

Our Ecclesiastes reading reminds us that life is a rich tapestry of changing seasons and helps us to find peace and purpose when we are facing challenging times. We should embrace each season in the firm knowledge that God orchestrates absolutely everything for his glory and our growth.

The highs and lows we experience are all part of a greater plan and the challenges we face will pass and joy will come after sorrow. We are reminded in Psalm 30 v 5 “weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning”.

God’s timing is perfect and we need to let go of all our anxiety and impatience and rest in the assurance that He is working all things for our good as it says in Romans 8 v 28 (“in all things God works for the good of those who love him”).

Nothing is by accident. Trust God’s word as a source of strength. Everything has its proper time. Be patient and trust God.

CS Lewis said that “the great thing, if one can, is to stop regarding all the unpleasant things as interruptions.... and realise that the interruptions are precisely one’s real life – the life God is sending one day by day.”

Turning to our passage from Esther – and if you’re not familiar with the book of Esther I really commend you to read it, it’s only 10 chapters. And it’s one of only 2 books in the bible that doesn’t directly mention God by name – although you can clearly see his hand working through the pages. The other book is Song of Songs or Song of Solomon - if you are interested!

The passage we heard contains the most famous quote from Esther spoken to her by her uncle Mordecai – “who knows but that you have come to your royal position for **such a time as this?**”

To set the context, the King has dismissed his original Queen - Vashti - who defied him. He conducts a beauty parade of the most gorgeous women from across his vast empire who form a new harem and without putting too fine a point on it, he tries them out one by one! He eventually selects Esther to be his queen. Her uncle has advised she must keep quiet about being Jewish.

The wicked Haman has just come up with a plan to annihilate all the Jews, who were now all living under this threat.

Esther never sought her position as queen - she was a lowly Jewish girl with no parents and of no importance. God had placed her in this pivotal position at the perfect time to be able to fulfil a purpose much bigger than herself. She was in the unique position of being the only person who could save every Jewish person, God’s chosen people.

All the things that Esther had experienced up to this pivotal moment – the negative as well as the positive – had worked together to place her in such a setting, at such a time and season for her to be able to make a significant difference. There's no such thing as chance!

Initially Esther is afraid, nervous and uncertain – and it took her 3 days to mull over the situation, pray and muster courage to act - but she accepted her situation and had the courage and strength of character to step up. She disregarded what might have been the consequences.

She had a choice and she chose to act. Similarly, Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane had a moment questioning what he was destined to do, but he too chose to act.

God never forces anything on us – it's always our choice - our free will. But sometimes we are our own worst enemy and we don't have the courage to step up. We might be one brave decision away from the most important turning point in our lives.

God places us in situations where he wants to use us – and in these situations we are faced with the choice of doing either what God is calling us to do or ignoring God.

Stepping into God's purpose can feel overwhelming but God never calls anyone to anything without equipping them.

The world tries to encourage us to seek fame and books, social media, magazines and movies can present us with a warped world view and make us dissatisfied and unhappy with what we've got. But the bible calls us to seek faithfulness – remember Mark 10 v 45 “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve”.

We can easily spend too long trying to figure out where God wants us to be or wishing we were somewhere else – instead of just allowing God to do something with our life just where we are.

Remember God has placed you exactly where you are for **a time such as this!** Trust his timing and step forward in faith. It could be in your school, your work, your church, your friendship group, your sports club, literally anywhere - we are each placed in our own unique sphere of influence.

We also should remember that God knows all – we know nothing – it's not all about us – we should trust God and his timings.

Mordecai's words to Esther could equally apply to each one of us! All the steps that got you to this particular place – look back – you'll see God's hand guided you here! Steering you, holding you.

Remember Debbie from CAL who spoke to us a few week's back – she wouldn't have gone on that journey with CAL if she hadn't had the courage to step forward.

God places us in our relationships, jobs and locations for a reason – he works through us. If we choose not to act, God's plans will still happen but we just won't be part of them, we will have missed our personal opportunity to fulfil what God had in store for us and to be part of His plan. God always accomplishes his agenda regardless of whether or not we are brave enough to be part of it.

God uses ordinary people to accomplish His extraordinary purposes when they are willing to step out in faith. His divine timing is perfect, so be patient and trust that he is orchestrating events for his glory and your good.

Serve God wherever he places you. Don't wait for God to place you in your desired place – we are all where we are for a reason. Have the courage and wisdom to discern this and serve God exactly where we find ourselves. Don't make excuses!

Dear Lord

We pray for your guidance, open our eyes to see what you would like us to do in the places in which you have placed us. Direct our steps to do your work so that we may share your love with those around us so that we live by faith, be known by love and are a light of hope to our community.

Amen

**Carol Elsasser, 20 July 2025**