



Voices Week 2

Opening Prayer

God, help us to be open to whatever you have in store for us. Help us to experience you.

Talk It Over

Dave Gibbons started his talk reminding us that God is active and present in each of our lives —in both tangible and abstract ways — in the here and now.

- What are some of the various ways in which we can personally meet Jesus?
- When was the last time you would say you met Jesus?
- Generally speaking, do you find it hard or easy to be present in the moment? Why or why not?

Brief Overview

This week's talk came out of the story of Esther. Esther was an attractive women who had been selected as a wife by the powerful, wealthy, King Xerxes after a kingdom wide search for a new queen. Prior to this search, King Xerxes had removed his previous wife from the throne after she refused to obey him and Esther was living with her cousin Mordecai — who had raised Esther as his own daughter after her parents had died. Once Esther was taken to the palace, she was out of place to say the least. She was not in her homeland, she was not with people who shared her belief in God, she was away from her traditions, the King was unaware of the fact she was a Jew, and people around her were making terrible decisions for the sake of gaining power, control, and respect. By the time we pick up in the next verse, one of the King's staff members had been actively working on a plan to kill all the Jews in the land.

Read Esther 4:12-17 (The Message)

Even after Esther had made up her mind to talk to the King for the sake of her people, she was not hasty, forceful, or careless. With Mordecai's love, encouragement, and partnership, Esther seemed to know how to stand firm in her faith throughout the vulnerable process at hand. In fact, Esther's willingness to step outside of her comfort zone and to use her position for the sake of others was a beautiful illustration of her faith.

- Share about a time you had to walk through a difficult season as a believer. How did you manage to stand firm in your faith and how did you fall short?
- Esther decided to use her voice to help people who didn't have a voice. Has anyone ever used their voice to help you? Share about that experience.
- Looking back at this last year, in what ways has God invited you to use your voice for the sake of good despite your fear or the risk? Tell us how you responded to that invitation.
- Share about a time you recently felt God inviting you to step out of your comfort zone.

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Read Galatians 6:9-10

Esther's cousin and caregiver, Mordecai, was the kind of person who seemed good at doing what he needed to do. He was faithful, plugging away, and honoring God on an individual level. In turn, his personal commitment to God resulted in him being blessed in beautiful ways and him being able to encourage Esther well.

- Who in your life does a good job at pointing you to Jesus? How do they do this?
- Who in your life have you seen your faith encourage? Tell us about that story.

Read 2 Timothy 1:7

Esther reminds us that we can do hard things and we can learn new ways of being by being open to the opportunities life presents us. We can constantly be changing and evolving for the good. With God's help and our willingness to say 'yes' to God's lead, we can grow our faith, hope, creative response to life, and so on.

- Is there any area of life you can sense that maybe God is leading you to do something that scares you? Share about that.
- In what areas of life would you like God to help you grow in this next year?
- In what areas of life would you like to get more willing to say 'yes' to God invitation?

Closing Prayer

God, we believe you are here with us. Help us to say 'yes' to whatever you are inviting us into. Help us to experience you in the midst of our daily here and now.