

# NAVIGATING DIFFICULT TIMES

## (Book of Esther)

### When God Puts You In The Middle

TEXT: Esther 4:1 – 4:17

INTRODUCTION: The raging river of trouble that surrounded Esther much of her life was at flood stage. She was a young Jewish woman in the foreign land of Persia; her parents dead for many years. She had been abducted with hundreds of other young girls and imprisoned in the harem house of vile and wicked King Ahasuerus.

- She had learned **when evil overflows around you, watch for God**, who is ready to intervene on behalf of His people.
- She had also learned that **when evil captures you, trust in God!** And Esther had.
  - Her confidence in God was so great that she was able to **live daily with a character of meekness,**
  - **knowing that God will work for, in, and through you.**

Esther had watched for God, and He had intervened!

Even though captured by evil and imprisoned in a den of iniquity, Esther trusted in God. And God had worked for Esther's benefit and blessing. Out of all the girls in the harem, Esther had been chosen to become his new Queen.

This was without question a great blessing, one for which Esther was thankful to the Lord, but the river of trouble raging around her life would not be calmed.

Although Esther was Queen, she was still captive. She could leave the palace only with the approval of the King and with heavy escort. The locks on the royal doors may have been plated with gold, but they prevented passage none the less.

Esther was Queen which of course meant she was the wife of the king, but she did not have all the privilege and control normally afforded even the wife of a peasant. She could not even go into the presence of her husband unless and until he sent for her. If she did, she would be as any other person who presumed to enter the presence of the king uninvited. She would be killed unless the king extended the golden scepter for her to touch. (Men, don't even begin to think this is what you should do as football season approaches!)

Esther was queen, but the king had not called for her in a month. He had obviously returned to his practice of bringing in girls from his harem. Esther had no idea if or when the king would ever summon her again. She seemed to be no more than a prize pet kept in an enormous gilded cage.

What Esther could not see from the inside was told to her by those able to go outside. Her servants came to her to say her cousin Mordecai and indeed all the Jews were in mourning. They had clothed themselves in sackcloth and rubbed ashes upon their heads. In their homes and sometimes in the street they weep and cry out to God to save them.

Unable to go out of the palace herself, Esther sent a trusted servant to ask Mordecai what was happening. Mordecai explained that wicked Haman, the right hand man of the king, a man who hated the Jews with heart, soul, mind, and strength, had devised a plot against the Jews and secured the approval of the king, and now this plot of Haman had been publicized throughout the empire.

So we read in

**Esther 3:13** And the letters were sent by couriers into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their possessions.

Mordecai and all the Jews were doing what God tells us to do.

- **When evil is plotted against you, cry out to God.**

They tore their clothes and put on sackcloth and called out to God to save them from this certain extermination, now written as a decree of the King in the Laws of the Medes and the Persians, which could not be changed.

Thus this river of wicked trouble roars around this captive queen. We read the next part of this true story that God gives us to instruct us how to navigate in difficult times, as Esther sends her servant to Mordecai to learn more detail.

**Esther 4:6–9** 6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square that was in front of the king's gate.

**7** And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews.

**8** He also gave him a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people.

**9** So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

Esther now understood the dire and deadly predicament of all of her fellow Jews. But how could Mordecai want her to help? Did he not understand how utterly helpless she was?

Esther 4:10–12 10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai:

11 “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days.”

12 So they told Mordecai Esther’s words.

Mordecai understood. He no doubt sympathized with his young cousin who was also his adopted daughter. But Mordecai was mature in the ways of the Lord. He knew that it was God who not only raised up kings, but queens. It was God who had put Esther in the place that she was, and it was God who was working through her at this very moment.

God had put Esther in the middle. Now Esther just needed to obey. So wise and godly Mordecai sent a message back to Esther.

Esther 4:13–14 ... “Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king’s palace any more than all the other Jews.

14 For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

I am sure these words were hard for Esther to hear. Mordecai wanted her to risk her life in an effort to save her people. And what is more, Mordecai was saying that was the very reason God had made her the Queen of Persia.

**God who had worked for her  
was now working in her  
so that He could work through her.  
Esther’s role was to obey.**

So Esther sent back word to the cousin she had called daddy for many years,

Esther 4:16 “Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!”

## I. WHEN GOD PUTS YOU IN THE MIDDLE, OBEY!

You may be in the middle of a marriage that is falling apart. You don’t want to be there, but you are there. Set your course to obey God.

You may be in the middle of a dishonest scheme at work. Determine your path. You will obey.

You may be a principal in a school or a teacher that is put in the middle of a moral dilemma. Determine that you will obey God.

Students, you may be in the middle between two groups of your friends, both pulling you to side with them. Plant your feet to be on God's side and obey Him.

But someone asks, what if I don't know what God says?

**A. If you don't know what to do, check His Word.**

Do not depend on your feelings.

Do not depend on your ability to reason it out.

God's ways are higher than our ways, His thoughts higher than our thoughts.

Search God's Word and find a clear instruction from Him.

**B. If you don't understand God's instruction, seek godly help to understand the Word of the Lord.**

I am not saying ask your friends, even Christian friends, instead of finding the answer in God's Word.

If you cannot find it in the Bible or you have found it but do not understand it, then seek counsel from a godly person to help you find and understand the Word of God.

**CONCLUSION:** Folks do you realize that the part of the story of Esther we have looked at today is the pivotal point of everything this book is about. Whether or not Esther successfully navigated the difficulty that flooded her own life came down to the question of whether she trusted God enough to obey Him.

Whether or not she would be the instrument through which God worked to save His people from destruction came down to whether she trusted God enough to obey Him.

**Do you trust God enough to obey Him?**

Do you know that this was the crux of everything even in Jesus' life?

**John 6:38** For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

The Holy Spirit told Paul to write in his letter to the believers in Philippi,

**Philippians 2:8** And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Let us remember the obedience of Jesus that caused Him to pay the price for our sin upon the cross, and to remember His resurrection, because as the Living Lord, He gives us the power to obey as well.

**Do you trust God enough to obey?**