

“Living Dangerously”

Esther 3: 8-11, 4: 1-2, 4, 6-17

8 Then Haman approached King Xerxes and said, “There is a certain race of people scattered through all the provinces of your empire who keep themselves separate from everyone else. Their laws are different from those of any other people, and they refuse to obey the laws of the king. So it is not in the king’s interest to let them live. 9 If it please the king, issue a decree that they be destroyed, and I will give 10,000 large sacks of silver to the government administrators to be deposited in the royal treasury.” 10 The king agreed, confirming his decision by removing his signet ring from his finger and giving it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. 11 The king said, “The money and the people are both yours to do with as you see fit.”

4:1 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 wearing clothes of mourning.

Verse 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 know 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.

If you are taking risks for Jesus Christ, then you are **dangerous** to satan. I want to ask you to think about it this morning and ask yourself: “Am I dangerous to satan? Is satan worried about me? Might the evil one lose numbers in hell because of me? As long as we do nothing more than read a paragraph or two in a devotional every day and go to church on Sunday, then satan probably doesn’t know we exist. By looking at some examples from Scripture I plan to make it clear what it looks like to be dangerous to satan. My goal is to create a desire in every person here to live in such a way, that you are dangerous. Live dangerously in Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

[NOTE 1]

The first person I want to look at as an example for us is Esther. From the verses I read we have some of the basics to the story of Esther. Now let me give you a little more detail and background. First, we have King Ahasuerus partying up a storm. I mean this was no ordinary house party or rager. This one went on for several days. So the King and his friends have been partying and drinking for several days, when the king calls out and demands that his wife come out and show herself to him and his guests. He wanted to show off his trophy wife, his greatest wealth, his beautiful wife. Queen Vashti, however, decides that she does not want to degrade herself by obeying the King’s drunken demands. Because of this he is deposed and loses her position as Queen.

[NOTE 2] After the King sobers up and calms down, he wishes to reinstate Vashti as queen but he is unable to do so because in his drunken stupor he uttered an irreversible decree so the law and his own words make reinstatement impossible. So Vashti can no longer be Queen.

This opens up the door for Esther. The King institutes a Kingdom-wide “Who Wants to be Queen?” search. It’s basically an ancient version of “American Idol” without the music and singing. People go throughout the land looking for the most beautiful woman in the Kingdom. And the winner is Esther. So Esther becomes Queen in Vashti’s place. Unknown to the King and his servants, however, Esther is a Jewess, raised by her cousin, Mordecai. Her identity as a Jew was kept a secret. Then a guy named Haman comes on the scene as the King’s advisor and right-hand man. In fact the King orders that the people of his kingdom treat Haman as his representative and bow down to him.

Mordecai, Esther’s cousin refuses to bow down to Haman and that makes the guy really mad! So Haman goes to the king and gets him to sign a decree condemning, not just Mordecai but all Jews, meaning they should all be killed. As a sort of subplot we are told that just a short time before this all happens, Mordecai had discovered a plot to kill

the king and warned him that the King's life was spared. But now, because he would not bow down to Haman, Mordecai and all the Jews in the kingdom are to be killed. So Mordecai gets word through a messenger to Esther that it is up to her to save her people. The only problem is that Esther hasn't been summoned to the King in 30 days. One of the ways the Persians guarded against assassination was to enforce a law that anyone who went into the King's chambers without a summons was automatically killed. So Esther would have to risk her life to approach the King. There was, however, one loophole in the law; the king could offer the golden scepter to the person who had intruded and pardon the offense. At first Esther sends word back to Mordecai that it is too dangerous, but eventually she is persuaded that the only way to save Mordecai, herself, and the rest of the Jewish people is to do as Mordecai asks. So Esther risks her life for her people and is rewarded by the king extending the golden scepter to her. Esther eventually persuades the king to save the Jews. Another result of Esther's plea is that Haman gets hanged on the gallows that he himself ordered to be built for the Jews and Mordecai to be killed publicly. Also Mordecai ends up with Haman's place in government as well.

Now I would like to focus in on the characters of Vashti, Mordecai, and Esther. Think about how each of them is an example to us in this story. Queen Vashti risks her life and her position as queen for her right to say yes and no. You see, King Ahasuerus, thought of his queen as someone to be manipulated and exhibited, a trophy of sorts. Vashti didn't appreciate that and refused to degrade herself by parading for the drunken king and his friends. She refused one of the king's commands and was deposed from her position for it. She is lucky she didn't lose her life. If she had not taken a stand for her rights, if Vashti had not taken the risk, Esther would never have become queen. God was able to effect what would happen to the Israelites through Vashti's being deposed. Perhaps Vashti is an example of the person Jesus describes in chapter 25 of Matthew that is counted among the sheep and has no idea why. Vashti sacrificed without even knowing what she had given for God and His people. I guess the point is that even if you are not looking for it, God can use you in ways you aren't aware of. God works through circumstances. Vashti took a risk by standing on her principles and God brought about good through it.

Sometimes all it takes is a little stepping out in faith to make a difference. Please listen to this story told by Dr. Francis Dixon: "I was a widely-traveled pastor in England (from Lansdowne Baptist Church). One night in church I asked a man named Peter to share his testimony. Peter got up and said, 'This is how I was saved. I was in the Royal Navy. 'I was walking down George Street in Sydney, Australia and out of nowhere stepped a little old gray-haired man and he said to me, 'Excuse me, sir, but could I ask you a question? I hope that it won't offend you, but if you were to die today, where would you spend eternity? The Bible says that it will either be in Heaven or it will be in Hell. Would you think about that, please? Thank you, God bless you, and Toodle-oo!'" "Then the man left. I had never been confronted with that question – I couldn't get

it out of my mind; I got back to London, I sought out a pastor, and I became a Christian.”

Several weeks later we had a revival in the church and Noel, one of the visiting revival team, shared his testimony, “This is how I came to know Christ. I was in the Royal Navy and I was walking down George Street in Sydney, Australia and out of nowhere stepped a little old gray-haired man. He said to me, ‘Excuse me, sir, but could I ask you a question? If you were to die today, where would you spend eternity?’ The Bible says that it will either be in Heaven or it will be in Hell. Would you think about that, please? Thank you, God bless you, and Toodle-oo!’ What he said bothered me and later, I sought out a Christian, and I was converted to Christ.”

Several months after that I was in the city of Adelaide in eastern Australia and I thought that I would share the testimony of Peter and Noel. A man in the congregation jumped up waving his hands and said, “Well, I’m another – the same thing happened to me. I couldn’t get what he said out of my mind and I became a follower of Jesus.” I then went to western Australia for a revival meeting and shared this story and afterwards a deacon of the church came to me and said, “Dr. Dixon, I’m another, I’d never been asked that question, and later I prayed to receive Christ.”

I went back to my home church in England and shared about Peter and Noel and the man in Adelaide and the deacon from the western part of Australia. When I finished, a young lady came up to me and said, “Pastor Dixon, I’m another, this man said the same thing to me and later I became a believer.” Several weeks after that, I was attending a conference in northern England where I shared this growing story. Afterwards, a man came up to me and said, “Dr. Dixon, well, I’m another. I was on a business trip to Sydney and this obnoxious, spiteful little man stepped out of a shop doorway, offered me a religious pamphlet, and accosted me with a question, ‘Excuse me, sir, but could I ask you a question? I hope that it won’t offend you, but if you were to die today, where would you spend eternity? The Bible says that it will either be in Heaven or it will be in Hell. Would you think about that, please? Thank you, God bless you, and Toodle-oo!’ “I tried to tell him I was a Baptist Elder. He wouldn’t listen to me. “I came home and told my pastor, thinking he would sympathize, but he agreed! He had been disturbed for years knowing that I didn’t have a relationship with Jesus...and he was right. I made Jesus my Lord and Savior!”

A year later I went on a world speaking tour and one of the stops was India. I was at a missionary conference and spoke on the topic of personal evangelism. I thought to myself, “What a perfect illustration!” I went through the story and afterwards a missionary came up to me and said, “Dr. Dixon, I’m another, it happened the same way for me and I trusted Christ soon after.” After India I went to Jamaica. I was at a meeting with a group of pastors. I shared this story with them. A pastor came up afterwards and said, “Excuse me, Dr. Dixon, I’m another, the exact same thing happened to me and later, I was converted and went on to seminary.”

Next I stopped in Atlanta, Georgia to speak at a Naval Chaplain convention. Here for 3 days I spoke to over 1,000 Naval Chaplains. Afterwards the Chaplain General took me out for a meal and I asked the Chaplain how he became a Christian. He shared that he was a reprobate drunk in his days in the Service, and while doing exercises in the South Pacific, they stopped in Sydney Harbor.

"I got off a bus on George Street, blind drunk, and this ghost-of-a-man jumped out in front of me, pushed a pamphlet in my hand and said, 'Sailor, are you saved? If you die tonight are you going to Heaven?' "The fear of God hit me immediately.

"I was shocked sober, ran back to the ship, and sought out the Chaplain. He led me to Christ. I soon began to prepare for the ministry under his guidance. I am now in charge of 1,000 chaplains who are bent on soul winning." Well, do I need to tell you where I went next? I went to Sydney, Australia. I sought out a Christian friend of mine and told him the stories and asked if he knew a little gray-haired man on George Street? "Oh, yes! Everybody knows him. That's Mr. Frank Jenner. But he's very old now and he's in the hospital confined to his bed." I asked my friend to take me to Mr. Jenner. We went to the hospital and I introduced himself. As I was giving specifics of each story, Mr. Jenner began to weep. And he wept and he wept. I asked, "What's wrong?" And Mr. Jenner said, "When I came to Christ, I promised Him that I would share Jesus as a simple witness to at least 10 people a day. In my retirement years, the best place to do this was George Street. I got lots of rejections, but a lot of people courteously took the tract. "In over 40 years of doing this, Sir, I have never heard of one single person coming to Jesus...until today." Mr. Jenner died two weeks later.—*A true account, shared by Dr. Francis Dixon before his death, 1985.*

Francis Dixon before his death, 1985.

[NOTE 3] Now let's talk about Mordecai. First Mordecai raises his younger cousin when her parents die. Just the fact that Mordecai took on this task tells you something about the kind of man he was. Then of all the women in the Kingdom, Eshter is picked as the most beautiful. Mordecai is shrewd as he keeps the Jewish identity of Esther a secret. Mordecai was one of the few people, the cream of the population, that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away with king Jehoicachin. He was a leader among his people. Back then, the Jews had a very hard time remaining true to their Jewish faith. There were tremendous pressures to assimilate into the Babylonian culture. Besides the government requiring them at times to bow down to the king, images of the king, and even his representatives, there were things about the culture that were very tempting to the Jews. They had to fight to remain separatist and had to hold on to their distinctiveness with bulldog-like tenacity. Sometimes this was done with an elitist attitude which looked down on other people. This did not sit well with the Babylonians so the Jews were not liked at all as a people. IF the king's servants had known that Esther was a Jew it is probably that they would have found a way to eliminate her as a candidate for Queen.

Then Mordecai accepted obscurity and stayed in the palace court though it was probable far from being his first choice. He gave faithful support to Esther even after she became queen and risked his safety by hanging around. It would have been easy for

him to give in to the ways of the people in the royal court but he remained faithful to his people, his heritage, and his faith and remains a non-conformist.

It is always easier to follow along then to separate yourself from a group. As Christians we are called to be different. Romans chapter 12 and verses 1 & 2 says that we are to “Not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we can know God’s will. We as Christians are called to be in the world but not of it. When people look at us they should be able to tell that there is something different about us. But, it is not easy. That is one of the ways we can tell if we are dangerous to Satan or not. Do we stick out? Can somebody from the outside, from our words and actions, tell a difference between us and the non-Christian next door? There is a poem that expresses the difference between the two paths we can take in life, the one that Satan wants us to take and the one that leads to salvation: “As once toward heaven my face was set, I came

unto a place where two ways met. One led to Paradise and one away;
and fearful of myself lest I should stray, I paused that I might know,
which was the way wherein I ought to go. The first was one my weary
eyes to please, winding along through pleasant fields of ease,
Beneath the shadow of fair branching trees, “this path of calm and
Solitude, surely must lead to heaven,” I cried, in joyous mood.
“Yon rugged one, so rough for weary feet, the footpath of the worlds’
Too busy street, can never be the narrow way to life.” But at that moment,
I there one espied a footprint bearing trace of having bled, and knew
It for the Christ’s so bowed my head, and followed where it led.

I always think of the path of the world as a highway and the road to salvation as a path, or two track at the most that an off-road vehicle might possibly dare to try. It’s not easy to be the kind of Christians that Jesus calls us to be. There is risk involved. If you find no risk in your life, chances are that you are on the wrong path. Most likely you will find that without risk, you are not dangerous to the evil one and rather comfortable. I know I have said it before, but I need to hear it again and I am therefore inferring that you might also: “Nowhere in the Bible are we called, implored, commanded or told to be comfortable!”

Back to Mordecai. When Haman walked through the royal court everyone bowed their faces to the ground, except Mordecai. Mordecai remained faithful to his God and to his people. Then when Mordecai learned of the king’s signing the decree to destroy all Jews, he risked his life to cry out to God in the city. Then for his people he risked communicating with his beautiful cousin ... Queen Esther. He challenges Esther, the girl he raised as his daughter, to risk her position as Queen and her very life, for her people. Think of the self-sacrifice it must have been for Mordecai to urge the child he raised to risk her life. We can learn a lot about the motives for self-sacrifice by looking at the arguments that Mordecai uses to persuade his daughter/cousin to intercede on behalf of the Jews before the king.

- 1) First there is the reason of self-preservation. Mordecai points out that once the bloodbath starts it may be found out that Esther herself is a Jew and she may be killed along with the rest. One reason for us to sacrifice ourselves for the cause of Christ is to avoid hell.
 - 2) Mordecai realized that no matter what, God's will, is what is going to happen. Also there is a price for turning away from God and His will.
 - 3) Thirdly, Mordecai alerts Esther to the point that God put you where you are for a purpose, "for such a time as this." God may have let you become Queen so that He might save His people through you. Power is duty and responsibility. As we have gifts and talents so we have a responsibility to use them for God.
- [NOTE 4]**

It is an honor to suffer for Christ. The harder the task given a student, craftsman, or surgeon, the more we honor him/her for successful completion. In the same way we should think of our trials for Jesus' sake as glory given to us by God. We are honored because God knows we can handle it, or that we will turn to Him to handle it for through us. We find our glory in obedience to God's will as Jesus' perfect obedience was His glory. Jesus' glory lay in the fact that, from His life, people recognized his special relationship to God. As with Christ, it is our glory when people see in us a reflection of God. That is most obvious when we risk something for the cause of Christ; when we take the risk to be obedient to God and not to the social norms of the world. Jesus calls us to deny ourselves and take up our cross daily and follow Him. Another reason for self-sacrifice is the reward in heaven besides the fact that it is commanded. Jesus was a risk-taker for the sake of others, for the sake of love. Jesus calls us to be willing to risk being different.

If you're not risking your comfort, if you're not stretching your comfort zone for Christ, if you give up when you're asked to sacrifice something for the church or for Christ, then the evil one is laughing at you. We are not dangerous to Satan if we aren't willing to lose our life for the cause of Christ. Satan's got it pretty easy in America. We are all so used to the easy life that we don't think of anything else. But when all is said and done, you are your life and nothing else. Think about it ... you are not what you meant to be, not what you hoped to be, you're not what you dreamed yourself to be, or pretend to be, you are not what you may have deluded yourself into thinking you are; you are your life and nothing else! **[NOTE 5]**

Esther is a good example. She is beautiful, courageous, cunning and resourceful. She is a good example of a risk-taker who is blessed with the desired outcome. When Esther was first approached by the messenger from Mordecai, she wanted to save herself and remain silent; a silence of selfishness. Often if we remain silent we stay comfortable. If we speak up we might risk losing our delights, our level of ease and enjoyment. Again, it is easier to remain quiet than it is to do what is right. It is difficult to put love and justice ahead of all. The sin of omission, though, is one that we often don't give any attention. Leaving undone what God has called us to do is just as bad as doing something blatantly against God's will.

Esther decides however, that she must save her people . the next thing she does is to ask her people to pray for her and she has her attendants pray also. They all fast and pray. This is really significant. Esther was smart enough, even though she was queen and would have been tempted to become reliant on her beauty, position, or money ... to realize that she needs God, yea even I dependent on God. She shows a total reliance on God. A three day fast certainly wouldn't make her more beautiful, it probably would have the opposite effect, but Esther realized that her power was in God, not in anything else. In the same way we need to recognize that Jesus Dhris is our strength in the power of the Holy Spirit. If you look at the word Christian, take out Christ, what do you have left? I, A, N, which stands for I am nothing. We are nothing without Christ, but we can do all things, IN Christ, who strengthens us. He is our rock, our mighty rock, our refuge, our shield and our strength! **[NOTE 6]**

When Esther decides that weh will do as Mordecai suggests she reveals an attitude which is also seen in Paul and in Jesus Himself. She says, "So I will go to the king thought it is against the law and if I perish, I perish." It is the same attitude we see in Paul when he says, in effect, If I die, I go to be with my Savior, If I live ...I win more people to Christ. In a way, they considered their lives as totally belonging to God. It's part of denying yourself, the dying of the old self. No one can touch you if you have that kind of attitude. This attitude is dangerous to the evil one. Satan's weapons are rendered useless on a person who lives by the mantra, If I die I go to be with my Savior in paradise, if I live, I win more people to Christ." Christ's cause can do without us, be we cannot do without IT! **[NOTE 7]**

If we want to change anything it will take total commitment. In everything that is true. The professionals that you see on TV in sports or music or dance have had to have a total commitment to what they do to get where they are. Hours and hours of practice, sacrificing time with friends, play time, etc. It takes years of practicing 7-8 hours a day to become a great musician. Quinton Marcellus is quoted as saying that you can practice an hour a day and be very good or you can practice 5-8 hours a day and be great ... it's up to you. Yes some people have more natural talent than others. I remember playing college football with a guy named Bart Mattson. He was an amazing natural athlete. It always looked almost effortless from him. But he worked hard and was a very good defensive back. The same is true in sports. It takes a total commitment to be successful. The cause of Christ is the only thing really worthy of our total commitment. Some Olympic athletes who give their whole lives to getting to the Olympics are left cold and empty and alone even though they have a gold medal. The challenge for all of us in this life, is to consider our lives. Are we dangerous to the evil one? Are we committed to our relationship with Christ? When is the last time you risked anything for the cause or Christ? I pray that as a faith community, as fellow Christ followers, we would risk bringing the message of the gospel to others! Let's look at our lives an make some changes to move toward becoming dangerous to satan. Make the evil one notice you. It is easy to just keep our heads down and hurry through our busy lives.

What are you going to do about it? Let's accept the challenge that the examples of Jesus, Mordecai, and Esther. Let's be totally committed to our relationship with God, the Father, the Son and God the Holy Spirit! Are you willing to risk getting Satan's notice by sacrificing, stepping out of your comfort zone? Are you willing to spend some serious time in prayer? Ask God where He might want you to get out of your comfort zone? Remember, you can do all things, through Christ who strengthens you in the power of the Holy Spirit! Let's pray ...AMEN

Sermon Notes for "Living Dangerously" on Esther
given at Doster Community Church November 2, 2025

- I. Ask yourself, "Am I dangerous to Satan?" Does the evil one know who I am? Does he have anything to worry about concerning me?
- II. Queen Vashti is also a good example as she stands up for her right to say yes or no and that opens the door for Esther to become queen and save the Jewish people.
- III. Mordecai is an example to us as well:
 - a. We need to risk for Jesus and the Gospel
 - b. We are not called to be comfortable
 - c. Mordecai's persuasion includes:
 - i. Esther is in danger herself, we need salvation
 - ii. God's Will comes first
 - iii. God has you where you are for "such a time as this!"
- IV. It is an honor to suffer for Christ, if we aren't willing to sacrifice our comfort for Christ, then the evil one laughs or worse, ignores us.
- V. Esther is a good example in that she puts herself at risk for God. She risks her life to save her people--the Jews.
- VI. No one can hurt somebody who has the attitude: "If I die, I go to be with Jesus in paradise. If I live, I win more people to Christ."
- VII. Christ's cause can do without us, **but we cannot do without it!** Jesus is the ultimate example! Are you dangerous to Satan? What are you going to do about it?