

Esther's Courage

Esther 4:9-16 (lightly abridged)

(9) Mordechai sent word to Esther in the palace about Haman's evil plan to destroy the Jews, and charged her to go to the king directly and to plead for her people.

(10) Esther, however, sent Mordecai the following reply: (11) "Everyone knows that if any person, man or woman, enters the king's presence without having been summoned, there is one law for them—they shall be put to death—and I have not been summoned to visit the king for the last thirty days."

(12) When Mordecai was told what Esther had said, (13) Mordecai sent this message back to Esther: "Do not imagine that you, of all the Jews, will be safe by being in the king's palace. (14) On the contrary, if you keep silent in this crisis, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from somewhere else, while you and your father's house will perish. And who knows, perhaps you are in this royal position for just such a crisis."

(15) Then Esther sent back this answer to Mordecai: (16) "Go, gather all the Jews who live in Shushan, and fast on my behalf; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens will observe the same fast. After that I shall go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I am to die, I shall die!"

Discuss:

1. In your own words, how does Mordechai coach Esther to be courageous (verses 13-14)? What is his argument?
2. Why do you think this argument was effective in changing Esther's mind?
3. Look at Esther's response (verse 16). Explain it in your own words.
4. Why do you think Esther asks for 3 days and for her community to fast? How might this help her be courageous?