

Sunday Morning Message

June 4, 2023

Title – *You Do Your Part and God Will Do His*

Text – Esther 4 - 6

Congregational Reading – Esther 4:13 - 17

Introduction

We have been reading the Book of Esther in our daily devotions for the last few days, and we have seen that God is at work in the lives of his people even when we cannot see him. God is not mentioned by name in this book at all, and neither is Satan. Yet both are active. Satan is working feverishly behind the scenes trying to thwart God's plan and destroy God's people. God is also working around and through God's people, and God will prevail – He always prevails. Even when we think the situation is hopeless – God is in full control.

In our story we see the plan of Satan to wipe God's people Israel off the face of the earth. But God is way ahead of Satan and has strategically positioned Esther and her cousin Mordecai to put a stop to Satan's plot. God placed Esther in this Persian Kingdom "for such a time as this."

God may have positioned you in your situation, at your place of employment, in your geographical location "for such a time as this". God may be preparing you today for something that He has planned for you to do for Him at an appointed time in your near future.

Will you be ready? Will you be prepared? Will you take full advantage of the opportunity that God will give you to act "for such a time as this."

Let's review this familiar Bible story:

Chapters 1 & 2 – We see the positioning of the key players:

Chapter one introduces us to King Ahasuerus and Queen Vashti

King Ahasuerus is the king of Persia, which is the world empire of the day. The king has a week-long party for all the key people in his kingdom and on the last day he asks his beautiful wife to put herself out on display in front of all his drunken guests, which she rightly refuses to do. The king gets angry and after consulting with some of his counselors, he decided to put Vashti away from being queen and determines that he will get another wife.

By the way, this is not the message for today, but notice that this problem was caused by drunkenness. The king and the men at his party were drinking, and in their intoxicated

state they want to parade a woman, the king's own wife before them all, presumably so that they could lust after her.

"29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? 30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. 31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. 32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. 33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. 34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. 35 They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again." (Proverbs 23:29-35)

Queen Vashti will have no part of this display before these drunken men and after her refusal, she is removed from being queen. She did the right thing.

Note – sometimes doing the right thing will temporarily lead to negative consequences but it is still right to do the right thing. God will ultimately be the judge and will reward those who do right.

Chapter two introduces us to Mordecai and his cousin Esther.

Mordecai was more like an uncle to Esther. They were Jews; leftovers from the people from Israel that were taken into captivity. They were from the Tribe of Benjamin, which is an important fact to remember as this story unfolds. Esther is one of the many women that were contenders to be the replacement for Queen Vashti, but she rises above the rest of them and becomes the new queen:

"16 So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. 17 And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. 18 Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king." (Esther 2:16-18)

Notice another bit of information that is given to us at the end of chapter two:

"21 In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. 22 And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name. 23 And when inquisition

was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king." (Esther 2:21-23)

Chapter 3 – We meet up with the enemy, Haman, and learn about the conception of His wicked plot to exterminate Mordecai and all the Jews.

You will find out from verse one that this Haman is an “Agagite.” He was a descendent of King Agag, the Amalekite king who was hacked to death by the prophet Samuel during the reign of King Saul. King Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin, and he had killed all the Amalekites because he was commanded to by God, but he initially spared Agag, their king. However, when Samuel arrives, he rebukes Saul for letting Agag live, and he kills Agag himself. The point is that there is history and long-standing hatred between the descendants of Agag and the Jews, but particularly Jews from the tribe of Benjamin.

In chapter three, we learn that Mordecai the Jew refused to bow down and give reverence to Haman who was a very high-ranking prince underneath the king in Persia. Haman developed a tremendous hatred for Mordecai, particularly after he found out that he was a Jew. He came up with a plot to have Mordecai and all the rest of the Jews put to death. He does this by convincing the king that the Jewish people were rebellious and a threat to the king.

"8 And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. 9 If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries. 10 And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. 11 And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee." (Esther 3:8-11)

Mordecai, Esther, and the rest of the Jewish people have a big problem. They are facing extermination, and something needs to be done.

Read Esther 4:1 – 12

My thought for this morning’s message is that in this story of Esther we see the blending of God’s sovereign control over His world with the responsibility that each man has to act; to do something. There seems to be two extremes when it comes to God sovereignty. Some folks feel that God will do it all and that He acts without using man at all. Others feel that it is all up to man, and that if we don’t act, God will somehow be limited. These folks feel that in this great battle of God verses Satan, or good vs. evil, that man is the key player.

Neither of these extremes is correct. We believe that God is sovereign, meaning that He is in control of what is going on down here. However, we also know that He has given us a role to play, and He even gives us the free will to choose whether we will submit to His will and play the role that He has for us or reject it.

Notice Esther 4:13 & 14:

"13 Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. 14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:13-14)

The fact is that God is not dependent upon us to accomplish His will, but He does choose to use us as part of His plan. He has a job for us to do, and if we are faithful to fulfil our roles in that plan, He will be faithful to work in a supernatural way, helping us to accomplish His will.

I. Esther Does Her Part (4:15ff.)

Esther reluctantly determinesthat her uncle is right. She needs to do something:

"15 Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, 16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. 17 So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him." (Esther 4:15-17)

Read Chapter Five

Esther takes the chance of approaching the king, which she was not supposed to do unless the king called for her. She risked her life by attempting this. The king, however, is pleased with Esther and permits her requests to have a banquet with her and Haman that would take place on the next day.

Notice in vs. twelve and following that although Haman is very honored that he was invited to be part of this banquet, he is also in despair because of his hatred for Mordecai:

"12 Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to morrow am I invited unto her also with the king. 13 Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. (Esther 5:12-13)

Think about this: Haman was the highest-ranking prince in the administration of King Ahasuerus. This man had a prestigious position, second only to the king. He had a family

and friends. No doubt, he had tremendous wealth. It could easily be said that this man had all that any man could ask for. He was a rising star in the kingdom. Yet, none of that mattered to him, because he was consumed with hatred toward the Jewish people in general, and specifically toward Mordecai. All the things that should have brought joy and happiness to this man were of no avail, because all that Haman could think about was Mordecai. He was obsessed, consumed with hatred and bitterness toward another human being. Stupid!

His wife is just as bad as he is.

Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made." (Esther 5:14)

Instead of talking some sense into Haman, she feeds his hatred toward Mordecai.

Note - You need a wife that is going to support you and help you fulfill the will of God, not one that will help you sin.

II. God Does His Part (Chapter Six)

When we do our part, God will do His part.

After Esther decided to meet with the king to expose the plot of Haman, God begins to work on the king by not letting him sleep and directing him toward a book of records that revealed that Mordecai had saved his life.

Read Chapter 6

Conclusion

Most of you are familiar with the rest of the story. Haman's wicked plot is exposed, and he and his family end up receiving the fate that they had planned for Mordecai and the Jewish people. It is a great victory for God and the Jews. The Jews celebrate this victory every year in March in what is known as the Feast of Purim.

However, the thought I want you to go home with is this. God's will is accomplished on earth today when God's people and God work together to fulfil it. Don't misunderstand, God is not limited by or dependent upon me as an individual for His work to be accomplished, but He does choose to use me. If I decide I don't want to yield to God's will and do what He wants me to do, then God will use somebody else, or do it another way. But God wants to use me. And if I am faithful to do what God calls me to do, then God will work supernaturally, behind the scenes to help me help Him accomplish His plan.

Someone once said that we need to work like it is all dependent upon us, but also pray like it all depends upon God.

Lester Roloff once said that the best place to pray for potatoes is at the end of a hoe handle.

1. God has got a plan. He has got a big plan for the universe, which includes many smaller plans: plans for our community, our church, and your family.
2. He wants to use you as part of that plan.

Esther was strategically placed by the God of the Universe within the Kingdom of Persia to save the Jewish people from extinction.

God has strategically placed you within your world, your community, this church, your family, so that He could use you for His purposes.

3. If you submit to God and are obedient to His will, He will use you, and supernaturally help you to be successful.
4. You will be rewarded and remembered for your obedience to your part in God's plan.
5. Your family and friends will be blessed because of your obedience to God's plan.
6. However, if you refuse to obey Him, He will use somebody else or do it another way, but you will miss out on the blessing, and may even be chastised for your refusal to obey Him.

If you are not saved, the first step of God's plan for you is salvation.