

There's a Reason You Are Here

Esther 4:12-17
John 10:7-10

May 7, 2017
Faith Community

The story of Esther takes place in a troubled time for the Jewish people. A member of the king's staff had nursed a bitter spirit against someone who happened to be Jewish. So twisted was Haman's mind that he devised a plan to rid the country of the entire Jewish population. He then convinced the king to put his plan in motion.

Now it just so happened that Esther, the queen, was Jewish herself. Her uncle, whose name was Mordecai, found a way to let her know what was going on, and to ask her to intercede. The problem was that anyone, including the queen, who approached the king without his permission in advance could be executed. It all depended on how his majesty felt at the time. What would she do?

Friends, there are important lessons in this conversation.

I think the first thing Mordecai said to Esther was, you're just like everyone else.

Don't think that because you're in the king's house you alone of all Jews will escape. (Esther 4:13)

It was important that she know that, even with her position and prestige. It's important that you and I know it too, whoever we may be. We're just like everyone else.

In some ways, that's a liberating thing. It really can be a comfort to know that. "You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it," Paul said to the Corinthians. You belong, in good times and bad. There's a place for you. You're just like everyone else.

When we baptize people, we're saying that. When we receive new members, it's an affirmation that people matter to God, and they matter to us.

You're like the rest of us now. You belong.

But we don't stop there. The next thing Mordecai said to Esther was, there's something special about you. There's a reason you're here.

Who knows but that you've come to royal position for such a time as this? (v. 14)

Esther could do something no one else could. She could approach the king. She could help rescue the people. It might cost her her life, but she could do it.

You're just like everyone else. However, the world wouldn't be the same without you. An important part would be missing. This church wouldn't be the same without each of you. You have a key role to play in our life together. There's a reason you're here. Your joy is our joy. Your heartache touches us as well.

Friends, we're to be a bunch of midwives around here, assisting in the birth of new life, new people, and then training them, commissioning them, charging them to grow and get involved. We're to see that they have every opportunity to learn, that they're part of the team, just as we are, but they're so very special too, and that together we're to live and communicate the good news of Jesus Christ.

There's something very special about you.

So Mordecai told Esther she was like everyone else. Then he told her there was something special about her.

Finally, he told her to claim her destiny. There'll be no sitting on the fence.

If you remain silent at this time, relief will come from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. (v. 14)

Sometimes the stakes are that high.

God's going to move. The question is, will you be part of it? Will you claim your destiny?

Bill Hybels said, "I once saw a cartoon picturing hundreds and hundreds of people lined up as far back as the eye can see. Each one was asking the same question: 'What can I do? I'm just one person.'"¹

¹ Bill Hybels, Too Busy Not to Pray: Slowing Down to Be with God (Downers Grove, IL, Inter Varsity Press, 1998), p. 107.

Friends, you're just like everyone else. You belong. There's also something special about you. There's a reason you're here. So, you need to claim your destiny. Do not sit on the fence. Do not let something inside of you die. Esther said to Mordecai,

Go, get everyone together, and fast for me for three days. I and my staff will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king. And if I perish, I perish. (vv. 16-7)

Esther did it! She claimed her destiny. The people were saved.

Now it's your turn. Perhaps you've come to this point in your life for such a time as this.

Irish explorer Ernest Shackleton headed an expedition to the South Pole in 1908. They came closer than anyone had before but, 97 miles short of the pole, had to turn back.

"In his diary he told of when their food supplies were exhausted except for one last ration of biscuits, one of which was given to each man. Some of them took snow, melted it, and made tea while eating their biscuit. Others put theirs away, saving it for a last moment of hungry desperation."

"The fire was built up, and weary, exhausted men climbed into their sleeping bags to face a hard night. Shackleton was almost asleep when he heard a rustling and noticed one of his most trusted men sitting up and looking around to see if anyone was watching."

"His heart sank as he watched him reach for the food sack of the man next to him. He watched as he opened it and took his own biscuit and put it in the other man's sack."²

"I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full," Jesus said. There was a reason he was here. He knew it, and lived it, and the world has never been the same. What would it be like if you knew it in your own life, and if you were to live it yourself?

² Harold J. Sala, "Knapsack Sacrifice." To Illustrate, Leadership, Vol. 21, No. 4, Fall, 2000, p. 69.

What would you be like? How would the world be different? It could be as dramatic as saving a nation. It might be as humble as an anonymous gift. Whatever it may be, remember these:

You're just like everyone else.

There's something special about you. There's a reason you're here.

Claim your destiny.