

For Such a Time

(Esther 4:1-17)

Yearly Theme: “Love Is...”

Series Title: *Never Give Up*

May 5th, 2019

Something to think about:

The book of Esther in the Old Testament is a small narrative comprised of only 11 chapters describing a time when the Jewish people were no longer a nation, but rather a people under Persian rule.

Though the Jewish people were under Persian rule, many of them continued to refuse to comply with the pagan worship rituals and bowing before court officials. One such official by the name of Haman became so incensed by one specific Jewish man’s refusal to bow to him that he made a request of King Xerxes to decree an edict for the extermination all of the Jewish people throughout the Persian kingdom, to which the king agreed. The man that refused to bow before Haman was called Mordecai.

However, due to an earlier dismissal of King Xerxes’ wife Vashti for dishonoring his request to come to him during a party, virgin women throughout the kingdom had been brought to the king in order to procure another queen. The woman chosen, is the woman after which this book of the Bible is named: *Esther*. Coincidentally, Esther was adopted by Mordecai who had raised her as his own. Now, as the queen of the Persian empire, Esther was in a position to do something about the decree to exterminate the Jews, but would she? Keeping her own Jewish heritage a secret, would she risk everything to approach the king? This is where we pick up their story today...

Turn in your Bibles: *Esther 4:1-17*

Esther’s love for Mordecai, and more importantly her love for God, caused her to press in rather than give up. And, here’s the point this morning...

Key Point: “Love never gives up even when it means honoring God more than honoring the king.”

Like Esther, I believe we can learn how to face difficult circumstances without buckling or caving in to fear. I believe, like Esther we can learn to never give up even when situations seem impossible to overcome. This is what we can learn from Esther today...

- A call to action may at times involve great risk.

Esther 4:10-11 (NLT), ¹⁰ Then Esther told Hathach to go back and relay this message to Mordecai: ¹¹ “All the king’s officials and even the people in the provinces know that anyone who appears before the king in his inner court without being invited is doomed to die unless the king holds out his gold scepter. And the king has not called for me to come to him for thirty days.”

- God will always accomplish His purposes with or without us (though He prefers to accomplish them *with* us).

Esther 4:13-14 (NLT), ¹³ Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: “Don’t think for a moment that because you’re in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. ¹⁴ If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?”

- Resolving to do the right thing is difficult and often comes with a price.

Esther 4:15-16 (NLT), ¹⁵ Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶ “Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die.”

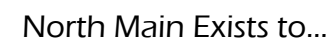
Something to take home:

Esther was fearful, but she didn’t allow that fear to paralyze her. Esther was willing to do the right thing, no matter the cost. She understood that God could accomplish His purposes without her, but she was willing to be an active participant in His plans.

Are you willing to take a risk for God? Are you willing to be an active participant in His plans and purposes? Do you give up when the going gets tough, or when the odds seem stacked against you? Are you willing to pursue what’s right in spite of the consequences?

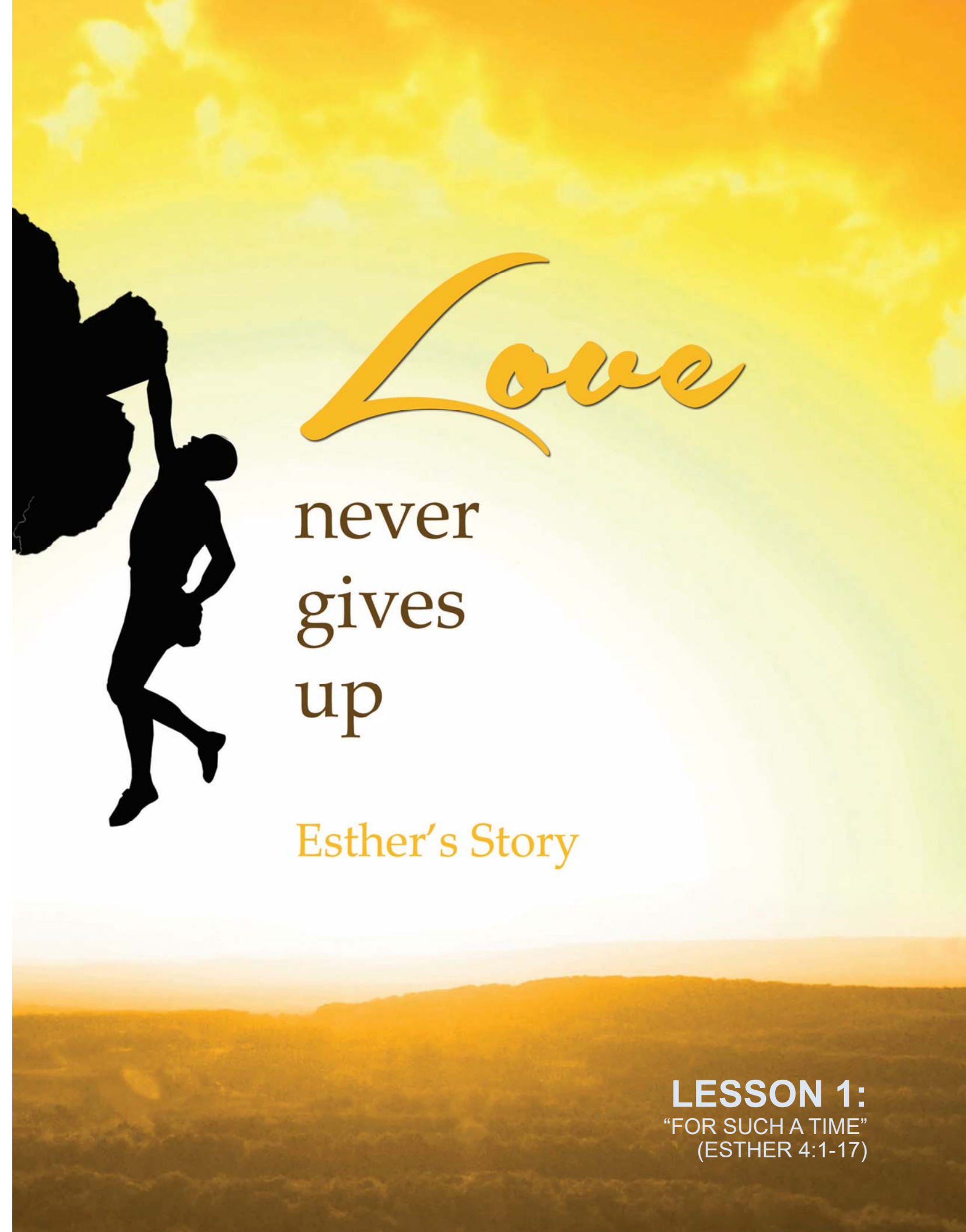
Doing the right thing may be difficult at times, and often comes at a price, but it’s always worth it in the end. Never giving up for the right reasons pays great, eternal dividends. Loving God and loving others requires sacrifice and endurance. Remember...

Key Point: “Love never gives up even when it means honoring God more than honoring the king.”

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Know Christ intimately,
Grow in Christ continually, and,
Go for Christ daily;

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never
gives
up

Esther's Story

LESSON 1:

“FOR SUCH A TIME” (ESTHER 4:1-17)

For Such a Time

(Esther 4:1-17)

Series Title: *Never Give Up*

KICK STARTERS:

⇒ Has there ever been a time when you wanted to give up; throw in the towel? If you’re willing, share your story and what came as a result of your decision...

SCRIPTURE: (Before studying this material, consider listening to the corresponding message online at: <http://www.northmaincog.org/media/sermon-media>)

Esther 4:1-17 (NLT)

¹ When Mordecai learned about all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on burlap and ashes, and went out into the city, crying with a loud and bitter wail. ² He went as far as the gate of the palace, for no one was allowed to enter the palace gate while wearing clothes of mourning. ³ And as news of the king’s decree reached all the provinces, there was great mourning among the Jews. They fasted, wept, and wailed, and many people lay in burlap and ashes. ⁴ When Queen Esther’s maids and eunuchs came and told her about Mordecai, she was deeply distressed. She sent clothing to him to replace the burlap, but he refused it. ⁵ Then Esther sent for Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs who had been appointed as her attendant. She ordered him to go to Mordecai and find out what was troubling him and why he was in mourning. ⁶ So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the square in front of the palace gate. ⁷ Mordecai told him the whole story, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸ Mordecai gave Hathach a copy of the decree issued in Susa that called for the death of all Jews. He asked Hathach to show it to Esther and explain the situation to her. He also asked Hathach to direct her to go to the king to beg for mercy and plead for her people. ⁹ So Hathach returned to Esther with Mordecai’s message. ¹⁰ Then Esther told Hathach to go back and relay this message to Mordecai: ¹¹ “All the king’s officials and even the people in the provinces know that anyone who appears before the king in his inner court without being invited is doomed to die unless the king holds out his gold scepter. And the king has not called for me to come to him for thirty days.” ¹² So Hathach gave Esther’s message to Mordecai. ¹³ Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: “Don’t think for a moment that because you’re in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. ¹⁴ If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?” ¹⁵ Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶ “Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die.” ¹⁷ So Mordecai went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. In the first three chapters of the book of Esther, we find the Jewish people living under the control of the Persian empire. A Jewish woman by the name of Esther has become the new queen, and her older cousin, Mordecai, has been given some authority as a leader in the King’s court. However, they both have kept their Jewish heritage a secret. After a series of events, the King’s second in command, Haman, has coerced the King into siding an edict to exterminate all the Jewish people’s in the kingdom. In chapter 4, we come upon the scene. As best you can, describe what’s going on in the text:

2. What do Mordecai, and the Jewish people do, after hearing the news of the King’s edict (vv. 1-3)?

3. After hearing that Mordecai is in mourning and grief-stricken, what does she do (vv. 4-6)?

4. The back and forth continue between Mordecai and Esther through Hathach for some time. What does Mordecai ask of Esther, and what is her initial response (vv. 7-15)?

5. Esther’s final response is one of concession to do what Mordecai asks of her. What is the final thing that Esther asks Mordecai to do (vv. 15-17)?

6. Mordecai was asking Esther to take a risk. What was the risk involved in what he asked her to do? Would you have been willing to take the risk that Esther did? Why, or why not?

7. Mordecai tells Esther that deliverance and relief for the Jews will ultimately come from somewhere, but that perhaps she was made queen for such a time as this. God will ultimately accomplish His plans with or without us. How can people actively participate in God’s plans? Are you actively participating in God’s plans? Why, or why not?

SELF-EVALUATION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ **ARE YOU WILLING TO TAKE A RISK FOR GOD?** Are you willing to be an active participant in His plans and purposes? Do you give up when the going gets tough, or when the odds seem stacked against you? Are you willing to pursue what’s right in spite of the consequences?
- ⇒ **DOING THE RIGHT THING MAY BE DIFFICULT AT TIMES**, and often comes at a price, but it’s always worth it in the end. Never giving up for the right reasons pays great, eternal dividends. Loving God and loving others requires sacrifice and endurance.
- ⇒ **MEMORY VERSES:** *Esther 4:13-14; 1 John 4:18a; Mark 8:35-36.*