

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Living out the gospel with
one another in our homes

Date: 02/25/24

Sermon: Ted Rastatter

Text: Esther 4 - Times of Testing

Questions: Ted

All of us are tested. In chapter 4 Esther is challenged by Mordecai with the greatest test of her life. Will she be silent and conceal who she really is or will she identify herself with God's people and plead to the king for their salvation, which could also be a death sentence for her (4:11)? Mordecai saw a sovereign hand behind the circumstances that allowed Esther to rise to the position she held, saying in verse 14, *"And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"*

The sermon was organized around the way believers can act in the world when we are confronted with evil around us: Public Repentance (1-4), Revealing truth to the world (5-11), Responding faithfully (12-17).

Discussion:

1. How should Mordecai's public repentance present us with a model for repenting and lamenting? What types of things should we be crying out to God about? Why are we so tempted to stay quiet?
2. Mordecai's public witness revealed the genocidal plan to Esther. Jesus created the church to be a preserving and revelatory witness in the world (Matt. 5:13-16, 1 Tim. 3:15). This revelation caused a crisis for Esther. Imagine together what her temptations might have been. How can we relate to her temptations?
3. What do we learn about God's plan and our participation in it from the beginning of verse 14 *"For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish."*?

Group Exercise: Relational Map

1. Many of us attended the Gospel Conversations time on Saturday. One of the most beneficial parts was simply thinking and asking the Holy Spirit to show us the people in our lives who are far from God. Have everyone take a sheet of paper and help each other complete their own personal relationship map.

- a. The crucial questions to ask when you are done with your map is: Do I care enough about these people to start praying for them consistently? Do I care enough about them to share the gospel with them.
- b. This is a great way for us to stop thinking about ourselves and thinking about others. Commit to encouraging one another in these relationships.