



May 24, 2014
Heart of a Lion,
Soul of a Saint
Esther 4

Discuss: Today we're going to look at the defining moment for Esther. Describe some of the biggest decisions you have made in your life.

The story so far:

Esther has been queen of Persia for about five years. Through the scheming of the king's favorite, Haman, an edict has been sent to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews in the Persian Empire. (Esther 3:13)

Read Esther 4:1-17.

[Q] How do the Jews and Mordecai respond to the edict? (vv. 1-4)

[Q] What does Mordecai accomplish by mourning at the king's gate?

[Q] What is Esther's initial response in v. 4? What steps does she take to find out the truth of the problem? (See also verse 16.)

[Q] What difficulties does Esther see in Mordecai's plan in verse 11?

Mordecai replies in Esther 4:13-14:

... "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. ¹⁴ For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" (NIV)

[Q] What does verse 14 suggest about the relationship between God's sovereign purposes and our responsibility?

Esther: NIV Application Commentary:

It was for "such a time as this" that Esther was forced to choose between identifying herself with God's covenant people or continuing to live as a pagan in the king's court. Apparently no one in the court, including her own husband, knew that she was a Jew. To save her people would mean revealing her own identity as well. She would be admitting that she had not been living as a devout Jew should live. Furthermore, she would be identifying herself as a target of destruction under Haman's decree and an easy mark in the treacherous Persian court.

Apply

It is unlikely that any of us will ever be in Esther's dire predicament, but every one of us faces defining moments in our lives. (Maybe the biggest defining moment is how we respond when we hear the good news of Jesus Christ!) Every day we face decisions that demand we choose either to identify ourselves with Christ by obedience to His Word or to live for ourselves in that moment.

How do we get the kind of courage we need to choose rightly? By fixing our eyes on Jesus:

Esther identified with her people by disclosing her race;
Jesus identified with us by joining our race.
Esther had to come to King Xerxes at his throne, but
Jesus got off His throne to come to us.
Esther only had access to King Xerxes once, but
Jesus gives us constant access to His throne of grace.
Esther served as a mediator between her people and the king;
Jesus serves as a better mediator between God and His people.
Esther was willing to die for her people;
Jesus actually died for His people.

[Q] What kind of situations or decisions, big or small, are you currently facing where you need strength and courage to follow Jesus?

[Q] Where has God positioned you to be an influence for Him? (Work, school, family, neighborhood, etc...)

Pray

[Q] What is your prayer for this week regarding the above decisions or influence?

During the weekend message we asked people to pick a specific time each week to pray for our launch preparations for the Bristol campus from now until the launch on Sunday, October 5. Submit your name and email address to gbrundage@valleycommunity.cc and each week you'll receive two or three specific prayer topics for that week.

Let's ask God to prepare the way for His grace and mercy to flow in the greater Bristol area.
