

Esther

This three week series focusing on the book of Esther reveals God's providential hand working behind the scenes in a story of banquets and bureaucracy, plot twists and conspiracy. Esther calls us to trust that God is overcoming evil and rescuing the world - through us - for His purposes; even when it's hard to see Him.

Week 2: A Place, A Time, A Purpose (Drew Ritchie – July 21)

1. Share a moment in your life when you found yourself in the right place at the right time. What happened, and how did it impact you or someone else?
2. **Read Esther 2:19-23** and look back at **Esther 3**. What stands out to you the most? What struck you about Mordecai saving the king's life? Follow up: What do you see more of at work behind the scenes of your life: *Coincidence/Chance* or *Providence/Purpose*? Explain.
3. Look back at **Esther 4**. What resonates with you the most from this chapter? **Read Esther 4:12-14**. Mordecai's statement suggests that Esther's position was part of God's plan. How does this verse help us understand our own roles in God's story?
4. Drew mentions that **deliverance will come from somewhere**, regardless of individual actions. How does this impact our understanding of personal responsibility in God's plan? Follow up: How can we hold in both hands two seemingly contradictory ideas - that God will bring deliverance no matter what AND God *wants* us to be part of that plan?
5. Esther's life was shaped by factors both within and beyond her control. How do you see this balance of circumstances and choices in your own life? How might God use both?
6. How did Esther balance her fears with her sense of duty? Recall a time you faced a tough, courageous decision. How did you handle it and what helped you the most? Follow up: Drew encouraged us to **consider our own unique positions (e.g. teachers, lawyers, parents) for serving God's purpose**. What are some ways you can use your current position or role in life to make a positive difference in others' lives and fulfill God's purpose?
7. Drew mentioned there's a **cost to not using your position for God's purposes**. What fears or concerns might be holding you back from using your position this way? How could you overcome these fears? Follow up: Reflect on times you've seen God working to fulfill His promises and plan. Prayerfully consider: Where might God be inviting and urging you to use your experiences and current position "**for such a time as this**"?

PRACTICES: The people's response to Haman's edict was one of mourning, fasting, and prayer (**Esther 4:15-17**). How can we incorporate these practices into our own lives when facing challenges? If you've done something similar share that experience.

