In our study of the book of Esther, we continue to see God’s sovereign hand at work. This young Jewish girl is handpicked by the King to become queen in a foreign land. Now, a decree has been issued that every Jew is to be killed. Mordecai tells her that she must go and plead the case of her people before the King. Such an action may result in her death because the King can kill anyone who approaches the throne without being summoned. What a contrast exists here for the born again! We have complete access to the throne of grace. We ay come before the King of Kings at any time (\*Hebrews 4:16). Think about this freedom, just this morning. For the past couple of weeks, we have talked about God’s sovereignty. In that sovereignty, in his power and authority, God places people where and when He wants them (\*\*Romans 8:14). Yet we have personal, unfettered access to Him. Even as His plan spans centuries and cultures, God has a perfect view of His own plan. God does what He wishes for the advancement of His Kingdom. And who know where each of us should be? God does! Each of us has a calling, a Kingdom assignment. It is God who has placed each of us when and where we are. Our jobs, our education, our positions, and our resources all come from our Heavenly Father for His purposes. How do we choose to use them? Tony Evans\*\*\* said, “To miss your Kingdom assignment because you have become too aught up in your personal kingdom is the greatest tragedy you could ever face.”

 Many times, God will call us out of our comfortable kingdom so that we may participate in something bigger than ourselves. And, Family, apathy and complacency are not fruits of the Spirit. Esther made the right choice to address

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\*Hebrews 4:16

16 Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

\*\*Romans 8:14

14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.

\*\*\*Tony Evans—Dr. Tony Evans, graduate Dallas Theological Seminary, author of more than one hundred books, award-winning radio host, pastor to George W. Bush, former chaplain of Dallas Cowboys, Baptist, founder of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship.

the King. In spite of fear, in spite of the unknown outcome, Esther did what needed to be done. Mordecai’s speech speaks to the sovereignty of God, conveying that she has become queen for a heavenly purpose and that she has a personal obligation to go before the King with the petition on behalf of the Jews. Mordecai displays faith when he says in verse 14,

 “For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will

 arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who

 knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”

God doesn’t fail, Mordecai affirms to Esther. He will see His plan through, a truth not changed by Esther’s hesitance to respond. But we wouldn’t be here today talking about Esther if she fails to act in obedience. Reminded by Mordecai, Esther understood the power of God. She knows she needs as many people as possible pleading for the Lord’s grace and provision. Esther sees and we should that our spiritual life is designed by God to be a community project. Esther’s life is in God’s hands, a recognition that emboldens her to remain committed to her faith in God and the well being of His people. Like Esther, Church, we must be willing to be challenged for the cause of Christ (\*Ephesians 5:15-16). We must each be willing to make the most of our time, be resolute in making a Kingdom impact, submitting to the will of God, relying on the Spirit of God, His power, and His presence. As He does for Esther, God, our Savior, empowers us; He empowers us to minister and to share His Gospel.

 Just as Esther’s world needed to know of God’s assurance for the survival of the Jewish people, our world needs the Gospel—not our opinions of it but THE Gospel, the truth of the Saving Grace of Christ. We are often passionate and resolute with our opinions on music, politics, sports teams—caught up in our own kingdom so completely that we rich missing our Kingdom assignment. Roman 12:21 tells us, “Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.” We need to realize our utter dependence on God and live in that space (Romans 8:14-19 [see last page]). In His sovereignty, God never fails and, wonderfully, He choses to include us in His plan. Paul confirms that he knows this truth, which he confirms in the first

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\*Ephesians 5:15-16

15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

first chapter of Philippians, 12-14:

 “Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.”

This faith statement should move each of us to ask, how can my circumstances serve to advance the Kingdom? Wouldn’t it be wonderful if God just emailed you His itinerary? Some of us wouldn’t bother even to open such an email, but when challenged about our lack of participation in His kingdom, would protest that we didn’t know! But if you think about it, if you see such a communication, how often would you try to hide from it, to avoid it if you realized what He was doing? Would you end up like Jonah in the belly of a great fish? Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:5, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.” Esther’s life is a life surrendered to God. She leaves us a spiritual legacy confirming that strength to act for the Kingdom comes from faith in the Kingdom’s God. She is a vessel placed for such a time as needed for her Kingdom assignment. This example assures us we have a Kingdom assignment, and that God gives strength to complete the assignment.

 Church, we need to take the Bible personally. This is for us. And what God says applies to us. When we do find peace, encouragement, and courage? Many heroes of the faith wonder where God is and what He is doing. So in our doubts, we are in good company. But the heroes of faith don’t quit. They are shown committed by faith, willing to be inconvenienced and challenges for the cause of Christ. In light of following Christ in such a time as this, what do we believers do? We ask God to take away our apathy and to help us to be obedient. We need to fast and pray. We must be courageous. We must cling to the Gospel. We need to humble ourselves before God. We must be willing to be inconvenienced. We must take the Bible and its tales of heroes for God personally. We must be willing to use our circumstances and resources to advance God’s Kingdom. As Coach Bobby Bowden often said, “Don’t go to the grave with life unused!”

PASSAGES SUPPORTING THIS SERMON:

Romans 8:14-19

14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Present Suffering and Future Glory

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.

Esther 4:1-14

1 When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. 2 But he went only as far as the king’s gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. 3 In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes. 4 When Esther’s eunuchs and female attendants came and told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. 5 Then Esther summoned Hathak, one of the king’s eunuchs assigned to attend her, and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why. 6 So Hathak went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king’s gate.

7 Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. 8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to instruct her to go into the king’s presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people. 9 Hathak went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. 10 Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, 11 “All the king’s officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king.” 12 When Esther’s words were reported to Mordecai, 13 he sent back this answer: “Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. 14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”