



DEFINING MOMENTS

(**Esther 4**)

History indicates that there were approximately 15 million Jews scattered throughout the Medo-Persian Empire when Xerxes was king, when Esther was his queen, and Haman was his chief advisor. And, as we saw in our study of Esther 3, because of Xerxes' perverse callousness toward the life and death of others, coupled with Haman's passionate hatred for the Jews, a royal edict was issued throughout the kingdom that every Jew must die. In other words, total annihilation of God's Chosen People! This "**crossroad**" experience for the Israeli nation became the **defining moment** of Esther's life. For us, as followers of Jesus, each day holds crossroad experiences. Granted, they may not be quite so dramatic in scope as this one in Esther, but when added together, they become our defining moments. The question becomes, when the Lord brings us to these places and times, how will we respond? What we do in these defining moments determines who we genuinely are becoming. **Esther 4** offers us all great hope, because it shows us how a spiritually flawed woman of questionable motives, certainly no paragon of virtue, managed to redefine her life with God when circumstances put her to the ultimate test. Queen Esther will help us see **who** Jesus wants us to be, and **what** Jesus wants us to do, as He brings about our own defining moments.

AT THE CROSSROAD OF DISASTER

(**4:1-3**)

THE NEED OF THE HOUR

(**4:4-8**)

THE HESITANCY OF FEAR

(**4:9-12**)

MORDECAI'S HUGE DOSE OF REALITY

(**4:13-14**)

ESTHER'S DEFINING MOMENT

(**4:15-17**)

TODAY'S TAKEAWAYS

1. God's Plan includes ...
2. God's Power can change ...
3. God's Promise can make your faith ...

FOR THOUGHT & TALK

In your small group take 5-10 minutes to review the main points of Pastor John's message. Discuss the following questions, taking your time as the Spirit leads, realizing you don't have to cover them all.

1. **Esther 4** depicts a huge crossroad in the lives of Mordecai and Esther. What exactly is that crossroad? How are they different in this chapter from the previous three? How does this crossroad experience expand into a defining moment for them both in terms of their faith in God, their willingness to express that faith to others, and their commitment to act upon that faith?
2. Although not as dramatic or broad in scope as Esther, the truth is, our faith has crossroad experiences that become defining moments for us on an almost daily basis. What are some of your crossroad experiences as of late? Why do you think the Lord brought these situations to you? What life lessons is He trying to teach you about who He is, and what He wants to help you become, from the defining moments happening in your life?
3. What are the qualities you see in Mordecai, from this chapter, that you want to see more of in your own life? When it comes to Esther, can you identify with her initial hesitancy to act, out of fear, over the King's possible reaction? Similarly, what are the qualities you see in Esther that you would like to see more of in yourself?
4. Our God, according to the example of **Esther 4:14**, is all about **relief and deliverance**. Read these verses aloud ...
John 16:33 – *In this world you'll have trouble, but take courage; I have overcome the world. In Me you will find peace.* **2 Corinthians 1:9** – *Indeed, it seems like God Himself has been telling us we are going to die. Yet, this is so that we will not trust in ourselves but in God, who raises the dead!* **Isaiah 43:2** – *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you. When you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.*
 What do they tell us about God's **relief and deliverance** plans? How have you experienced Him relieving you and delivering you? Are you willing to be the person God uses to bring relief and deliverance to someone else? What is the cost of doing this and what are the joys of doing this?

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