

GOSPEL COMMUNITY GUIDE

Living Faithfully in Exile

Esther 4 | May 3, 2026



REDEEMER
ROUND ROCK

QUICK UPDATES

Share any upcoming church events and handle housekeeping for the Gospel Community.

CONNECT

Where in your life right now do you feel the tension between staying comfortable and stepping into something costly or risky?

REVIEW

Have someone read the passage out loud from the ESV translation or something similar. Reflect on any insights, questions, or parts that stood out from the text or the sermon. Then read the summary below.

Esther 4 brings the turning point where God's hidden providence meets human responsibility. Mordecai's grief leads to lament, modeling how God's people respond honestly in suffering. He challenges Esther to see through her illusion of comfort and recognize that God has positioned her for a purpose. As Esther moves from fear to faith, she calls for prayer and chooses courageous obedience, trusting her life to God. Ultimately, the passage points to Christ, who didn't just risk His life but gave it, securing our salvation and empowering us to live with bold, faithful courage.

LEARN & LIVE

These questions help us grasp the truth of the passage and consider how to live it out.

- In verses 1–3, what do you notice about how Mordecai and the Jews respond to the decree? What does that show about how God's people handle crises?
- What keeps people (including you) from practicing honest lament before God?
- In verses 4–9, what is Mordecai asking Esther to do? Why is this such a difficult request?
- From Esther's response in verses 10–11, what fears or obstacles is she facing? How would you feel in her position?
- Verse 14 shows Mordecai's confidence in God's deliverance. What does this teach you about God's character?
- What does "for such a time as this" reveal about how God works in people's lives and circumstances?
- In verses 15–16, what changes in Esther? What role do fasting and prayer play in that shift?
- Where might God have positioned you right now (relationships, work, family, influence) for His purposes - and what would faithfulness look like this week?

GO DEEPER

These questions invite us to slow down and wrestle with what's going on beneath the surface. Use these to go a little deeper or in your Huddle Groups.

- Where are you currently tempted to protect your comfort instead of obeying God?
- What do you tend to do with grief or stress - bring it to God, or distract and numb it? Why?
- What are some practical ways we can bring our grief and stress to God?
- In what ways might you be underestimating how God is working in your life right now?
- Where do you feel the cost of obedience most clearly, and what makes that cost hard to accept?
- Do you believe God will accomplish His purposes with or without you? How does that shape your willingness to step in?
- What would it look like for you to say, in a real situation, "If I perish, I perish"?
- Where have you been spiritually passive, waiting instead of stepping into what you already know is right?

- **How is the Holy Spirit comforting you or challenging you personally from this discussion? How will you respond and what will you do differently this week? Is there anywhere you need help to make that happen?**

PRAY FOR NEEDS in the GROUP

- Some other ways to pray:
 - Pray about one way God spoke to you tonight through His Word
 - Pray by name for one person you know who is far from God..
- Pray for this ministry area of Redeemer: [Pray for Redeemer students as they finish their school year.](#)

5 GROUP DISCUSSION RULES

We want to be full of grace as we meet, deepening our relationship with one another and with Christ. These five values help us know our **P.L.A.C.E.** in our GC's and Huddles.

1. **Pray** - Prayer is a space for confession, struggle, and praise. Keep requests focused on yourself and your immediate family, so we can pray specifically and personally.
2. **Listen** - Be present and attentive. Share with humility, be mindful of time, and remember: silence is okay.
3. **Apply** - Answer honestly. Consider how God's Word speaks into your life, and what it might look like to respond.
4. **Confess** - Confession and repentance are signs of maturity. We meet one another with grace, not shame.
5. **Encourage** - Practical advice is helpful, but truth is better. Speak the gospel into each other's hearts and stories.

COMMENTARY EXCERPT:

4:1–3 As someone routinely in the palace gate, Mordecai would be among the first to know of the decree. His response, tearing his clothes and wearing sackcloth and ashes, is typical for those in mourning, as is his "loud and bitter cry." Since those in mourning could not approach the king, Mordecai seems to have used the gate to go as close as possible. His response was typical and was repeated across the empire.

4:4–11 That Esther and Mordecai had maintained some communication was hinted at previously, and that process is important here. By coming to the gate, Mordecai acted in a manner that would be noticed, and this was reported to Esther. Esther's initial response was to send clothes, perhaps so Mordecai would not be at risk from dressing inappropriately in the palace complex. Her message was passed through her eunuch Hathach, and he presumably acts that way throughout the dialog reported here though he is not mentioned past the initial comments. Esther needed to know why Mordecai was acting this way. But clothes will not resolve the issue, so Mordecai reported what had happened, including the size of the bribe Haman offered for the destruction of the Jews. To confirm this, he provided Hathach with a copy of the decree, asking him to explain it to her, suggesting that Esther was illiterate. More importantly, Esther was urged to go before the king and beg his favor and plead for her people. Since Esther has previously found favor with the king, this might seem a straightforward proposition, even if it meant disclosing Jewish identity. But now Esther reveals that however much she had pleased the king before, theirs was not a strong relationship. She could only go to him when summoned, and Mordecai should already know that anyone going to the king without being called would be executed. Only if the king held out his scepter would the person live. And Esther had not been summoned for thirty days, so it was unlikely she would be called. She acknowledges Mordecai's request, but effectively says it cannot be done.

4:12–17 Mordecai's response to Esther provides a key point in the book. His message can be broken down into three main points. First, because Esther is Jewish, being in the palace will not protect her. She has not disclosed her identity, but enough people know her link to Mordecai, and his Jewishness is well known. Second, if she does not act, then deliverance will come from "another place," but Esther and her family will perish. Mention of "another place" is sometimes taken as a direct allusion to God in light of the later Rabbinic practice of using "place" as a circumlocution for God. But if so, then "another place" is difficult to understand as God because it suggests more than one deity. But if taken more generally in understanding that there is something about the Jews that is distinctive, then it leaves space for God, even if the reference is more oblique than sometimes thought. How God might act is not specified, merely that there is some sense of providence at work. Finally, considering the previous points, he raises the question of why Esther has come to her place. This could be a sign of that providence, though Esther must decide whether this is true. Throughout, Mordecai has proposed a close link between divine providence and the commitment of God's people. Esther was convinced and directed Mordecai to gather the Jews in Susa to fast for her for three days, while Esther will do the same with her attendants, even though many of them were not Jewish. Normally, fasting is accompanied by prayer, though that is slightly too direct a reference for this book. Esther now takes on her part, agreeing to go to the king despite the risk she knew she faced. She will only know if God is with her if she takes the risk.

David Firth, Esther [<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/commentary/esther>]