

LESSON 6

Esther: For Such a Time as This

Esther 4:10–17

If you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will come to the Jewish people from another place, but you and your father's family will be destroyed.

Who knows, perhaps you have come to your royal position for such a time as this.

Esther 4:14

Class Overview: Esther's story is a clear example of God's providence in Scripture. Although His name is never mentioned in the book, His presence is seen in every detail—from Esther's rise to the throne to her act of bravery before the king. When a decree threatened to annihilate her people, she faced a crucial decision: stay silent and stay safe, or risk everything to speak out. Mordecai's challenge still resonates today: "*Who knows, perhaps you have come to your royal position for such a time as this.*" This lesson reminds us that God places His people where they are for a reason, and courage often means trusting His unseen plan.

Class Objectives: By the end of this class, you should be able to—

1. Explain the historical background of the Persian Empire and Esther's rise to prominence.
2. Understand how God's providence works even when He seems silent.
3. Identify the choice Esther faced and what gave her the courage to act.
4. Recognize the connection between faith, timing, and obedience.
5. Commit to trusting God's purpose and acting with courage in the place He has positioned you.

Introduction

ESTHER'S STORY IS ONE OF QUIET FAITH AND COURAGEOUS OBEDIENCE. She lived during a time and in a place where God's name was not spoken and His presence seemed hidden, yet His hand guided every detail. When a decree threatened to destroy the Jews, Esther faced a crucial decision: stay silent in comfort or risk her life to speak up for her people. She was an unlikely hero, a young Jewish woman in exile who had become queen in a pagan empire. But when it mattered most, she realized that her position was no accident.

The call that came through Mordecai still speaks to us today: "*Who knows, perhaps you have come to your royal position for such a time as this.*" Those words capture the core of Esther's story. God's providence placed her exactly where she needed to be, and the courage to act was rooted in the faith that He was still at work, even when unseen. In moments of fear and uncertainty, Esther shows us that faith isn't just believing God can act, it's choosing to act because we trust that He will.

Historical Background

The story of Esther takes place during the reign of King Xerxes (Ahasuerus), who ruled the vast Persian Empire from 486 to 465 B.C. His empire extended from India to Ethiopia and included many conquered nations, among them the Jewish exiles who remained in Persia after the Babylonian captivity. Although some Jews returned to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel and Ezra, many, like Esther and Mordecai, chose to stay behind, building new lives in foreign lands.

Esther's story begins at the royal palace in Susa. When Queen Vashti refused to appear before Xerxes at a royal banquet, she was removed from her position, and the king started searching for a new queen. Among the young women brought to the palace was Hadassah, better known by her Persian name, Esther. She was raised by her cousin Mordecai, who advised her to hide her Jewish identity. Through God's providence, Esther gained favor in the king's eyes and was crowned queen.

Years later, Haman, a high-ranking official, rose to power and demanded that everyone bow before him. Mordecai refused, and Haman's pride turned into hatred. When he learned Mordecai was a Jew, he persuaded the king to issue a decree to exterminate all Jews across the empire. Since Persian law could not be revoked once sealed with the king's signet ring, the situation seemed hopeless.

When Mordecai learned of the decree, he sent word to Esther, urging her to go before the king and plead for her people. But there was a problem: anyone who entered the king's presence without being summoned risked death unless the king extended his golden scepter. Esther had not been called to see the king for thirty days, and she knew the danger was real. Her initial hesitation was natural, but Mordecai's message reminded her that her position was not a coincidence. It was providence.

God's name is never referenced in the book of Esther, yet His presence is clear. He arranged events so that Esther was in the right place at the right moment. The story reminds us that God's sovereignty isn't limited by human power or political systems. He can work through unseen means and ordinary people to fulfill His will. Esther's courage to act in faith reminds us that God's purposes always succeed, and that He often calls His people to be part of that purpose, even at great personal cost.

God's Providence Places Us Where We Are Needed Most

When Mordecai sent word to Esther about Haman's decree, her initial reaction was fear. She reminded him that approaching the king without being summoned could cost her life. In human terms, her hesitation made sense. She had no guarantee that the king would listen, nor could she predict the outcome. However, Mordecai's reply shifted her focus from fear to faith: *"If you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will come to the Jewish people from another place... Who knows, perhaps you have come to your royal position for such a time as this"* (Esther 4:14).

Those words reveal the central theme of Esther's story: God's providence. Mordecai didn't mention God by name, but his trust in divine purpose is clear. He believed that God's plan would not fail, even

if Esther remained silent. The salvation of God's people was certain, but Esther had the chance to be part of it. That truth changed everything. Her position was not accidental; it was purposeful. Every event leading up to that moment, her selection as queen, the favor she gained with the king, even her concealment of her identity, had been directed by an unseen hand.

Providence means that God is actively working behind the scenes, directing events toward His purposes even when we cannot see Him. Throughout Scripture, God works through ordinary people in ordinary places to accomplish extraordinary things. Joseph's rise in Egypt, Moses' survival in the Nile, and Ruth's meeting with Boaz all demonstrate that divine coincidence is no coincidence at all. Esther's life follows this same pattern. She didn't seek her throne; God placed her there.

Mordecai's words also present a personal challenge. They remind us that faith is active, not passive. Esther couldn't just hope things would improve; she had to act. God's providence doesn't justify inaction; it calls us to participate. When we see that God has placed us where we are "for such a time as this," we begin to view every situation, our workplace, our relationships, our neighborhood, and our influence as part of His plan.

For Esther, obedience involved risk. To act meant facing danger; to stay silent meant losing the chance to save her people. But faith required her to trust the unseen God. In that moment, she realized that courage grows when we believe more in divine purpose than in personal safety.

The same truth holds today. God still places His people at specific times and places to fulfill His purpose. You may not stand before a king, but you might be in front of someone who needs encouragement, truth, or compassion. God has a way of arranging our lives so that we are exactly where He wants us to be. Like Esther, we often don't realize the purpose until we face a choice that tests our faith.

Mordecai's challenge remains: *Who knows? Maybe you are where you are for such a time as this.* None of us are in our current situation by accident. The jobs we have, the people we influence, and the opportunities before us are all part of a greater plan. God's providence places His servants

exactly where they are most needed. The question is whether we will recognize His hand and respond with faith.

God's Purpose Requires Courage and Faith

When Esther understood how serious Mordecai's message was, she faced a pivotal moment in her life. The choice was simple: stay silent and protect herself, or speak out and risk death. Persia's law was strict: anyone who approached the king without an invitation could be executed unless he extended the golden scepter (Esther 4:11). Esther hadn't seen the king in thirty days. Walking into his throne room uninvited was extremely dangerous. Still, faith called for her to act.

After battling fear, Esther made her decision: *"Go and gather all the Jews in Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My female servants and I will also fast in the same way. After that, I will go to the king even if it is against the law. If I perish, I perish"* (Esther 4:16). With those words, she shifted from hesitation to faith. She didn't know how God would act; she simply trusted that He would.

This is the moment where courage and faith meet. Courage isn't the absence of fear; it is acting despite fear. Esther wasn't naturally brave; she relied on God's strength. Her fasting shows she didn't act on her own initiative. She first turned to the Only One who could grant her favor. True courage is grounded in prayer and dependence, not pride.

When Esther decided to act, her faith did more than change her future; it changed her people's as well. Her choice became the pivotal moment in the entire story. Because of her bravery, Haman's plot was uncovered, the Jewish people were saved, and the day of sorrow turned into a day of celebration. But none of that would have happened if she had chosen comfort over conviction.

God often invites His people to similar moments of faith. We might not face royal courts or death sentences, but we encounter choices that call for courage: standing for truth in a hostile culture, defending the innocent, forgiving those who wrong us, or speaking about Christ when

silence seems safer. Each moment tests whether we will trust God's unseen hand or give in to fear.

Faith does not remove risk; it redefines it. Esther's words, "*If I perish, I perish*," demonstrate complete surrender. She was unsure of the outcome, but she trusted God's sovereignty. That kind of faith depends not on knowing what will happen but on knowing who is in control. Like Esther, we are called to act when obedience calls for courage.

This part of the story also reminds us that courage rarely develops in isolation. Esther surrounded herself with others who fasted and prayed with her. She faced the unknown through community and reliance on God. Likewise, the church today needs people of shared faith who uplift one another during times of trial.

Esther's bravery serves as an example for every disciple. Faith involves trusting God's plan enough to act, even if we don't see how things will turn out. Courage means moving forward in obedience, confident that if God has called us to it, He will be with us every step of the way. Esther's choice to stand before the king was a quiet act of bravery; but in God's plan, that bravery changed history.

God's Providence Works Through Our Obedience

When Esther decided to approach the king, she placed her life entirely in God's hands. Nothing in her plan guaranteed success. She didn't have the power to change the law or the influence to control the outcome. But she had one thing that mattered most: faith in God's providence. Her obedience became the channel through which God's unseen hand brought deliverance.

When she entered the royal court, the moment of truth arrived quickly. The king saw her and extended the golden scepter. That simple gesture of favor was not merely luck; it was divine timing. God had prepared the king's heart long before Esther ever stepped in. From there, the events unfolded with perfect precision: two banquets, the sleepless night that led the king to read the royal records, the discovery of Mordecai's past

loyalty, Haman's downfall, and the eventual deliverance of the Jewish people. Every turn in the story demonstrates God's providence working through one woman's faith.

The book of Esther never mentions God's name, but His presence fills every chapter. The coincidences are too perfect to be random. The story reminds us that God doesn't need to announce Himself to be working. His providence often moves quietly, through decisions, delays, conversations, and even difficulties. While Esther may have felt alone as she entered the king's court, heaven was orchestrating every detail.

This truth offers great encouragement for us today. The uncertainty of our world does not stop God's purposes. He works through simple obedience, the small, faithful steps we take each day. Our job is not to control results but to trust God with them. Esther couldn't see how God would turn Haman's scheme into her people's salvation, but her obedience allowed God's plan to unfold. In the same way, our willingness to act in faith gives God room to show His power.

Obedience also brings peace. After Esther risked everything, she realized that God's faithfulness was enough. The fear that once controlled her heart was replaced by calm resolve. She had done her part and left the outcomes in God's hands. This is the core of faith: trusting that God's plan will succeed even when we cannot see it. As Proverbs 16:9 says, "*A person's heart plans his way, but the Lord determines his steps.*"

For every Christian, the lesson is simple but deep: God's providence works through our obedience, not without it. He could have freed Israel without Esther, but He chose to do it through her. Similarly, He calls us to act, speak, and serve in ways that match His purpose. Our choices matter, not because they change God's will, but because they show our trust in it.

Esther's story ends with celebration, not fear. The people who once faced destruction now rejoice in deliverance. The day of mourning has become the feast of Purim, a yearly reminder that God turns evil into good and that faith-filled obedience can change the course of history. None of this would have happened if Esther had remained silent. God's providence was always at work, but He used her obedience as the spark that ignited redemption.

The same is true for us. The same God who placed Esther in the palace has placed each of us where we are. His providence surrounds us, His Spirit empowers us, and His purposes unfold through our choices. We may not see the end from the beginning, but we can trust the One who does. When we step forward in faith, as Esther did, we become instruments of His hidden, unstoppable plan.

Lesson Summary and Reflection

Esther's story is a masterpiece of God's unseen providence and human obedience. His presence is unmistakable. He was working behind every event, from Esther's rise to the throne to her courageous stand before the king. Her life teaches that faith is not simply believing God can act but trusting that He already is.

First, we understand that *God's providence places us where we are most needed*. Esther did not choose her role or her circumstances; God arranged them. Mordecai's words reminded her, and us, that no one's life is an accident. Every Christian is where they are "for such a time as this." God works through everyday settings, homes, workplaces, friendships, to fulfill eternal purposes.

Second, *God's purpose calls for courage and faith*. Esther faced real danger when she approached the king, but she chose to act anyway. Her words, "*If I perish, I perish*," demonstrate a faith that values obedience above safety. Courage does not eliminate fear; it overcomes it through trust in God's sovereignty. Her fasting showed where her confidence rested, not in human power, but in divine strength.

Third, *God's providence works through our obedience*. When Esther stepped forward in faith, God's hidden plan unfolded perfectly. The king's heart softened, Haman's plot fell apart, and Israel was saved. Each part of the story shows that God uses faithful obedience to carry out His will. He didn't need Esther to act; but He chose to work through her. The same is true for us. Our choices matter because they show faith in His plan.

Even when God seems silent, He is never absent. His providence weaves through our lives in ways we may not notice until later. Like Esther, we

are called to recognize His timing and trust His guidance. Faith means believing that where we are and what we face are part of something larger than ourselves. When we obey, we become partners in the unfolding of God's redemptive plan.

Key Truths

- God's providence is always at work, even when unseen.
- Our position and opportunities are part of God's larger purpose.
- Courageous faith means acting in obedience despite fear.
- God uses the obedience of His people to accomplish His will.
- No situation is beyond God's ability to redeem and use for good.

Conclusion

Esther's life challenges us to live with both courage and conviction. She started afraid, uncertain, and hidden, but through faith, she became a vessel of deliverance for her people. The same God who placed her in the palace has placed each of us where we are. Whether our stage is small or large, His purpose stays the same: to shine His light through our obedience.

You might not see God's hand clearly in your circumstances, but you can trust that it's there. Like Esther, you are part of His story. When you face moments of decision, when faith and fear collide, remember her words: "*If I perish, I perish.*" Faith isn't about predicting the outcome; it's about trusting the One who controls it. And when we act in faith, God moves in ways that change lives and show His glory.

Memory Verse and Weekly Challenge

If you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will come to the Jewish people from another place, but you and your father's family will be destroyed.

*Who knows, perhaps you have come to your royal position
for such a time as this.*

Esther 4:14 (CSB)

God's purposes will always prevail, but He invites us to take part in them. Every Christian is placed in their circumstances by divine design. Courage comes when we recognize that our lives are not accidents; they are opportunities to serve God's purposes.

Weekly Challenge

1. Reflect on Your Position.

Consider where God has placed you, your home, work, school, or community. Ask yourself, "*What purpose might God have for me here, at this time?*"

2. Step Into a Risk of Faith.

Identify one area where fear or hesitation has kept you from doing what you know is right. Pray for courage and take that step this week.

3. Fast and Pray.

Like Esther, set aside focused time to pray for wisdom, courage, and sensitivity to God's timing. Seek His strength before acting.

4. Encourage Another Believer.

Mordecai's words strengthened Esther's faith. Be a "Mordecai" this week—encourage someone who needs to see that God has a purpose for their situation.

5. Thank God for His Hidden Hand.

Spend time in gratitude for the unseen ways God has guided your life. Write down moments where His providence became clear after the fact.

For Discussion

1. When has God worked in your life in ways that you only recognized later?

2. What fears most often hold you back from speaking or acting with courage?

3. How does Esther's example help you trust God's unseen hand in uncertain situations?

4. Who has been a "Mordecai" in your life, i.e., someone who encouraged you to live out your faith courageously?

5. What step of faith might God be calling you to take "for such a time as this"?
