

Sermon Title/Topic:	FAITH FORWARD
Main Scripture References:	Esther 4:12-16, Psalm 63:1-5, Isaiah 58:6-12
Speakers:	Ps Craig Clark
Date:	Sunday 17 th May

Church News

- Groups Online – www.lifeau.org/onlinegroups
- You can access and listen to every sermon online - www.lifeau.org/online-church
- Resources for parents; including devotionals, fun activities can be found at <https://lifeau.org/onlinekids/#parent>

Sermon Overview

Faith Forward – God has entrusted us this time in history

- Esther 4:14 – You have been born for such a time as this
- Not being insensitive to those who are suffering loss and from as sense of hopelessness
- But just as in Esther’s case, where her people were about to lose everything and face terrible devastation, God mantled her, appointed her and entrusted her to lead during that time.
- God does not cause trial and trouble, but He does allow it: Joseph wouldn’t have enjoyed being sold into slavery, Paul wouldn’t have enjoyed being beaten repeatedly and put in prison etc. however in each of those stories the restriction and reduction was a cause of breakthrough and breaking out of what was.
- Lesson from Esther’s story – she had a reckless abandonment to respond with an ‘All In’, she took a massive step of faith to move forward.

4 Keys of FAITH FORWARD:

1. Re-align Lordship: Esther got her information from Mordecai, but her instruction and insight from God.
 - In all areas we realign who our supply is, where our provision comes from, who and what our foundation in built on.
 - Psalm 63 – David was in a desert season but still praised God with everything
 - Fasting Fuels Faith – Esther called a nationwide fast to re-align Lordship
 - Fasting is like fresh breath to fire, some of us badly want a breakthrough – fasting will bring the release.
 - Seeking comfort will always sideline our call: Naturally we’d want to fast forward this season, but faith forward requires us to secure a new supply of God’s spirit, in that our faith arises
 - John 12:27-28 – even Jesus was not exempt from wanting to escape, but instead He surrendered because He knew His Father was wanting to reveal and release something unprecedented
 - This is a time to silence self, and choose God’s ways, His path, His leading
 - Isaiah 58: God has a strategy for your situation, fasting unlocks incredible breakthrough

2. Re-unite Believers: Esther gathered and united all her people in a time of persecution
 - Proverbs 17:17 *A friend loves at all times, and a brother in born for adversary*
 - Friends are found in the fun – but family is formed in the fire
 - Are we uniting with others that will join us to faith forward?
 - Where there is unity, God commands a blessing

3. Reveal Faith
 - Esther kept her nationality hidden as the King didn't know she was a Jew, but this was a catalyst that allowed her to step into her entrusted time
 - Our faith could be revealed ever increasingly – we could all hear from the Holy Spirit more and step out in faith
 - We are in a time of great opportunity to offer prayer to people whose hearts would not normally be open
 - Not a time for caution but courage, reveal faith in fresh ways
 - Isaiah 61, James 5:16

4. Release Echoes
 - Jewish Annual Festival of Purim (February 25-26). A celebration of Esther's time where for the Jewish people terror was turned into triumph
 - Story of Ps Craig's grandmother – widowed 3 times but still declared the goodness of God
 - When we look on this moment in history, what will the lasting echo be of what we did now?

CG Discussion Questions

- 1). In what ways have you been encouraged by Ps Craig's message?
- 2). Read Isaiah 58:6-12; How has this scripture encouraged you around fasting?
- 3). As a connect group how can we be uniting and encouraging each other to keep taking steps into Faith Forward?
- 4) Discuss some practical ways we can be reaching out to others and revealing God's love to them during this season? How can we keep stepping out in faith to the world around us?