

You Are Called for Such a Time As This

You Are Called to Take Risks

Esther 4:10-17

We are doing a series of sermons called: “You are CALLED...” We studied the lives of Peter (You are Called to Get out of the Boat), Abraham (You Are Called to Trust and Obey), Isaiah (You Are Called for a Holy Life) and Jonah (You Are Called Where?). Today we will examine Esther (You Are Called for Such a Time As This, which means you are called to take risks).

Definition of risk: “exposure to the chance of injury or loss; hazard or dangerous chance.”¹ One can take risks and either harm his life or save it. One can take risks and lose money or make more money. Taking a risk is for some people very exciting while others will be terrified to take any risks. I am a person who does not like to take risks. Yet, I learned in my life that nothing can be accomplished if we do not take risks.

Why are we afraid of taking risks? I think we want an assurance that the result of the steps we take will be successful. Welcome to the Biblical world, where you learn God is in control. People who walk with God take risks and learn that God will lead them every day. In the lives of Peter, Abraham, Isaiah, and Jonah (the four people we studied) do you see the element of risk? James said it best about taking some steps and not knowing what’s next:

“Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, **“If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”** (James 4:13-15 ESV)

The book of Esther is a book that illustrates taking a risk to save lives. The event is happening in **Persia**, where a Jewish girl becomes queen and saves her people from a plot to destroy them. Some think this book should not have been in the Bible; there is no reference to God. Yet, the events point to the faith of **Esther and her uncle Mordecai**. The events of the story make

it clear that, even when God is most hidden, He is still present and working to protect and deliver His people.

King Ahasuerus (486–464 BC), one of the characters, was a great king who reigned in many lands. We read in the opening of the book: **“Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over 127 provinces.”** (Esther 1:1 ESV) The king was having a big royal party when **Queen Vashti** who refused to obey him and attend the party. As a result, her royal position as queen was given to another woman, namely a young Jewish girl, **Esther**. I find God’s hand in leading Esther to this palace and to this position. I don’t think it was the most pleasant thing for Esther to do, yet she obeyed and came to this place with her uncle as adviser.

When I was sent by the church union to become the school principal of the Armenian Secondary School of Ainjar in Lebanon, I was shocked. “Why me, Lord? I used to escape from school when I was young. What are you doing my life?” I look back and I see God’s hand in sending me there.

Esther was an orphan and her uncle Mordecai had raised her as his own daughter. In the palace, we find another character **Haman**, King Ahasuerus’ prime minister. Haman hated the Jews and wanted to annihilate them. Mordecai heard about it and asked Esther to take a step that no queen had ever done.

Esther was asked to take a risk. She would go to see the king without being invited:

“All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days.” (Esther 4:11 ESV)

For Esther, taking a risk could be very costly, namely the penalty of death. What if she did not take the risk? Her people would be put to death.

This is the history of God's people; their salvation was part of God's plan in bringing SALVATION to entire humanity through the birth of Jesus Christ.

Esther took the risk and went to the king. But before doing so, she asked for something very important which indicates her trust in God.

She asked everyone to fast and pray for three days:

“Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.” (Esther 4:16 ESV)

“If I perish, I perish.” She did not have a special revelation from God. She did not have a guarantee that the king would spare her life. She had to make a decision based on her spiritual training and obedience to God. Asking people to pray and fast is an indication of Esther's trust in God.

Let me give another example from the Bible where people took risks.

-Moses sending the 12 spies

If you recall, the Israelites were in the wilderness and came close to the Promised Land.

“Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel. From each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a chief among them.” (Numbers 13:2 ESV)

Indeed, the twelve went, spied and came back after 40 days. Ten of those men said, “No way, this is difficult place!” “The people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified” (13:28). They wanted guarantees.

However the two spies Joshua and Caleb had a different opinion. **“Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it”** (Numbers 13:30 ESV).

What was the response of the people?

“Then the entire congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, ‘Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!’” (Numbers 14:1-2 ESV).

How sad it is that people forget who God is. They want a secure road. The Israelite left Egypt, but it seems Egypt did not leave Israelite.

So what can we learn from these events of Esther or Moses?

1. No secure roads in the world, yet God’s road is secure

I have news for you: there are no secure roads. All roads have obstacles. No one promised us the roads would be easy. (Just read the Bible)

It is good to take risks for God, (steps of faith) because we know Him and we trust in Him.

Moses replied: **“The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the LORD. ...”** (Numbers 14:7-9 ESV)

Paul’s life is another example (see below).

2. The Outcome of your steps does not depend on you. This is God’s Work and not yours.

We are usually courageous in taking risks in our business life, why are we hesitant in taking steps of faith in walking with Christ?

What is holding you back?

Fear of failure...

-My wife Sevan tells me from her life in Beirut. When her father moved to Lebanon to be pastor in Beirut, there was a civil war going on. She and her mom wanted to restart the Sunday school in at the First Armenian

Evangelical church. Someone said to them, "Forget it, no one will come. It is wartime."

Sevan tells me they did start and a few came. Now they took a risk to come to church. They took a risk opening the Sunday school in war times. They did not see the result then. Now after many years we look back and we find these children have become pastors, lay church leaders, Bible teachers...

There is one guarantee. God is a sovereign God who made you and called you for His purpose. Know Him and surrender to His will. Taking those faith steps requires surrendering to Him completely.

3. Who knows...you are here for such a time as this.

"Who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (4:14)

Who knows, let this phrase repeat in our minds. **Who knows?**

We don't know, I don't know. Perhaps I will know the answer much later in time as I said before, or perhaps I will never know. But one thing you must know, **you are not an accident**. You are created in God's image to be His light and salt in this tough world. Who knows, you are here, in this city for a **purpose**. Who knows you are called for such a time as this. Please find out beside business, why are you here, and what is your call and vocation serving our Lord Jesus Christ?

4. Who is Mordecai in your life?

Mordecai was the one who said to Esther: "Who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this..." In my words, "Who knows why God put you in the palace for such time as this..."

Who is **Mordecai** in your life? Do you have a Christ-centered person whom you trust who prays with you, helps you and leads you to find direction and purpose?

Where do you stand?

There is a reason we are in the USA. There is reason some of you came here, some you were born here, some had grandparents who came here many years ago.

Our Genocide has its share in leading people to come here.
Some believed that US is the secure land. Maybe so, comparing with other parts of the world.
If you think you are secure here, you live in false security.

We should look to our lives beyond economic stability and security. God is the leader of PACC. This church is here for a reason. This week Kevin and I were at LOVE INC, a para-church organization. The director gave us the history of Fresno. We have 500,000 people living here. We have 100,000 Christians in this city. If each of us reaches out to five people, just think what will happen.

Can you see that part of our calling means to TAKE RISKS in the mission field?
Esther took the risk and rescued her people.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18 ESV)

1 <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/risk>

-**Paul's life was full of risks.** He is the one who went on missionary journeys to places no one would go. The "gentile world" was open in front of him, and he did go.

Not all the stories have smooth endings. He went to places where he was not welcome: He was beaten, prisoned, tortured....you name it

Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. (2 Corinthians 11:24-28 ESV)

What if Paul did not take those risks? What would have happened? Just imagine the Good News of Christ staying within the borders of the Middle Eastern lands.