

Trust in the Timing of God – Esther 6

Lesson for Sunday, March 17, 2024

INTRO:

- Begin by reading Romans 8:28
- We love stories filled with drama, suspense, power, romance...it is what we expect from Hollywood! But we also see all of these elements in one specific place in the Bible.
- It is not a fantasy. It's the real account of real events that happened in the story of Esther.
- Esther is an interesting book in our Bibles.
 - It is 1 of only 2 books in our Bible that focuses on a woman as the main character.
 - Another interesting fact: there is not one direct mention of God in the entire book.
 - But while you don't read His name in the text, you can see His work everywhere.
- Esther has been called the Romans 8:28 of the Old Testament.
- It reminds us that God is both watching and working for our good, even when it doesn't seem like He is.
- The theological term we use to describe this is the providence of God.
 - Nothing is beyond God's ability to work all things together for good.

SUMMARY OF CH 1-5

- CH 1-2: We are introduced to the main characters...
 - The King: He's an arrogant pagan throwing an extended party so the world will recognize his wealth and power.
 - The Queen: She is called by a drunk King to come and be perform in front of the king's intoxicated officials. She refuses and that's the last time we see the Queen.
 - Esther is introduced in chapter 2 as the winner of the Miss Persia competition and is now "honored" to be the new queen.
 - Her adopted father Mordecai becomes a palace official and actually saves the king's life from a secret assassination plot.
- CH 3-5:
 - CH 3: Introduced to the evil man Haman who serves the king as Prime Minister.
 - Everywhere he goes all the people bow down...except Mordecai.
 - Haman becomes so angry he plans not only to kill Mordecai, but all of Mordecai's people (the Jews) which includes Queen Esther (which Haman didn't know).
 - Mordecai informs Queen Esther of the evil plot and encourages her to tell the king and save the Jews from extermination.
 - The most famous quote in the book was by Mordecai: *"Who knows? Maybe you were made the Queen for such a time as this..."*
 - Esther comes up with a plan. She fasts for three days and then risks her life in order to carry it out.
- This brings us to a chapter where the providence of God is front and center. Esther 6.

OUTLINE:

1. Providential Insomnia (vs. 1)
 - a. The king has a sleepless night. Probably happens a lot to kings and world leaders.
 - b. Don't miss it: The whole story turns on verse 1. Literally, it reads in the Hebrew, "the king's sleep fled away."
 - c. If the king was able to sleep that night, the entire story of Esther would be different...look at 5:14.
 - d. Since he didn't have a cell phone to scroll through he requests a book to be brought and read to him as he tries to get back to sleep.
 - e. Ever have a sleepless night? Better question: in the middle of your sleeplessness, did it ever occur to you that God may be up to something?
 - f. The Providence of God: at that moment, while His children were asleep, God was at work.

2. Providential Investigation (vs. 2-3)
 - a. Go back to 2:21...5 years before...
 - b. What a coincidence, that on this specific night the King would ask for this specific book and remember a specific time from five years ago?
 - c. In God's economy, there is no coincidence, just providence.
3. Providential Irony (vs. 4-10)
 - a. Imagine the swing of emotions with Haman going from thinking he was to be honored to having to honor the man he wanted to kill.
 - b. Here is Haman – full of pride, full of hatred toward Mordecai – walking into the King's court at the exact moment the king wants to talk about the same man.
 - c. But instead of hanging Mordecai – the king wants to honor him!
 - d. Don't miss it: We don't know the time of night or day, but Haman was right where God needed him to be at the exact moment he was supposed to be there.
 - e. The providence of God applies both to God's people and to God's enemies (Prov. 16:9).
4. Providential Insult (vs. 11-13)
 - a. In seeking to be personally honored, Haman found personal humiliation.
 - b. This ought to remind us that God operates on a different timetable than we do:
 - i. Five years before, Mordecai did the right thing. It was recorded in the history books, but he went unrewarded.
 - ii. But God, in His wisdom, was saving Mordecai's reward for exactly the right moment. Haman was ready to execute Mordecai, & God was ready to exalt him.
 - c. The providence of God: even when circumstances appear contrary to the fact, God is both watching and working for our good.

APPLICATIONS: A proper understanding of God's providence should make a difference...

1. God is always working.
 - a. It's important to remember as you study your Bible that God is the main character in every story.
 - b. God is not mentioned in Esther; God is not seen physically or heard audibly. But make no mistake: God is front and center. He was working in Esther, and He is still working today.
 - c. You may be in a difficult time wondering, "Where is God?" Be assured that He is here; He knows your circumstances; and He is working.
2. God expects you to work.
 - a. There's a mystery to the providence of God.
 - i. Obviously, most of the time, we don't know what God may be up to.
 - ii. But the real mystery is how God's providence and man's responsibility work together.
 - b. In Esther, God providentially prepared the place and the opportunity, but His people, Esther and Mordecai, chose to act.
 - c. While it is difficult to explain, we know that we are called to be faithful in this moment and in this place, and then trust the providence of God for the rest.
 - d. What has God called you to do in this moment? How will you be faithful to His call?
3. You can trust God with it all.
 - a. For Esther and Mordecai, God was doing His most important work while they slept.
 - b. If God can do that...why wouldn't you trust Him with everything?

CONCLUSION:

- ⇒ The most powerful evidence of providence of God was on a hill called Calvary. A day when the worst crime of humanity was ever committed – the crucifixion of the Son of God – God's providence was on full display.
- ⇒ Only God could take the worst day in history and provide salvation, forgiveness of sins, the hope of eternal life for all who will trust Him. Why would you serve anyone or anything else?