

**Sermon Title:** Burning Bushes: The Stage  
**Scripture Reading:** Esther 4

**There's a work for you to do in your generation that builds on what God has already done, accomplishes what God wants to do right now, & sets up the work He's going to do in the future.**

**The moment has historical, cultural, geographical, & seasonal elements.**

This is what happened during the time of Xerxes, the Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush: <sup>2</sup> At that time King Xerxes reigned from his royal throne in the citadel of Susa, <sup>3</sup> and in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials. The military leaders of Persia and Media, the princes, and the nobles of the provinces were present.

Esther 1:1-3

**The moment is filled with opposition & opportunity.**

In the twelfth year of King Xerxes, in the first month, the month of Nisan, the *pur* (that is, the lot) was cast in the presence of Haman to select a day and month. And the lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar.

<sup>8</sup> Then Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. <sup>9</sup> If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents of silver to the king's administrators for the royal treasury."

<sup>10</sup> So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. <sup>11</sup> "Keep the money," the king said to Haman, "and do with the people as you please."

Esther 3:7-11

***We don't have to force the moment:***

**Every day** he walked back and forth near the courtyard of the harem to find out how Esther was and what was happening to her.

Esther 2:11

When the virgins were assembled a second time, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate. <sup>20</sup> But Esther had kept secret her family background and nationality just as Mordecai had told her to do, for she continued to follow Mordecai's instructions as she had done when he was bringing her up. <sup>21</sup> During the time Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Xerxes. <sup>22</sup> But Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. <sup>23</sup> And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were impaled on poles. All this was recorded in the book of the annals in the presence of the king.

Esther 2:19-23

*“God never hurries. There are no deadlines against which He must work. Only to know this is to quiet our spirits and relax our nerves.”*

A.W. Tozer. The Pursuit of God

***We don't have to run from the moment:***

That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. <sup>2</sup> It was found recorded there that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes.

Esther 5:1-2

**The moment requires a sober mind, a prophetic voice, a discerning eye, & a courageous heart.**

***A sober mind:***

When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. <sup>2</sup> **But** he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. <sup>3</sup> In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

<sup>4</sup> When Esther's eunuchs and female attendants came and told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but **he would not accept them.**

***A prophetic voice, discerning eye, & courageous heart:***

Hathak went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. <sup>10</sup> Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, <sup>11</sup> “All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king.”

<sup>12</sup> When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, <sup>13</sup> he sent back this answer: “Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. <sup>14</sup> 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 4:9-14

**The moment requires God being God & you being you.**

<sup>14</sup> 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?**”

***There's a work God has for you that **only you can do.*****

Now when David had **served God's purpose in his own generation**, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed.

Acts 13:36

**The people of God rise to meet the moment by **seeking God's wisdom & favor:****

Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: <sup>16</sup>“Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.” <sup>17</sup> So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions.

Esther 4:15-17

**The people of God rise to meet the moment by acting in line with **the character of God & the content of their prayers:****

On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance.

Esther 5:1

“If it pleases the king,” she said, “and if he regards me with favor and thinks it the right thing to do, and if he is pleased with me, let an order be written overruling the dispatches that Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, devised and wrote to destroy the Jews in all the king's provinces. <sup>6</sup> For how can I bear to see disaster fall on my people? How can I bear to see the destruction of my family?”

Esther 8:5-6

The king's edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves; to destroy, kill and annihilate the armed men of any nationality or province who might attack them and their women and children, and to plunder the property of their enemies.

Esther 8:11

When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”

Esther 4:16

**Esther risked her life to fulfill the purposes of God; **Jesus gave His life.****

*5 Diagnostic Questions for The Moment:*

*What are some **historical, cultural, geographical, & seasonal** elements shaping how we see, understand, & relate to God, ourselves, others, & our community?*

*What are the current **oppositions** to the purposes of God being fulfilled?*

*What are the current **opportunities** for the purposes of God to be fulfilled?*

*How do they personally and uniquely **affect me**?*

*How can I personally and uniquely affect them?*