

Week 31: Esther - Courage in the Face of Destruction

A Sabbath Family Bible Study

Introduction

Esther lived in a time when God's people faced annihilation. Hidden in a foreign kingdom, surrounded by pagan power, and raised without the open presence of the temple or prophets, she still became a vessel of deliverance. God placed her exactly where she needed to be - long before she knew why.

This study shows how God works behind the scenes, how courage is often costly, and how faithfulness requires acting when silence is easier. Esther's story calls families to stand firm when danger rises, to trust God's timing, and to believe that He positions His people for such a time as this.

Scripture Reading (KJV)

Esther 2:5–11, Esther 3:1–6, Esther 4:10–17, Esther 7:1–6, Psalm 27:1–3 (With commentary throughout)

Esther 2:5–11 - Esther's Humble Beginning

5 Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;

6 Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

7 And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.

8 So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of

Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.

9 And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women.

10 Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it.

11 And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.

Commentary:

God often begins great works in quiet places. Esther's rise did not begin with power but with humility, obedience, and God's unseen favor. Mordecai and Esther both demonstrate the importance of faithfulness long before a moment of crisis arrives. A prepared character precedes courageous action.

Esther 3:1-6 - Haman's Hatred Revealed

1 After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.

2 And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.

3 Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?

4 Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew.

5 And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.

6 And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.

Commentary:

Haman's hatred began with one man's refusal to bow, but it grew into a plan to destroy God's people entirely. Evil rarely stays small - once unchecked, it spreads to consume all it can.

Courage is costly, but cowardice is deadly. Mordecai's stand forces a crisis that will reveal Esther's calling.

Esther 4:10–17 - "For Such a Time as This"

10 Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai;

11 All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or women, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

12 And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

13 Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

15 Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer,

16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

17 So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

Commentary:

Esther's fear was real, and her risk was deadly - but her calling was undeniable. Mordecai reminded her that God had positioned her for this moment. Esther stepped forward not because she felt strong but because she trusted God's sovereignty. "If I perish, I perish" is not despair - it is the courage of faith.

Esther 7:1–6 - Esther Speaks for Her People

1 So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen.

2 And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.

3 Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request:

4 For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.

5 Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?

6 And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen.

Commentary:

Esther's boldness exposed evil. After fasting, praying, waiting, and preparing, she finally spoke - and God used her words to bring justice. Courage does not rush; it moves at God's timing. When the moment comes, silence is no longer faithfulness. Esther acted, and God acted through her.

 **Discussion Questions for All Ages**

Young Children:

- Who was Esther?
- Why did Mordecai not bow to Haman?
- What did Esther say when she decided to help?

Older Children & Teens:

- What made Esther courageous?
- Why is it sometimes hard to do what is right?
- How can God use ordinary people to protect His people?

Adults:

- What "moments of courage" has God placed before your family?
 - Where must we refuse to bow to cultural pressure?
 - How do fasting, prayer, and obedience prepare us for "such a time as this"?
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 **Psalm Reading**

Psalm 27:1-3 (KJV)

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

Commentary:

This psalm matches Esther's courage. Fear fades when faith stands firm. God does not remove danger - He strengthens His people in the midst of it.

 **Hymn: "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"**

By Martin Luther (1529)

1.

A mighty Fortress is our God,
A Bulwark never failing;
Our Helper He amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and pow'r are great,
And, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

2.

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth His name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

3.

And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The Prince of Darkness grim -

We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo! his doom is sure;
One little word shall fell him.

4.

That Word above all earthly pow'rs -
No thanks to them - abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours
Through Him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill -
God's truth abideth still;
His kingdom is forever.

Family Application Points

1. **God positions His people intentionally** - You are where you are for a reason.
 2. **Courage is rarely convenient** - but obedience demands it.
 3. **Evil must be confronted** - silence is not safety.
 4. **Prayer and fasting prepare the heart** - strength comes before action.
 5. **Families must stand together** - Mordecai and Esther succeeded because they acted in unity.
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A Sabbath Feast Prayer (to be used later when the Sabbath meal is ready)

Father, thank You for the courage You gave Esther in her hour of testing. As we sit at this table, teach our family to stand firm when danger rises and to trust Your hand in every season. Bless this food before us and bless the loving hands that prepared it. Make us bold, prayerful, and faithful. Strengthen us to act when You call us, and help us to see that You have positioned us for such a time as this. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Closing Prayer

Lord, make us courageous in our generation as Esther was in hers. Give us discernment to see the moments where obedience requires boldness, and grant us the strength to stand firm even when the cost is great. Teach our household to trust Your timing, rely on Your sovereignty, and speak truth without fear. May our family be united in righteousness, steadfast in conviction, and faithful in every trial You allow. Guide our steps, guard our hearts, and anchor our courage in Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.