

Esther: A Story of Faith, Courage, and Hope

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[0 : 00] So Esther, who is Esther? She's the woman who saved a nation.! And her name in the Persian is the name for Star.

! Through the life of Esther and others, even ungodly men, intervening and protecting his very people for his glory.

And through the book we see God's purposes unfolding at work in the lives of ordinary people. As we heard in the message this morning, God works extraordinary things in the lives of ordinary people.

So we're going to look at some of the characters through the book of Esther, what we can learn from them. And broadly, one thing we can learn from the book of Esther is that God is always in control.

God is always in control, even when hope seems lost. And that's true for us today too. So as much as we're talking about Esther thousands of years ago, all of this is real and applicable for you and me right here, right now, in your life.

[1 : 20] And Esther teaches us to take a risk, to do something for God. We see her stand for courage in the face of her fears. In all of it, we see the grace and faithfulness of God.

Even though it can feel like God is silent, absent, he's still working in your life too. Even though it seems like things aren't how you'd like it to be, yet God is working behind the scenes to accomplish his purposes.

And the book starts off with King Ahasuerus of Persia. He throws a lavish banquet. So we're going to just pick some salient verses through the book.

Rather than read the whole ten chapters, we're going to pick out some of the highlights here. So chapter 1, verse 5, in part, it reads, Here's this king throws this lavish banquet.

And it says of the setting where were white, green and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble.

[2 : 40] The beds were of gold and silver upon a pavement of red and blue and white and black marble. So this was lavish. This was a palace.

And people were summoned to this lavish banquet. And it says, it reads on, He called his servants, verse 11, He wanted his queen to come.

And he called his servants, verse 11, To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to show the people and the princess her beauty, for she was fair to look upon.

But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains. Therefore was the king very raw, and his anger burnt in him.

So this man, King Ahasuerus, he ruled over 127 provinces. So he was really a significant player, a very well-known king through all these provinces, 127 provinces that he controlled.

[3 : 42] But he could not control his wife. Really, he was a fool. The man was a fool. Wasting money on lavish banquets that lasted for months.

They went on for months. And he wanted to show off his queen really because of his own pride. He did not care about the indignity that it was to her. Because he was kind of showing her off, wanting her to parade, wanting to show her off as one of his items of property, virtually.

So, nevertheless, Queen Vashti refused to come. And so the king deposed her as queen in his anger.

And so the search then began for a new queen. And we'll pick it up in chapter 2, verse 3. And the king was guided to call for some contest.

And it says, he was advised, Let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Susan the palace.

[4 : 50] And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king. And he did so. So there's a big call went out right across the land for all these

maidens to come to the palace, for him to look at them.

The king wanted a new wife, and so this great search began. Who would become Miss Persia, if you like, the new queen? Next up, we meet another person in the story.

The first person in history to be called a Jew. Mordecai, verse 5. Now in Shushan the palace, there was a certain Jew whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jaya, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite.

Mordecai had brought up his younger cousin, Esther. And she was an orphan. It reads on, verse 7. And he brought up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother.

And the maid was fair and beautiful. Her Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter. So Mordecai cared for his younger cousin, Esther.

[6 : 08] And he helped to raise her. Esther was taken to the palace as one of the many contenders to become the new queen. Now we could wonder why they were even in this pagan land and why they went down this route of entering into a pagan marriage.

But nevertheless, God used the circumstances for his good. And so Esther was taken to the palace as one of the contenders to be the new queen. And sure enough, in time, she was crowned Queen Esther.

Verse 17, chapter 2, verse 17. And it tells how the king loved Esther above all the women. And she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

Now in recent times we've seen the coronation of a king. Imagine the coronation, as it were, the crowning of Esther here, that the crown, the royal crown was set upon her head.

We wonder how this little girl who was an orphan, became this young woman, now is elevated to this high office, this high office of being the queen of Persia.

[7 : 30] And it makes you wonder, even for ourselves, that God's favour can lead to unexpected opportunities. So here's Esther elevated to queen of Persia now.

The story unfolds further now, where Mordecai overhears a plot to assassinate the king. There's this conspiracy to kill the king. And Mordecai informs Esther.

And that's in verse 21, it says, In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, so it was the place of business, of official transactions, of officials sitting at the gate, watching over the trading and such.

Mordecai sat in the king's gate, and then two of the king's chamberlains, or servants, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. So these two servants, Bigthan and Teresh, they started talking to each other, and they were angry about the king, and they were talking about assassinating him.

[8 : 30] So Mordecai reported this assassination plot against the king, and he saved the king's life. Mordecai's name then was written down, it was recorded in the chronicles of the king.

So in the official history of the king's life, it was written down, Mordecai's actions saved the king. But he received no reward at that time.

Now likewise, we can think, we can contemplate for ourselves. We might wonder, when things happen in our lives, you do something and you don't get any credit for it.

You don't get really what you think you deserve. We can still learn to trust God. That's what Mordecai did. He didn't make a fuss about this lack of recognition. He was faithful.

We can still learn to trust God. When things happen in our lives, and we feel like maybe we've been wronged or not recognised, recognise that God is still in control of your life, and trust his timing too, the timing of God.

[9 : 34] He has his time for that which he would want for you. The next character then that we meet is the wicked enemy of the people of God.

Haman. Haman. Chapter 3, verse 1. We see the adversary. Haman. We could think of Haman as a light to Satan, to the people of God.

And it says there, verse 1 of chapter 3, After these things did King Ahasuerus promote Haman, the son of Hamadathah the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.

So this man Haman was given a very high office. Verse 2. And all the king's servants that were in the king's gate bowed and revered Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him.

But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence. So here's Haman, this high-ranking official in the king's court, and he was a man full of pride, a vain man, and he expected everyone to come and bow down to him, as if he was some kind of a god, as if he was someone to be honoured so. [10:54] But Mordecai would not bow. He would bow to no one but God himself. He would not bow. He stood his ground.

Mordecai stood fast in conviction. And when Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman, it sparked this desire in Haman for revenge against all the Jews. We read that in verse 5, chapter 3, verse 5 of Esther.

And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. He got really angry. And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had showed him the people of Mordecai.

Wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Hazaras, even the people of Mordecai. Not only did he want to react towards Mordecai, but he was against the whole people of Mordecai, the whole nation.

So he wanted to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom. And so Haman hatched his diabolical plan. Verse 8, it reads, And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom, and their laws are diverse from all people, neither keep they the king's laws.

[12:16] Therefore it is not for the king's prophet to suffer them. So Haman said to the king, These people are not keeping your laws. They should be killed.

Verse 9, If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed. And I will pay 10,000 talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business to bring it into the king's treasuries.

So we see there an order was written, it was sealed with the king's ring, and we see that there was money talked of there to again lure the king to make this brutal order of destruction of the Jews. And the king approved Haman's dastardly plan, and he authorised to send out these dreadful orders right across the land. It meant death to the Jews.

This was the extermination of a nation. A real holocaust. And verse 13 it reads, And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish all Jews, both young and old, little children and women in one day, even upon the 13th day of the 12th month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.

[13:35] So they chose this day, the 13th, the 13th of Adar. The date was set. And this meant the destruction of the Jews. This was going to be the day they were going to be wiped down.

And when Mordecai heard the news, he put on sackcloth and ashes. Esther 4 verse 1, When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes. He tore his clothes.

It was a sign of grief, of mourning, of grieving. It was a grievous thing. It was a shocking thing. It was a display of his grief. And it says, And he put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and bitter cry.

So this was devastating news. It reads on verse 3, So they demonstrated their grief and their concern, their distress, by pouring ashes upon themselves, and clothing themselves with sackcloth. It was a sign of grieving and weeping. And notice there, there was fasting too. There was fasting. The king's decree meant that all Jews in the empire would be annihilated.

[15:04] So when this news came to Esther, she also was concerned. Word came to Esther. At that time, she had yet to reveal that she herself was one of the Jews.

The law spared no one. Even those working for the king and living in the palace, they were not safe. Even her. Esther was not safe.

So Mordecai appealed to Esther to plead to the king, to plead with him, to intervene on behalf of her people. But there was a huge risk here for Esther. So we see, just to recap, Esther has married the king now.

She's Queen Esther, but she's not revealed that she herself is a Jew. And now the king, through Haman's leading, the king has authorised an order that meant the destruction of the nation.

And that included Esther. And so Mordecai urged Esther to intervene on behalf of God's people for their saving.

[16:09] So we'll pick it up there from verse 11. All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces do know that, So Mordecai asked Esther to approach the king, but if Esther went to

approach the king without being called, without being summoned or authorised to come, it could mean her death, unless the king offered his golden scepter as a sign of his acceptance.

If she was to approach, she faced this penalty of death. And she says, He's not called me for 30 days. And Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews.

He was saying to Esther, Look, you're at risk too. If this order gets enacted, that you could suffer death, as well as the nation. And then it reads on, this is one of the pivotal verses of Esther, chapter 4, verse 14.

For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall their enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place. But thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

So Mordecai puts to Esther, God can bring deliverance how he pleases, but that thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed.

[17:52] And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? So Mordecai is putting to Esther that, well, you've got this privilege now, this place of honour, you've got this place of influence, you've got this potential to intervene, to advocate to the king.

Maybe this is your time. This is, it's for such a time as this. When you think of it, the time that it was, it was a time of crisis, it was a time of great danger, it was a time of great stress and adversity and potential destruction of a nation.

Mordecai challenged her that this was her time. This is your time, Esther, for such a time, for such a time as this. A time of crisis, a time of danger.

Yet this was Esther's time, Esther's destiny, her calling. We could think of it for ourselves, where God has put us in our lives, in our circumstances, in times of crisis too, that God's got his hand on your life and he knows and wants you to find that calling, that destiny.

Here we see how God can place people in specific places or circumstances to fulfil a greater purpose, a greater purpose. What about you and me?

[19:15] We could think about that, can't we? Do we recognise those moments that we are called to shine? It might be in certain circumstances, certain settings, certain employment settings, certain responsibilities that you might have.

God has put you there for such a time as this. Sometimes we don't know why we're in a certain place. We think, am I out of place? Am I not in the right place? But God knows his timing and his timing is perfect.

Do we see God's working in our own life? Can we embrace our God-given purpose and destiny? Sometimes we don't always have the concept of the destiny, but actually I'm right in the centre of God's will, even though it's a time of crisis, a time of danger.

And Esther chose to use that opportunity that she had to shine. Esther chose to stand up for what was right. But first, she wanted prayer.

We can rely on God's guidance and strength in challenging circumstances. So Mordecai challenges Esther, you're here for such a time as this.

[20:24] He urged her to advocate to the king, and she gave a response here in verse 16. Go gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day.

I also and my maidens will fast likewise. And so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law, and if I perish, I perish.

Esther said, yes, I will go, but first, fast for me. Now it doesn't directly say pray for me, but really fasting and prayer go hand in hand.

If you're fasting, you're praying. So we can understand that she was asking for prayer. She wanted prayer here. She wanted God to give her the strength, the wisdom, the leading.

We could think of the words of the song, be not dismayed, whate'er betide, God will take care of you. Our lives are in his hand, aren't they?

[21:31] For such a time, for such a time as this. Yeah, Esther was prayerfully saying, three days of praying, of fasting, we're going to seek God.

We're going to ask God for his help, for his intervention. She wanted to have a prayerfulness to her actions, and to have that prayer support. And she says, if I perish, I perish.

To enter into the king's court, unsummoned, could mean death to her. She says, I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law. And if I perish, I perish.

To leave is Christ. To die is gain. Even in this life-threatening situation that she was in. And Esther asked for help. Friends, there's power in prayer, in fasting, seeking God's divine intervention, no matter what, in a crisis.

And so the Jews fasted, and we could understand they prayed together. The people supported each other during this time of crisis. So she was supported by the nation, praying for her, fasting for her.

[22 : 37] Verse 1 of chapter 5, Now it came to pass on the third day that Esther put on her royal apparel and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house.

And the king sat upon his royal throne, over against the gate of the house. So here she was at the threshold, entering in, about to enter in to what could be her death to come.

If I perish, I perish. She had that heart, I will do God's will. I will intervene. I will stand for Christ. I will stand for my faith.

I will stand for my nation. So this was a great challenge, to approach the king without any invitation could lead to her death. There was real danger here. This was life-threatening.

But Esther acted with courage. And Esther decided to risk her life and approach the king to invite him and Haman to a banquet. What about us? Will we step out in faith when we're at the threshold, as it were, when we're faced with even such a confronting situation for such a time as this?

[23 : 43] Will we be like Esther? What about us? Will we step out in faith, stand for what's right, take action when we face difficult circumstances? Verse 2, chapter 5, verse 2.

And it was so when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court that she obtained favour in his sight. And the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand.

So holding out the golden scepter like the sign of his authority was saying, yes, you're welcome.

Yes, you're accepted. Yes, you're received. Yes, you can draw near. It showed his favour.

So Esther drew near and touched the top of the scepter. We see, as pictured there, that she was received by the king. We can think, likewise, we can have access to our king.

Amen? We don't have to stand in trepidation. We can enter in to the very holiest, to the very throne of grace. And we know that he will always receive those who come unto him.

[24 : 44] Verse 3. Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, Queen Esther? What is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom. So Esther took this step of faith.

And God honoured her courage for entering into the king's presence. And verse 4 it says, And Esther answered, If it seemed good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.

So Esther puts to the king her request that there be this banquet. The banquet was called. The king again asked Esther of her request at this first banquet. And she said, Let's hold a second banquet. Again with the king, Haman and herself. We're just skipping some of that. So there was the first banquet and she put to him, I'll tell you my request at the second banquet.

So a second banquet was called with the king, Haman and herself. And she said she would reveal her request then. So she was showing a lot of patience here, a lot of wisdom, a lot of tact, a lot of careful strategy really of setting this next meeting to reveal her request.

[25 : 51] She didn't just jump in and act rashly. She was very deliberate in how she did it. Verse 9. Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart.

He thought, Wow, I'm being honoured. Haman thought, This is my lucky day. He was so joyful and had a glad heart that he was again going to be honoured with this second banquet now.

But then it says, But when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate that he stood not up nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai.

So Mordecai didn't reverence him. Mordecai didn't honour him as he wanted to be honoured. And so Haman got really angry and annoyed, really raging mad at Mordecai.

It reads on, Verse 10. Nevertheless, Haman refrained himself and when he came home he sent and called for his friends and Zeresh his wife and Haman told them of the glory of his riches and the multitudes of his children and all the things wherein the king had promoted him and how he advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.

[26 : 58] So here's Haman waxing lyrical, telling the world about how great he himself is, how he's been elevated above the princes and servants of the king having all of these special honours, this

special banquet.

Verse 12. Haman said, Moreover, yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself and tomorrow am I invited unto her also with the king. Yet all this availeth me nothing so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. Verse 14. Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him let a gallows be made of 50 cubits high 75 feet high.

Let a gallows be made and tomorrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon. Then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet and the thing pleased Haman and he caused the gallows to be made.

So his wife counseled Haman to build this great gallows, this 75 foot structure to hang Mordecai on the next day.

[28 : 10] Now what happens next is the king has a sleepless night. Esther 6 verse 1. On that night could not the king sleep and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles and they were read before the king.

So here's the king he's restless having this sleepless night and he says to a servant come and bring the book of records of the chronicles the kind of history of the king's life and by God's providence it was that the king couldn't sleep.

So just to occupy himself he went to the chronicles and read about the plot to take his life and discovered that it was Mordecai that had saved his life. He heard how this man named Mordecai overheard the two king's guards plotting to assassinate him when the king read that Mordecai had exposed the plot and saved his life he asked his servant what reward or recognition did we ever give Mordecai for this?

And the answer was there was nothing done. So again we look back how God was orchestrating all those events that were happening before and his timing was for his purposes.

It reads verse 3 the king said what honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him there is nothing done for him.

[29 : 33] So here's Mordecai he saved the king's life way back but nothing was given for him no reward no acknowledgement. And at this time in verses 4 and 5 it tells how Haman was in the outer court of the king's house at this time he was getting ready to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows that he'd prepared for him and the king's servant said behold Haman standeth out in the court and the king said let him come so Haman came in it says verse 6 so Haman came in he'd been lurking outside he's just biting at the bit to get the king to hang Mordecai to kill him and the king says let him come in so Haman came in and the king said unto Haman what shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour so the king wanted to honour Mordecai and he asked

Haman what should be done and it reads now Haman thought in his heart to whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself and Haman answered the king for the man whom the king delighteth to honour and he goes through a number of things here Haman's thinking it's all about me I'm the best guy in the kingdom and I deserve all the credit and in his arrogance he thought to himself who is there that the king would rather honour than me I'm just so good you know and so he thinks up this extravagant honour that he thought that he himself would receive he talks about this royal robe a royal horse the royal crest and to be led around by most noble princes and to be acknowledged with the words thus shall it be done to the man and the king to lights to honour so we read that there in verse 8 let the royal apparel be brought which the king used to wear so the very robes of the king and the horse that the king rideth upon the royal horse and the crown royal which is set upon his head and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour and bring him on horseback through the street of the city and proclaim before him thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour verse 10 then the king said to Haman make haste and take the apparel and the horse as they are said and do even so to Mordecai the Jew that sitteth at the king's gate let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken then took Haman the apparel and the horse and arrayed Mordecai and brought him on horseback through the street of the city and proclaimed before him thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour as he heralded him so instead of putting a noose around Mordecai's neck

Haman is ordered to drape a royal robe of honour over his shoulders what a humiliation for Haman here he was thinking he was going to get all this honour and he ends up honouring his enemy

Mordecai what a humiliation and Haman then gets ushered into the second banquet with Esther and the king chapter 7 it reads so the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen and the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine what is thy petition queen Esther and it shall be granted thee and what is thy request and it shall be performed and it shall be even to the half of the kingdom then Esther the queen answered and said if I have found favour in thy sight O king and if it please the king let my life be given at my petition and my people at my request for we are sold I and my people to be destroyed to be slain and to perish but if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen

I had held my tongue although the enemy could not countervile the king's damage what she's saying here is I'm going to be destroyed and my people are going to be destroyed Esther reveals to the king her heritage that she is a Jew this was not yet revealed but she reveals it here and she tells her that she is in danger that this plot has been devised against her people including her and then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen who is he and where is he but durst presume in his heart to do so who's this man who would dare to do this to my queen and Esther brings the charge against Haman verse 6 and Esther said as she looks across the table the adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen so Haman this man who came to the royal dinner is afterwards taken out in shame to be hanged on the gallows the adversary and the enemy is this wicked Haman it's interesting when the Jews recount the reading of the book there's a dramatic reading of the book of Esther in a Jewish synagogue at the feast of Purim the congregation join in this kind of chorus every time they mention the name

Haman they say may his name be blotted out let the name of the ungodly perish they were shouted out they drown out the very name Haman they're so loathful to the Jews the enemy of God's people and it reads on verse 9 so we see the outworkings of God's providence we see the provision of safety to God's people we see Haman who sought to destroy Mordecai ended up being executed on the very gallows that he had prepared think of the biblical principles you reap what you sow amen you reap what you sow

[36 : 21] Haman wanted to kill Mordecai and he ended up getting killed on the very instrument that he had made to kill Mordecai when you think about it too the cross it represents the same kind of idea that the cross that Satan has prepared for Christ became the instrument of his own defeat think of that really isn't it Satan would have been jumping for joy that Christ was crucified but really the cross is the defeat of Satan it is his defeat it's the victory of our saviour it's the cross and his resurrection so we see the self-defeating foolishness of godlessness friends sin is always self-destructive we see in Haman that pridefulness that sin that hatefulness sin is always self-destructive we see for example the word reads pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall so when they mention his name may his name be blotted out let the name of the ungodly perish and when they read through

Esther every time they make a big noise the kids make some rattles and noises and yeah they used to yell out because they don't even hear that hateful name the hated name of Haman now there's great irony here the poetic justice in the consequences that befell Haman for his wicked plans you can think of that that the wicked will face their vengeance God will do right those who devise evil schemes will face often their own downfall and so we see as much we can learn from the book of Esther chapter 8 it talks about on the day that the king Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman the Jews enemy unto Esther the queen so the house of Haman was now given to Esther and Mordecai came before the king for Esther had told what he was unto her and the king took off his ring which he had taken from Haman and he gave it unto Mordecai and Esther sent Mordecai over the house of Haman so we see here again the blessed reversal of everything that Haman had wanted the destruction of Mordecai we see the elevation of

Mordecai as the faithful man we see Esther pleaded for the lives of her own people and the Lord gave great victory ultimately to the Jews the king issues a decree allowing the Jews to defend themselves against their enemies and the Jews are saved so that's in the later chapters it tells us verse 15 Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white and with great crown of gold and with a garment of fine linen and purple and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad the Jews had light and gladness and joy and honour so this people that was to be exterminated now have gladness and joy and honour and Mordecai who was to be destroyed on the gallows is now given this royal privilege and raised to this great status

Esther shows us the importance of perseverance of faith for such a time as this you can think of it for yourself for such a time as this and we can think of the world the way it is often we hear people even when we're reaching out to people they're acknowledging the world's in a big mess it's for such a time as this that we hear that we're alive in this time that we're alive that we're here where we are for such a time as this God knows what he's doing his purposes his plan his timing is perfect he knows what he's doing in your life simply have the heart that Esther had to say if I perish I perish I'm going to do what's right I'm going to do what's right no matter the cost no matter the risk I'm going to be brave and bold and have courage to do the right and we see the blessing that resulted the joy and gladness that came friends God cares for his people he cares for you in whatever circumstance you're going through right now and God's timing is perfect as Esther sought time to pray she allowed time to pray and it was all the right timing till the very next day that Mordecai was going to be killed that everything just fitted into God's plan where Mordecai was actually honoured and God provided great victory for his people God's timing is perfect and we can trust him really it's the story of redemption here isn't it too in chapter 9 the Jews defend themselves against their enemies on the appointed day and there's great victory God made provision for them to defend themselves and gave great victory and Haman's sons and his allies were defeated Mordecai institutes then the celebration of Purim this ongoing commemoration of their deliverance which is still celebrated today around the world the feast of Purim so we can take heart tonight to learn from the story of

[42 : 06] Esther and know that God is working in all the affairs of our lives we can know that God is going to turn calamity and crisis into victory and in every province and in every city with us whoever the king's commandment and his decree came the Jews had joy and gladness a feast and a good day and many of the people became Jews for the fear of the Jews fell on them so it's saying here even God blessed them such that the nation was strengthened and really the fear of the Jews the fear of God resulted from their enemies and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy and from mourning into a good day that they should make them days of feasting and joy and of sending portions one to another and gifts to the poor so we see this ongoing commemoration this annual commemoration was such that they could recall the providence of

God turning sorrow to joy from mourning into a good that time of fasting and grief to days of feasting and joy and giving in chapter 10 again just to wrap up we see Mordecai elevated Mordecai the Jew this is chapter 10 verse 3 Mordecai the Jew was next unto the king unto King Ahasuerus and great among the Jews and accepted of the multitude of his brethren seeking the wealth of his people and speaking peace to all his seed so Mordecai the Jew this man who was the target of the wrath of Haman is now next unto the king and he's great he's recognised and God's provided so just to wrap it all up tonight throughout the book of Esther we can see that God is working that God has his hand upon every life and God can turn any situation around so

Esther is this time calamity and crisis it was for such a time for such a time that God put Esther right where he put her for such a time as this and it's the same for you and me brother sister whatever crisis or situation of testing and stress and difficulty we can trust God's timing that he will bring about his will we can recognise God's at work in human lives and respond to situations of challenge with courage with faith and divine providence we see that Mordecai stood up he didn't bow down we see that Esther spoke up she didn't hold back she answered in and we see that likewise for you and me as God's people we can rise to the challenge Esther and Mordecai risked their lives the both of them to save their people from destruction Mordecai stood with conviction he didn't bow down he had the courage to face this great test he had the integrity to carry on standing for the right and he had love for his adopted daughter his cousin

Esther he showed love for the people of God and he acted as a true servant really he was in some ways he was a good model father as well in taking care of Esther we see those qualities of Mordecai as much as you wonder why they were in a pagan land for one thing and all of that circumstance but nevertheless God used Mordecai in the place where he was for such a time as this and then of course we see Esther we see her humility she listened to her father figure Mordecai she was respectful she was obedient she heard and listened to counsel and godly instruction she showed patience through all of those times she took time she gave time to praying she asked for prayer she asked for the nation to fast she showed a reverence for God in putting God first and in trusting him through all of the challenges that she would face she exercised self-control in that she had one banquet after another banquet she didn't just blurt it all out she took time and tact to make

the revelation that she wanted to reveal she showed boldness likewise she was ready even to die in order to help save her people so we see in some ways she was quite Christ-like in herself too that she said if I perish

I perish she was willing to put her life on the line to be a means of God's redemption of God's saving of his nation so when we think about the book of Esther we could probably unpack a whole lot more that wonderful providence of God that wonderful sense of God's faithfulness and we can know that in our lives today in the here and now in our time in such a time as this let us pray Lord we thank you that you gave Mordecai the strength to stand up Lord you gave Esther the courage to speak up Lord help us also to have the heart to look up to look up to you as Esther looked up to you to in faith trust you and your hand as much as you're invisible yet you are active and present in the book of Esther Lord we thank you that we can see as you worked in the lives of these ones and as you moved even the ungodly

[47 : 58] Lord that your timing is right and it's such a time as this that we need to likewise have the same conviction and courage that Esther and Mordecai had help us Lord in the daily grind the troubles we might face the challenges that we might confront as this world we live in is ever more godless Lord help us to realise it's for such a time for such a time as this that you put us where we are and what's happening for us we can trust your timing we can trust your plan and trust your providence Lord knowing that it is your will that will be done and we can lean upon your strength to help us to live and do that which is right Lord help us to learn these things and make it real for us today and in our future ahead to always have that acknowledgement that sense that you are guiding and that you are watching over us through all of life's journey Lord help each one to have that heart's trust that says you're my saviour you're my redeemer and your precious blood has paid all my sin and I can trust you with my life with this time and with eternity in this present life and for life forever more that your hand is upon us and our lives our times are in your hand and it's for such a time as this

Lord help us to always have that heart to know that your timing's best and you put us where you want us to be and help us to live as would please your precious name we ask in Jesus name Amen Amen Thank you.