

LIFE GROUP SERMON SUMMARY QUESTIONS

ESTHER SERIES

These questions are for the **February 4, 2018** sermon, "For Such a Time as This." Please read the sermon passage (Esther 4:1-17) together out loud.

SERMON OUTLINE

IN DISTRESSING TIMES, TRUST GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL CARE DURING . . .

1. The anguish we experience in life (1-3)
 - a. Sometimes we prepare ourselves for a loss that seems inevitable, "anticipatory loss."
 - b. Mordecai put on sackcloth and mourned loudly and out in "the midst of the city."
 - c. Yiddish proverb: "God gives burdens, God also gives shoulders."
 - d. God will often use brokenness to produce wholeness.
 - i. Brokenness drives us to seek God's PROVIDENCE (God watches over us).
 - ii. Brokenness drives us treasure God's PRESENCE (God is always near).
 - iii. Brokenness drives us to trust God's PROMISES (God provides hope).
2. The responsibility we carry in life (4-11)
 - a. Esther is positioned within the palace--she does not seem to know there is a problem.
 - i. Esther sends Mordecai clothes (external), but the real angst is in his heart.
 - ii. She is afraid to act on behalf of the Jews (speaking up might result in death).
 - b. Mordecai's response: NOT speaking up might result in death.
 - i. Note how Mordecai rushes to God's providential care: "Deliverance (for the Jews) will arise from somewhere else if you do not speak."
 - ii. Chinese word for crisis: "danger + opportunity."
3. The courage we need in life (12-17)
 - a. Mordecai reasons that all of Esther's preparation--her whole life--has occurred in order that God might use her influence in this solitary moment.
 - b. Esther is convinced: I will act, and "If I perish, I perish." Now, go and pray for me.

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #1, above: Mordecai mourned loudly over a "potential loss." The loss that he was worried about never actually came to pass. What potential losses are you facing today? How might God use fasting and prayer to change the situation? Mordecai mourned "loudly and publicly" for his people. Do you ever do that? Why, or why not? How can we pray for you?
2. Based on #2, above: Esther had convinced herself that it was too dangerous to act. But Mordecai showed her that it was too dangerous to NOT act. Identify a "crisis" in your life and answer this question: "After rushing to God's providence, and fasting and praying, is it time to "not say something," or "to say something"? (Reminder: it's not ALWAYS time to speak.)
3. Based on #3, above: When we start with God's providence, we are free to act without fear. Esther knew that death was a real possibility, but she did not let that stop her from courageous obedience. How has God positioned you for effective influence, "for such a time as this"? Are you ready to speak up even if it means laying your life on the line? Why or why not?