

Esther

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[0 : 00] Esther. Now I know someone would say, well you preached on Esther. I preached on Esther quite! I love Esther. So if you go to the book of Esther in your Bibles, Esther lived two and a half thousand years ago. And every year at this time the Jews celebrate the Feast of Purim. So it's very fitting to talk about Esther at this time of year. And the Jews recall God's deliverance. How he saved his people from destruction through the bravery of Queen Esther. She was a champion, a hero of the faith. And Purim is a time that Jews used to give praise to the Lord and to remember how he keeps his promises to his people. Now like I said, I preached quite a lot on Esther over the time about God's guiding hand through her life. This is a new sermon.

There's actually six videos on our YouTube channel, six different sermons about Esther. And they go through the book in a lot more detail than we will today. You know, verse by verse, a bit more rigorously than what I'm doing today. Today I just want to touch on some of the things that stand out to me. Some three pointers we can learn from the book of Esther, from the life of Esther. And how we can ourselves walk in her shoes in a practical way. Some practical pointers you could put from Esther. Esther found herself in a time of crisis. It was a great crisis. These were challenging times for Esther. And these are challenging times I put to you that are happening for us as God's people. These challenging times happening and yet to happen.

And we do well to learn from Esther I put to you today. See how did Esther handle what was happening for her? How did Esther handle these tough times? And her uncle, Mordecai, what did they do? And what can we do learning from them when we face challenges in our day? God had a purpose and plan for Esther's life. And he has one for you. Each one of us. God has a plan and purpose.

To set the scene we're going to cover off some of the background for the story. The book of Esther. Esther. Just to paint the picture of the backdrop here about the book of Esther. As I say we're not going to cover every point fully. Esther begins with a great festival. The king wanted a great festival. And it went on for six long months. Six months. Imagine that. Wouldn't you feel a bit of a great festival? And then he's going to cover every day? And then he followed it up with a feast. Furthermore a feast that went for seven long days. And then to top it all off he wanted to, this was the highlight now, he wanted his wife Queen Vashti to come and appear before his guests.

[3 : 09] But she refused. How dare she? But the Queen Vashti refused to come. This is Esther 1 verse 12. She refused to come at the King's commandment. And this enraged the King.

He had steam coming out of his ears. This was how dare my wife do such a thing. And he deposed her. She was thrown out of the palace on her ear. She was no longer the Queen.

Not recommending you do that husbands if your wife doesn't obey you. But mind you women, don't put yourself in that position. But she was thrown out of the palace.

And she was no longer Queen. And after that the King sent about choosing a new Queen for himself. He wanted a new bride. So he caught a contest. And it came about that God gave Esther favour in the King's sight.

But we've cut the long story short that Esther was the one. Verse 17 of chapter 2. And the King loved Esther above all the women.

[4 : 16] 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 Esther Queen instead of Vashti.

So here we see the scene set. The King crowned this nobody. Esther, who was she? She came out of nowhere. She was a nobody. Now she was the true Queen of the land.

The new Queen of Persia. Wow. From obscurity to royalty. Next, now what happened at this time was that Mordecai, Esther's uncle, was a man who served in the King's court.

Mordecai. One day while he was sitting at the King's gate, at the city gate, he overheard two men. Two of the King's officials. And they were plotting to kill the King. It was an assassination plot.

A conspiracy against the King. And Mordecai heard them. Overheard them. And he went and told Esther, his niece, to warn the King.

[5 : 22] Saving the King's life. Here's what happened as it records in chapter 2 verse 21. And in those days while Mordecai sat in the King's gate, two of the King's chamberlains, these two officials of the King, the big fan of Teresh, of those which kept the door, they were the doorkeepers, they were wroth, they were angry.

And they sought to lay hands on the King Ahasuerus. Something must have peeped them. They got cheesed off with the King. Verse 22. And the thing was known to Mordecai.

He heard it. And he told it unto Esther, it says, the Queen. And Esther certified the King thereof in Mordecai's name. She relayed it on verse 23 of chapter 2.

So it says, and when the 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.

So that's the background, the backdrop to the story. Now let's look at what happened as we're going to walk with Esther through some of the crises ahead.

[6 : 30] And three commitments that we can make when we face a crisis. Firstly, we learn from Esther how to stand up. Stand up.

Both Esther and Mordecai, when they faced a crisis, they both decided to stand up.

That's what happened when Haman showed up. Haman was a big shot. High ranking official of the King. And my dad's kind of enacting here. At the time of the Feast of Purim, when the Jews talk about Haman, everybody goes, boo, hiss.

And they got rattles for the kids and make a big ruckus because he's such an evil man. And so this man, he was a big shot. Haman, he was a high ranking official of the King.

And we read about him as it tells us in verse 1 of chapter 3. Chapter 3, verse 1 of Esther, it says, After these things did King Azaruz promote Haman the son of Hamadathah the Agagai and advanced him and set his feet above all the princes that were with him.

[7 : 40] So he was made the chief official. And this Haman, he was a descendant. Some would understand that as an Agagai, he was a descendant of King Agag, the king of the Amalekites.

So he represented the flesh, the anti-god of the day. And we read verse 2, it goes on, of chapter 3. And all the king's servants that were in the king's gate bowed and revered Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.

Get the picture? Haman, chief, a big chief, under the king. Everybody had to bow down.

Look, if he walked in the room, we'd all be on our faces, bowing down, bowing down, bowing down. He loved that. He just loved that. He was a big shot. He wanted that honour and glory for himself.

[8 : 46] He wanted to be the top dog. And he wanted everybody to know it. And everybody to bow down to him. And everybody did. Bow down. Everybody.

But Mordecai. But Mordecai. Mordecai refused to bow down. He stood up. He stood up. He stood up for his convictions.

It seems like these days, everybody is bowing down. Bowing down to this, to that. It's easy just to follow the crowd, isn't it? Go along with sin. Look, everybody's doing it.

Does it make it right? No, sir. What's right biblically? What's right in the sight of God? But everybody's doing it.

No, it doesn't make it right. Satan wants us to bow down and worship. Whatever. Anything. But God. And he gets people to worship, doesn't he?

[9 : 46] Gets people to worship money. People to worship the self. To worship success. Whatever it be. Anything but God. God. Some have their posters.

Don't they? I mean, I know, picking on my sisters, they have posters on their rooms. All these rock stars and movie stars or whatever it be. Mostly the pop stars of the day.

And it's like there was a worship there. I don't mean to pick on my dear sisters. But I know it's just a girl thing. Like just a teen thing. But you know, there's people like that today, aren't they?

They just want to follow the rock stars, the pop stars, the film stars. Anything. They virtually worship them. The sports stars. You name it. Satan just wants you to worship anything but God.

He craves your worship. In Matthew 4, we see Satan came to the Lord himself. In Matthew 4 verse 10. And the Lord says, as Satan says, come, bow down.

[10 : 49] I'm going to give you everything. Just worship me. He says, get thee hands, Satan. For it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God. And him only shalt thou serve.

Don't be afraid. People of God today, don't be afraid to be like Mordecai. To stand out from the crowd. That can happen as a Christian. To stand up for what is right. Even if it's not popular. And it makes you a target. Stand up. Stand for God. No matter what. No matter what.

And I can reflect how I was working in a state government department in health. And it came to light. Someone saw some of my videos. And they said, oh, you're one of those homophobes. You know, this woman I work with, she said, oh, my antenna didn't pick that up. That you're one of them. My antenna didn't pick it up. As if she's kind of listening.

[11:49] Oh, anything that doesn't fit the mantra. Anything that doesn't fit the direction of the world and its thinking. Anything that doesn't fit this anti-God culture.

And you're marked. But we should stand up. Now I was polite with her. I'm not a homophobe. But when the word of God says something, I'll say it.

Alright? Stand up. Stand up for what is right. What is right. Even if it's not popular. And even if it makes you a target. Because in some workplaces, it can. It does. I know.

Mordecai gave his allegiance to God. And he would not bow down to Haman. Now this really rankled Haman. He got really uppity here. We read verse 5 of chapter 3.

It says, And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. He was steaming mad.

[12:49] He was not bowing down. And it says, Verse 6, And he thought scorned to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had shown him the people of Mordecai. Wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.

So not only was Haman really aggro against Mordecai, he said, Oh, the whole lot of them. Let's get the whole lot of them. This is not on. I'm not having this, he thought. Haman was like this little Satan, full of pride.

He wanted praise. And he hated Mordecai. And he wanted to destroy God's people. Now, for us today, we face a fierce enemy, don't we? We do.

Sometimes we forget that we've got a fierce enemy. Will we bow down and honour those who work evil? No, we shouldn't.

Absolutely not. And those who work evil, they're pretty much pulling the strings behind everything now, aren't they? Are you going to bow down to them? They're just like the everybody.

[13:55] Everybody's doing it. Or are you going to say, actually, I'm going to stand for God. I'm going to stand for what's true and right. Are we going to stand by our convictions? Will we stand up for what's right and serve God?

When we face a crisis, let's determine this. Stand up. Stand up for what's biblically right. Not what's politically correct. The world will tell you it's okay to do this and that.

What does the Bible actually say? What's biblically correct? That should determine our actions.

That should determine every conduct of our life. It should be determined by God.

Is it biblically right? Not what is politically correct. The world will tell you to do this and that and live who cares how. But God says there's a way to live.

And we ought to stand for our convictions, biblical convictions. Haman was so angry that he talked to the king into destroying the Jews, wiping them all out.

[14:52] Mordecai, the whole lot of them. He was like the Hitler of his day. And we read verse 13 of 3. It says, Letters were sent by hosts. They sent these letters by couriers into all the king's provinces to destroy, to kill, to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children, women, in one day.

They set the date. the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar. And to take the spoil of them for a prey.

Wipe them out, take everything they've got. Interesting, this was the night before the Passover, which was the fourteenth of Adar. The day after.

And Passover was a time of great rejoicing, a great festival of praise, of God's deliverance, a time of great joy, remembering God setting his people free from Egypt.

And it points, for us, as we know, it points to the redeeming power of the precious blood of our Lord Jesus shed for us. And it looked like this time, this Passover, was going to be a devastation instead.

[16:03] This was woeful. This was terrible. And when Hester heard this news, what did she do? Esther stands up. That's what she did. Esther stands up.

She's an example to the people to stand up and to sink after God. It says, the people of God went to prayer and fasting. We've seen chapter 4, verse 1.

As much as prayer is not mentioned, reading between the lines, we can understand that they prayed. We can assume that they would have been praying. I mean, to fast is good for your body, but prayer and fasting, they go hand in hand.

Fasting without praying might help you health-wise, but praying and fasting helps you more. It helps you spiritually. And so, we see in verse 1, Mordecai perceived all that was done.

He rents his clothes. He tore his clothes. It was a sign of distress. And he put on sackcloth with ashes, it says. So there's this clothing of sackcloth.

[17:02] And he went out into the midst of the city and he cried with a louder bit of crying. He was crying out. This was a terrible time. Verse 3, in part it says, there was a great mourning among the Jews.

Fasting, weeping, wailing, many lay in sackcloth and ashes. Sackcloth and ashes speaks of mourning, of grieving. When a challenge faces us, question is, will we bow down or will we stand up?

When the enemy of God's people threatens us, it's not the time for us to bow. We will not bow. We must stand up. I put to you today, people of God, learn from Esther, learn from Mordecai, when the enemy of God faces you, stand up.

We must. Stand up for our convictions. And that can be hard. I've experienced it in workplaces. You stand up. You stand through. You don't deviate.

You don't back down. You don't compromise. You stand up for God. It'll cost you, but stand. It doesn't mean be stupid about it, of course.

[18:15] But as a way to stand, still be a good worker, still be a witness, still be a testimony of God's grace in your life. Don't stand up for some kind of big note in yourself, but stand up in humility.

Stand up for what's true and what's right. And I know some of you do. I know I've heard stories about people in workplaces with Christian, evident Christian witness in their office and on their desk.

God bless you for that. It's a good thing to stand up. It's tough standing up, especially in these secular workplaces. We know what it's like, but don't be deterred.

Stand up for Christ. And it's the same in more building sites and more of the rough and tumble kind of workplaces. You can stand up for Christ there.

You can be a witness for Christ there. Sometimes it's even harder when it's the kind of rough and tumble kind of work sites, but even more so, stand up. Friends, I urge you to that.

[19:14] And so, we must stand up. Stand prayerfully. Stand up for God. Stand up spiritually. And when challenge comes, then stand up.

Secondly, we see step up. We are in a confrontation with evil. This was a time of great despair and danger for God's own people.

And it seemed all was lost. All hope was gone. This was the king's decree. This was the law of the land. This was a time of great defeat and disaster, it seemed.

Yet, it also was a time for courage. Mordecai encouraged Esther to go into the king, to plead before him for her people.

Esther knew it was against the rules. This was not the done thing. To just go in before the king without him inviting her. What happened to the previous queen? Queen Vastity, banished for displeasing the king.

[20:20] So Esther was taking a huge risk here, as we know. Esther said this, verse 11 of chapter 4. She told how this was the law. Whosoever will come into the king, into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of this, to be put to death.

except such, to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter that he may live. The king's scepter he would hold out if he favoured. And she says, but I have not been called to come in unto the king these 30 days.

She had not seen the king for 30 days. Esther knew she was taking her life into her own hands. She knew she was risking her life. The law said she could be put to death on the spot.

Her only hope was if the king gave her favour. Now, think of it. If you're in Esther's shoes here, Esther could have taken the easy way out. She could have stayed in the comfort. She had the palace. She had the, all the comforts of royalty. Everything was hers. She could have just stayed back there in the comfort zone and done nothing.

[21 : 30] But Esther did not back off and shrink back in fear. She stepped stepped up in faith. And friends, that's the same for you and me. When we face a challenge, she rose to the challenge.

She was this one woman who had come from nowhere but God was with her. And through the Bible, God works through ordinary people.

It's the way he does it. He doesn't choose the leading lights that by and large he uses many ordinary souls like Esther to do his bidding, to protect and redeem his chosen people.

Esther did that. This humble Esther. And our Lord works through ordinary people today just like you and me. Don't discount yourself. Just step up.

Simply that. Trust him. We've all got need of courage, of faith. It's better, it's easier, it's human nature, isn't it, to not step up.

[22 : 35] But it's God's plan that we have courage and faith and step up. It's God's plan for us. Mordecai urged Esther about this critical time that there was a sense of destiny here. Verse 14 of chapter 4.

He tells Esther this. Mordecai says, For if thou altogether holdest thy peace, at this time, you know, if you don't say anything, then shall the enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place.

He had faith that God would do something. God was going to set the people free one way or the other. But he says, 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.

Mordecai challenged Esther, look, it could be that God has chosen you for just this time, for such a time as this. And who knows what God can do with your life.

You might think, humble little old me, just step up. Step up to the plate. Step up. When the challenge comes, don't shrink back. Step up.

[23 : 39] And that could be in all kinds of ways, all kinds of opportunities that come your way. Don't step back. Step forward. When the call goes out, answer the call.

You might say, look, I don't feel, it doesn't matter about that. Step up. Honestly, people of God, God's wanting to get a hold of your life. And when the call goes out, answer it.

When you have need of courage, ask for it. Step up. Sign up. Show up. Man up. Put your hand up. Step up.

And God will give you the courage just like he did for Esther. That's why God has placed you where you are today. You might think, things are not good.

Well, it's for such a time as this. That's where you're meant to be. God's got you right there in the thick of it and you are in the centre of his will even though it's hard going.

[24 : 37] He's got a mission and he's got a mission only you can fulfil for such a time as this. That's a thought, isn't it? God is working and that's kind of the wonderful thread that is through the book.

God's not mentioned as we, strangely, by name in the book but he's everywhere. His fingerprints are all over what's happening. And it can be with your life too when you think, oh, what's God doing with me?

Actually, he is doing a work and sometimes we strangely don't. We're just not conscious. We just do what he tells us to do and that means at times it can be putting ourselves out, stepping out of the comfort zone like Esther.

She took a risk. She was willing to sacrifice. She was willing to die. He has our life mapped out for us.

For all of us and he has his purposes for us. His best. We don't want to miss that, do we? We don't want to miss that. Esther asked Mordecai, call the people to fast.

[25 : 45] Let's go to, effectively she, I put to you, she was saying, go to God. Let's fast. She wanted it to be a God thing. We can understand this to mean the people were praying.

They were seeking God. They were fasting. This was desperation. They were wanting to depend upon him, on his power, his protection over Esther. Step in up and pray while you do that.

You know, I've asked some people to do things and they've respectfully said I need to pray about it. That's a good thing to do. Amen. It can be hasty. I know sometimes some use it as a cop out.

I'm not meaning to press that but the point is if we're going to do something for God, we've got to be spiritual about it. We've got to be prayerful about it. We need to step out and pray while we do it and God might say no as well for certain things.

But when you step out for God, trust him and know that he is with you. So she said this, gather the people, gather the Jews that are present in Shushan, fast you for me.

[26 : 51] In effect, she was saying, pray for me. Neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. I also, my maidens, will fast also. So likewise, so will I go in unto the king which is not according to the law.

I'm going to go in and if I perish, I perish. Esther did not chicken out. Imagine yourself in Esther's shoes. This was life or death. If I perish, I perish.

Did Esther chicken out? No. She stepped up. And as we see the story unfold, we see Esther sets out to overcome Haman. Now Haman here is one of the most powerful people on earth at this moment in time.

The second to the king. He was very powerful and we could compare evil Haman with our enemy, Satan.

Esther did not back off. She stepped up. Haman was powerful. The king had given him so much authority. He virtually could pass laws that the king had not even read.

[27 : 55] He had the signet ring to authorise laws. And so Haman was very powerful. We, you and me, also have an enemy.

What will we do? Will we back off or will we step up? And I've talked numbers of times about spiritual warfare. This is real.

This is not some flaky term or some spooky, you know, super, super spiritual thing. I'm going into spiritual warfare. We are in spiritual warfare.

All the time. 24 by 7. It's not whether you feel like it or not. You are in spiritual warfare day by day, moment by moment. Question is, will you step up in God's strength and trust him and take on your enemy?

God wants us to trust him and have courage to face our enemy. Friends, let's do that prayerfully. Lean upon God's strength. Know that God is with you and believe God to work on your behalf.

[28 : 56] So we see we should stand up and we should step up. And thirdly, we see this, that we should speak up. You know, it's easy to clamor.

It's easy to say nothing, especially when you're tested, when you're confronted, when it's easier to just say nothing. The Bible speaks of the confession of your faith.

He says, confess me before man. That's a good thing for you to do. It's the right thing. It's the biblical thing. It's the God thing to do. Esther was bold in her God to speak, to speak up, to speak the truth in a world of lies.

That's the world we're living in, people, a world of lies. It was dangerous for Esther to enter before the king. She put her life on the line. She was a queen willing to lay down her life to save her people.

A picture of Christ in that regard. God's people were threatened. And Esther was willing to risk her own life for what was right. She put the kingdom of God ahead of her own comfort and safety.

[29 : 59] Esther spoke up. She told the king that she was one of the Jews. You know, that was something, wasn't it? He'd marked them for destruction. She said, I'm one of them.

She spoke up. She said, I identify as one of God's people. I'm a believer. I'm one of God's people. That's effectively what she said. And it's like that for us sometimes to confess Christ.

To confess Christ. It can be a turning point for you that are born again. It was for me as a young Christian, as a year 12, earlier than that, year 10, as I met a Muslim fellow in year 10 in England, equivalent of year 10, and then in year 12, a Muslim, sorry, Mormon.

And for me to confess Christ to them was a turning point for me. It solidified my faith. It strengthened my faith because I had to honestly examine Muslim religion, Mormon religion, and confess my faith in the Christ of the Bible, the Saviour.

And that was a turning point for me. Sometimes when you confront it, when you test it, and when you're faced with a decision, do I confess Christ or do I just say, oh, just sort of leave it.

[31 : 20] Don't say anything. Confess Christ. Confess Him. Don't be afraid. When the opportunity comes for you, confess Christ. And again, I don't mean there's wisdom to that.

How do you put it? You're not there to kind of show off or, yeah, just cause an argument or be just, you know, how some people are just so, they know it all, you know.

You don't come across like that. But to know the Lord, that's everything. And to confess Him is the best thing you can tell anybody, isn't it? And Esther was willing to confess her faith. In effect, you could read between the lines that she was identifying herself as one of God's people.

And it's like that for us sometimes. To confess Christ, to confess, I'm a born again Christian. To confess your faith, to confess, yes, Jesus saved me and I know it.

To confess Him, that can be hard. And people will scorn you. I've had it happen multiple times. People will reject you. It can be hard, but it's the right thing to do.

[32 : 29] God wants you to speak up. Give voice to your faith. We face times of crisis, people. We're in times of crisis. People are searching for answers. There's desperation.

Look, I've had people talk about suicide to me. And there's someone who attempted suicide. And that is very confronting for me. People are searching for answers.

Friends, this is not a time to shut up. It's a time to speak up. Confess Christ. You that are struggling, confess Him. Stand fast. Stand up. Step up.

Speak up. Speak up. In testimony, speak up. In prayer, God wants to hear you praying. Speak up. It talks about the reading. Give attention to reading.

Speak the Word. When you're at home, speak it up. Speak it forth. Confess the Scriptures. When you're in your car, play a tape. Whatever they're called now. Whatever the modern equivalent is.

[33 : 31] Just play the Word. Speak the Word. Read the Word. Hear the Word. Confess the Word. Speak up. In faith. God has called you to the Kingdom of God for such a time as this.

He gives us true purpose for life. And what is God calling you to do to serve Him? To serve the church, His church. To serve your world.

So we read how Esther stood up. She stepped up and she spoke up. I'm not meaning to dwell on that. It's just how I picture these things which are, in a way, they're all the same. But we see chapter 5 verse 1 how Esther spoke up.

And it came the third day that Esther put on her royal apparel. that had these three days of fasting. She put on her royal robes. She stood in the inner court of the king's house over against the king's house.

And the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house over against the gate of the house. So the king was in the throne room and it says verse 2 and it was so when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court that she obtained favour.

[34 : 35] He extended the golden scepter and Esther drew Ninger and touched the golden scepter the top of the scepter. It says verse 3 Then said the king unto her What wilt thou Queen Esther?

Tell me what you want. It shall be given to you. What is thy request? Friends, likewise we have access to the king and we have the favour of our king.

Sometimes we don't go to God in prayer. We should go like Esther went go to the king. Go to the top. Go to the king. He wants us to go to him and he will give us his grace.

He always wants to hear from us. That's just by the by. But notice that Esther was willing to risk and to go against the protocols to break the rules to go against the culture the norms of the day.

We need to likewise if it be so that we'll go against the rules of the day. I'm not saying go and break the speed limit on the way home. Although the king's business requireth haste.

[35 : 35] That's always what I use as an excuse. No, no rather. We should do the right. We don't break the law. We do the right thing. But when the man-made rules conflict with God's rules let's break the rules.

Be willing to be a dissenter. That's what they called the old time Bible believers of old. They were non-conformists. They weren't part of the establishment church. They were told don't preach you're not authorised.

We've got to break from the crowd to take a different path to be like the men and women of old like old Bunyan. They were willing to believe God and radically stand for biblical truth even at risk of imprisonment or worse.

So next we read that Esther arranged a meal. She did this twice for the king with Haman and her and it happened the first time Haman came upon Mordecai again and he refused to bow again.

So Haman got really mad now. He wanted revenge and he built this gallows that was 22 metres high with the purpose of hanging Mordecai there. Now this was all setting the stage really for God's

salvation of his people and the point I'd like to put here is that God is working even when things look grim God is working.

[36 : 47] He's working still and sometimes even in our own lives when things don't seem to be working out God is working even when it seems things are going from bad to worse.

We see how God was working as we read chapter 6 verse 1 said the king could not sleep and that very night was the night when Haman was planning for Mordecai's hanging and God moved the heart of the king.

He couldn't sleep you know the story likely that he ordered this book of the Chronicles to be read to him perhaps it was such dry reading it would send him to sleep but the Chronicles were this history of what was happening in his realm in his reign and of those who should be rewarded for faithfulness.

God was clearly at work this night. Again I'll put it to you sometimes we're not aware of what we would think are coincidences in life as some would call them their God incidences.

God is at work. It was the exact night the king couldn't sleep it was the exact night that he called for the Chronicles not some other book and that the servant turned to the very account of Mordecai.

[37 : 53] So the king was surprised to hear that Mordecai had never been honoured for saving him for falling that assassination five years before and it goes on we'll take it up from chapter 6 verse 3 and the king said as he just found this out that Mordecai hadn't been rewarded he heard someone rustling out there and he said who's out there who's out there sorry I'll go back to chapter 6 verse 3 he says what honour and dignity has been done to Mordecai for this and the servant said nothing nothing's been done for him so he was quite staggered that they'd missed this so then we see that suddenly he has this noise who's out there who's in the court and Haman was there he'd come as it stands there to speak to the king he wanted to get permission to hang Mordecai but before he could say anything the king said this this is chapter 6 verse 6 what should be done unto the man whom the king delighted to honour now Haman thought in his heart to whom would the king delight to do such an honour more than myself just my good self well he's got to mean me yes of course that was the kind of irony here verse 7 and Haman said this well I've got to do everything for this man pull out all the stops he says for the man whom the king delighted to honour verse 8 let the royal apparel be brought which the king is to wear and the horse that the king ride us upon and the crown royal which is on his head and verse 9 and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes such as me that they may array the man with whom the king delighteth to honour and bring him on horseback through the street of the city and proclaim before him thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour great idea said the king well it's such a good idea and the next thing

Haman knew he was leading Mordecai through the city shouting the very words that he had come up with what an embarrassment it was you can see verse 10 there that he went and did all of that roped him with the royal rod set him on the king's horse put the crown on he said this is what the king will do for the man he delights to honour we see that there verse 11 as well we see prideful Haman he was forced to now give Mordecai the honour that he wanted for himself friends the point is ultimately I put to you for whatever goes on in the here and now ultimately we'll see the downfall of the wicked they will get their just desserts though we may face crisis and possibly persecution though we may face risk and danger like Esther though the enemy threatens us and he is and he does and he will do the word shows us that the wicked will be ashamed and God's people will have ultimate victory the Bible says this is the victory that overcometh the world even our fame so time came where Esther spoke up and again at a second banquet she confronted as it all came about I'm skipping bits here but chapter 7 verse 6 we see at the second banquet when it was revealed this plot to kill the Jews and she said on one of them and he says who's done this and she says Esther spoke up she said the adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman you know he would have I don't know if he choked on his chops or whatever he was eating at the time but he was afraid before the king and the queen we need to speak up against the enemy speak up friends in faith and truth speak up for Christ it ended up as we know Esther 7 tells how Haman was killed on the very gallows it made for Mordecai friends in Esther's story God is at work right through providing leading sustaining intervening strengthening guiding and then the ultimate victory what about you and me today we might think where's God in all of this in my life friends

God is not mentioned by name in Esther's book but he is not absent he is present and it's the same in your life and mine when we feel like God's not there he's right there all the time even in the

desperate times of our lives God is with us he is very present and God is working on your behalf even when wow it's tough right now God is still working hang on saints hang on hang in there God is bringing his will to pass he is working out what will be a great victory the king summoned Mordecai to the palace he gave him the signet ring of Haman he vested him with all the royal authority Mordecai received Haman's position power and property and chapter 8 verse 1 says that he gave it all all that the house of Haman had Mordecai was given and the king took off the ring it says verse 2 and he gave it to

Mordecai so Esther sent Mordecai over the house of Haman look how things changed look how things turned around here was Mordecai chapter 4 verse 1 he was wearing sackcloth and ashes he was renting his garments now he was robed in the king's royal robes Haman had a plan just like Satan has a plan but God has a plan God has a plan amen and our God will thwart the devil's plan the devil cannot defeat us he might get a few little wins a few little battles a few little skirmishes now again but God's going to win the war God will prevail stand on that God's plan will prevail it says that the promises of God are for us it says the Jews had light and gladness and joy and honour this is 8 16 and then 17 it reads in every province in every city it says the Jews had joy and gladness a feast and a good day and many of the people of the land became

[44 : 31] Jews for the fear of the Jews fell upon them now God's going to extend his kingdom people are going to get to know him to become God's people to be saved and we shall overcome someday victoring is ours by faith saint of God brother sister today joy and gladness is surely yours in Christ our God will prevail when we face challenges let's have the same commitments that Mordecai and Esther hand don't bow down stand up don't back off step up and don't clam up speak up be like Esther be like Mordecai this life ahead there's challenges but God is with you just like he was right through the book not named but present God is present in your life just as surely let's pray our God and King we thank you that the testimony of

Esther of Mordecai speaks to us still that story two and a half thousand years old is still very true for us in this 21st century Lord God help us we pray that we can apply these principles to to not be cowering bowing down but to stand up for you to stand up for our faith Lord help us to likewise to step up when challenge comes not to be a quitter but to step up to step forward in faith trusting you and Lord to speak up as we see Esther did even at the risk of such a great risk she did not hold back to speak up let us too confess our faith to speak up to speak truth in a world of lies to speak as you give us the ability to and Lord we want to be spiritual about it we want to seek your face like it appears they did as they fasted and likewise they would have prayed that we would have a prayerful heart

Lord do that work we know there's victory ahead we pray for each one here this morning the Bible says the victory that overcomes the world is even our faith and that's not just some general faith it's that saving faith that trust in Christ only as our Saviour Lord we pray each one might have that assurance truly know that promise that peace that joy and peace in believing to know Jesus today and we pray if there's any any here present or engaged in watching this that they might come to that personal trust even right now by faith even right now they would say yes Lord I confess you as my Saviour I want to stand up for you to live for you to walk in your ways and to speak up even that I'll confess you as my Lord and confess that faith that you've you've made active in my heart that faith that prompts us to activate our life in a good way pray if there's any burden down this morning whatever it be there's crises going on

I'm not downplaying that for anyone here there are some tough things going on Lord that Lord you just assure each one that you're very close you haven't left us you're very present Lord challenge us if there's things we need to get right that are not right in our lives things that we're not doing right Lord put the finger on that Lord and don't let us rest until we get it sorted whatever it be if there's a sin if there's a situation that is not right Lord God convict us of that Lord that we might fix it Lord that we might get things right with you we pray in Jesus name Amen