Advent Week 2, 2025
Esther 4:1-17

I have a question for you, have you ever had to patiently wait for someone? Whether it's one of your children, your spouse, a job offer, results of a medical test or it might even be that you are waiting for God to answer prayer request. We all have experienced a time where we have had to just simply wait. As we already know, Advent means to wait and to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. So now let's continue our Advent journey of "How Long, O Lord?"

Last week you heard from Pastor Day and Deacon CoCo as they presented a message that as we wait during this season of Advent, we wait so that ALL people get to hear and to know the good news based on Luke 2:8-14.

This week we will be looking at the text from the book of Esther. Esther is one of only two books named for women, Esther and Ruth and the only book where there is no mention of the name for God. Our text begins with chapter 4 but in order to understand, let's take a look at what has happened prior to our reading.

Here's a brief synopsis: The book of Esther begins with the Queen refusing to obey an order from her husband, the King. She was subsequently banished and a search for a new queen began. When the King saw Esther, he was incredibly happy and made her his new queen.

Esther's older cousin Mordecai became a government official and during this time he stopped the assassination plot of the king. Another member of the King's court, Haman, who was second in command, felt that since he was so important that everyone should kneel and bow down to him. When Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman, because he knew that God was the only one

he should bow down to. Haman became furious and determined to destroy Mordecai and all the Jews along with him.

Haman deceived the King and persuaded him to issue a decree condemning the Jews to death. This edict ordered the complete massacre and elimination of all the Jews. And this is where our text for today begins right after Mordecai has read this proclamation. We find him going to inform Queen Esther about what is happening outside the walls of the palace where she lives.

Mordecai presumed that since Esther lived in the King's palace that it would be easy for her to visit with the king about this decree. Once she reads it, she becomes truly terrified — no one is allowed to approach the king without a summons, or they'll be put to death. If the king extends his scepter when approached, the petitioner can live, but there's no guarantee. Even as the queen, speaking out would put Esther's life in danger. When Queen Esther sent word through her servant to her cousin Mordecai that she was not able to just go to the king, his reply is one of the most infamous statements found in the Bible, "Don't think that because you live in the palace that you will escape from this order - for if you keep silent…you and your family will be wiped out. Who knows? Perhaps you have been placed in this position for just such a time as this."

What does she do next? Another question is, what would you do? Would you ignore this news and respond by saying that since you live in the palace that you would be safe or would you just presume that someone else with more power will step into help. Or would you just wait in silence, hoping and praying that God will provide an answer. O God, what must I do? Please give me some guidance, there is a lot of pressure upon me, what should I do?

We find out that Queen Esther does follow the guidance of her God and asks not only her servants but also her fellow Jews to fast and pray. After three days she then risks her life by approaching the king. The king does extend his scepter to the Queen and promises to grant her request. But we find that Esther has a strategy. She doesn't ask right away. First, she invites the king to a banquet — and then to a second banquet. Finally, she makes her request. The king finds out that he has been deceived and ultimately grants Esther's request. The king now knows that his second in command Haman is the one who really wants all the Jews destroyed. Haman's dislike of the Jews ends up with his own death.

We find that God placed Esther in this exact position. She is, in essence, a role model for all Christians. It is a prime example for each of us to become seriously involved in political and local advocacy. Esther prayed for a strategy, appealed to her leader, made her case, and asked him to save her people. Consider what the fate of the Jewish people would have been if Esther had not taken the case to her King. Esther along with Moses, Daniel, and Jeremiah are biblical political activists who made a lifesaving difference for Jews by appealing to their leaders. Again, where would the Jewish community be without these role models?

In today's political climate, we need to be increasingly aware of what is happening in our communities, our nation, and the world. We need to become an advocate for any and all injustices.

When we take a closer look at Scripture, any type of activism is both affirmed and directed by God through each of us. Several opportunities to advocate for a variety of issues await each of us.

Yet, what are we doing while we are waiting? The question still remains, "How Long, O Lord?" How long? The story of Queen Esther is a reminder that everyone can be an advocate. Whether it's standing up for a friend in need or raising awareness about larger social issues, we can all make a difference. Advocacy is about being aware of injustices and taking action, just as Esther did.

As we are waiting, we can do the following: 1. Spend time in prayer asking God for guidance; 2. Research an issue or issues and educate yourself on the injustice or injustices that pull at your heart; 3. Use your voice, make phone calls, write letters, send postcards. In other words, take action. 4. Encourage others to speak out against any injustices that they witness.

Because of Queen Esther's courageous act, a whole nation was saved. Seeing her God-given opportunity, she seized it! Her life made a difference. Perhaps he has prepared you to act in "such a time as this."

These questions still remain: How will **YOU** advocate for justice? How will **YOU** use your voice to speak up for others? Will **YOU** be like Esther – obedient to God, courageous and stand up for justice? Or will you remain silent? It's all up to **YOU!!**