

# God's strength in weakness: When life is dangerous discussion guide



based on **Esther 7** (Linked to sermon of 06/06/21)  
which can be accessed at [www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks](http://www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks)

*This was part of a series: God's strength in weakness*

The book of Esther is an unusual one. Interestingly it is the only book of the Bible where God is not mentioned, yet His presence is felt in every page. Esther finds herself in a very dangerous situation. As one of the wives of the most powerful man in the world at the time, Ahasuerus (usually known as Xerxes in other historical accounts), she finds herself in a unique position to protect her people, the Jews, from annihilation by Haman, one of the king's chief officials. Esther has a clear choice – ignore the suffering of her people or speak up and risk death herself. I wonder how we would act in her shoes?

Begin with worship. Either read Psalm 91 together and thank God for His protection and the freedom we have in this country to worship or use this song to begin a time of thanksgiving [https://youtu.be/h\\_3no0UYQQ](https://youtu.be/h_3no0UYQQ) Shadow of Your wings.

Before beginning to read chapter 7 of Esther, you might like to watch this short video which gives an overview of the whole story <https://youtu.be/JydNSlufRIs>

It is worth reading Esther 4 which sets out the situation Esther finds herself in more clearly, then read chapter 7 for the outcome. Discuss the following together and anything else that strikes you about these Scriptures:

1. How does Mordecai react to the news that the King has ordered the destruction of all the Jews (4:1-3)?
2. What does Mordecai want Esther to do in 4:8?
3. Why is this request so dangerous for Esther to fulfil (4:11)?
4. What does Esther decide to do and what does she ask Mordecai to do (4:16)?
5. How does Esther prepare the king for her request? (7:1)
6. Is her request granted and how? (7:8-10)

Although Esther initially disguises the fact that she is a Jew, when she realises what danger her people are in, she takes the bold step of identifying with them and risks her own life to rescue them. Jesus calls us to stand up and be counted as Christians as well as being prepared to risk lives and reputations for the gospel, something the early church experienced and that many Christians around the world still do.

Discuss the following together honestly (you may want to split into small groups for this):

Have you ever disguised the fact that you are a Christian in order to "fit in"?

When have you found it difficult to "stand up and be counted" as a Christian? What happened?

In what ways do you feel challenged to be more vocal in your faith? What would help?

In your groups pray for one another and the situations you find yourselves in at work, in your community and even in church where you find it difficult to stand up for your faith.

Come together as a group finally to pray for the persecuted church around the world. You could use any of the following from Open Doors <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/> or Barnabas Fund <https://barnabasfund.org/> You might even like to commit to praying for a particular country as group throughout the week.

"When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you are to defend yourselves or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say" (Luke 12:11-12)