

"Destiny Via Disturbance" - Esther 4:8-17
Wednesday 10/3/18 - Jeff Lyle

I. The Owning of a Burden (8a)

"Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction..."

As the king's decree to exterminate all the Jews in the empire is made public, mass mourning and lament is taking place among the Hebrews. Mordecai is covering himself in ash and sackcloth and lingering near the area surrounding the King's Gate in Susa. He knows that the only hope for the Jews is resting on Esther's ability to use her privileged position as queen to speak to the king on behalf of her people. He makes the decision to provide a written copy of the decree for Esther to read for herself. He intuits that the woman he raised as his daughter is ignorant of what is coming against her people.

II. The Sharing of a Burden

A. Our potential to enlist relief (8b-9) - "...that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and command her to go to the king to beg his favor and plead with him on behalf of her people. 9 And Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said."

B. Our potential for self-preservation (10-11) "10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to go to Mordecai and say, All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law-to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days."

C. Our potential sense of helplessness (12) - "And they told Mordecai what Esther had said."

The decree of death is presented to Esther to read. Along with it are the specific requests of Mordecai for Esther to be the intercessor on behalf of the Jews living in the empire. She is asked to go into the king's presence and seek some means of rescuing her fellow Hebrews. Her immediate response is one of fear and uncertainty. No person, even the queen, is allowed to enter the king's presence without a personal invitation. She had not even

"Destiny Via Disturbance" - Esther 4:8-17
Wednesday 10/3/18 - Jeff Lyle

seen her husband the king for a month and she expresses her fear that there will be personal consequences for her if she violates the standard of nobody entering his presence uninvited. Esther's response to Mordecai would have landed hard upon him. She seemed to be preserving herself and retreating from the needs of all her people. Mordecai had to receive her response second-hand from the servants.

III. The Blessings Within a Burden (13-17)

A. We have to face reality (13-14a) - "Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. 14a For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish."

Mordecai apparently had more confidence in God's ability than he did Esther's willingness to do as she had been requested. He is firm in his response as he tells her that her own life is also in jeopardy as a Jewess. He reasserts his own confidence that God cannot fail to keep His covenant promises to the Jews. He declares that deliverance for the Jews would come from somewhere, but that Esther would not be rescued if she did not operate in faith.

B. We have to consider possibility (14b) - "And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Now Mordecai adds the "scent of destiny" to what was happening. Surely it was no coincidence that the unseen God of the Jews had elevated a Hebrew orphan to the highest position a woman could hold in the Persian Empire. Esther needed some big picture perspective in order to properly understand what was going on. Only the king could potentially do anything that might provide a way of escape for the Jews. Though he could not revoke his decree to exterminate the Jews on the appointed date, he might have other means by which he could protect the people. Esther needed to understand that God had providentially positioned her in the king's family in order to save her people from destruction. Mordecai highlighted the reality that there are defining seasons and moments in believers' lives where they intersect the primary purpose of Heaven for their lives. This was Esther's moment of divine destiny. She needed to recognize that and act accordingly.

"Destiny Via Disturbance" - Esther 4:8-17
Wednesday 10/3/18 - Jeff Lyle

C. We have to employ bravery (15-17) - "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."

Note the shift in Mordecai and Esther's roles. Sometimes we are the follower, sometimes we are the leader. Here, Esther takes command of the situation and asks Mordecai to enlist support among the Jewish people. Esther seems to be moved by Mordecai's counsel to view the present trouble as the stage for her to act on behalf of God's chosen people. She leads the people into a three-day fast on her behalf because she knew that she could not operate in human power and wisdom while facing this overwhelming challenge. She makes up her mind to lay everything on the line and enter into the king's presence once the fast was completed. We see in her words, "If I perish, I perish," that she had committed herself to this risky plan. Our moments of divine destiny require us to go all-in with our minds fully made up. The Apostle James warns us that double-minded people are unstable in all of their ways. We cannot afford to vacillate between this world and God's Kingdom. Once we fully commit to the plans of the Lord for our lives, we enter into holy adventure with the One who loves to topple strongholds, enact deliverances and defeat the enemy through our feats of faith. This was Esther's moment.