

1. Ammunition against me – Low brow humor of choice = 3 Stooges.
 - a. Curley’s hijinks lead to falling out of chair
 - b. Moe: “What’s the matter w. you?” Curley: “I’m a victim of circumstance.”
2. *Transition: We identify with this; we feel like victims of circumstance*
 - a. 3 “if only’s”= then we could be leaders
3. But it’s not like this – new way of seeing circumstances
 - a. We think leaders are “born” not “made” (baby Teddy Roosevelt and Abe Lincoln)
 - b. But Scripture tells us leaders are “made” not “born” (reiterate) – reference “Unlikely Leaders”
 - c. Our talents and greatness don’t make us leaders – our circumstances call us to leadership.
4. *Quick Transition: Last week of series – new Unlikely leader = Esther.*
 - a. *Context- Jewish people in exile in Persia.*
 - b. *Esther not looking for leadership or power – all circumstance.*
5. Book of Esther:
 - a. She’s a lucky duck – chosen to be new Queen(via The Bachelor)
 - b. King doesn’t know she’s Jewish.
 - c. Mordecai gets in trouble with Haman (chapter 3). Doesn’t bow to him.
 - i. Haman’s overreaction = law that calls for death of all Jews
 - d. Mordecai’s message to Esther and her response = Turn to scripture (Es. 4:5-11)
 - i. 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.”
 - e. Reasons for Esther’s hesitation:
 - i. She’s not secure = ie. Vashti
 - ii. Can’t walk up to King w/o being summoned/asked.
 - iii. King has to hold out scepter to her or else she’s sentenced to death.
 - iv. Mordecai is asking Esther to risk her life.
 - f. Mordecai doesn’t care he’s asking this of her!
 - i. 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?”
 - ii. Big Guns- it’s all about circumstance. (vs.12) It all points to this moment.
6. *Transition: What does this mean? “for such a time as this?”*
 - a. *God not mentioned by name but present.*
7. Esther’s circumstances call her to this pivotal moment.

- a. Her two choices:
 - i. One, Fear and self preservation
 - 1. God wants her safe and comfy (list of benefits of being Queen)
 - ii. Two, not to be a victim of circumstance and lead
 - 1. God wants her to risk her life and comfort for the lives of her people.
 - iii. Esther tells us her choice in vs 15-16.
 - 1. She chooses to lead and risk her life: “if I must die, I must die.”

8. *Transition: We’re not going to go through and finish Es. Today (but you should – and grab a GTC journal)- but good news: Esther lives and saves her people (Purim)*

- a. *But what about us? How do we respond to this question?*

9. We want ideal circumstances

- a. Anti-leadership response = excuses (3 excuses) – someone else who’s
 - i. Stronger
 - ii. Richer
 - iii. More charming/talented/ etc.
- b. Circumstances are never ideal, but leadership is not about us, but about what God does through us.
- c. But everything depends on our perspective and response to the “such a time as this” question.
- d. But the truth is we ALL lead other people at some point in our lives, we are given opportunities to influence, so we’re ALL unlikely leaders!
 - i. Leadership = stepping up and taking mantle when circumstances call for it.
 - ii. Example of 3 types of leadership
 - 1. Leadership at work – having a strong work ethic, building others up, etc
 - 2. Leadership in the home- with caring for parents, spouse, children
 - 3. Leadership in the church- encouraging others, volunteering your time and talents, praying and caring for one another
 - iii. Respond like Esther – “If I must die, I must die” putting others first, ourselves second
- e. We didn’t ask for it...(3 ways – people, place, culture, job) but that’s our circumstance
- f. God asks the same for all of us – die to ourselves and live for Him.
- g. New way of seeing God’s blessing – not for our good and comfort, but for God’s glory. What is our “such a time as this”?

10. *Transition: Esther = distant. More recent (only a couple hundred years! ;-) example*

11. William Wilberforce – less familiar contemporary of George Washington or King Louis IX.

- a. He had to deal with “such a time as this” question.
- b. MP at young age (but was typical college student) – political connection, witty and charming, good at take-downs, threw great BBQ to get votes
- c. Went from ambitious (but lazy) MP to devout Christian
 - i. Initial tension between beliefs and politics.
 - 1. Mordecai figure = John Newton.
 - ii. The “this” for Wilberforce – the Slave Trade (middle passage)
 - iii. Wilberforce = unlikely leader
 - 1. How he got into this job.
 - 2. Abolitionists = very unpopular
 - iv. His answer: “If I must die, I must die.”
 - 1. In 20 years, brought about end of slave trade.
 - 2. 3 days before he died, saw end of slavery in England



3. Quote: My walk is a public one. My business is in the world, and I must mix in the assemblies of men or quit the post which Providence seems to have assigned me.”

v. His circumstances called him to leadership – not his gifts

12. Transition: We don't need to seek out power or control – we need to step back and take stock. Providence, God, has put us in circumstances that call for leadership, call for action.

13. As we wrap up, I have a few next steps we can all take in response to Esther's story, ways we can avoid being “victims of circumstance”:

- a. Maybe you're Mordecai or John Newton and see friends and family who need guidance, feel powerless, are facing obstacles, or aren't stepping up into circumstance. (flesh out.)
 - i. Then – Encourage (note or coffee); point to God; Challenge them and ask them the “such a time as this” question! Life is busy, but take time to invest in others.
- b. Maybe you're like Esther or Wilberforce – in overwhelming situation with risk. Want to take it easy, etc. see others (family, friends) in need of love and guidance and leadership, but you could get hurt, or you're overly comfortable and you like the way things are...
 - i. You need your “if I must die, I must die” moment.
 - ii. Like Gideon, Ruth, David, and Esther-you might be an unlikely leader.
 - iii. God loves working through unlikely leaders – look at Jesus (“Can anything good come from Nazareth??)
 - iv. Ask yourself: Am I ready
 1. to hand over my life...
 2. to die to myself and live for Christ
 3. To be like Esther and say: if I must die, I must die for the sake of Him who already answered this question followed through?
 4. To be an unlikely leader and ask: Am I here for such a time as this?

14. Prayer.