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THE HANDS OF THE HARVEST

For Such a Time as This — The Hands of the Harvest

Last week we looked at The Heart of the Harvest and saw three things in Esther's story.

1. Divine Appointment Positions You. You are not where you are by accident. God placed Esther in the palace for a purpose, and He has placed you where you are for the harvest. **Esther 4:14 (NLT)**
2. Preparation Readies You. Before you speak for God, you must seek God. Esther called a three-day fast before she approached the king. Prayer precedes proclamation. **Esther 4:15–17 (NLT)**
3. Compassion Moves You. You cannot reach a harvest you do not love. When Mordecai mourned, Esther had to move from palace comfort to compassionate action. **Esther 4:1–3 (NLT)**

That was the heart of the harvest. This week we look at the hands of the harvest—what it looks like to act on what God has put in your heart. Esther's story is a picture of what it means to:

* speak boldly * act strategically * prioritize truth * leave a legacy of deliverance for generations to come

1: Access Gives You Boldness - Because of Jesus, you have bold access to the King—use it to intercede for others.

Esther approached the king's inner court uninvited. It was illegal, but she found favor. The king extended the golden scepter and said, "What do you want, Queen Esther? I will give it to you, even if it is half the kingdom!" Esther used her access not for herself, but for her people.

Esther 5:1–3 (NLT) *On the third day of the fast, Esther put on her royal robes and entered the inner court of the palace, just across from the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne, facing the entrance. ² When he saw Queen Esther standing there in the inner court, he welcomed her and held out the gold scepter to her. So Esther approached and touched the end of the scepter. ³ Then the king asked her, 'What do you want, Queen Esther? What is your request? I will give it to you, even if it is half the kingdom!'*

Hebrews 4:16 (NLT) *So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.*

Hebrews 10:19–22 (NLT) *And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. ² By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. ³ And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, ⁴ let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.*

1 Timothy 2:1–4 (NLT) *I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. ² Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. ³ This is good and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth."*

Ephesians 3:12 (NLT) *Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence.*

This is a picture of what we have in Christ. We do not approach God on the basis of our own merit. We don't come to Him with a list of our achievements, hoping He'll be impressed. We come on the basis of a relationship. Jesus has opened the way. The curtain has been torn. The throne that was once terrifying is now a throne of grace. And because we have access, we can intercede. Esther did not use her access for herself. She could have asked for riches, for power, for luxury. Instead, she asked for the lives of her people. That is the heart of intercession—using our position before God to plead for the salvation of others. You have access to the King. Do you use it? Do you pray for the lost? Do you intercede for your family, your friends, your community? The most powerful thing you can do for someone who does not know Jesus is to bring their name before the throne of grace. And then, having prayed, you can speak. You can share the gospel with boldness, knowing that you are not alone—the Spirit of God goes with you.

2: Timing Gives You Strategy - Evangelism is not just what you say—it is when and how you say it.

Esther did not blurt out her request at the first banquet. She invited the king and Haman to a second banquet. Then, at the right moment, she revealed the plot and named Haman as the enemy. Her timing was strategic and courageous.

Esther 7:1–6 (NLT) *So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet. ² On this second occasion, while they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, 'Tell me what you want, Queen Esther. What is your request? I will give it to you, even if it is half the kingdom!' ³ Queen Esther replied, 'If I have found favor with the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my request, I ask that my life and the lives of my people will be spared. ⁴ For my people and I have been sold to those who would kill, slaughter, and annihilate us. If we had merely been sold as slaves, I could remain quiet, for that would be too trivial a matter to warrant disturbing the king.' ⁵ 'Who would do such a thing?' King Xerxes demanded. 'Who would be so presumptuous as to touch you?' ⁶ Esther replied, 'This wicked Haman is our adversary and our enemy.' Haman grew pale with fright before the king and queen."*

Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NLT) *For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.*

Colossians 4:5–6 (NLT) *Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone."*

Proverbs 15:23 (NLT) *Everyone enjoys a fitting reply; it is wonderful to say the right thing at the right time!*

Isaiah 50:4 (NLT) *The Sovereign Lord has given me his words of wisdom, so that I know how to comfort the weary. Morning by morning he awakens me and opens my understanding to his will.*

Esther's delay was not indecision. It was strategy. By the time she made her request, the king was eager to hear what she had to say. Notice also that she framed her request wisely. She did not begin with accusation. She began with relationship. She reminded the king of her position and his favor. Then she revealed the threat. And only then did she name Haman. This is not manipulation. It is wisdom. Jesus Himself used strategic timing. He often told people not to reveal His identity until the right moment. He waited until after His resurrection to explain the full meaning of the Scriptures to His disciples. He knew that some truths can only be received at the right time. When you share the gospel, ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom. Not every moment is the right moment. Not every conversation is the right conversation. But if you are praying, if you are watching, if you are sensitive to the Spirit, God will give you divine appointments—moments when a heart is open and a word can take root. Be ready. Be wise. Be led by the Spirit.

3: Truth Changes Everything - Silence keeps people in bondage. Truth sets them free.

For years Esther hid who she was. Mordecai had told her not to reveal her nationality or her family background, and she kept that secret even after she became queen. She was safe, but she was silent. The turning point in the story was not only her courage—it was her honesty. When she finally told the king the truth about who she was and who Haman really was, the lie was exposed and the deliverance began. The decree of death stood until the truth was spoken.

Esther 2:10 (NLT) *Esther had not told anyone of her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had directed her not to do so.*

Esther 7:3–6 (NLT) *Queen Esther replied, 'If I have found favor with the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my request, I ask that my life and the lives of my people will be spared. ⁴ For my people and I have been sold to those who would kill, slaughter, and annihilate us. If we had merely been sold as slaves, I could remain quiet, for that would be too trivial a matter to warrant disturbing the king.' ⁵ 'Who would do such a thing?' King Xerxes demanded. 'Who would be so presumptuous as to touch you?' ⁶ Esther replied, 'This wicked Haman is our adversary and our enemy.' Haman grew pale with fright before the king and queen."*

John 8:31–32 (NLT) *Jesus said to the people who believed in him, 'You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. ³² And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'*

John 14:6 (NLT) *Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.'*

Ephesians 4:15 (NLT) *Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.*

The deliverance of a nation hinged on one woman telling the truth about who she was and who the enemy was. That is exactly what evangelism is. We know the truth about who Jesus is. We know the truth about what sin does to a person. And too often we stay silent because silence feels safer. But silence has never saved anybody. The decree of death is still over this world, and it will stand until somebody speaks. Jesus did not say the truth would make people comfortable. He said the truth would set them free. And He did not just point to the truth—He said He is the truth. That means when we share the gospel, we are not sharing an opinion or a religious preference. We are introducing people to a Person. Where have you been silent? Maybe you've been a Christian at church and a secret agent everywhere else. Maybe your coworkers don't know. Maybe your family doesn't know how much Jesus means to you. You have been hiding in plain sight. The truth you carry is the only thing that can break the lie people are living under. Speak it in love. Not with a hammer, but with honesty. Tell people who Jesus is. Tell them what He did for you. And watch what God does when the truth finally comes out into the open.

4. Courage Leaves a Legacy - When you step out in courage, your obedience releases a harvest that outlives you.

Esther's courage did not just save her own life. It saved an entire nation. A new decree was issued, the Jews were delivered, and the victory is still celebrated today in the Feast of Purim. Her courage left a legacy of deliverance.

Esther 8:8 (NLT) *Now go ahead and send a message to the Jews in the king's name, telling them whatever you want, and seal it with the king's signet ring. But remember that whatever has already been written in the king's name and sealed with his signet ring can never be revoked.*

Esther 9:1 (NLT) *So on March 7 the two decrees of the king were put into effect. On that day, the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but quite the opposite happened. It was the Jews who overpowered their enemies.*

Esther 9:20–22 (NLT) *Mordecai recorded these events and sent letters to the Jews near and far, throughout all the provinces of King Xerxes, ²¹ calling on them to celebrate an annual festival on these two days. ²² He told them to celebrate these days with feasting and gladness and by giving gifts of food to each other and presents to the poor. This would commemorate a time when the Jews gained relief from their enemies, when their sorrow was turned into gladness and their mourning into joy.*

John 4:35–38 (NLT) *You know the saying, 'Four months between planting and harvest.' But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. ³⁶ The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! ³⁷ You know the saying, 'One plants and another harvests.' And it's true. ³⁸ I sent you to harvest where you didn't plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest."*

2 Timothy 2:2 (NLT) *You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.*

Psalms 145:4 (NLT) *Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power.*

We plant seeds we may never see grow. We water fields we may never harvest. We speak words that may not bear fruit for years—or generations. But God is faithful. He takes our small acts of courage and multiplies them beyond what we could ask or imagine. Jesus said, "I sent you to harvest where you didn't plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the

harvest." We are part of a story that began before us and will continue after us. We are not the first workers in the field, and we will not be the last. But we are called to be faithful in our generation.

What legacy will your courage leave? Who will be saved because you spoke up? Who will come to faith because you stepped out? You may never know this side of heaven. But your obedience matters. Your courage matters. The harvest is not just for now—it is for the generations to come. Be faithful. Be bold. Leave a legacy of deliverance.

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