

“Living Large: Lessons From Old Testament Heroes”

Week 2:

Esther 4:1-17

For Such A Time As This

THE BIG IDEA: We live life large when we use all we have been given to further God’s purposes in the world.

OPEN WITH PRAYER

GETTING STARTED: What was the best gift you ever received?

LEARNING & APPLYING GOD’S WORD If possible, read the entire book of Esther before your RLG meets. Or, if you have a study bible, read the summary of Esther at the beginning of the book. If you don’t have one already, a study bible is a great investment. I recommend the TNIV Study Bible. Esther is an interesting book and you should be able to read the entire book in 20 minutes.

Esther was a young Jewish woman still living in exile in Suza, the capital of the Persian Empire around 470 BC. King Xerxes (also known as Ahasuerus) deposed his queen and held a beauty contest to find another one. Esther’s cousin, Mordecai, convinced Esther to conceal her Jewish identity and to enter the contest. Esther won the contest and ended up queen of Persia.

Trouble began when Haman was made the king’s right-hand man, and he determined to kill all the Jews in the empire because of Mordecai’s refusal to bow down before him. He convinced the king to issue a royal edict to fix a day on which all the Jews would be massacred.

Mordecai went to Esther to ask for help. This is where we pick up the story in chapter 4.

Together, read Esther 4:1-17

1. What was the reaction of the Jews to the edict of the king (vv.1-3)?
2. What does Mordecai ask Esther to do (vv.6-9)?
3. What causes Esther’s reluctance to ask the king to reverse the edict (vv.10-11)?

4. What arguments does Mordecai use to contend with Esther's hesitation to intervene on behalf of her people (vv. 12-14)?
5. What does verse 14 reveal about Mordecai's understanding of God? What does he mean he says, "And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"
6. What is Esther's response to Mordecai's exhortation (vv. 15-16)? What might she be giving up by agreeing to go to the king? What kind of help did she need in order to obey God?

LIVING OUT "REAL LIFE"

7. Where has God placed you at this particular time in your life? What might be a few reasons why God has you there? Explain.
8. Steve said (quoting Rick Warren) that God wants us to use our influence and affluence to further his purposes in the world and that our lives become larger when we do so. It takes courage to go against the grain of our society which tells us that life is found in comfort, materialism, security and pleasure. Do you believe our lives become larger when we are willing to live for God's purposes instead of our own? Discuss. Have you found this to be true in your own life? Why is it difficult to trust God to allow him to use our influence and affluence for his purposes?
9. Is your group at the point where you can play the role of a "Mordecai" in each other's lives?
10. What steps might you take in your life in light of this study?

SHARING AND PRAYER (Prayer Requests)

Take some time to share prayer requests, where you need to find God's grace and peace. Be sure to give thanks for each other and pray for one another's needs. When we pray together, we find the power of God.

