

## YOUR TIME IS NOW!

APRIL 30, 2023

## WORSHIP

Great in Power, Today,  
Sovereign, More Like Jesus,  
You Are God Alone

## WELCOME

Who is the most influential woman in your life thus far? How has she been used by God to change your life for good?

## WORD

**ESTHER 4:6-17**  
 (READ ESTHER CHAPTERS 1-4  
 FOR CONTEXT)

<sup>6</sup> So Hathach went out to Mordecai to the city square in front of the king's gate. <sup>7</sup> Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. <sup>8</sup> He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict which had been issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show Esther and inform her, and to order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people. <sup>9</sup> Hathach came back and related Mordecai's words to Esther. <sup>10</sup> Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him to reply to Mordecai: <sup>11</sup> "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days." <sup>12</sup> They related Esther's words to Mordecai. <sup>13</sup> Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews. <sup>14</sup> For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?" <sup>15</sup> Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, <sup>16</sup> "Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish." <sup>17</sup> So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him.

We have studied several Bible characters who were ordinary men that God transformed and used as change makers (Jesus being the exception as He was both fully man and fully God). Today, we have the privilege of learning from a woman that God used as a change maker during her time and from whom we can learn much from for our own time. We will learn from a cast of characters --- Esther, King Ahasuerus (Xerxes), Mordecai (Esther's adoptive father), and Haman (the "bad guy") --- in a Bible story the plot of which is more amazing than any other movie out there. There's romance, comedy and irony, twists and turns, good vs. evil etc. that only God could have written the script of Esther's story. Strangely, God's name was not mentioned even once in this book, yet we see His hand at work all over the place. It is a reminder that God is active in our lives especially in the difficult times, when we don't always perceive Him.

Chapters 1 and 2 gives you the background and context of Esther becoming Queen of Persia, wife of King Ahasuerus. Mordecai adopted his young cousin, Esther (Hebrew name: Hadassah) when her parents died. In came about that King Ahasuerus was searching for a new queen from his entire kingdom to replace his deposed wife, Queen Vashti. The king loved Esther more than any of all the women and he made her the new queen (**Esther 2:8,17**)! This was Esther's appointment with destiny---to fulfill God's plan for her life. If you are already a follower of Jesus, your time is now to fulfill His assignment for you ---make disciples! If you are not yet a follower of Christ, now is the time that Jesus wants to make the biggest difference in your life.

### 1. SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

**Esther 2:21-23** gives the account of how Mordecai discovers a plot to assassinate the king. The assassination was averted, and Mordecai's actions were recorded in the king's Book of Chronicles. This event will have great significance later on in the story, showing God's sovereignty in all the events in the Book of Esther.

**Esther 3:1-2** tells of how King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the Agagite as his second-in-command. Most commentaries say that Haman descended from King Agag of the Jew's one-time enemy, the Amalekites. Mordecai though refused to bow down to Haman, and Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, not just Mordecai (**Esther 3:4-6**). Haman, the enemy of the Jews had a diabolical scheme to destroy Israel, that he presented to the king (**Esther 3:9-11**). So far, this are all bad news for Esther and her people. But if you believe in the sovereignty of God, you will surrender to God even when the news is bad.

### 2. SURRENDER TO GOD

Mordecai and all the Jews learned about Haman's plan (**Esther 4:1,3**) and it was the deepest, darkest day in their lives after their exile to

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Babylon. They were devastated by the news, and maybe wondered, “where is God in all these? Why is He allowing this to happen?”. Mordecai sends word to Esther (**Esther 4:8**) for her to go before the king and make an appeal to save her people. Esther sends her real and honest response to Mordecai including her apprehension to go to the king uninvited (**Esther 4:10-12**). When we feel frightening things in our lives, we can be real about our fears. How many times did God tell Joshua, “Do not be afraid”? God knows we experience these fears, just as Esther did too.

But Mordecai recognizes that Esther was appointed by God for “such a time as this” (**Esther 4:13-14**) and gives her the needed push to step into God’s purpose for her. Mordecai must have believed in God’s promise to Abraham regarding his descendants; he must have known in his heart that God was going to do something to save the Jews (**v. 14**). God does not need us to accomplish His plan, but He wants to use us! It is not a coincidence that we are where we are in our circle of influence. The prodding of the Lord to do His purpose can come in the most unexpected times. God’s timing to accomplish His plan can seem a little odd, but when He gives us that little push, we can say, “I’ll step off in faith because You are sovereign, because I surrender to You”. Esther’s surrender to God’s sovereignty can be seen in her response (**Esther 4:15-16**). Meanwhile, we see Haman’s hatred for the Jews was not yet done; with his wife and friends’ advice, he planned for Mordecai hanged in public (**Esther 5:13-14**). At the same time, the king recalled what Mordecai did for him and the irony was the king used Haman’s selfish idea to do honor Mordecai (**Esther 6:1-11**)! If man wrote this script, nobody would believe it—but the sovereign God was the one who wrote this! Haman was humiliated and received foreboding words from his wife and friends (**vv.12-13**).

### 3. STAND IN THE GAP

Esther gains favor before the king as she petitioned for her people (**Esther 7:1-5, 8:3-8**). Not only that, but Haman was hanged on the gallows he built for Mordecai (**Esther 7:9-10**). Mordecai was also given authority in Haman’s place (**Esther 8:1-2, 9-11**). This great deliverance of the Jews is celebrated at the Feast of Purim, from that time to this day (**Esther 9:26, 28, 32**)! Truly an acknowledgment of God’s sovereignty! Let Jesus make the greatest difference in your life (**John 10:10**) ---put your trust in God’s sovereignty, surrender to God and His mission as Jesus did (**Luke 22:41-44**), and stand in the gap being reminded that Jesus stood in the gap for us that we may be saved (**1 Peter 3:18**). Your time is now, be a change maker like Esther for such a time as this!

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

#### 1. Self-Check.

What situation in your life do you need to surrender to the sovereignty of God?

#### 2. Setting It Right.

What is preventing you from telling people about Jesus (sharing your testimony, sharing the gospel, starting to make disciples)?

#### 3. Living It Out.

How does Esther’s story help you overcome these obstacles; what will you do about it?

### WORKS

#### PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for people in authority, and those who have great influence over people groups and nations that our sovereign God will use them to accomplish His divine purpose for His people. As part of God’s people, stand in the gap for your family, friends, nation by sharing Christ, the only Savior who can deliver them from their sins and give them eternal life.

### WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

#### I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

#### II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God’s help and comfort for the Sudanese people caught in violence and conflict.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented; tension in East Asian and Middle East countries to stop.

#### III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, leaders, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

#### IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

#### V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends.

### MEMORY VERSE

#### ESTHER 4:14

“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”