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THE HEART OF THE HARVEST



Summary of Esther's Story that we are covering today (Esther 1–4)

- King Xerxes of Persia deposed Queen Vashti after she refused to appear before his banquet guests.
- Esther, a Jewish orphan raised by her cousin Mordecai, was taken into the king's harem
- Mordecai later discovered an assassination plot and saved the king's life through Esther. The event was recorded but Mordecai was not rewarded yet.
- Haman, a wicked official, was promoted. He hated Mordecai because Mordecai refused to bow to him. Haman manipulated the king into signing a decree to destroy all Jews throughout the empire.
- Mordecai mourned publicly. Esther sent word to him, and he urged her to plead with the king for her people.
- Esther was afraid, but Mordecai replied: "Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?"
- Esther called for a three-day fast and prepared to approach the king.

1. Divine Appointment Positions You

You are not where you are by accident. God has strategically placed you for the harvest.

Esther was an orphan in exile, yet she was elevated to the palace and crowned queen. She did not earn her position; God orchestrated every detail. Mordecai helped her see that her comfort was not the goal—her assignment was.

Esther 2:15–17 (NLT) *When the time came for Esther to go to the king, she asked for nothing other than what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the harem, suggested. And Esther won the favor of everyone who saw her. ¹⁶ She was taken to King Xerxes in the royal residence in the tenth month, the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. ¹⁷ The king loved Esther more than any of the other young women. He was so delighted with her that he set the royal crown on her head and declared her queen instead of Vashti.*

Esther 4:14 (NLT) *If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?*

Acts 17:26–27 (NLT) *From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. ²⁷ His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us.*

- God is never named in Esther, yet His hand is visible on every page.
- God often works behind the scenes, positioning His people before the crisis arrives.
- Esther did not know why she was queen, but God knew.
- Your job, school, neighborhood, family, and circle of influence are not random.
- Your position is not just for your comfort. It is for the harvest.
- Identify your mission field.
- Ask: Who has God placed around me?
- Refuse to see your daily environment as ordinary. It is a divine assignment.

2. Preparation Readies You

Before you speak for God, you must seek God. Spiritual preparation precedes spiritual impact.

Esther did not rush into the king's presence. She called for a three-day fast for all the Jews in Susa. She knew approaching the king required more than courage—it required spiritual preparation. She humbled herself and sought God before she opened her mouth.

Slow to speak

James 1:19 (ESV) *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;*

Esther 4:15–17 (NLT) *Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, ¹⁶ "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. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish." ¹⁷ Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.*

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NLT) *Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.*

1 Peter 3:15–16 (NLT) *Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. ¹⁶ But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.*

- Esther's fast was not a hunger strike or manipulation tactic.
- It was desperate dependence on God.
- The decree of death could not be revoked by human means. Esther needed divine intervention.
- Fasting declares that God is more necessary than food, comfort, or life itself.
- Prayer precedes proclamation. Preparation precedes power.
- Pray before you witness.
- Fast for lost family members, coworkers, and friends.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to go before you and soften hearts.
- Evangelism is not a performance—it is a spiritual battle.

3. Compassion Moves You

You cannot reach a harvest you do not love. Evangelism and your Holy Calling begins when your heart breaks for people.

When Mordecai learned of the decree to kill all Jews, he tore his clothes, wept loudly, and mourned. The Jewish community fasted and wailed. Esther was in the palace, but Mordecai sent word to her and urged her to plead for her people. She had to move from palace comfort to compassionate action.

Esther 4:1–3 (NLT) *When Mordecai learned about all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on burlap and ashes, and went out into the city, crying with a loud and bitter wail. ² He went as far as the gate of the palace, for no one was allowed to enter the palace gate while wearing clothes of mourning. ³ And as news of the king's decree reached all the provinces, there was great mourning among the Jews. They fasted, wept, and wailed, and many people lay in burlap and ashes.*

Matthew 9:36 (NLT) *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

Romans 9:1–3 (NLT) *With Christ as my witness, I speak with utter truthfulness. My conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm it. ² My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief ³ for my people, my Jewish brothers and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut off from Christ!—if that would save them.*

The Hebrew word for compassion is *racham*, related to the word for “womb.”

- It describes a deep, gut-level feeling. It's a love that aches physically.
- Esther did not immediately respond with courage; she responded with distress.
- Compassion begins when we refuse to be insulated from the pain around us.
- The harvest is not a statistic. It is PEOPLE.
- Ask God for His heart for the lost and broken
- Pray for one person by name this week.
- Let your heart break over what breaks God's heart.

Conclusion:

- Divine Appointment Positions You. You are placed by God for a purpose.
- Compassion Moves You. You must love people enough to act.
- Preparation Readies You. Prayer and fasting prepare you for spiritual impact.

Esther was positioned, compassionate, and prepared. She models what it means to live ready for the harvest.