

Esther Series – When Crisis Comes Esther 4:1-17
Dave Shepardson, Calvary Chapel Nuevo / wordbymail.com

We began the Book of Esther looking at this word “providence.” This is a massive word, and it’s the word we started with. In fact, in our first message, specifically on providence, we used the key verse of the book of Esther, which we’ll get to here today.

Back in Chapter 1, we met the worst role model of a man, maybe the worst male role model in the Bible, and certainly the worst role model of a king. His name was Ahasuerus and he epitomizes pride, arrogance, and pompousness – all things that women don’t know that much about; but all those things that men just *are* by nature. Man, this guy Ahasuerus is just an idiot, plus he’s really easily influenced by both alcohol and anger.

So we’ve got a prideful, arrogant, pompous king who’s easily influenced by alcohol, by his own anger, and by his “advisers” around him. And he decides to throw the world’s largest party. In the first chapter he throws a six-month bash, at the end of which he has a seven-day all-out rave, where he makes two very bad decisions – one from alcohol and one from anger. Those two bad decisions set up the need for a new queen, because Queen Vashti gets banished.

In chapter 2 all the young women are gathered up. Forget the idea that this is a beauty pageant. This is no beauty pageant. This was a forced roundup of all the virgins in the Persian kingdom. It’s not pretty.

One of those young women was a young Jewess named Esther. She was rounded up and she was dolled up. All of these young girls were taken to the king one night at a time. It’s really disgusting, honestly, and as worldly as that is, God was at work in the midst of it. Through that Esther became a queen. That’s God at work. God gives her favor and she becomes a queen.

Esther has an older cousin and this cousin’s name is Mordecai. Mordecai had raised Esther and Mordecai gets some type of position at the king’s gate. First, Mordecai thwarts an assassination attempt of the king which is going to come back in his benefit. But then there’s only one guy in the book that is more prideful, more arrogant, and more pompous than King Ahasuerus. His name is Haman. When I say “Haman,” you go “Boo.” That’s what they do when they read it in Purim.

Haman is worse than King Ahasuerus and Mordecai refuses to bow down to Haman. Haman gets upset that Mordecai won’t bow down to him but instead of wanting to just kill Mordecai, Haman decides to annihilate the entire Jewish race. This is a huge deal.

Remember that King Ahasuerus (who is easily influenced) is influenced (as we got to the end of chapter 3) into signing an irrevocable decree – an irreversible law – that on a certain day in the following year, every Jew in the Persian Kingdom would be killed,

would be annihilated, would be wiped out. This is a huge kingdom which includes the land of called Canaan which is the Jew's land – Jerusalem and all of the land of Canaan.

We closed the last time we taught Esther with that irreversible order for all the Jews to be annihilated on a certain day.

Let's pray.

Father God, we need clarity and focus. Lord, I need to say what needs to be said and not what doesn't need to be said. We need to hear from you. There's a crisis coming in the Book of Esther. There's a crisis coming in some of our lives. There's a crisis on the horizon in Esther and there's a crisis on a horizon in some of our lives. Some of us are in it, some of us have been in it, and some of us will be in it.

We pray, Lord, that you would teach each of us – each and every one – the lessons, Lord, that you have for us illustrated in this Chapter of Esther about how you call us to respond when crisis looms on the horizon, Lord. Show us from Your Word. We pray in Jesus' name, amen. Praise the Lord.

The situation in Esther Chapter 4: impending tragedy. It's just months away. It's a great crisis on the horizon. Things have been set in motion that are going to bring great harm and great destruction. Maybe you've never faced the annihilation of your race, but probably you've faced a crisis in your life. There's probably been a time or there is now a time or there will be a time when you see crisis come in like clouds on the horizon and you don't know what to do about it.

That's where Mordecai and Esther are today. Maybe you're there today, too. I believe that Esther chapter 4 speaks illustratively to what we are called to do and how we are called to respond when we know the storm is coming and when the crisis is here. When we look up and say, "Lord, the sky is dark. What do I do?" What should we be doing? What should our response be when we see a great crisis on the horizon of our own lives?

I want to share with you the answers before I teach. I don't normally do that. How long is it been since I've given a three-point sermon outline? I don't remember (unless I stole one from Warren Wiersbe once) I don't do three-point outlines; I just don't. I just teach through it. I believe in one point. But this message just came with three points and there are steps, if you will. They're an answer all together to what I believe God calls us to when we're facing a crisis.

Here are the three points that I believe are the answer to how we should respond to a great crisis in our lives. Here they are:

- 1) We must come humbly and submissively before our God.
- 2) We must seek him above all else, especially above all else in this world.
- 3) We must firmly resolve to do what's right.

That's what I believe God wants us to see in Esther chapter 4 today. There's a great crisis coming. For the race of the Jews, their annihilation is eminent. Facing this crisis, Mordecai and eventually Esther – which makes us relate to Esther kind of like we relate to Peter when we see how long it takes Esther to really get it today – but eventually Mordecai and Esther and the Jews do this three things. They come humbly and submissively before their God. They earnestly seek him above all else and Esther, especially, firmly resolves to do what's right no matter what.

That's a recipe for how we can stand against the storms in our life, how we can stand against the crisis in our lives. This is what I believe we're called to do.

Esther 4:1 ***“When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes (underline those key words, “sackcloth and ashes”), and went out into the midst of the city, and he cried out with a loud and bitter cry. he went up to the entrance of the king’s gate, for no one was allowed to enter the king’s gate clothed in sackcloth.”***

The crisis looming on the horizon is the annihilation of over 10 million Jews at the time – estimates are 10-12 million Jews in the Persian kingdom. An irrevocable decree had been signed that on a certain day, every single one of them was to be killed. That's a big coming crisis, wouldn't you say?

That's an overwhelming coming crisis and that's good because that means you can't say, “Well, yeah, sure. The annihilation of the Jewish race. But I have really big problems.” So if your crisis is no bigger than the annihilation of an entire race, then Esther chapter 4 applies to you. It applies to your crisis; it applies to what you're going through. That's why it's so big – to make sure that it applies to you.

First and foremost we see Mordecai coming humbly and submissively before God. This action of sackcloth and ashes is an action of great grief and of great repentance, and what we see Mordecai doing here is actually getting his heart right. To put on sackcloth and ashes all throughout the Bible is a sign of mourning, of repentance, and a sign of a prayer of deliverance for God. It's understanding who God is and who we are not.

The Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words defines it best. This book says, “Mourning in sackcloth and ashes is showing our humility and submission to our Holy God.” That's why the first step is for us to come humbly and submissively to our God because that's the picture. Remember that the Old Testament teaches by illustration what the New Testament teaches by theology. Here in sackcloth and ashes, we see Mordecai coming to

God just humbly and submitting to a sovereign God, grieving, mourning, and lamenting – as when Christians grieve. We grieve.

The Bible doesn't say we will be protected or shielded from grief. In fact, Jesus promises us tribulation in John 16:33. But instead, what we have is we have a God who will meet us there if we'll come to him right – if we'll come to him in sackcloth and ashes, if we'll come to him humbly and submissively, if we'll come to him recognizing who is the Almighty, Holy and Sovereign God and who is the ashes. Get it?

This is about us coming correctly to God – not shaking our fist, not demanding things, not expecting what we want from God, but saying, “God. You are God. You're sovereign. You know all. You're able to do all. I'm nothing but ashes. What am I before God? I come humbly to you, God. I recognize, in reverent fear, your holiness and your sovereignty.”

That's how we have to come to God – not with a bad attitude. Don't you see that our relationship with God is based on our heart being made right? That's the first step: coming humbly and submissively in sackcloth and ashes, recognizing our lowly state and understanding who God is. That step one.

It's always step one in salvation. Don't you realize that the recognition that you're a sinner and you deserve the wrath of God is the first step to you being saved? In fact, you can't be saved until you recognize the need for God to judge your sin because if you don't recognize that, you don't think you need a Savior because you'll think you're all that – until the Bible gets through to you and you recognize that God should squash you like a bug for your sin and then you understand your need for a Savior. That's step one.

So Mordecai immediately is in this correct heart condition. Esther 4:3 ***“And in every province, wherever the king's command and his decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and many of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.”***

This means that the many of these Jews have found the right place before God where they're humbly and submissively crying out to God in a correct posture before God. They knew what needed to be done. Mordecai had come up to king's gate (verse 2 said) in this mourning condition because he needed to talk to Esther. He needed to make sure that Esther knew, but no one could come inside the palace courtyard in mourning. In fact it was normal even far before now (all the way back to Joseph) that kings during these times were known to execute people just for looking sad in their presence.

Warren Wiersbe says that “Kings lived in an artificial paradise that sheltered them from the realities of life.” Have you ever known somebody who has chosen to live sheltered from the realities of life? “Just don't tell me about it and it won't exist.”

So Mordecai couldn't come into the king's palace area even. We read in Esther 4:4 ***“When Esther's young women and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed. She sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them.”***

This is the first hint that Esther isn't getting it. “Oh, Mordecai must be upset about something. Give him some new clothes quick. Give him a quick bath so that the king doesn't see him sad.” Hey, Esther. Is there a chance that there's something more serious going on here? Is there a chance that it's something besides Mordecai being dressed poorly?

Verse 5 ***“Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was.”*** When Mordecai wouldn't accept the new clothes and the cleanup, she says to Hathach, her eunuch, her attendant, “Go see what his problem is.”

Have you ever noticed that sometimes when we're really in the midst of a crisis, God uses someone else to point it out to us? Have you ever been in the midst of something really bad and just be living in complete denial? I should rephrase that. Have you ever known someone *hypothetically* living in denial of an impending crisis in their life? I know some people like that. Esther is like that. She doesn't recognize her true condition. She's living in a false world. She's trapped in an ivory tower. There's a major crisis about to come down on her life and she's pretending like nothing's happening.

And so Mordecai is going to exhort her. He's going to help her. He's the mouthpiece of the Lord to say, “Hey, this is what's really going on in the world around you.”

Esther 4:6 he begins to help her come to grips with the truth. ***“Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, and Mordecai told him*** (because he couldn't get to Esther) ***all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews.”*** Remember that's an absurd amount of money that Haman offered if he could just kill all the Jews.

Verse 8 ***“Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther*** (here's the proof, this is the situation you're in, this is the crisis that's befallen you) ***and explain it to her and command her to go to the king to beg his favor and*** (look closely) ***plead with him on behalf of her people.”***

There's a subtle little note there. Mordecai says through Hathach to Esther, “Hey, these are your people that are about to be killed.” And he's going to get even more personal here in just a minute. So Esther's about to get a good dose of what it's like outside the harem, if you will.

Mordecai tells Hathach the whole story, gives him proof, tells him even about the money, and then sends him back to Esther. Mordecai needs Esther to join him in this. Don't we need the people who are in the crisis with us to join us in it? It's not okay to live like the crisis isn't occurring. There is a correct response, but just laughing it up isn't the right way.

They say that during the Black Plague in Europe, people were just caught up in revelry, in frivolous living, in high living as they called it. While a third of the country was falling dead to the Black Plague, people were living as if it wasn't occurring. Mordecai needs Esther not to do that. Esther's not in the sackcloth and ashes place yet, but Mordecai's going to help her get there.

Hathach comes and he tells Esther the real issue, and Esther has a little concern of her own – we should say a concern *for* her own.

Esther 4:9. ***“And Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. Then Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to go to Mordecai and say (verse 11), ‘All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days.’”***

Esther may not understand the true condition – even her true condition in this crisis – but she understands one thing. There's a law that says that if somebody approaches the inner courts of the king without being summoned by him, there is but one law – that that person is put to death. This helps the king with unwanted interruption. A king doesn't want to be interrupted so he passes a law that says, “If you come to my inner courts without me calling you, I'm going to kill you. I'm just going to have you killed – dropped dead – right on the spot.”

Unless, for some reason, the king holds out the golden scepter and instead of saying, “Off with their head,” he holds out the scepter, which means two things. Number one, you get to live; and number two, you get to speak. So before you speak, the king decides whether you live or die if you go into his presence uncalled for.

The other thing that Esther lets Mordecai know is, “There's one other little problem. The king hasn't called for me in 30 days.” Now we know from getting to know this king (and what's incorrectly called a beauty pageant) we know this king doesn't like to sleep alone, and he wasn't sleeping alone. And he wasn't calling for Esther. That means she had probably fallen out of favor with the king, which greatly increases her chances of not receiving the scepter but receiving the sword instead. So she is trying to tell Mordecai, “I understand, but I've got some problems my own, okay?” Here's where they're at.

Mordecai is going to help Esther get into the right place in this crisis. Do you see that she's having a little trouble coming along? Do you see that Mordecai and the Jews are in sackcloth and ashes, humbly and submissively crying out to God, and Esther still living in the ivory tower?

This describes the world around us. Don't we need sometimes for someone to just shake us and go, "you don't understand, man. You are in deep trouble and you're acting like everything's okay. It's not okay. You've got to get your heart in the right place so that you can accurately and adequately address God about it."

Finally in Mordecai's response *now*, Esther is going to hear the words, eventually, that are the key to this entire book. And when she hears the key verse of the book finally, her heart is going to be brought to the right place. She gets there. It just takes a little bit of encouragement.

It starts in Esther 4:12 ***"And they told Mordecai what Esther had said. Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, 'Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews.'"*** (That's bringing it home, right?)

This is coming to your door, Esther. This is on you. This is personal. Don't think your ivory tower is going to protect you and your position is going to make you immune. In other words, it's time to wake up and smell the coffee, Esther. This cloud's coming to your life, too. And then Mordecai is going to make this incredibly faithful comment.

This is a guy who we originally described as marginally faithful. Do you remember that? We said the Persians can't even tell that Mordecai and Esther are Jews. That means they're not worshipping the God of Israel on a regular basis like Daniel and his friends were. Everybody (the Babylonians) all knew that Daniel and his buddies were Jewish, but Mordecai and Esther – they don't even know because they're really not outwardly worshippers of the God of Israel. But watch. When this comes up, watch the incredible faith that Mordecai has developed.

Here's the lesson: *crisis is often the catalyst that deepens our faith*. That's a big enough lesson. Crisis is often the catalyst that deepens our faith. Don't pray for crisis. But God is at work in it, and it is often the catalyst that deepens your faith. And so often people in some way thank God for the crisis he's brought them through because of what it's done in their faith.

So Mordecai makes this great statement of faith. We're headed to the key sentence. Esther 4:14 ***"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."*** Suddenly, Mordecai is a prophet. Now that's a serious statement of faith. That's providence. It's a great statement of faith, but it's also a very serious warning to Esther.

Mordecai says, “Listen, cuz (they are cousins), you're not going to stop God. God will bring deliverance for his people. Since Abraham, God has brought deliverance for his people, and you are not going to stop that. But you have a choice. You have a choice to either join God in his deliverance of his people or rebel and reject his call on your life. You have that choice, but there are consequences to the choice.” That’s what he’s telling Esther. “You can back out; you can bail out; you can wimp out. But there are consequences. Don’t think there’s not.”

Fortunately, I’ve wimped out a number of times and God hasn’t killed me – yet. But Mordecai makes it clear to Esther, “you have the choice to not join God where he’s working, but there’s a consequence to the choice. You have a choice to be used by God or you have a choice to reject him. And if you allow him to use you, it will be the greatest purpose for your life. If you reject it, there will be consequences.” It sounds very ominous, but that’s what it says.

We need to understand one thing. God does not need us for anything – not for one little thing. Sometimes we stand up here and we say, “Oh, we need help,” or “We need this,” or “We need this.” God doesn’t need anything from us – nothing. If we don’t praise him, the rocks will. If we don’t respond to his call, he’ll raise a donkey to do our job and he’ll do it better.

God doesn’t need you and he doesn’t need me. But here’s the good news: in God’s providence, he invites us to join him where he’s working. God has a plan and a purpose and it’s a good one, and he’s inviting you to join him in that plan, to join him in his purpose, and to join him in the work that he is doing. He gives you the choice to do that or to reject it and if you do it, it will be the highest reason for you to wake up in the morning, for you to take your next breath, to be used by God.

By the way, it’s right where you're at. Don’t think for a second, “God, if you’ll just change all my circumstances, then you can use me. If you’ll just make everything like I want it, then you can use me.” No, that’s not how God works. God has you in the place that you’re in for a purpose that is his and his alone. He has a plan for the place that you're in that’s his and his alone. You either join him in that plan or you reject him, but that’s your only choice. It occurs right where you're at.

Mordecai is exhorting Esther to join God in the work that he wants to do in and through her life. I would exhort us to do the same thing. Join God where he’s working and I promise you where he’s working is where you find yourself. No other place. The other place he’s working, he’s already got somebody else there. He’s got you where you’re at because he’s doing a work right there.

Second half of Verse 14, Mordecai drops the providence hammer. I love that. Mordecai says to Esther (and the Holy Spirit says to you), “***And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?***”

Esther, what if this is why you're queen? What if this is why you went through that horrible excuse for a beauty pageant? What if this is why you found favor? What if this is why you are in this position you are in? What if God has you where you're at for a purpose that he has right where you're at? What if you have the opportunity to join God today, right now? What if you have come to this place in your life for such a time as this? What if you're in this place for a purpose that God had that you can't know?

It's true for Esther. It's true for us. God works in every one of our lives. Remember that the whole book of Esther is all about God's providence. God's providence we defined (in the first message) as God's provision and his involvement, which includes his guidance and his direction, in the events of your life.

Does that mean that God makes everything in your life happen? No, he does not. God is not the author of sin and the effects of this sin fallen world in your life. God is not to blame for it. If anything, Adam is; sin definitely is; the ruler of this world is. But God is not.

But here's the miraculously thing about a sovereign God. he can take the free will of a fickle, human, sin-natured person in a world (a cosmos) that's whirling around that person that's driven by the ruler of the earth, and God can bring his good purpose and his good plan to pass right in the midst of it.

God can bring his good purpose and his good plan to pass right in the midst of the crisis that you find yourself in. It is not too big for God. It's not beyond God. You can meet God right where you're at and he can use you right where you're at. You can be part of his plan and his purpose right where you're at.

What if, indeed, God has brought you to this place for such a time as this? What if this is the time? What if this is the place? What if there's an eternal plan that's unfolding and he's calling you to be part of it? What now? The most amazing thing about God's providence is that he uses his people to accomplish his purpose. That's amazing – hat God would use you in the midst of where you're at after all you've been through, that he would still use you to accomplish his eternal plan and his purpose. Who knows whether you have not come to this place for such a time as this? Don't forget that, please. That's the key verse in the book of Esther and it works on Esther.

Esther finally joins the problem. Esther finally joins Mordecai in the problem and she's finally ready for step two. Remember that step one was to humbly and submissively come before your God.

Step two is to earnestly seek God above all else. It's illustrated for us in the picture of fasting. Esther 4:15, "***Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai*** (this is a solemn resolve), "***Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf,***

and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do.”

Just as sackcloth and ashes pictures coming before God in humility and in submission, fasting pictures a concentrated in a humble position of recognizing that above all else, we need God. Above all else in this world, we need God. Above our physical needs, we need God. Above our food, we need God.

Job says, “I long for your word more than my necessary food.” Fasting is an act that is not religious routine. It does not earn you anything in and of itself. It puts you in place where you say, “I need God more than I need food. I need God to work in my life more than I need the things of this world – more than I need materials things, more than I need things of the flesh.”

It is a process by which we remind ourselves that the things of this world aren't what we need, but it's the things of God that we need. So we practice that by crucifying the things of this world so that every time the hunger pain strikes you say, “God, I need you more. I need you above all else. I need you above everything in this world. I need you, Lord. I need you more than my necessary food.”

Fasting is about earnestly seeking God above everything else. Do you know that? Fasting puts you in a place to help you understand that you need God more than anything in this world, including food. We need God alone, so please see this as I build this up. You come humbly and submissively to God.

“God, you alone are God. I'm only ashes. I need you more than anything else. I need you more than my necessary food. I need you in this situation, God. I don't need your answer; I need you. I don't need your blessing; I need you. I don't need you to change my circumstance; I need you. I need you, God. I need you more than anything else.” Do you get it?

God teaches us in the Old Testament by illustration, by picture. The sackcloth and ashes is humbly and submissively coming to God; the fasting is recognizing our need for God above all else. Every crisis, every storm on the horizon, every urgency, every life-threatening situation. This is a good way to respond – the best way. To recognize who we are before God and to recognize our need for him above all else.

I just need to say for you theologians, yes, the word “prayer” is not here. I know. The name of God is not here. I know. But we already dealt with that. The writer of Esther has purposefully shown God and how he works without naming his name and without specific references to him because the writer is trying to convey the truth of providence. This is how God works.

Whether you name his name or not, he's still in control. Whether you join him or not, he's still God. Whether you cry out to him or not, he's still there. That's the picture the writer was trying to paint, so I believe that's why he leaves out the references to the name of God and specific references to prayer. Instead, he shows us these pictures of our spiritual condition where we're called to come humbly in sackcloth and ashes before God and we're called to cry out to him above all else when a great crisis come to our lives.

Have I ever told you that repetition is the mother of learning? Hear it, please. Number one, when great crisis comes into your life, you've got to come humbly and submissively to God. Not, "How could you, God?" Not, "Why did you do this to me?" Christians should be dropping dead all over the country. So many Christians say, "How could you do this to me, God?" I mean, if I were God... Praise God I'm not.

Number one; come humbly and submissively before your God. Understand who is God and who is ashes. That's the picture – sackcloth and ashes.

Number two, you've got to earnestly seek him above all else. That's the picture of fasting and implied prayer. Finally, we see the third step in which Esther firmly resolves to do what's right and leave the consequences up to God. Do you hear me? Come humbly and submissively to him, seek him above all else and then firmly resolve to do what's right no matter what comes.

Esther 4:16 At the very end Esther, after humbly and submissively coming before God and after fasting to recognize her need for God above all else, says, ***"Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish."***

That's what my son told me when I said, "I'm proud of you, but I really want you to come home." he basically said to me, "Dad, I'm called to this. If I don't come home, I don't come home." I'm like, "Time out, man. Who taught you that? We've got to review your theology, man." Where is the prosperity teaching when I need it?

If I perish, I perish. This life is a vapor. Your relationship with God is eternal; this life is a vapor. If I come before God, if I seek him above everything else, and if I make a firm resolve to do what right, and if I perish, I perish – so be it. That's what Esther is saying. "I will go to the King, and if I perish, I perish." Don't you know that's the greatest peace – the greatest resolve?

I was listening to Pastor Chuck on the radio and he told a story about this guy in his church that he and his wife, Kay, knew was crazy. He knocked on the door one night (I've had this happen – not this whole story, but at least the beginning of it). A crazy guy knocks on the door and says, "Get in the car with me." Everybody knows that the guy's unstable and Chuck says, "Okay." he looks at Kay and she's shaking her head, "No, no, no." he turns to whisper to Kay and she says, "Don't do it. Something bad is going to happen." Chuck says, "No. I have to do it."

So he goes and sits in the car. As soon as he sits in the car, the guy pulls out a 45 and holds it to his head. Chuck says, “The first thing I thought was ‘Kay is a prophetess.’” And she is. The guy pulls the trigger. “Click!” and he pulls the trigger again. “Click!” and then he sets the gun down. He says to Chuck, “I took out the firing pin. I just wanted to see how you’d face death.” Now that guy is an idiot. But do you know what? Chuck’s like, “Okay, bring it. If this is it, then bring it.”

I’m not there yet.

There’s peace and there’s confidence when you say, “I’ve come before God, I’ve recognized my need for him, and I’ve firmly resolved to do what’s right whatever the consequences are.” That’s our job – come humbly and submissively before God, earnestly seek him above all and else in this world, and firmly resolve to do what’s right.

If we will do that, God will meet us in our crisis. If we will do that, God will provide for us in our crisis. And here’s what I want you to hear more than anything else. If we will do that, God will make us victorious in our crisis no matter what the outcome of the crisis is. If we will come to him humbly, seek him above all else, and firmly resolve to do what’s right, he will meet us, he will provide for us, and he will make us victorious *no matter what the outcome is*.

Let’s pray.

God, you don’t want to make our circumstances right, Lord. You want to use our circumstances to make us right. Your purpose is not to make our circumstances right. It’s to be at work in the midst of our circumstances, Lord, for your plan and for your purpose. And, Lord, you invite us to join you in that and today we say we will. We’ll join you in your purpose, Lord. We’ll humbly come before you. We’ll seek you above all else.

We’ll firmly resolve to join you where you’re working and to do what is right and allow you to sort out the consequences, God. Give us that resolve, Lord. Give us that resolve, God. Give us that resolve, Lord. We pray in Jesus’ name, amen.