



Sermon Series: Mentoring: Investing in Others
To be used with Session 4: Mordecai and Esther
Sermon Title Possibilities: From Fear to Fierce
Scripture: Esther 2:5-7; 4:8-17

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the Bible study “Mentoring: Investing in Others” this sermon teaches us how to identify and overcome fear when it comes. We learn how to go from fear to fierce by examining the exchange between Mordecai and Esther. Mentoring is not sugarcoating, but honest interactions between mentor and mentee that may include high stakes. A mentor’s job is not to baby or pacify mentees but turn them into warriors willing to face ultimate costs for the call on their life. Mordecai’s mentorship to Esther is the blueprint for execution in the face of high stakes. Encouraging others to follow God’s leadership no matter the cost consists of being honest, direct, and stern in messaging.

Introduction: Each year salmon gathers at a fishing migration event to hatch in freshwater. Although most of their adult life is downstream in the ocean, annually, they swim against the stream to continue the life cycle of salmon with a new generation of hatchlings. However, swimming upstream is risky to hatch new life with grizzly bears on the prowl. Weighing close to 400 pounds, grizzly bears, aware of this annual gathering, come as spectators seeking opportunities to eat. For salmon, the risks are high but worth it because the next generation depends on the gathering. Like the salmon, Esther found herself in a risky, life-threatening position needing her mentor's advice. Mordecai’s role as a mentor is one of encouragement, wisdom, and fortitude. He must communicate to Esther the risk she must take for the future of herself and the children of Israel. Often, risky decisions are made easier when mentors provide direct support and direction. In this text, we will examine how Mordecai empowered Esther with the correct information and gave her courage in the face of a risky situation.

1. Moving into Position (Esther 2:5-7)

Mordecai is thrust into a mentorship relationship through no fault of his own. Esther, without parents, left Mordecai as the legal guardian of his cousin (v. 7). At the outset, Mordecai, adopting Esther as his daughter, stood as a protector and mentor amidst the shifting political landscape. Little did Mordecai know that his wisdom and advice would

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prove pivotal for future Israelites. However, what is most notable is how God began moving Esther into a position to preserve the children of Israel during a difficult season. We may not understand many things about our lives, but we can rest assured that God is in control and knows what is best for us. Esther could have felt captive, but God strategically positioned Esther to have a pivotal impact on generations of people. Mordecai may not have realized it, but he was responsible for mentoring Esther, and his advice played a significant role in Esther's future success.

2. Moving into Confrontation (Esther 4:8-11)

With the decree of destruction issued by the king, the children of Israel seemed destined for annihilation. However, God was at work, and Esther was in place to communicate with the king and potentially save her people (v. 11). However, a law in place threatened to thwart Mordecai's plans and compromise Esther's life. With the inability to approach the king and the inner courtyard without being summoned, Esther, whose Jewish nationality was concealed, could face the death penalty unless the king extended an offer (v. 11). Often, the odds are stacked against us, and the easiest route is worth considering when times are tough. With access to the king, Esther had Mordecai to give advice continually in the face of consequences. Mordecai knew much more was at stake and convinced Esther to be strong and courageous. A strong mentor to guide and direct under challenging moments is essential for producing the courage to make tough decisions worthwhile.

3. Moving into Power (Esther 4:12-17)

Mordecai gave a final reply to Esther that included a prediction of the escape of all the Jews and the recognition that the reason for her ascension to royal status may be for such a time as this (v. 14). It would appear God positioned Esther to be in her position to protect her fellow Jews from destruction. Initially, she acknowledged the laws of the land that could potentially expose and cost her life. However, Mordecai's mentorship and wisdom gave Esther the courage to face the king and be willing to risk her life if necessary. Esther's call for a fast reminds us of the need for God's presence to intercede. Although God's name is not mentioned throughout the entirety of the book, God's hand is prevalent in every chapter. Now filled with confidence and conviction, Esther concludes her communication with Mordecai and begins the journey of God's will for her life.

Conclusion: God's handiwork was on full display in the life of Esther. Furthermore, despite the potential danger to Esther, Mordecai, and the children of Israel, God positioned Esther in the perfect spot at the perfect time. While Esther needed Mordecai to inspire the strength and courage needed to address the king without an invitation, she systematically put herself in a

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position for God's glory and Jewish freedom for the children of Israel. The results may not appear probable due to current circumstances, but if we believe God is in control, an expectation of victory should be anticipated. Throughout our lives, we may not fully understand why God is doing what He does until it collides with the courage to stand and make a difference. In our lives, we may get frustrated by the way things are, but as we continue to walk with the Lord, we will know that His hand is guiding and protecting us the entire time. May we continue to look to the Lord no matter the situation, trusting that He will bring us through.

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