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# HEROES OF OUR FAITH

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## PART 6 · ESTHER

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28 NIV*

### Background

- + Time – 483-474BC - at the end of the Old Testament historical narrative
- + Place: Susa, capital of Persia, in modern day Iran
- + Esther's story is celebrated every year by the Jews in the festival of Purim

### Cast:

- + **Xerxes: An impetuous king**

Xerxes, the ruler of the largest empire then known, has a massive, six month long party, then 'merry with wine', demands that his queen come and show herself off to the men. She refuses and so he divorces her.

- + **Esther: a beautiful maiden**

Taken to the palace, chosen to be queen

It sounds like a fairy tale, but Esther had no choice – life seemed to be happening to her without her will

- + **Mordecai: the loving guardian**

A proud Jew who cared deeply for the orphaned Esther

## + Haman: the bad guy

Haman, the newly appointed Prime Minister, is offended by Mordecai's refusal to bow down to him, and in the over-reaction of the century decides to kill the whole Jewish race in retribution. King Xerxes, not knowing Esther's race, happily agrees.

## The Rescue

Mordecai turns to Esther to rescue her people. But Esther has a problem. She hasn't seen the king in 30 days, and entering the king's presence without an invitation means instant death, unless the king extends his sceptre. But Mordecai believes that she is there for a reason.

*“Do not think that because you are in the king's house 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 your royal position for such a time as this?”*

Esther 4:14-15 NIV

Esther tells Mordecai to command all the Jews to fast for three days, and she and her maids do the same. After that she will go to the king, and if she dies, she dies.

## In God's presence Esther receives courage and wisdom

God will give us courage and wisdom if we enter His presence too.

Esther enters the king's presence and is welcomed. She invites the King and Haman to two banquets. At the end of the second one, she denounces Haman. The king executes Haman and allows Esther and Mordecai to write edicts rescuing the Jews. Esther's act is still celebrated today.

## **A Powerful Queen emerges**

Esther responds to God's call, and her life has more significance than she could ever have imagined. We are called to make a difference as well.

### **Now what?**

1. Trust that God can use you wherever you are
2. Spend time in his presence
3. Act

### **We are here for such a time as this**

Just like Esther, you are here for such a time as this. You are here because God wants you here. At this time of change and uncertainty, it is essential that we individually and corporately emulate Esther and get into God's presence.

He has the answers we need, and the elegant solutions to our problems and fears. He can give us the courage that new situations will require of us. Just as Esther moved from a fearful girl who seemed to have no choices to a powerful queen, God wants us to step into our birthright.

As we go across the river, our influence as a church will increase. Our capacity to transform lives will increase. We as individuals are in the awesome position that we can be part of this.

Whatever your gifting be assured that there is a role for you. Because you are here, for such a time as this.

## Discussion Questions

1. As you reflect on Esther's story, what stands out to you?
2. God's name is not mentioned in this book. How do you see Him working even though there are no miracles?
3. Have there been times in your life when God seemed to be silent, but looking back you could see His hand at work? Share.
4. Has there been a time when God has used you in a place that you wouldn't have chosen to be?
5. What does the phrase "you are here for such a time as this" mean to you?
6. Romans 8:28 promises that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. What do you think that this means practically?
7. Is there a situation you are facing at the moment where you need God's wisdom to know how to act, or His courage to step out in faith? Pray for each other.