



Near and Now

On purpose – Esther 4

By Rev. Mandy France

Warm-up Question

How does your faith inform your responsibility to your community?

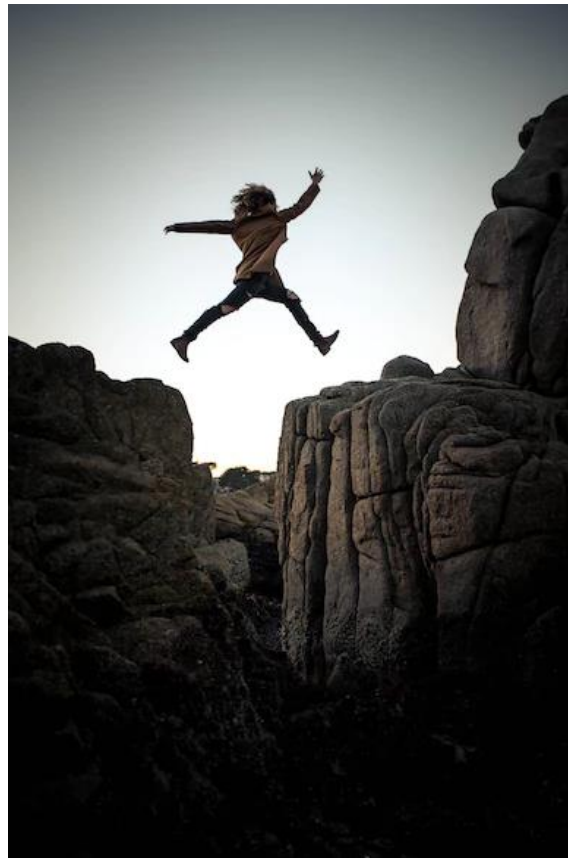


Photo by Sammie Chaffin on [Unsplash](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

Such a Time as This

Read [Esther 4](#)

Bible Story Reflection

What are you willing to risk in order to love and care for your community? The book of Esther Chapter 4 is a very unique and interesting one. It is short, but full of lessons. Many times, we don't take risks because we are too afraid of failure. Queen Esther was giving excuses to justify the fact that she was afraid of going into the king's presence without invitation. But after Mordecai told her the reality of the situation, she decided to take the risk. She lived fully into her vocation even in the midst of a dire situation.

Queen Esther was scared of what was at risk. Thankfully, Mordecai opened Esther's eyes to what needed to be done and Queen Esther was moved to do the right thing, even if it meant risking her life. Many of us are like Queen Esther. We are afraid of taking risks. We value comfort over confrontation. We don't like to step too far outside of our comfort zone in fear of what we might lose. What we don't realize is that we might actually gain something that is invaluable.

Esther Chapter 4 reminds us to stop giving excuses or procrastinating, but to take risks, because life itself is a risk. Miraculous things are created when we venture outside what makes us feel comfortable. God shows up in the discomfort and the Spirit goes to work. Open your eyes to where God is calling you to take a risk. There just might be something amazing waiting for you.

Discussion Questions

1. Where is God when bad things happen?
2. When Mordecai hears the edict, he tears his clothes and puts on sackcloth and ashes. What is your response when you see evil and injustice happening around you?
3. Whom are you responsible for? What does that look like?
4. How can grief move you into action?
5. Reflect on a time in your life when you had to take a risk. What emotions did you feel?
6. In what areas of your life has your faith empowered you to make a change?
7. Reflect on a time in your life when you had a turning point. Where did you see God show up in that moment?
8. What do you do when you feel afraid? How do you overcome it?

Activity Suggestions

Attend your local city council meeting and hear the needs of your community. Spend time praying about ways you might be able to help meet those needs.

Write letters to your local political leaders with words of encouragement to lead with compassion and equity.

Think of a risk you have been unwilling to take. Make a list of resources to help you overcome that fear. Spend time in prayer, asking God to help you.

Prayer Concerns

Communities facing genocide, People who hold positions of power, People who are bound by fear

Closing Prayer

Open me to your purpose for me, O God, that I might live into your call upon my life today. In the name of +Jesus, Amen

