

Intro: Turn with me to Esther 6-7 pg 357

Quick Review:

- Jews living in captivity under Babylonian rule
- King Xerxes got rid of his first wife, Esther, a young woman of Jewish nationality elevated to be Queen
- Haman (bad guy) Gets upset at Mordecai (good guy) and determines to destroy not only him...all Jews
- Xerxes is duped into agreeing to allow Haman to exterminate Jews, a plan, date and time is set
- Mordecai, cousin of Esther, asks her to intervene...she agrees...but reminds him...her life is on the line if she does!
- She, her family, friends, all the Jews in Susa...fast...3 days...and the storm clouds gather on the horizon!
- The first domino falls!

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Look with Me at God's Handiwork

1. God's Timing Is Always Right.

6:1-5

All too often we find ourselves worried and wondering about what and when God is working!

We want Him to work NOW...or we want Him to wait...But He seems to insist on doing things in HIS timing, not ours

- Vs 2: *It was found:* Had always been there...since it had happened...but the time wasn't right for it to surface
- Vs 4: *who is in the court?* Haman had just entered! God's timing is perfect
- Vs 14: warned about downfall...but no time to process: "*While still talking eunuch's hurried him away to banquet*"
- 7:8: *Just as the king returned from the Garden!* God so perfectly engineered timing for His purposes

Here is my point. We often struggle with what God is doing, and when He does it.

We think we have a better plan...or a better way...or better time. But we don't fully understand what God is doing

Applic: In the NT there are a couple of different ways of talking about time.

- *Chronos:* Mechanical, orderly...passing of time
- *Kairos:* Due time, Opportune time, Right time, In season, When time was right or ripe
- Rom 5:6 "*You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*"

God works that way in YOUR life as well.

Just as His timing was perfect for Haman and Esther...and for all of us in salvation...His timing is perfect in YOUR life!

We don't always understand it...but God's timing is perfect.

Is 46:19 "*I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.*"

2. God Often Work's Through "Bad Circumstances."

6:1; 2:23

Remember the old bad news good news jokes from when you were a kid?

Guy comes back from dead to talk to his golfing buddy...*Good news, there is golf in heaven...bad news...9 tee time tomorrow!*

Just like we get confused with the issue of God's timing, we also get confused by the issue of what is "bad and good!"

You see that taking place here in the events of Esther. Early in the story we think something in BAD...but Later...GOOD!

- 6:1: King couldn't sleep...Bad...No...Read the history of his reign and see Mordecai not rewarded!
- 2:23 Plot All recorded...but nothing rewarded! Bad!, right...Risked his life...No...Good...because later..time right!
- 5:14 Gallows built for Mordecai...Bad! No...Good...When King is upset...Haman is hanged...End of Story!

We "KNOW" that intellectually...but when we are going through the BAD...and we can't imagine the GOOD...

Rom 8:28 "*We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

Applic: What do you do when the "bad" comes?

- We can fret and worry, be overwhelmed and despair
- Or, we can TRUST God knows what He is doing
And I KNOW...it is much easier to say that than it is to LIVE it...But we have to trust God knows what HE is doing!

3. God Often Works Through The Small Things Of Life.

6-7

I want you to notice in the chronicle of events that is taking place in these two chapters all the SMALL things God does!

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| ~No sleep | ~No reward | ~Just walking in |
| ~Haman's confusion(for me) | ~All timing issues | ~Gallows ready |
| ~Harbona speaking up! | | |

I think this is a major lesson we have to learn in our spiritual life.

We all want we is sometimes called the "Silver Bullet" (Jim Collins in How Mighty Fall)

We want the miracle cure, the overnight success, the one size fits it all and solves every problem solution.

All too often that isn't what God does! God regularly works behind the scenes, quietly arranging pieces...putting them into place

Applic: Like the girl in the domino video..25 hours of work over 8 days...but everything PERFECTLY placed...

Awaiting one simple...gentle...easy touch to put it all in motion!

And we MISS it...because we are looking for the big, flashy, quick solution...Instead of gentle hand of God!

Zech 4:10 "*Who despises the day of small things? Men will rejoice when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.*"

The work of rebuilding the temple...this amazing endeavor...one to which Jesus would come: Started w/ piece of string!

4. God Always Rewards Faithfulness...And Unfaithfulness!

6:3, 9-10,

You can't miss this part of the story! AND You can't be confused about this part of the story!

- God rewards faithfulness:
~With Esther, With Mordecai: Both were delivered, Both were honored, both were taken care of
- God also rewards unfaithfulness!
~With Haman: He thought he was going to get his way...But in the end faithfulness and honor win out

Here is what I want you to see:

~In this instance the reward was in this life: Haman was Hanged, Mordecai and Esther Elevated and honored
~But it doesn't always end up that way in this life! (John Baptist was beheaded, Jesus was crucified!) God's Purpose
~God sometimes allows us to walk through the difficulties and trials and tribulations: To fulfill His purposes!
Illus: Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego: Our God can save us...but they went into flames
Others in the NT, Heb...gave their lives...not rescued!
Many if not most of prophets, 12 disciples...didn't die peacefully in bed!

Applic: Ga 6:7 *"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."*

I talk to people all the time. Devastated and Upset, Disappointed and ready to give up on spiritual things:
God let me down! *I did everything right! I honored Him, served Him, worshipped Him, trained kids, Gave, Prayed*
He broke His part of the bargain: He didn't protect me...He didn't take care of my family: I quit!
Comes from a faulty understanding of Spiritual thing: God never promised you no problems: OPPOSITE!
In this world you will have trouble! Readjust your thinking: Recalibrate

Thess, Timothy, James, Peter

All speak of a crown, reward...IN THE LIFE TO COME!

This world is NOT our home! We are not ultimately rewarded here...If that's your expectation: Setting up for failure!
Just because we aren't rewarded in THIS life...doesn't mean we aren't going to be rewarded

The inverse is also true. This world may not be OUR home...But for those that LIVE for this world...sometimes get it!
All the things that they desire...many come their way...it isn't until they stand before God sometimes the cost is seen!

REFLECTIONS ON ESTHER 6-7

1. Are you struggling with God's timing? Has he allowed something into your life that you don't like...understand...agree?
Don't judge by where you are today. The final bell hasn't sounded, final report not written, final reward not given
This world is NOT your home...You usually aren't going to be rewarded in THIS life for serving God
2. Are you struggling with "bad" circumstances?
Has God allowed something in your life that you look at and say...THIS IS BAD?
Maybe...but maybe not! His ways are NOT your ways, His thoughts NOT your thoughts!
God may have allowed something you thought was bad...but in His plan...Is Good!
Applic: Remember Joseph...sold into slavery...carried off to Egypt...Imprisoned Unfairly
"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." Gen 50:20
3. Have you overlooked some of the "small things" God is doing in your life? Are you looking for silver bullet?
Maybe what you need to do is pray God...show me the way you are at work...the unseen, small things
The things you are doing that are all behind the scenes...so I can cooperate with You!
4. Are you trusting God today to reward you in His timing?
Or, have you fallen into the trap of saying, God I want your best NOW!
You may not EVER see the reward God has for you in this life...but keep honoring Him, Keep serving Him, faithful!
Gal 6:9 *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

I don't know what you need...but I do know who can meet that need...You come as we sing.