

For Such A Time As This - The Palace is Not Your Purpose - August 11, 2019
Scripture: Esther 3-4

Esther 3-4 (selections)

After these events, King Xerxes honored Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. ² All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor.

⁵ When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged. ⁶ Yet having learned who Mordecai's people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.

⁸ Then Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. ⁹ If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents of silver to the king's administrators for the royal treasury."

¹⁰ So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. ¹¹ "Keep the money," the king said to Haman, "and do with the people as you please."

¹³ Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews— young and old, women and children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods. ¹⁴ A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so they would be ready for that day.

¹⁵ The couriers went out, spurred on by the king's command, and the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was bewildered.

4.8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to go instruct her to go into the king's presence and beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.

4.11 "All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king."

4.12 When Esther's words were reported back to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: Do not think that because you are in the king's palace you alone of all the Jews will escape. 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 this royal position for such a time as this?

4.16-Go gather together all the jews who are in Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three day, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. and if I perish, I perish."

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Read and Discuss

Introduction

Pastor Jacob continued his series on the Old Testament book of Esther, *For Such a Time As This*. He picked up the story after Esther had become queen. She was an unlikely person for this position, but eventually discovered that she was there for a reason. After seeing an opportunity to save her people from death, she factored the risks and then began to ask for help and take action.

Engage the Scripture

- Read Esther 3.1-2, 5-6, 8-11,13-15. In these verses we read about the set-up for Esther's big moment. Haman plotted to kill all of the Jews because he was insulted by Mordecai. It's an irrational response but created a real threat to Esther's people. Why do you think things escalated so quickly? Where do you see rapid escalation in the world today?
- Read Esther 4.8,11-12. In this moment, Esther began to learn that the palace was not her purpose. As unlikely as her position was, it came with some comforts that others might have aspired to. Yet the palace was not her destination. Have you ever reached a destination in life (graduation, marriage, a job) and been surprised to find out that you are not content...that maybe there is more?
- Read Esther 4.16. Pastor Jacob talked about Esther's response to Mordecai's request. He talked about it in terms of "the Unseen Path". What Esther learned was that she had to ask others for help, ask God for help, let go of her own safety, and take the next right step.

If you are facing a challenge how could these four things inform your response?

Challenge or Calling: _____

1. Who should I ask for help? Who are my people? What will I ask them to do for me?
2. How can I ask God for help? What will I ask of God?
3. What am I holding on to for safety's sake? What comfort or contentment is keeping me from saying yes to a calling?
4. What is the next right step for me?

Prayer

Pray for God to show you the next right step in pursuing His purpose for you.