

RESPONDING TO YOUR DEFINING MOMENT

Scripture used: [Esther 4:13-14 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon began this week's sermon with a surprise announcement. Today is his 34th wedding anniversary! The story of how he and Dr. Rhonda met and married is one example of how important it is to look to God in defining moments of our lives. His plan for us is greater than anything we can imagine for ourselves. It was actually Dr. Rhonda who first heard God speak to her, saying that a strange young man across the college quad would be her husband. She introduced herself, and Pastor Hurmon heard the same thing from God while they were talking for the first time. God orchestrated that single moment to bring them together. This is the same thing that Mordecai said to Esther in [Esther 4:14 \(NLT\)](#). She was "made queen for just such a time" to save all the Israelites from execution. It was now up to her to make the decision to follow God's path for her, even though it would not be easy. Now each of us has the opportunity to make that same decision. In the middle of a global pandemic, with so much fear and uncertainty, Jesus followers can be the light for others!

KEY POINTS

- 1) **There are only a few defining moments in our lives.** A defining moment is a time when we face a decision with far-reaching consequences. Dr. Rhonda listened to God about a total stranger being her future husband. Esther listened to God about her role as advocate to save all the Israelites in the Persian empire. We are all in such a time now, even though the details are different for each of us.
- 2) **God asks us to take powerful action in defining moments.** The most difficult times offer the greatest opportunities. We all have a role to play in God's plan. These defining moments require us to take action that is unique to us and the circumstances we're in. We must choose to take the risk and suffer the consequences. No one can do it for us.
 - a. **Use our voice.** Esther is one of many examples of God's people using their voices. [Proverbs 31:8-9 \(NLT\)](#) actually commands us "to speak up for the poor and helpless to see that they get justice." There are many opportunities to do this right now as America comes to terms with systemic racism. Some of us may be called to actively support others, as Paul describes in [1 Thessalonians 5:11 \(NLT\)](#). This is so important at a time when many people are using their voices to tear down others.
 - b. **Use our influence.** God may be also asking us to work with others. Some of us are in positions of power, such as the leader of an organization or an executive. They may be able to directly take action. That isn't true for many of us, but we can still make a difference. Some of us are in close proximity to power, such as the member of a team who interacts with leadership. And some of us enjoy special positions in the hearts of the powerful, such as Esther. The Persian King's love for her that gave her the ability to control half the largest empire in the world — [Esther 7:2 \(NLT\)](#).
- 3) **Create space for God to share His plan for this defining moment.** Mordecai knew that Esther was in a defining moment. But that didn't mean she immediately understood what to do, or how to do it. In [Esther 4:16 \(NLT\)](#), she asked him to join her in three days of fasting and prayer. This would allow her to spend time with God. She would get closer to Him, and try to see exactly how she fit into His plan. She knew that if she thought of herself first, she would not have the strength to risk her life. Only God knew what to do in this defining moment.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - This is a defining moment for all Jesus followers. We have an incredible opportunity to lean into God, not ourselves. How has God been prompting you to respond to Him in this defining moment?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - The only thing we know for sure is that God loves us. He has a plan for us, and like Esther we will learn that our part is much bigger than we can imagine. That bigger role can be intimidating. What scares you the most about saying yes to Jesus? What have you learned from prior times in your life when you've taken a risk to respond to God in a significant way?
- 3) **DO** - Pastor Hurmon asked each of us to affirm this statement: "I will seek God's direction in this defining moment!" That means fasting, but it doesn't have to be food. Choose one thing to give up this week. Dedicate that free time to prayer. Speak to God and listen for His response. This is a defining moment!