

Esther - and The Unseen Hand of God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 September 2020

[0 : 00] Going to Esther. Today we're going to look at Esther. Esther was a Jewish woman who became the! She lived in Babylon while it was under the control of Persia as part of a remnant of the! Jews were there and God used her to save her nation. Now in this book of Esther God is invisible if you like. He's not directly mentioned but he is always present.

And we're going to see if you like the unseen hand of God working out his plan. And think about that for yourself because that's what's happening for you. God has a special and purposeful plan for our lives. We read verse 1 of Esther 1 it says this of the reign of King Ahasuerus it says now it came to us.

It came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus. This is Ahasuerus which reigned from India even unto Ethiopia. Over 120, 127 provinces.

No 172 provinces rather. Is that right? 127 sorry I'm getting it wrong. The king of Persia ruled over a vast domain. Imagine that from India to Ethiopia.

And then we read verse 2 it says this. But in those days when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of the kingdom which was in Shushan the palace in the third year of his reign he made a feast unto his princes.

[1 : 43] All his princes. All his princes and his servants. The power of Persia and media. The nobles and princes of the provinces being before him. Imagine that. 127 provinces had the kings.

They had the king, the nobles, the princes. All the officials were there. And friends this was gigantic. This was awesome. A gigantic feast. The book of Esther records much feasting. We'll see. It's a book that kind of makes you hungry I reckon. Don't you reckon? All the feasts in Esther.

And this event was really, really important. You can imagine this. It's really, really important. Verse 4 it says this of Esther 1. Now this feast went on 180 days. Imagine that. Six months of gorging yourself. Six months.

You know there's some people planning a wedding feast. Well this is, that's going to be nothing compared to this. This is six months of parties and eating. It's awesome, isn't it? Doesn't it make you think, oh I wish I could have been there and joined in that.

And then the king topped it off with another feast. We see verses 5 through 6 it says this. And when these days were expired, when they had these six months of feasting, then it says the king made another feast.

[3 : 04] Unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days in the court of the garden of the king's palace. So another feast, seven days, only just a little one.

And then verse 6 it says there was white and green and blue hangings fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble. The beds were of gold and silver upon a pavement of red and blue and white and black marble.

This feast was in this grand palace, the very palace. And it was a feast fit for a king. Okay, now it's time for yet another feast.

It goes on, verse 9. Now the queen organized one. She wasn't going to be outdone. This was a feast fit for the queen. It says verse 9, And the queen, Vashti the queen, made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to King Ahasuerus.

At this point, the king asked his servants to call Vashti. Come on, I want Vashti to come to my party now, he says. And it says that he called Vashti, verse 11 it says, He called his servants to bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal on her head to show the people and the princess her beauty for she was fair to look on.

[4 : 22] She was beautiful and he wanted to show her off. You know, he didn't want her to be away from his party. In verse 12, But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment.

And therefore the king was very wroth and his anger burned in him. How dare she! Refused to come to my party.

The king was enraged that the queen Vashti had refused his request. Sorry, that was just to wake you up. The king decided to banish Queen Vashti and take away her royal power.

He wouldn't be putting up with this kind of behaviour. So the search began to find a new queen. The king called in Esther 2 verse 3, He called to gather, to gather all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace.

The search began for a brand new queen. Now I'd like to point out here just again, The theme I'd like to put to you today is that the unseen hand of God is at work.

[5 : 30] It was at work in Esther's life and it's at work in your own life. Even when we aren't even conscious that the hand of God is working in lives.

And number one, we see this. Now this is just to kind of illustrate it if you like. God steers. God steers. Through the book of Esther, God steers Esther and the other characters.

Through the various series of events, we see God's hand at work. We don't actually see it. It's kind of unseen. Find the scenes. It's unseen. God steers, people.

God steers history. He knows the future ahead of us. And he moves in the affairs of men whilst he is unknown. Unseen.

Whether you realise it or not, God is steering you. He's steering in all the events of your life. Of life. We all have a mission from God. The unseen hand is at work, friends.

[6 : 33] It's at work in the life of Esther and of her cousin Mordecai. He is steering their course. How about you? Does God have the steering wheel of your life?

Like it's been said, and I've said it before, is God your co-pilot? Actually, better yet, let him take the driving seat.

You be the co-pilot. Let God be the pilot. Let him take the steering wheel. And this is the point I'm trying to get across here, that the unseen hand is working.

And he is steering through all the chain of events we'll see unfolding. God's master plan is coming about. We meet Mordecai now, a devout Jew. Loyal, strong, faithful.

And we meet Esther. She had humble beginnings, but God was steering her life. Mordecai had charge of young Esther, his cousin. He brought her up as his own daughter.

[7 : 35] Chapter 2, verse 7. We see it says this. And he, Mordecai, brought up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle's daughter.

For she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful. Here was Esther. She was brought up. And then she was brought up by Mordecai. And he brought her into the palace, along with many other women for consideration by the king.

And this process took one whole year. Imagine that. One whole year. Just for her to be prepared to come to the king. And Mordecai checked on her faithfully for one year.

What a faithful man he was. And she did not reveal that she was a Jew in this time. The unseen hand was staring Esther all the time.

And Mordecai and the whole circumstance. We read verse 17 of chapter 2. It says, And the king loved Esther above all the women.

[8 : 41] 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.

Esther! Wow! She was crowned as queen. They put the royal crown upon her head. What a great honour. A wonderful moment. And so, guess what? Time for another feast.

Another feast. Are you getting hungry yet? It was a great feast. A great feast. Oh God, I'm skipping ahead. It was another feast again. It was the coronation feast, if you like.

Chapter 2, verse 21. And what happens in between time is Mordecai hears this plot. There's some officials having a yarn and they're saying they're going to kill the king.

And Mordecai warned the king, thereby saving his life. And this was written down in the royal records. These events were all part of God's steering, of what God was unfolding, his plan.

[9 : 41] He was steering the lives of Esther and Mordecai to fulfil his purposes. Sometimes, friends, we don't fully understand all the twists and turns of life. But we know the one who's behind the steering wheel, don't we?

We can trust in him through those various bumps along the road. We can trust the one who's behind the steering wheel. And the road was about to get a whole lot more rocky here.

Now we meet a new character, a man called Haman. And when the Jews recount this story, whenever you use the word Haman, everybody goes, boo, boo, hiss, he's a baddie, boo. What you've got to do, no, not really. Unless you feel like it. And so a man called Haman, boo, enters the scene. Haman was a high official.

And he had a high opinion of himself as well. So much so that he expected everybody to bow and scrape before him, you know, kiss his boots or whatever it be, you know, so that they had to come and bow before Haman.

[10:51] Oh, you're such a great guy, Haman. You know, they had to bow before him, which they did. Everybody except Mordecai. Mordecai was faithful to God.

He would only bow to the faithful, true God, not to some mere man. And so we see it started to get a bit tense here and went, Haman, boo, saw Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.

Then was Haman full of wrath. Haman hatched this destructive plan. Haman decided he would take Mordecai down. And he wasn't content just to attack Mordecai alone, but all of his flock, all of his people, all of the whole people, the people of Mordecai, wanted to wipe them all out, the Jews. Haman, chapter 3, verse 6. Haman. Come on. Haman, he sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom.

What a bad character he was. He plotted the destruction of the Jewish people. Really, you could reckon he was like the Old Testament Hitler. He wanted genocide. And the king agreed.

[11:59] He authorised that action. Mordecai got word. And there was great weeping and fasting by the Jews. This was terrible.

This was dreadful. And Esther was deeply pained when she heard the news. This was disastrous. Yet despite this unfolding drama, friends, I put to you the unseen hand.

The unseen hand was working. God steers in the affairs of men. Through even those bumpy and terrible times of life, God's over it all.

He's over it. And another thing that God's unseen hand does is God supplies from his hand. We heard about praying and thanking him for his supply.

Seeking his supply. That's supplication. Prayer. God supplies. Do we ever stop and thank him for his supply? When the enemy comes in like a flood, the spirit raises up his banner.

[13:01] God supplies. What does he supply? His protection. God supplies. God supplies his courage to us. We're not always conscious of the unseen hand.

We don't always even think. You know, go through life and, wow, actually God was helping me there. Someone had a car accident lately. You know? God's unseen hand was there.

God supplies. Even in the dire turn of events, God supplies. He sustains us. Sometimes we don't register. It doesn't even register. Wow, yeah. I'm here because God's been looking after me.

God's good to me. Haman is a light to the very enemy of our soul, Satan. Now, Jesus spoke about the thief.

He wants to steal, to kill, to destroy. That's what Haman wanted to do. He wanted to steal, to kill, to destroy, to wipe them out. But God supplies.

[14:01] God supplies his care for you. Brother, sister, God supplies. God supplies in his timing, in his own way, exactly what we have need of.

And God supplies through human vessels. He works through people personally. This was a scary time. God supplies through human beings. God supplies through human beings.

Including for Queen Esther herself. As Mordecai warned her in chapter 4, verse 13. He says, Mordecai says to Esther, think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews.

You know, once they found out you're a Jew, you're a goner too. Yet, even when circumstances seem against us, friends, God is for us.

God has a plan. The unseen hand is working out his purposes. And God supplies the courage and the strength when we need it. Esther herself is faced with destruction.

[15:01] And Mordecai encourages her to take action. We see that in chapter 4, verse 14. Really pivotal verse here. It says, who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

Mordecai says to Esther, this is your time. This is why you're the queen. This is why God has put you here. This is why the unseen hand has placed you here. And he has supplied you with that place to make a big change here.

Friends, God's timing is perfect. And for all of us, God has a purpose and a plan for such a time as this. I saw someone's Facebook profile along this lines and it says, I am 70 trillion of God-designed cells that are shaped into an image of me.

You can say that. 70 million, sorry, no, not million, trillion, 70 trillion, trillion cells made into a God-designed image of God-designed shape.

That's what you are. You have been made by God's plan for such a time as this. Trust in his plan. He's steering and he's supplying. Fulfill his plan.

[16:23] Find what God's steering you to, what God is supplying for you. Thank him for it. Esther knew she had to approach the king now. This was going to be very risky because it could cost her her life.

No one went to the king without being asked to come. She was taking a huge risk. I remember when, what's his name?

Prince William and what's the woman called? Princess Kate. So, so important they are to me. They came to Elizabeth and I was in the crowd and I reached out my hand and shook the princess's hand.

I was told afterwards, no, you've got to wait for her to extend her hand to you. I broke protocol. I could have had my head chopped off for doing the wrong thing, for breaking the royal protocol. You know, this was breaking the royal protocol, if you like, that Esther would go to the king. No, you don't do that. That's a no-no. That's not allowed.

[17:25] But she was trusting his plan. She was fulfilling his plan. She was willing to take a huge risk because God will supply the courage. God will supply the courage that we need.

God supplies your need. Doesn't he? Doesn't he? Yes! Shout it out. Amen! Yes! And so she asked God to supply her need and she called for a time of fasting.

Now, we could understand, while it's not specifically said so, when you fast, you pray. They're hand in hand, aren't they? I mean, no point just fasting. You fast and you pray.

That's what they were doing. And it says there, verse 16, They gather, she says, the Jews. Fast for me, she says. Pray for me, she's saying. Like Peter was talking before, I'm going to go into the king. It's against the law. If I perish, I perish. Now, it's a good thing to rely on the power of God through prayer, what we've been hearing about before, isn't it? God will supply, pray, ask him.

[18:29] Have that prayerful heart of Esther. When you face something, trust the unseen hand. Amen? Trust his hand to supply. Philippians 4.19, it tells you, A God shall supply.

My God shall supply all. Wow! All. Your need. According to his riches. In glory. By Christ Jesus. Go to God. In prayer. Trusting in prayer. He will answer. Seek after God. He will supply. Ask for his intervention.

He will supply your need. And may God help us to be willing to pray. Be prayerful. Ask God to help you to pray. Even to fast.

To wait for his direction. And trust he will supply. He will provide. The book of Esther is just packed with God's provision. On woe to go. God's provision. Supply.

[19:26] Esther knew. This could be her death sentence. This was a no-no. Anyone who came to the king's presence without being summoned, they could be executed. God supplied Esther the courage to do God's will.

God will give you the courage. God will supply. Hear the faith. Faith. And Esther stepped out of the doubt zone into that. Out of the comfort zone into the faith zone.

That's what we need to do. Leave the comfort zone. She came to the throne room. And this was it now. This was really serious now.

Chapter 5 verse 2. What did he do? He held out to Esther the golden scepter. The kingly scepter. He held it out to her, which was a sign of his favor. The king saw Esther and he gave her favor.

God supplied her need. It was the unseen hand that gave Esther favor. The unseen hand. God supplied her need. Now, sounds like another good time for a feast, doesn't it?

[20:31] So Esther called for a banquet with the king. And she said, let's get Haman along. Let's ask our friend Haman. It says, chapter 5 verse 6.

And the king said to Esther at the banquet of wine, what is thy petition? What do you want? It will be granted you. What is thy request? Even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.

Esther then asked yet for yet another banquet. Again with the king and with Haman. And Haman was hearing all of this and he was so full of pride. Oh, I'm so flattered.

You know, he just polished his humility badge. And I'm so flattered that I'll be honored with such a wonderful thing. And of course I deserve every bit of it. You know, and he thought of this banquet that was in his honor.

And then afterwards he was bragging to his family and his friends. Hey, guess what? I've got to be doing tomorrow. Look at all my glory and my pride. I'm just so great and grand.

[21 : 27] And Haman told them of the glory of his riches. And of the multitude of his children. And how the king had promoted him and advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. You know, he was the top dog.

But then just after that, Haman got really angry because Mordecai still wouldn't bow to him. And he was seething mad. You know, the smoke coming out of his ears.

He's just red with anger and rage. How dare he? You didn't bow to me. You've got to bow on your knees. Just put your face on the ground. No, Mordecai did not.

And he told his family and his wife and friends said, kill him. Let's build a gallows. No, we're going to hang him. He's going to swing on a rope. And it's going to be 50 cubits high.

That was 23 meters. Can you imagine that? This was no little gallows. This was 23 meters high. We want the whole city to see him swinging. Let a gallows be made.

[22 : 31] And then speak to the king. Then you can go merrily with the king unto the banquet. Now, I missed a bit there.

It says, oh yeah, there it is. And the thing pleased Haman. And he caused the gallows to be made. He thought to himself, what a brilliant idea. That's just what I want.

A gallows, 50 cubits, 23 meters high. We're going to get this fellow and get him good. We're going to make an example of him. How dare he not bow to me. So this was really impressive.

23 meters high. Now, we will see that God shapes things ultimately to the purpose of his will. Even in Joseph's affliction, he could say, God meant the evil for good.

And God used the good. He used this for good. We'll see. Notice, really, God is still staring. He's still staring this life. He's still staring Esther. God is still staring things.

[23 : 34] And you might say, here's another coincidence. No, really, it's a God incidence. That's what it is. It's a God incidence. All the while, while the gallows are getting built, Mordecai is building these gallows.

He's got his carpenters nailing it together over the night there. And that same night, we see chapter 6, verse 1, it says this, that the king couldn't sleep. Just had this restlessness and just couldn't sleep.

And he called his servants, bring the book of records. And they were read before the king. Now, what better way for you to get back to sleep than to have someone read a book of historical records?

Get someone to read a boring book to you. All right? That's a good tip for you. That's what King Ahasuerus did. To get back to sleep.

Bring the boring books and I'll just sit and listen to you and I'll go back to sleep. But God is still staring things here. The very book, the very section they read was about Mordecai's discovery of the assassination plot.

[24 : 35] And the king found out that nothing had been done to reward Mordecai. This was not on. This guy saved my life. What honour and dignity has been done for Mordecai?

And they said nothing. Nothing. We didn't do anything about it. He didn't get a little certificate or a little badge or a sticker. Nothing.

Now, just as it happens, Haman's nearby. He's floating around. Haman's here. He's actually going to see the king to get his go-ahead to hang Mordecai on this huge gallows that he'd made.

But before he could say anything, the king posed him a question. There's a lot of irony here. And the king said...

Oh, sorry. I'm skipping ahead there. The king said... My apologies.

[25 : 34] I missed it. But chapter 6, verse 6, it says, What shall be done to the man who the king delighteth to honour? That's chapter 6, verse 6. Mordecai, the king asked Mordecai, What should we do to someone that the king wants to honour?

And Haman thought in his heart, Oh, who would the king want to honour but such a humble servant such as me? Now, Haman, of course he must be talking about me.

I mean, who else would the king want to honour? And so he pulled out all the stops and he asked for the greatest of all honours. He said, you know, let's... For the king... He answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, He says, Let the royal apparel be brought, Which the king useth to wear, And the horse, Which the king rideth upon, And the crown royal, Which the king wears.

And then it says, verse 9, And let this apparel... Sorry, and let this apparel Be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes.

And get this man to lead him through the city, As he's on horseback and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour. Haman thought in his pride that he was the one who's going to get the honours, But it was actually, the honour was for Mordecai.

[26 : 54] Haman was shocked. This was... I'd imagine the colour drained from his face, And, you know, imagine maybe... This was dreadful.

This was shocking. He was actually going to have to honour the man that he hated, His enemy. And who would have thought that God would supply such honour to Mordecai? That God would supply such honour to Mordecai.

He says, Take the horse, the apparel, the clothes, the crown, And do this to Mordecai the Jew. Make sure you do everything you've said that you would do.

And so Haman took the apparel, the clothes, the royal clothes, the horse. He clothed Mordecai. He brought him through the streets of the city and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done for the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

Haman was completely humiliated and ashamed. And now he was to face the music as he came to the banquet before the king and Queen Esther. Thus far we've seen the unseen hand at work.

[28 : 02] God steers the events of our lives. Brother, sister, God's steering your life. We are truly in his hands, aren't we? We are in his hands. Let us learn to depend upon him. And God supplies blessing after blessing after blessing.

As we seek him, he gives us faith. He grants us courage. He leads through the circumstances of life by his guiding hand. We're under his hand.

We're in his hands. God supplied his peace here and his protection even in trying times. And God supplied honour to Mordecai. Mordecai, just the guy that sits by the gate.

Nobody kind of, you know, that outstanding. But Mordecai, God supplied him honour. And so what we see just now is that third point, you know, God...

God steers our life. God supplies and God saves.

[29 : 03] A mass genocide was about to happen. They were going to wipe the whole people out. Mass destruction. He came and planned to destroy not just Mordecai but his people.

God's people. Yet the unseen hand will prevail. You know, God saves. We heard a testimony of God saving today, haven't we? God can save the trophy of his grace.

From the darkest of places, God can save. And God can save religious people too. Isn't that good? You might say, I'm a fine, upstanding citizen of this fair city.

But if you don't know Jesus as saviour, you're lost and damned to hell. God can save the upstanding man. The decent woman is yet to trust Jesus.

God can save you. And the unseen hand will prevail. Friends, it says that the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save. Neither is he heavy that it cannot hear.

[30 : 01] He doesn't have a blockage. He can hear you. His hand is going to reach you. You might think, I'm too far, far, far, far from God. No. His hand has got a super extension ability.

His hand is not shortened that it cannot save. And the king asked of Esther, what do you want? And Esther made a plea for her people. She said, if I found favour in thy sight, O king, but pleased the king.

Let my life be given me at my petition and my people at my request. Just saying my life is in danger here, my people. Esther revealed it was Haman who was about to destroy her and her people.

And Esther said, here's the guy, this wicked Haman. Here's the adversary. Here's the enemy. And then Haman was afraid before the king and queen.

Now this is, again, it's another banquet time. I'd imagine whatever Haman was eating at the time, it was a chicken leg or whatever. I'd imagine something got stuck in his throat right about then.

[31 : 04] Whatever he got feasting on at that banquet would have got stuck in his throat. Haman was exposed and ashamed. And the king was enraged.

And then one of the servants told the king about Haman's gallows, these beautiful gallows that he had built. He's built them 50 cubits high, 23 metres. He's made it for Mordecai.

The king said, hang him thereon. Hang him on that. And verse 10, it says, they hang Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.

Then was the king's wrath pacified. Friends, the unseen hand, isn't it? The unseen hand is at work through Esther. We don't see God named as such, but we see his hand right through the book. God steers through the twists and turns of Esther's life, of Mordecai, even at such a time as this when everything gets really to the crunch.

[32 : 01] And God supplies his people with courage and favour. And God saves, amen? Do you know Jesus saves? Jesus saves.

He delivers. He thwarts the enemy's schemes. The devil thought to destroy Christ by the cross. He thought that was going to be the finish of him. The devil thought he could destroy Christ by the cross, that instrument of death.

But it really was the Saviour's great victory. It was the Saviour's great victory over sin, death and hell. So too the gallows that Haman had made for Mordecai became the instrument of his own destruction.

And so too, friends, our enemy is defeated by the virtue of Christ's work at the cross, the very hand of God. Friends, God saves. God saves his people.

You might say, I'm not saved yet. Friends, there's nothing stopping you. Just trusting him right now. Just trust the unseen hand. Yes, God, you've brought me to this time, this place for such a time as this.

[33 : 03] You've been steering my life even when I haven't realised you have the steering wheel. You've supplied so much for me. You've supplied so many blessings. Blessing after blessing after blessing you supply for me.

And Lord, I want you to save me. I want you to save me. Our enemy is defeated by the very hand of God. Jesus saves. He says, it is finished.

His great providence at the cross was for you, for me. It was on our behalf. Our great redeemer. Haman hanged on the same gallows that he prepared to kill Mordecai. And Esther received Haman's estate.

And the humble and faithful Mordecai was honoured. God's people were saved. We see as we wrap up here that it says that Mordecai was robed in blue and white, a great crown of gold on his head, a garment of fine linen and purple, and the city was rejoicing and glad.

When Jesus comes, there's joy. We've heard about the joy of prayer, haven't we? When Jesus comes, there's joy. There's joy and gladness. It goes on that there was joy and gladness.

[34 : 13] There was light and gladness and joy and honour. Verse 16 says the Jews had joy and gladness.

And another feast, why not? Amen. It's almost time for lunch, isn't it? It's a time for another feast, isn't it? And it says many of the people became Jews.

So God's kingdom was blessed. The unseen hand. Friends, just to think as we wrap up here, the result of the unseen hand of God's work is joy and gladness.

It's not a put-on thing. It's not a manufactured thing. It's not a plastic smile. It's a deep-down joy, deep-down heart joy. Gladness, Jesus saves. He saved my soul.

You know, we've seen the smile of shame. God saved him from the inside out. Fills our heart with joy and gladness. Friends, there's nothing compares with the work of God in the heart of man that trusts in him.

[35 : 13] And we see Mordecai. He pictures for us the faithful, persecuted, ultimately victorious believer. He stood up. He didn't bow down. He didn't cave in. He didn't do what the crowd did.

He stood firm, resolute. And he walked with humility, with integrity before his God. And he rose above every hard circumstance by God's grace and power.

He humbled himself under the mighty hand of God. God exalted him. And Esther, she was willing to risk her own life to save her people, to fulfill God's plan. Haman devised that hateful plan to elevate himself, to destroy a people who wouldn't bend their knees to him.

But Haman was vanquished. God turned Haman's evil intent and his deadly plan right around. So it was Haman who lost his own life. Jews were saved.

Mordecai was given honor. Friends, the Bible says promotion comes from the Lord. Do the right thing. God will lift you up. Esther was crowned. Mordecai was crowned.

[36 : 16] He had a crown too. And friends, one day, the Bible says, you're going to get a crown. Amen. That's what it says. You're going to get a crown. It's all God's doing.

The unseen hand. Unseen hand. Working when we don't even think. God is actually doing something. Yes, he is. Wow, it doesn't feel like it. I can't see much, but God's unseen hand is working for you.

And God will crown every believer. His unseen hand is at work. And the cross that Satan prepared for Christ became the instrument of his own defeat.

The unseen hand. God's hand is on you. God's hand is under you. He's holding you like that. We're under his hand and his hand is under us.

He's got you like that. Don't you want to be in his hand? The unseen hand. Friends, it's the pierced hand. It's the pierced hand. That's the hand of the Lord. The hand of the Lord is the pierced hand.

[37 : 23] It's the hand that was nailed. It was the hand that bore the nails. That's the hand that's reaching out to you. Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you for Esther, the testimony of her life.

Lord, for your hand at work, even when it wasn't always seen, and it's working still now, today, in us, for us, through us, with us.

Lord, your hand. We want to come under that mighty hand of God. We want to humble ourselves and come under that mighty hand. Lord, we pray if there's any yet present. We pray if there's any yet. We pray if there's any yet.

We pray if there's any yet. It's like maybe it's not quite, they've not quite got it yet. But today might be the day they'll say, yes, Lord, I receive your salvation.

Thank you, Jesus, for dying on the cross for my sin, rising from the dead. I trust you. I know you've been steering my life through the bumpy bits and through the easy bits.

[38 : 19] Lord, you've been steering me. You've been looking after me, looking over me, even when it's been tough. Lord, you've been supplying all my real needs. You've given me everything I truly have needed.

And Lord, I want you to save me. Lord Jesus, save me now. I pray that if anyone has prayed that prayer to trust in the saving of Jesus, to know Jesus as saviour, to know that Jesus died for their sin, that Jesus died on the cross for their sin, and that they believe, that they trust in him, that they'll tell someone, share that, that we can have joy and gladness with them.

Lord, thank you for your people here, for what we've heard today, the testimony of your saving, the stirring to a call to evangelise, so that there's people out there who haven't heard, that we'll tell them.

Lord, we'll reach out. Help us in prayer, Lord, to learn to pray. Teach us to pray. And help us, Lord, to be like Esther, to be like Mordecai. In Jesus' name.

Amen.