1: **Humble Themselves**

- 1) **They mourned, they fasted, they wept, and they grieved.**
- (a) Most of them put on sack cloth and ashes.
- (b) While God is not once mentioned by name in this entire book of the Bible it is clear that the purpose of humbling themselves was to try and get God's attention.
- (c) It is a way of saying "**God, we are sorry for our part on this; but would you be merciful and bestow your grace upon us? We recognize that we cannot do it alone and we need your help.**"
- 2) **This was a form of repentance.**
- (a) They may not have known why this judgement was coming upon them; but they knew who had the POWER to do something about it.
- (b) God Almighty!
- 3) **Many of the Jews had returned to the promised land once they were freed by the Medes and Persians and allowed to return.**
- (a) But many stayed where they had settled.
- (b) Perhaps they thought God was punishing them for staying behind.
- 4) **Whatever it was, they felt that God was the answer.**

- (a) The purpose of fasting is to forgo the physical to focus for a period of time on the spiritual.
- (b) If they did not believe in God, then why go to all the trouble; they had 11 months, why not just leave?
- (c) I will bet some of them may have done just that.

TS: **The second thing they did was to . . .**

B) Key Point #2: **Call on God**

- 1) **Mordecai took a risk coming to the king's gate dressed in sack cloth which was forbidden.**
  - (a) When Esther learned of this; she tried to have clothes sent out to him.
  - (b) But he refused as drastic time require drastic measures.
- 2) **Hathack (HAY-thak) was one of the King's eunuchs assigned to protect the Queen.**
  - (a) Esther had sent Hathack out with the clothes;
  - (b) but, Mordecai gave a copy of the signed order and explained why he was so distressed.
- 3) **Mordecai asked the Queen to intervene on behalf of her people.**
  - (a) Queen Esther reminded Mordecai that if she walked into the presence of the king uninvited the sentence was death;
  - (b) That is unless the king held out his gold scepter and received her.
- 4) **Mordecai remind Queen Esther that perhaps she had been put into this position for such a time as this!**
  - (a) He warned that if she did not speak up for her people that help could arise from another; but that her family would be cursed.
  - (b) He was implying that God does not bless those who are against His people.
  - (c) That is scriptural as God said way back in **Genesis 12:3** in His promise to Abraham that, "**I (GOD) will bless those who bless you, and the one that curses you I will curse.**"
- 5) **So, Esther agrees to take the risk; but only after asking for intense prayer.**
  - (a) Esther tells Mordecai, go and gather the Jews living in Susa and declare a 3 day fast.
  - (b) In other words, give up the physical hunger and seek to fill that hunger for three days focusing on the spiritual.
- 6) **This simply means to use their energy to call on God to protect and go before her before Esther risks her life.**
  - (a) This was a good call on Esther's part.
  - (b) It is always a good call on our part too when we are facing a critical choice in life.

TS: **So, After humbling themselves and calling on God for help, the next step is to . . .**

C) Key Point #3: **Take Bold Action**

- 1) **At the end of the three days of fasting and prayer; Esther, takes a bold courageous step and walks into the King's throne room.**
  - (a) The King's mood is good and he is pleased to see Esther and extends the gold scepter as she reaches out and touches the top.
  - (b) The king inquires what it is that Queen Esther wants stating "**...whatever it is I will grant it up to half my kingdom.**" (**Esther 5:3**)
- 2) **God has heard and given Esther a plan to deal with the situation at hand.**
  - (a) What is it?
  - (b) You will have to wait until next week to find out or read ahead.
- 3) **The point here is that Esther had dealt with a difficult situation:**

- (a) by humbling herself before God and acknowledging that this problem was bigger than her ability to handle it on her own.
  - (b) She fasted and prayed and asked for prayer support from all the Hebrews living in Susa; it is good to ask others to pray with you for there is POWER in prayer!
  - (c) And then she took a bold step out of her comfort zone, trusting that God was preparing the way.
- 4) **This is the way we are to handle a difficult problem we are facing.**

**TS: Here is what I want us to take out of our study . . .**

III) Conclusion (Life Application)

A) **As Jews were under attack, the church today is under attack.**

- 1) Esther feared for her life and the life of her people.
- 2) I fear for the death of this church and those who need it.
- 3) Esther was motivated by Mordecai that perhaps God had put her in the place she was in for such a time as this!
- 4) Has God put you in a position of influence that can make a difference in the life of God's people here?
- 5) After praying in earnest, Esther dared to act boldly trusting that God would go before her.
- 6) Will you pray in earnest to see if God is asking you to get outside your comfort zone to do something bold for HIM?
- 7) You see when we do things outside our own abilities; we are placing our faith in God's POWER to handle the situation, thus Glorifying God in the process.
- 8) He gets the credit because He deserves the credit.

B) **Finally, I want to point out that Esther was under the penalty of death for breaking the law and boldly entering into the presence of the King.**

- 1) But she found mercy and grace extended to her.
- 2) She was granted entrance into the throne room of the king who wanted to hear her request.
- 3) **We to are under the penalty of death because of our sin; which means that all of us have broken God's law.**
  - (a) But we have been offered the scepter of Jesus if we accept it.
  - (b) Jesus is willing to grant each of us His mercy and Grace if we will submit our lives to His care and commit ourselves to following Him.
  - (c) Jesus wants us to enter the throne room of God and invites us to live there.
  - (d) If you haven't, won't you take the bold step of committing your life to Jesus.

IV) Invitation: **Let us Pray!**