

Changing History
“Unlikely Hero
Esther
Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Question (get everyone involved in discussion):

- Share about a significant moment in your life—where something happened that has shaped the moments that have followed, or someone invest in you in a life-changing way, etc.

Read Esther 2:1-10 and then discuss the following.

- How did Esther end up in Persia (formerly Babylon)?
- Why has she been hiding her identity as a Jew?
- How does Esther rise to a place of influence in the royal court?
- What do you think of the interplay here between the carnality of the king’s search for a queen, and God’s sovereignty in using it to get Esther in a position of influence?

Read Esther 3:2-15 and then discuss the following.

- How does Mordecai capture the attention of Haman, the prime minister? Why does he not just go with the flow?
- What do you notice about the Jewish people in Haman’s words in v. 8? How does this description align with God’s intentions for his people as conveyed throughout the Old Testament story?

Read Esther 4:6-16, and then discuss the following.

- Why does Mordecai reach out to Esther—how is she uniquely qualified to intervene for God’s people?
- Why does Esther express fear in v. 11?
- Why can Mordecai be so confident that “relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place?” (V. 14) What examples from the Old Testament story would inspire this confidence?
 - What does this assertion say about God’s willingness to carry out his purposes with whatever participants are willing to join him?
- One fact that is not readily noticeable to our modern eyes is that Esther’s fast here begins on the first day of Passover. Do you think this is coincidental? Why or why not? What may be the significance of the timing?
- Both uses of the word “time” in v. 14 contain the sense of “kairos” time—an appointed moment of opportunity, or critical moment—as opposed to just chronological time. Why was this moment such a significant one for Esther and her people?

Read Esther 6:1-11 and then discuss the following.

- What do you make of the sequence of events that played out at the palace this night?
- Pastor Josh claimed that there is “an unseen hand, moving along a great drama from just offstage.” Do you agree with that fact, based on this passage? Why or why not?

Read Esther 7:1-10 and then discuss the following.

- What risks has Esther undertaken in advocating for her people here? How could things have turned out differently?
- How is Esther a “type of Christ?” In other words, how does her life foreshadow and shed light on the ultimate rescue that Jesus would bring about? (Leaders, here are various angles to explore: risking one’s life on behalf of her/his people; the Passover Lamb; interceding in the throneroom; having the “gold scepter” extended in favor to you, etc.).
- In what ways was Jesus a “true and greater Esther?”
- Do you believe that God is always eager to extend his favor to you because of the intervention of Jesus?
- On Sunday we learned that our lives are filled with “Kairos” moments—moments of opportunity for eternal impact—and that God is pleased to use us in his work of redemption.
 - What keeps you from noticing those moments of opportunity?
 - Are there some such opportunities that you have missed, or upon which you neglected to act? Do you carry any remorse for those?
 - What moments of opportunity are currently before you, that you’re feeling a nudge to act upon?

Prayer:

- If someone has conveyed a sense of remorse, pray for that to be healed in the grace of God.
- If moments of current opportunity have been mentioned, pray for God’s direction in seizing them.
- What other needs exist in your group? Spend some time praying for them.