

For Such a Time as This  
Ness Lake Bible Camp  
Ester 4:14

*“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position **for such a time as this?**”*

All of us at some time or other have known the joy of simply being at the right place at the right time. We are going for a walk down the road and in the ditch you spot a nice \$20 bill. You are at the right place at the right time. Or you go to the hockey game and as you are walking up to buy a ticket, someone comes up and offers you a free ticket. Again you are at the right place at the right time. I’m a hockey player and over the years I know what it’s like to be at the right place and at the right time and the puck come right on your stick and the goalie is out of position and it’s an empty net shot. Easy – again, just being in the right place at the right time. Now those aren’t life changing events, but others are. For example, one night I went skating at the local outdoor hockey rink and met this beautiful, fun loving girl who one day would become my wife. Right place, right time. Perhaps the greatest was the summer when I decided to take a job at a grazing reserve, I met a Christian cowboy who told me about Jesus and my life changed completely. I went from death to life, from my name not being in the Lamb’s book of life, to it being written down. Again, that summer I was in the right place at the right time.

When we are at the right place at the right time, life is great. But sometimes we also know what it's like to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Bad things happen. Accidents happen. People get hurt. Often when you are at the wrong place at the wrong time, sorrow follows. Being at the wrong place at the wrong time, forces us to make sometimes incredibly difficult decisions.

Recently I read the story about a man named Harry was headed to church on a rainy Sunday morning. He pulled out of his driveway in his 2-seater convertible, with the roof closed and as he turned into the main road he saw ahead of him three bedraggled figures huddled under a single umbrella at the next bus stop. All of them saw him in his car. One was old Mrs. Fletcher. She still insisted on getting to church by herself, despite her arthritis which was always worse in wet weather. Then was Dr. Jones, the local General Practitioner. A year earlier Dr. Jones had diagnosed a rare and dangerous disease that Harry had contracted on an overseas holiday, so Harry virtually owed him his life. As Harry thought about both of those people, he knew needed to stop and give them a lift. And then to complicate things even worse, the third person was Judith. Harry had had a crush on Judith for the past 6 months since she joined their church but had never had the courage or the opportunity to ask her out. Harry had about 3 seconds to decide what to do. This seemed like one of those being in the wrong place at the wrong time

scenarios. He really wanted to pick all three of them up, but there was only one spare seat. Who should he offer a lift to?

But 3 seconds was enough. Quickly he pulled his car to a halt, jumped out, passed the keys to Dr. Jones, helped Mrs. Fletcher into the passenger seat, and then modestly waved them good-bye as he huddled close to Judith under the umbrella.

I like that. What looked like being in the wrong place at the wrong time, turned out instead to be at the right place at the right time. I don't know about you, but maybe as you think about your life, you don't necessarily think that you are at the right place and the right time. Life is good, in fact it's great. It's like finding a \$20 in the ditch. But being in the right place at the right time, well that might be a stretch. For others of you, you might be thinking your life is just the opposite. You may be thinking you are at the wrong place at the wrong time. Maybe you just started a new job and it's not going great and you are like wow, I'm not sure I should be here. Maybe you just started up a business venture a little over a year ago and now with the downturn in the economy, especially if it is related to oil and gas, you feel this was definitely the wrong time and the wrong place to start a business.

Well wherever you find yourself, as we look into God's word today, I think there is a challenge and encouragement. If you have your Bibles I would encourage you to turn with me to the book of Ester chapter 4.

To help set the stage for this passage, we find that it takes place in the city of Susa, which is located in modern-day Iran. Susa was one of four capitals in the great Persian Empire. It was 475 years before Christ. A hundred years previously, the Jewish people had been overrun by the Chaldeans and had been taken into exile in Babylon. Fifty years later, Babylon was conquered by the Persians and the Jews were allowed to return home. But some Jews chose to stay where they were. They had discovered something very important. God did not just live in the land of Israel. God was here too.

But living as a Jew at the heart of the Persian Empire was a risky business, as the book of Esther makes clear.

As we look at this book, there are 5 primary characters in this story:

1. King Xerxes: Powerful ruler of the Persian Empire.
2. Queen Vashti: Woman of character and conviction.
3. Queen Esther: Exhibits both inner and outer beauty.
4. Mordecai: Esther's stepfather who kind of adopts her as his own.
5. Haman: The nasty villain.

Since today is camp Sunday, I want to do something like we would do at camp and this is what I want you to do, whenever you hear the word Haman, I want you the ladies to 'Hiss' and the guys to go 'Boooo', okay?

Practice it for a moment – Haman (Hiss, Booo).

As we come to chapter 4 what has happened so far is this: King Xerxes, the leader of the most powerful nation on the face of the earth, decides to throw a party. It was a huge party and after partying for 180 days the King decides to have an even bigger party – but this one would only last for 7 days. Everyone would be invited to this party and after becoming somewhat intoxicated, the King decides to show off the beauty of Queen Vashti before all the people. The problem was, Queen Vashti wasn't all that excited about being called on display before a bunch of drunken people. Could anyone blame her? She wasn't at all interested in being gawked at by a bunch of crude, drunken men. So she refused to go. This made Xerxes furious and he ordered her banished from the kingdom. That's Ester chapter 1 in a nutshell.

As we come to Ester chapter 2, King Xerxes gets lonely and his officials come up with this great idea of having a huge beauty contest for all the women in the kingdom. This is the Miss Persia Pageant and this is where Ester enters the scene.

You see Ester was being looked after by her uncle Mordecai who took her under his wing when Ester's parents both died. As I mentioned before, Mordecai was Jewish and was part of the group of people who were deported from Jerusalem and taken into exile to Susa by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. In the end,

Ester wins over the heart of King Xerxes and he makes her queen instead of Vashti.

The chapter ends with Mordecai uncovering a conspiracy to kill King Xerxes. He tells Ester about the plot and she warns the king about it and the king's life is saved.

As we come to chapter 3, things change gears a bit. We are introduced to Haman, yes bad Haman. But King Xerxes thinks Haman is a great guy and makes him his right hand man. But Mordecai and Haman have this issue – everyday at the King's gate, everyone would bow down to Haman when he approached, everyone but Mordecai. Haman hated it and resentment began to build and Haman got to the place where he not only wanted to destroy Mordecai, but all the Jewish people.

Haman convinced, or better yet, he deceived the king into issuing a decree that called for the execution of all Jewish people – young and old, male and female. The summons went out to all the provinces in the land saying that on such and such a day, all Jewish people were to be killed. The chapter ends with Haman and the King sitting down to celebrate.

Now as we come to chapter 4, when Mordecai hears the news, he is devastated. He tears his cloths, puts on sackcloth and ashes and mourns. In fact all the Jewish people followed his example and they fasted, mourned and wept. Ester

is told that Mordecai is upset and so she sends her servants to find out why.

Mordecai tells them about the decree and gives them a copy to take to Ester and then he tells the servants to tell Ester that she needs to go into the King's presence and beg for mercy and plead for the lives all the Jewish people.

The problem was, no one was allowed to enter the King's presence without being invited by the King and if you went uninvited, the law stated you were to be put to death. The only exception would be IF the King extended his gold scepter towards you. So it was very risky, extremely dangerous for anyone to come before the King without being invited.

But this is right where we find our passage. It says in Ester 4:12-14 the following:

*“When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, <sup>13</sup> he sent back this answer: “Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. <sup>14</sup> For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?”*

Essentially Mordecai says to Ester, “Look, Ester, you're the only one who can do something about this. Who knows, but maybe God put you here for exactly this moment, for such a time as this.”

Let me ask you, as you look at your own life, could it also be possible that you are where you are right now for such a time as this?

I want to share with you why I think this is such an incredible statement because basically that is what I saw God working out at camp this summer. God brought all the people that needed to be at camp, when they needed to be there, for the exact time they needed to be there.

First when I started at the camp in May, I was introduced to an incredible Spring Crew. They were mostly college students who came to serve in leadership positions at camp. Let me tell you I was amazed by the character of these young men and women. There was one young man who was our Spring Crew boss who was amazing. His name is Drew Morash. You hear from him a little bit earlier. He was amazing in my mind. His leadership skills. His way of working with people and his fellow peers. God brought this guy for another summer of camp when he was almost done with camp after last summer. But there was also the rest of the Spring Crew team and I could go on and share how each one of them were there in the Spring and for the summer because they needed to be there.

Also there were a couple of other people that you know very well. Spencer Price and Darian Olsen. Darian was this little spark plug of joy and filled in over the summer in a number of different capacities that were literally God sends for us. Spencer, wow what a great guy and all of you know it. He was our main Work Crew Boss and what an incredible job he did throughout the whole summer with some very challenging circumstances sometimes. I think of all the people this



summer, camp had to be the biggest roller coaster for Spencer. We thought we had all these great things planned out and then things would happen, people would have accidents, leaders would come and go, campers on the Work Crew would be super challenging. Spencer was the calm, steady influence. And did you know something else about Spencer, he knows a ton of people. Whenever it seemed we needed a cabin leader, and especially guy cabin leaders, we would let Spencer know and Spencer would usually come back the next day and say something like, “Hey I know this guy, he’s a pretty good guy, could I give him a call and see if he wants to come out to camp for the summer.” And they came in droves. Great people, great cabin leaders.

But there was one area at camp where I definitely saw that God brought people each week to camp who needed to be there just for that week. I saw it so clearly in our First Aid Attendants. Let me share just a few examples with you. One week the camp was full with almost 180 campers at camp. However, that week over 60 campers needed to take some form of medication at least once a day. Over a third of the campers had to take some kind of medication at least once a day. That week, God sent Phil and Arlene Pudlas. They worked as a team. They quickly got a well-organized system down and every camper got their medications on time. On top of that, Phil has a background in social work and that week we had a couple campers disclose some form of abuse at home. Having Phil there,

well it just helped us correctly ascertain what the correct steps were needed to be followed.

Another week we had another couple come – more for a holiday but also to help if needed as First Aid Attendants. That week we only had about 6 campers who needed to take their medications. The husband was able to take his children fishing. She was able to do a bit of reading and enjoying the beach and sun. It was a great week for them.

Another week, God brought a doctor to serve at camp as the First Aid Attendant. Guess what happened that week. We had a few dislocations that the doctor was able to put back in place really easy. We had a few bigger bumps and bruises like one boy who slipped on some rocks and had a big gash on his head. No big deal for the doctor who would easily have stitched it up if he had some freezing and the tools needed. Instead he bandaged up the boy, sent him off to the hospital and told the camper after he got stitched up, he could come back immediately afterwards and enjoy the rest of the week at camp. Again, God sent the right person, at the right time for the right week at camp.

The worst accident we had was a little boy who broke both his arms. It was a really one in a million accident. It was one of those things you just don't ever want to see happen and I don't think anything like that has happened at camp but it did last summer. The little guy was so brave and strong. But again, guess who our

First Aid Attendant was. It was a lady who volunteered to serve at camp and her job is this — she is in charge and oversee all the emergency departments in Alberta. She knew exactly what to do. She calmly controlled the situation, gave that little boy 1<sup>st</sup> rate medical care and had him splinted and bandaged and sent off to the hospital in no time. While the team was taking the little guy to the emergency in town, she called ahead and introduced herself to the on-call emergency people and explained who would be arriving, what the circumstances were, the boy's condition and bunch of medical terminology and when our team showed up with the guy at the doors, there was a couple of ER nurses ready to take him in for X-rays.

And on and on I could go talking about all the people God brought to camp this summer, for just a time as this. The kitchen staff, the specialists, the head leaders, the cabin leaders, the program directors – our entire staff. They were all there for just a time as this.

But here's the big take away I had to come to realize. I don't if you are like me but often I find it's easier to look around and see how God is using other people, but what I also needed to see was that God had brought me, Elliott Harder to camp for just a time as this. I have to confess that this summer was tons of fun in many ways. It was a huge learning curve for me as I really have very little to no camp experience. Some of you know how this summer the camp came under

attack by the LGBTQ community and how we are fighting to help kids from the School District still be able to come to camp. I have to confess, I'm not sure we will win. There was a big part where this summer, I didn't think I was brought to camp for such a time as this. Actually in my mind, there would be a lot better people – actually anyone than me to work through this issue with the School District. But as much as I maybe don't like it, I, like you, we need to realize we are where we are for just a time as this.

As I think of Ester, if I was her, well I probably would have been thinking I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Who would like to be put in that kind of a position? You are a Jew. Your people are condemned to death unless you do something. But to do something means you could lose your life and if you don't, well you probably will end up losing your life. How can you change the mind of a crazy, unstable King? No, if I was Ester, I would probably be thinking I was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

And I think that's the power of this passage, because the reality is when we most think we are in the wrong place at the wrong time, well we are probably in the perfect place at the perfect time and the reason why is because God wants to use you to do something simply amazing and incredible. He wants to show you and everyone else, His power and His might. Let me challenge you with a couple of thoughts:

Could it be that God made you who you are and as you are because God wanted someone like you to do what only you can do?

Could it be that you have come to this place, to this moment, to these people, to this challenge, for just a time as this?

Could it be that you have been born in this country, to the family you have, to the neighbourhood you live in, for such a time as this?

Could it be that maybe you have been give the resources you have, the talents and abilities you have, the vision and passion in your heart, just for such a time as this?

And could it be that this church is here and you are here in this church for such a time as this?

I have heard about the amazing history of this church, and I can assure you that it's here today because someone listened to God. They took a step of faith and acted in obedience because they KNEW, they were where they were for such a time as this.

Read your Bibles. All throughout, you find men and women who while they may not have initially liked it, they came to understand that they were placed where they were for just a time as this. Moses – baby, placed in a basket and as a result grows up in Pharoah's courts and later encounters a burning bush because God wanted him to do something because it was his place and his time.

The incredible story of Joseph – life seemed to be one bad thing after another. You could say, he might have thought he seemed to continually be in the wrong place at the wrong time but we know that wasn't the case. God used Joseph as He did Ester to save God's people — the nation of Israel.

My friend, if there is one thing I want you to remember, the big take away that I could encourage you with, it is this — you are where you are, you are who you are, for just a time as this.

Let's pray.

Thank you all for the opportunity to come and have a camp Sunday. I hope you were encouraged. I hope you were blessed. And on behalf of Ness Lake Bible Camp, and all the staff, and really on behalf of all the campers that come each year, from the bottom of our hearts we thank you so much for your support, for your prayers and for how you put into the lives of many, many young people from the Prince George and surrounding area.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to come and talk to me. I would love to share with you some more about the camp. About some of the further details regarding the camp and the school district. Please when you think of the camp, please pray.