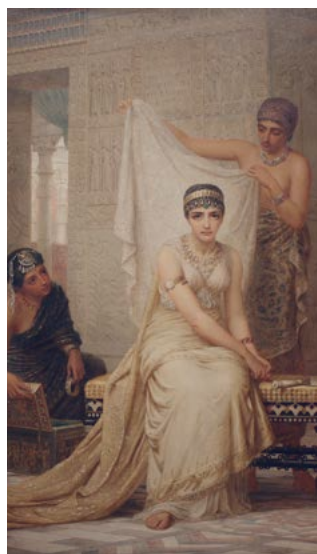


Managing STRESS

*From Circumstances
Beyond Your Control*
Alf Halvorson preaching

This is the first in a short four-part series on **Managing Stress**, which seems especially apropos since we are in the middle of this challenging and uncharted Coronavirus season—where anxiety is high and faithful next steps uncertain. Gratefully, texts from both the Old and New Testaments address stress as part of the human condition and something to be managed in order to “love God and your neighbor as yourself.” This short series fits well sandwiched after Easter (but before our longer summer series that begins the Sunday after Memorial Day Weekend.)

1. On a scale of one to ten, what is your stress level right now? Identify a couple of the sources or causes of your worry or anxiety. What sources might you be able to influence and what sources are beyond your control?
2. What do you know about the story of Esther from the Old Testament Book bearing the same name? See below for a brief summary, and the eight segments that make up the story.



THE STORY OF ESTHER takes place at about the time of Ezra (around 470 B.C), when the Persian Empire was supreme, and its king was Xerxes 1 (called Ahasuerus in Esther). Susa was a capital city of the Persians, the king's winter residence, and the locale of the story. It may be divided into these sections: 1) The disaffection of the Persian King for his queen, and her banishment; 2) The selection of a Jew, Esther, to be queen; 3) The king's life saved by Esther's Guardian, Mordecai; 4) Mordecai's refusal to obey the chief prince, Haman; 5) Haman's plot for revenge: the execution of all Jews; 6) The intervention of Mordecai and Esther; 7) The deliverance of the Jews, and the slaying of their enemies; 8) The Feast of Purim established.

3. Read *Esther 4:5-16*. What strikes you about this exchange between Esther and Mordecai? What are Esther's concerns? What are Mordecai's?
4. What does Esther ask in verse 16a? What does Esther say she will do in verse 16b?
5. In verse 14, Mordecai says to Esther, “Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.” I talked in my sermon about other examples of men and women stepping up at ‘just such a time as this.’ Many circumstances were beyond their control. But, they did have some measure of choice in their situation. What if you have been put where you are by God “for just such a time as this?” And what might your faithful action look like during this challenging time?
6. How can you encourage and pray for each person and their unique challenge right now?
7. What is your specific role? Is there a new commitment to take on or attitude to embrace? Is there anything you need to repent of, or stop doing, believing, or thinking?



Managing STRESS

8:30 Service
Sunday, May 3, 2020

Alf Halvorson preaching
Esther 4:5-16

Gathering Music

Welcome

Dave Steane

Songs of Praise

*Here for You
Holy, Holy, Holy*

Matt Maher
Trad.

Prayer of Confession & Assurance

Beth Case

Songs of Response

I Love You Lord

Laurie Klein

Mission Moment

The Micah Project

Moment of Prayer

Beth Case

Song of Preparation

Way Maker

Osinachi Egbu

Message

Managing Stress From Circumstances
Esther 4:5-16

Alf Halvorson

Communion

Alf Halvorson

To participate at home, please have bread and juice available.

Song of Response

The Blessing

Brown/Carnes/Jobe/Furtick

Sharing Our Gifts

Alf Halvorson

Managing STRESS

9:45 Service
Sunday, May 3, 2020

Alf Halvorson preaching
Esther 4:5-16

Worship Invitation

Meliza Gómez

Songs of Praise
Kids' Moment

Alive

Pappa/King

Here for You

Mayra Escamilla

Matt Maher

Moment of Confession & Assurance

Dan Aikins

Songs of Response

I Love You Lord

Laurie Klein

Way Maker

Osinachi Egbu

Message

Managing Stress From Circumstances
Esther 4:5-16

Alf Halvorson

Communion

Alf Halvorson

To participate at home, please have bread and juice available.

Song of Response

The Blessing

Brown/Carnes/Jobe/Furtick

Mission Moment

The Micah Project

Moment of Prayer

Dan Aikins

Sharing Our Gifts

Alf Halvorson

Managing STRESS

11:15 Service
Sunday, May 3, 2020

Alf Halvorson preaching
Esther 4:5-16

Prelude	<i>The Prayer with How Great Thou Art</i>	arr. White
Welcome & Call to Worship		Dave Steane
Choral Introit	<i>I Waited for the Lord</i>	Felix Mendelssohn
Hymn of Praise	<i>Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah</i>	CWM RHONDDA
Prayer of Confession and Assurance		Beth Case
Affirmation of Faith	<i>The Apostles' Creed</i>	Beth Case
Anthem	<i>Dear Lord and Father of Mankind</i>	Charles Hubert Parry (1848-1918)
Mission Moment		The Micah Project
Pastoral Prayer		Beth Case
Anthem of Preparation	His Eye is on the Sparrow	arr. Donald Moore
Message	<i>Managing Stress From Circumstances</i> Esther 4:5-16	Alf Halvorson
Communion		Alf Halvorson
To participate at home, please have bread and juice available.		
Hymn of Response	<i>Let Us Break Bread Together</i>	LET US BREAK BREAD
Sharing Our Gifts		Alf Halvorson
Postlude	<i>Holy, Holy, Holy</i>	arr. Mark Hayes (b. 1953)