Withholding Nothing:
Moving Beyond Fear to Faith
Esther 4:13-17

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May 10, 2020
Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not imagine that you in the king’s palace can escape any more than all the Jews.”
Esther 4:14

14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”
Esther 4:15-16a

15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, 16 “Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day.
Esther 4:16b-17

I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.” 17 So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him.
Today is Mother’s Day…

…it is a day for paying tribute to someone who deserves our appreciation.
It is also a day…

…for making up for another year of taking that special someone for granted…
For some of you...

...today may be especially difficult, because it is the first Mother’s Day without your mother. Just know that you are in our thoughts and prayers.
When God made…

…man, it was almost like He knew immediately that He was not done. He said in His own words, “it is not good for a man to be alone”.
Then God solved man’s…

…“aloneness” problem by creating a woman. He brought the woman to the man, and according to the biblical text, the man said, “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”.
But if I you allow me...

...to use my sanctified imagination, when Adam’s first saw the lithe and willowy figure of Eve, that brother said, and I quote, "Boom Shaka Lacka Lacka", unquote.
God created Eve...

...to be a companion for Adam...wife, mother, and spiritual equal.
And God gave the woman attributes that distinguish her among all the creature that He made.
God made her ...  
...brave and smart and clever and resourceful, and He wrapped it all in a package that would stop traffic.
And then when you…

...add to her other attributes service, sacrifice self-denial, tenderness, forgiveness and humility, you have a woman with what it takes to be a mother.
The woman at the center...

...of our discourse today is all of those things and more.
In the life of every person...

...there is role for God and a role for us. We cannot do what God must do, and God will not do what we must do.
The book of Esther is...

...both extraordinary and interesting. The events of Esther occur about a hundred years after the Jews are taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylon. Some of the captive Jews returned to Jerusalem, but many did not.
This story centers…
on a Jewish community that remained in Babylon. The main characters in the story are two Jews, Mordecai and Esther, King Ahasuerus and a Persian official named Hamon.
One of the most interesting...

...aspects of the book, and it is quite striking in its omission, is that God’s name is not mentioned anywhere, but you would have to be blind not to see God’s hand everywhere.
The Key Takeaway

We can trust God in the midst of a messy situation because even when we cannot see Him, He is always working.
Experiencing God

1) God is always at work around you.

3) God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.
Experiencing God

5) God's invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.

6) You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.
The story begins when…

Ahasuerus (also called Xerxes), King of Persia, holds two elaborate banquet feasts that last for 187 days, all for the grandiose purpose to display his majesty and splendor.
On the last day of the feast…

…Ahasuerus, in a drunken stupor, summons his beautiful wife, Vashti to the banquet hall so he could show her off like she was little more that a trinket. To her credit, Vashti refused to come, and the king is enraged.
The king is embarrassed and... 
...has to do something to save face so he immediately deposes the queen and, at the behest of those present he makes a decree that all men were the master of their own homes and the women must respect their husbands.
The king holds a beauty... …contest to find the most beautiful women in Persia to be the new queen. It is at this point that we meet Mordecai and Esther. She conceals her Jewish identity, enters the contest and wins. The king is totally smitten and elevates her to be the new queen.
You can call it an accident…

…but it was really the providence of God that allowed Mordecai to overhear a plot to assassinate the king. He informs Esther, Esther informs the king and Mordecai gets credit for saving the king’s life.
God name is not mentioned…

…but you know that it was more than coincidence that Mordecai was in the right place at the right time to hear of the plot to kill the king. This will be very significant later in the story.
We next encounter a very…
...unsavory character by the name of Hamon. Hamon was not a Persian. He was an Agagite (see 1 Sam. 15)
Ahasuerus elevated Haman to the highest position in the kingdom and demands that everybody kneel to him.
Mordecai refused to kneel…

..and this enraged Haman. When he finds out that Mordecai is a Jew, he persuades king to sign an executive order to exterminate the Jews.
It’s at this part of the story…

…that the focus turns to Mordecai and Esther because they are the Jews only hope. Mordecai and Esther make a plan that calls for her to reveal to the king that she is Jew and then plead for the king to reverse the decree.
Esther was fearful and…

…she reminded her uncle that it was a capital crime in Persia to go into the king’s presence uninvited. To do so could coat you your life.
Mordecai understood the fear...

...that Esther was grappling with, but he also knew that to fail would be even more catastrophic. Deep inside, Mordecai was confident that God would deliver the Jews even if she did not go before the king.
In fact, his words were……

… “For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this.”
And then Esther moves…

…from fear to faith when she says utters a brave and profound statement.
Esther’s words…

… I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.”
There is obviously much more...

...more to this story, but I would like to stop and reflect upon the insights we can gain for our own lives as we examine what prompted Esther to this great act of total surrender.
Five Lessons from the life of Esther…

…that help us to see a clear picture of the totally surrendered life.
Lesson 1

God’s supersedes every other purpose.
God’s Purpose

Nothing happens that does not contribute to God’s purpose

God can use disobedience and wickedness to accomplish His purpose
Lesson 2

God works His purpose through people.
God will work with…

…wicked people

…disobedient people

…unsaved people, but His preference is

…willing people
God works best...

...through those who are willing to totally surrender everything to Him.
Lesson 3

God is working even when you cannot see Him working
God’s name is not…
…mentioned anywhere in the book of Esther but His hand is everywhere.
God’s Providence

God will use someone else if you don’t want to do it... or He will discipline you until you surrender to His will.
Lesson 4

God is not in a hurry, but His timing is perfect.
God gave Moses...

...40 years to form a high opinion of himself, and then He waited 40 more years to show him that his opinion of himself was too high.
And then God…

...took another 40 years to show Moses how he can use a man who puts aside his ego and totally surrenders Himself.
Lesson 5

Man may be in charge, but God is in control.
God has the last word

…No matter what you are going through, or have already been through, God has the last word. (9:19)