

**Subject: *When Opportunity Comes***

**Scripture: *Esther 4:1-17***

In the Book of Esther, we see that nothing happens by luck, chance, or fate. Everything is under God's control and providence. Nothing happens by chance in our personal lives or in our troubles. Now in chapter 4, we see that God gives Esther an opportunity to do something that will make a big difference. We call this a divine appointment. Viktor Frankl stated: "Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life. Everyone must carry out a concrete assignment that demands fulfillment. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated. Thus everyone's task is as unique as his specific opportunity to implement it." President Teddy Roosevelt said, "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." Esther had an opportunity to save the Jewish nation. What can we learn from her example?

### **A TIME OF ANGUISH (vs. 1-5)**

In spite of the danger, Mordecai publicly expressed his grief when he learned about Haman's plan. All the Jews including Esther were heartbroken because they knew what this meant. They knew that they were God's chosen people and that God had made a promise to Abraham that through them all the world would be blessed. Our hearts ought to break over the things that break God's heart.

### **A TIME OF ANXIETY (vs. 6-12)**

Mordecai told Esther about the plan of hateful Haman and he asked her to approach the king to save the Jews. Esther sent a message back to Mordecai that she was afraid to enter the king's chamber. All people including the queen had to get permission to talk with the king. The king was considered off limits and he only wanted to hear good news. He lived in a world of illusion, not reality. What would the king do? What would he say?

### **A TIME OF ASSURANCE (vs. 13-14)**

Mordecai sent a message back to Esther telling her, "You have no choice. If you don't do something, you will die for sure. If you don't rise to the occasion, God will deliver His people by using some other means or by using some other person. Then Mordecai said, "Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for this very reason?" In other words, "Esther, this is your time to shine." Dr. Adrian Rogers said there are three kinds of people in the world: those who are afraid, those who don't know enough to be afraid, and those who know their Bibles.

### **A TIME FOR ACTION (vs. 15-17)**

Someone has observed that "after all is said and done, more is said than done." Esther asked Mordecai and the Jews at Shushan to fast three days for her, and she and her maidens would fast for three days. This obviously included prayer along with fasting. After that time, then she would go into the king and leave the results up to God. She was willing to risk her life for her fellow Jews. Esther was willing to be a living sacrifice to accomplish God's plan. Esther said: "If I perish, I perish." In other words, I don't have to survive. Desperate times require desperate actions. There comes time when you just need to do something. Pres. John Kennedy said, "There are risks and costs to a program of action, but they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction."

When opportunity comes we need to do four things: think it over; pray it through; do what's right; and leave the consequences to God.

### **Some Observations about Opportunities :**

- Opportunities often come disguised as problems

This was a crisis, and a crisis does not make a person, it reveals what a person is made of. The story is told about two shoe salesmen that were sent to a third world country to sell shoes. Upon arriving, one man wrote back home and said, "I can't sell shoes over here because nobody wears shoes." But the other man wrote, "Send lots of shoes over here because everybody needs shoes." Louis Brandeis was a former Supreme Court justice and his name is now associated with Brandeis University. He said, "Most of the things worth doing in the world had been declared impossible before they were done."

- Opportunities involve people that God can use

God could have moved directly on the situation, but He used Mordecai and Esther as part of His plan. That's what He usually does. And we need to remember that if God can't use you He will find somebody else. John Wesley lived by this guiding principle: "Do all the good you can, to all the people you can, in all the ways you can, as often as you can, and for as long as you can."

- A divine appointment involves the right person in the right place at the right time

Esther regarded her position as queen as a sacred trust to be used for God's glory. Mordecai helped her to see that she was just the right person for the job. When the right person and the right moment come together, incredible things happen. God's timing is everything! Winston Churchill described it like this: "There comes a special moment in everyone's life, a moment for which that person was born. That special opportunity, when he seizes it, will fulfill his mission—a mission for which he is uniquely qualified. In that moment he finds greatness. It is his finest hour."

- Lost opportunities cannot be regained

The ancient Greeks and Romans pictured opportunity in the form of a swift-footed man with one lock of hair in the front only. Just think what Esther would have lost if she hadn't used her God-given opportunity: her name would not have been on a book of the Bible; she would not have been admired and loved by Jews and Christians; and she would not have had great reward in heaven for being faithful.

- Opportunities come in different ways and times

It may be something big or something small. God gives us opportunities to learn, pray, speak, sing, serve, help, encourage, give, and witness. We may not have an opportunity like Esther to save a nation, but we have small opportunities that can make a big difference in someone's life. Esther was the bride of a king and she faithfully used her God-given position. As Christians we are the bride of Christ. Are we faithfully using our God-given position?

*I am only one, but still I am one;  
I cannot do everything, but still I can do something.  
And because I cannot do everything  
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.  
What I can do, I ought to do,  
And what I ought to do, by God's grace I will do.*

Our life is represented by a little dash on a tombstone. In that dash God gives us opportunities to make choices and do things that make a big difference to us and others. The invitation is an opportunity that God gives us to make choices and do what pleases Him.