

God Accomplishes His Purposes

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[0 : 00] All right, open your Bibles to Esther chapter 2. I'm in Ephesians at Sunday School. Esther chapter 2. What a good God we serve, amen? That was a great song, and I am so blessed.

Now, we're in the book of Esther, and you kind of need to know what's happening here. As you read the book of Esther, what in the world's going on? How come is it that the book starts off, and we're hearing about Queen Vashti and the king, and now this chapter, you're going to hear about Mordecai and Esther and how they get into the place, and God's name's not going to be mentioned, but I need to remind you of several things.

You know how God, when Moses said, what's your name? You know what God said? He said, my name is, I am. You know why? Because he's not, I was ever, and he's not, I will be ever.

He's always, I am. He stands outside of time. He sees yesterday like it is today, and he sees tomorrow like it is today. And so, and he gets, we get to the book of Esther, and we're reading it like humans, and we see it from our standpoint, and we see all this story happening.

We can kind of wonder what's going on, but the God of glory stands outside of time. He knows exactly what's happening, and he's at work. Now, no one knows in Esther 1, and no one knows in Esther 2, that in just a few short verses, Israel's life will be in danger.

[1 : 20] And God has a plan that started way back in Genesis chapter 12, that he's going to use the nation of Israel to bring the word of God to us, to give us Jesus, and for the church to be born out of them.

And so God has all this plan working here. And at this very moment, behind the scenes, wicked forces are at work that will destroy the nation of Israel if they can.

But God's bigger than all of that. He stands above all of that, and God's watching all that happen. And when nobody knows why Vashti gets kicked out as queen, God knows. And when God, no one understands why all of a sudden Esther will be chosen to be the queen, only God knows, but God knows.

That's one of the things you ought to get out of this. God knows, amen? And God accomplishes his purposes. And so all of a sudden, the queen will be Esther. And when the time comes, and a few chapters here, and you hear Israel's in trouble, you can know this God already knew.

And God already had a plan. And God was already working. The story of Esther is a story of how God is at work to save the nation of Israel so that Jesus will one day sit on the throne of David.

[2 : 28] We may not see God mentioned in all the book of Esther, but he is at work. And what may seem like normal circumstances to many must be seen as a believer as God working and moving in us.

I may not always see him. I may not always understand what's going on. But I know that he knows. And I know that he is taking care of things. And I know that he is at work. And I know that these things aren't an accident.

What is God doing in our lives? What is his plan? We are not our own. We have been bought with a price. We are not our own. We do not live for ourselves.

Mordecai and Esther have no idea what's going on in the story. They are just living their lives. She is snatched up from being a normal girl to becoming the queen. Mordecai is a nobody who becomes a man with great position.

They have no idea what God is doing. They are not even willing participants. They are not over there thinking, well, we are going to have to save Israel so we got to work and connive to get you in as queen and to get me in as a big person in the government so we can save the nation.

[3 : 33] They don't know what's going on. They are just living life. But God is at work. Some of you just might think he is not at work. And some of you may be going on about your lives and think this is what's going on and this is what I am doing.

But if you knew what the Bible teaches in the book of Esther, you know God is at work. And you know that God has a purpose and God has a plan. So I want to read with you. I do want to be a willing participant, by the way, in what he's doing in my life.

Unlike Mordecai and Esther, I want to find out what he's doing. I want to hook up to what he's doing. I want to be involved in what he's doing. I want to be a willing participant and say, God, use me. I laid in the bed last night before I went to bed.

I went to bed at like 9.30 old time, which was 10.30 new time. So I'd wake up on time. Then I woke up at 5.30 new time, which is like, I can't figure this out.

It just messes me up. Amen. When I run for president, we're going to change it to where it stays the same all year round. Ain't never happening. So I can see anything I want. But you know what?

[4 : 34] I laid down thinking last night, God, I know you're at work. I want to be used of you. I don't want to just live here. I don't want to just have a normal existence. I want my life to count for God. Don't you? If you do, say amen.

Now look, if you will, with me at Esther chapter 2. We're going to read the story. We're going to learn truths as we go through it. But I want you to remember the overall story. Here's another thing. Here's another thing you need to know about the Bible.

There's no story in the Bible by accident. You don't understand how big that is. See, he put this book together. He put this book together.

He preserved this book and he gave it to us. You may not realize this, but every time he puts a story in the Bible, there's a lot of reasons. And we don't even know necessarily what's going on. There are great big time gaps in the Bible.

God just totally leaves everything out of the story. For example, Genesis chapter 50. Between Genesis chapter 50 and Exodus chapter 1 is like 400 years. We don't know what's going on except they're in Egypt as slaves.

[5 : 33] We don't really know what's going on. In Judges, you're going to read verses that will say 40 years just took place. 40 years just passed. You're like, whoop, that was a quick 40. And it's just gone and done. So God picks stories.

And you ought never take your Bible lightly. You ought never just read it and ignore it. You ought to say, man, he must have something he wants me to know here. Amen? And you need to do with what he tells you, whatever he tells you.

And don't worry about what he doesn't tell you. And let's just accept what he's given us. Read with me, if you would, Esther chapter 2, verse 1. After these sayings, when the wrath of the king was appeased, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what was decreed against her.

Father, please work today. Oh, Lord, I'd like to see you save somebody and change somebody's life. God, I'd like some Christians to just be excited about you and who you are and what you do.

And to dedicate their lives to your purpose and to what you're accomplishing. And God, I give you praise for whatever you do today. In Jesus' name, amen. First thing we should write down, marriage mistakes.

[6 : 33] Why don't you write that down? Marriage mistakes. How about this? Write this down somewhere. Thinking about it when it's too late. Marriage mistakes. Thinking about it when it's too late. Historically, we know that it's been nearly four years since Vashti was deposed.

It's been nearly four years since the end of last chapter. The king has now been defeated by the Greeks and he's come home in humiliation. And he starts thinking about his wife and remembering her and what she had done and what he did.

He comes back and says, after these sayings, that's the four years, the wrath of the king, he was no longer mad. And he started thinking about Vashti and what he'd done and what he decreed. And he misses his queen.

Even though he has lots of concubines and lots of illicit sexual partners. And all of a sudden he wakes up and goes, man, those guys kind of tricked me into that.

And I kind of threw Vashti away over some kind of false pretenses. And I'm kind of missing old Vashti right now. And I'd just like to stop real quick. And if you've got your Bible, won't you underline in verse 1, remembered Vashti.

[7 : 35] And I just want to remind you, don't say or do things you'll regret. You know, sometimes to be a show-off and sometimes to be with your buddies and sometimes to run your big mouth, you might tell Vashti, bless God, you will obey me or I'll get rid of you.

And you may run your mouth and then later on regret it. Because that's what seems to happen in chapter 2, verse 1. How about in marriage that we think before we speak? How about we don't abuse and regret?

Yet, see, we ought to, I mean, I ought to really consider this. I don't know how many of you, I'm not trying to be ugly or nosy this morning, but sometimes we ruin our marriages because we do things we ought not do.

And then later on we're like, man, I really wish I hadn't done that. And now the marriage is over and the marriage is in trouble. And we're like old king and I can't pronounce his name here going, I remember my wife. I remember the life and it was better.

And all of a sudden we're sorry for what happened in the past. So I ought to be thinking about that right now. I ought to be thinking about that before I speak to my wife. I ought to be thinking about that before I speak to other people.

[8 : 36] I ought to think about it so I don't have to remember it. This king demanded and punished. As you read through this story, I can't help every time I ever read about a king, I think about my king.

And my king is Jesus. And this king demanded and he punished. He was like, you will do what I say. And if you don't do what I say, I'll get rid of you. But my king loves and gives his life.

You know what? He looked down and loved me though I was a sinner. He loved me though I had failed him. He loved me though I didn't deserve to go to heaven. And he saved me. And whenever we're talking about marriage in this chapter right here, you ought to know that like this guy wanted to be the head of his home, or at least him and his cronies when they're drinking, they want to be the head of the home.

Later on he's thinking about remembering it. But if you want to know who to follow, whose example you follow, you follow Jesus' example. The Bible says in Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 25, husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church.

Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church. You know what you do? If you want to think about Jesus, he loved us first. Amen? So a husband who wants to fix his marriage says, I'm not waiting on my wife to get things right.

[9 : 43] I'm not waiting on my wife to say she's sorry. I'm going to be like Jesus. I'm going to go love my wife and fix it myself. Because that's what he did. Amen? I was on my way to hell. There was no hope and no one thing I could do about it.

And the God of heaven, Jesus looked down and said, Austin, I love you. And he came and he found me and he saved me. And he did all of it. He brought me to him. Amen? I look at that and I say, how am I going to work in my marriage?

Well, bless God, I want Betty to crawl back on her knees. I want her to come back and say she's sorry. Thank God he didn't make us do any of that. He came to us. He forgave first. Would you write that down somewhere?

Husbands? He forgave first. You know what Jesus did? Jesus didn't come and say, if y'all straighten up your act, I'll forgive you. He came and said, I died and paid your sin, Dad, and I'll forgive you. It's Jesus forgiving.

It's Jesus sacrificing himself for his church and you for your spouse. Go with me if you would to Esther chapter 2 and verse 2. I really think there's some good marriage nuggets in chapter 2 and verse 1.

[10 : 40] If you'll look at your Bible and underline remembered Vashti and just realize what's going on. The second thing I want you to look at is don't allow yourself to be easily manipulated. We live in a world that manipulates us all the time.

News channels manipulate us. Politicians manipulate us. Employers manipulate us. Employees manipulate us. Spouses manipulate us.

But every Christian ought to learn to find out I'm anchored in this book and I'm going to do what this book says and I'm not going to follow whatever anybody pushes me to do. Look if you would at Esther chapter 2 and verse 2.

Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, let there be fair young virgins sought for the king. Now you've got to understand what's going on. The same cronies that were drinking with him, the same cronies that got Vashti kicked out, they're all sitting there.

And the king's, he's the center of attention because he's the big cheese and he's sitting over on his big old couch laying there eating some grapes. And they're fanning him and bringing him some Coca-Cola to drink.

[11 : 42] And he's sitting there and he goes, man, I remember old Vashti. Boy, she's a beautiful woman. I love my queen. And they're like, if he brings back Vashti, she's going to cut our heads off.

We better figure out some way to keep this big dummy who we can manipulate and mold and do whatever we want. We've got to get him to not bring Vashti back. So if you will look at chapter 2 and verse 2.

After he said, I remember Vashti. After that, the king's servant that ministered him said, why don't we find some beautiful young virgins for you? We've got a plan, king.

We know what you like. We know you like crazy sex stuff. We want to inflame your passions. We don't want Vashti back, so we've got an idea. Let's go all across the kingdom.

Let's find all the prettiest girls in the kingdom and bring them in. And you can examine them. You can spend one night with each of them. And then you'll find out which one ever pleases you. This isn't a beauty contest.

[12 : 42] This isn't Miss America. This is more like the guys riding around on their horses coming over to your house and seeing your pretty young daughter. And said, we're taking her with us. We're taking her with us. And we're taking her with us. And they took them back to the king because the king's going to do what he wants to do with your daughter.

And they bring them back. So they go to search the kingdom. You say, does it say that? Look at Esther 2, 3. The Bible says, And let the maiden which pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.

And the king goes, So you boys are going to bring me all the pretty girls in the kingdom. And I'm going to get sleep with each one for one night and see if I like them. And then after that, I'll make her queen.

He goes, Well, I can forget Vashti on that kind of terms. I'll forget Vashti. Now, let me remind you of some things as you read through this. As born-again believers, we never live for our pleasures.

You need to hear what I just said. As born-again believers, we don't live for our pleasures. You don't have a right to look at anybody else's wife. Can I get an amen? You don't have a wife to be contemplating other stuff like that.

[14 : 21] Because we please the king of kings, the Lord of lords. We please Jesus. And we're not on some kind of filthy sex-looking thing here like he is. We want to do what pleases Jesus.

We want to find out what's right and true. Don't allow Satan to manipulate you by pleasing your senses instead of your Savior. Don't you ever say, Well, I just need more than my wife can give me.

I just need more than my husband can give me. We die to ourselves and we live to Jesus. Can I get an amen right there? This is a picture. The picture that's in the book of Esther is not a pretty picture.

What's going on with Esther is really not a pretty picture. It's going to end up being pretty when they save the nation of Israel. But it's not a pretty picture. Satan is manipulating. The world is manipulating.

It's kind of like Ephesians chapter 2 when you run according to the course of the prince of this world. When you do what's wrong. But we don't do that anymore. That's who we were before Jesus. If you understand that, say amen.

[15 : 22] So quickly, decide not to use and abuse the spouse God gave you. Can I get an amen right there? Hey, you know God wants you to stay married about 100 years.

Well, actually, however long she lives. Or however long he lives. That's God's plan. Can I get an amen right there? You know what? My wife has been in captivity for 46 years.

I keep telling her, if I ever die, get a good looking one. If I ever die, get a nice one. But she's been married to me for 46 years. That's God's plan. Thank the Lord she died to what she wanted and accepted God's will.

Say amen. Now, God prepares to use a man to save his people. Esther chapter 2 verse 5. Now, I want you to know that Mordecai is not godly.

He's not spiritual. In the story, he chose to stay in the world rather than go back to the promised land. In other words, they were over here and he got used to living with the heathen.

[16 : 20] He got used to living with the auto worshipers. He got used to living with the people that weren't pure in their marriage. He got used to living with the drinking and the partying. And he got used to living in the world so he was more comfortable with lost people than he was over there with saved people.

And so when the people went back to Jerusalem under a guy like Nehemiah, he said, I'll just stay here. And he stayed. Some of us do that. Some of us do that.

We get more comfortable with lost people than we are saved people. Our only rendezvous to save people is on Sunday. And all week long, we live like the devil and we have accepted their temperature. That's where we are with Mordecai.

Look, if you would, in Esther chapter 2 verse 5. Now, in Shushan the palace, that's Persia, there was a certain Jew whose name was Mordecai. He was a son of, and verse 6, who was carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity.

He was carried away with the captivity, which had been carried away with the king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had carried away. I always find it interesting in the Bible when you hear something repeated.

[17 : 24] Carried away, carried away, carried away. Look at it in your verse. They were over here. They were supposed to be serving God. They were here where there's one God. There was a temple, and you were to honor God, and they were carried away, carried away, and carried away.

In one verse, carried away. How many of us have been carried away? How many of us has the Bible become not so important anymore? We've got to look for it on Sunday, dust it off, clean it up, and kind of look like that.

Or thank God, now we can use our phone, and nobody knows. We can't find our Bible. Didn't say that one. Not an amen, not a grunt. The consequences of sin had taken them to the Babylonian captivity.

But he chose to live like a Gentile in the world. In spite of all of this, God's going to use Mordecai to accomplish his purposes in saving his people, the nation of Israel.

You just got to understand, they don't know Esther is a Jew either. They don't know. How? If it was Daniel, they'd have known. They said, that Daniel, he looks out the window and prays toward Jerusalem every day.

[18 : 35] Not Mordecai. Hey, if it was Esther, if Esther was Daniel or Esther was the three Hebrew children, they'd have been thrown in the fiery furnace. But no, Esther and Mordecai are like, hey, we can blend in with the world.

We fit good. We can walk amongst them, talk like them, and act like them. Now, Mordecai had raised his cousin as his daughter. Esther is his cousin. Esther chapter 2 and verse 7, and he brought up Hadashah, her Hebrew name.

That's Esther. And that's his uncle's daughter. For she had neither father nor mother. And she was a good-looking girl. The young girl was fair and beautiful. And Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, he took her for his own daughter.

But you need to understand, God's not going to use Mordecai because of his goodness. He's going to use Mordecai because of his purposes. God never uses us because we're good. God never uses us because he's good.

But I'm pretty much a failure. I'm pretty much a mess up. If you can mess up and do wrong, I've probably done it. Now, these guys are keeping it secret that they're Jews. They're God's people living in the land of pagans.

[19 : 39] They're not practicing their faith. Or Esther would have been unable to hide her ethnicity. If they'd have known the uncle was Jewish, they'd have known the girl was Jewish. If they'd have known the girl was Jewish, they'd have known that since he's her uncle, she's Jewish.

But nobody knows. Nobody knows. She would have rather protected her sexual purity than have gone along with the world and its sexual deviancy.

Can you imagine Daniel? Somebody walked over and said, Daniel, you get to go spend a night with the queen. And if he likes you on that one night, you can be the king the next day. Daniel would have said, excuse me, I have purpose in my heart that I will not do things that are wrong.

But Esther said, okay, I'm in. If it had been the three Hebrew children that had said, our God's able to deliver us from this fiery furnace. But if he doesn't, we still ain't doing wrong.

Esther's like, I'm in. I'm in. See, there's no room for pride in God using us. He is God and he has purposes.

[20 : 44] We're nothing because of our own goodness. It's his grace and mercy. Now, before I leave this point, I just want you to know we ought never try to hide our faith. We ought never try to hide our faith. And I know you have, I know there's people in this room, you've got big positions.

You're somebody. You've got a business card and, buddy, it weighs something. You know, I mean, when you hand your business card, it means you're somebody. But you ought not try to live like the world so much nobody in the world knows you belong to Jesus.

Jesus. You ought not live like that. We belong to Jesus. We don't get along to go along or go along to get along, excuse me.

We want to be avid supporters of God and his word. Trying to get ahead in life is never reason to sacrifice your faith and your holiness. But that's what old Esther and Mordecai are doing.

Go with me, if you would, to Esther, chapter 2 and verse 8. Esther will be chosen to become the queen. All the women, including Esther, are brought to be prepared for the king. Esther, chapter 2, verse 8.

[21 : 50] And it came to pass when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, when many maidens were gathered under Shushan the palace to the custody of Haggai, that Esther was brought also under the king's house to the custody of the keeper of the women.

And he liked her. In Esther, chapter 2 and verse 9, the maiden pleased the keeper, and she obtained kindness of him, and he gave her everything she needed for purification.

He preferred her, and he gave her the best place in the house. He had no idea she's Jewish. In Esther, chapter 2, she had not showed her people nor her kindred.

For Mordecai had charged her that she not show it. Mordecai said, honey, don't let anybody know we're Jews. You know there's a prejudice against Jews. Don't let anybody know we're one of them.

We need them to think we're one of the Medes and the Persians here. We need them to think we're one of the Babylonians. We need them to think we're one of the lost people here. Every day, Mordecai walked back and forth in Esther, chapter 2, just to make sure Esther was all right.

[22 : 51] And all the women had to be purified before they could see the king. Esther, chapter 2 and verse 12. Look at it. Every maid's turn was to come into the king. After she'd been 12 months.

Now, I think my wife takes a long time getting ready to go to church. I'm just going to be blunt honest with you. I leave. I mean, I can get in the shower, take care of everything I've got to take care of, and be out the door in about 12 or 13 minutes.

My wife can't get to the bathroom that quick. I'm before she even gets in there. But these girls are taking six months of the oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odors. You think, she wears perfume.

This girl's been soaking in it for six months. She's pickled in sweet stuff. And she comes out all purified. I mean, her skin is perfect. Her smell is perfect.

And they were purifying themselves to see a human king. It was a drawn-out, long process. And yet, I serve the king of kings, and we don't want to work at being holy.

[23 : 52] We don't want to take time to be holy. You ever remember that song? We used to sing it when I was a kid, take time to be holy. Take time to walk with God. Take time to seek God and say, I want God's work in my life.

These ladies took time to please a pagan king. In Esther 2, verse 13, every maiden went into the king. And whatsoever she desired, when she was going to go in to see the king, they said, you can have anything you want.

We'll let you wear the dress you want. You can have the hairdo you want. You can have the jewels you want. You can wear the perfume you think you like. You can do anything you want because you get one chance to please the king.

You're going to have one night with the king. When you go spend that night with the king, if the next day he doesn't call your name and say, I want her back, we're going to throw you in the harem. Chapter 2, verse 14.

In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned to the second house of the women. The second house. To the custody of the other guy, Shegas, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines, second-class women.

[24 : 58] And she came in unto the king no more, unless he delighted in her and called her by name. The king had to be delighted. She spent a year. I'm sure she learned how to walk.

I'm sure she, this is like, this is like pretty woman before anybody ever thought of pretty woman. She's been taught all the tricks. She comes in, she's decked out, she's dressed up, and he has to ask her for my name.

You need to understand something. This was not a good deal for the girls. It's like winning the lottery. One person's going to get lucky, a whole lot of other people are going to be broken. And so what happens is this girl goes and she gets prepared.

She's had a year to get ready. She's been listening to the guys. She goes in and she spends one night with the king, and the king takes advantage of her. And the next morning she leaves, and then it gets taken over to the second house. And she won't get to go home.

She won't get to have babies. She won't get to have a husband. She's going to live lonely and childless, far from family because of these wicked practices, which is what sin does to you, which is what sin does to you.

[26 : 01] Sin looks like it's going to be fun, but you go in for that one night, and that one night you don't get what you thought you'd get, and you live with the consequences the rest of your life.

But Esther pleased the king. In Esther 2 and verse 15, she said, I'm not asking for anything special. You just tell me what I need. She required nothing but what the guy told her to.

And when she went in, she obtained favor of everybody. Everybody said, that Esther, she's got the sweet spirit. She's nice looking. She carries herself right. And the man knew what pleased the king, and she followed his lead.

She was chosen to be the queen. Esther 2, verse 17, he made her queen. The king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight.

And he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. Thank God I got more security than Esther or Vashti. You can be made the queen of a king like this pagan king, and if he gets mad at you, he throws you out.

[27 : 00] But because I've been saved by the grace of God, I've got the promise of God. I'm saved by the grace of God. I'm not going to get kicked out tomorrow. He loves me. He set his crown on her head. And then he threw a big party in Esther 2 and verse 18.

And they made a great feast. And even Esther's feast, and he let everybody get off work. And he let slaves go free. And whatever he did, he made a release in the provinces. And then Esther uses her influence to get Mordecai into position in chapter 2 and verse 19.

But no one knows she's Jewish. Esther 2, 20. Esther had not yet showed her kindred nor her people, because Mordecai told her not to.

She was consistently, she consistently respected and honored her cousin, her stepdad.

I just want you to understand, God has a purpose in your life. Now, Esther doesn't know it. Esther has no idea that God, in just a little bit, is going to do something great with Esther.

[27 : 59] Esther, she has no idea that God's going to do something great with Mordecai. They have no idea. They're just living their life. And they are making massive mistakes. They are doing wrong.

God's not using them because they're right with him. He's not using them because they're holy. The truth of the matter is, they're not holy. The truth of the matter is, they're running around with the wrong people. The truth of the matter is, they're not honoring God.

Did you know that if you read the story of Esther, you've got to see that God is moving and all these things are happening in people's lives. And if you read the book of Esther and you believe it's the word of God, which I believe, then you need to know God's at work.

And you're not an accident. You're not a coincidence. You're not just doing your thing and God doesn't know what's going on. Here's pagan Mordecai. Here's pagan Esther.

Here's people doing the wrong thing, and yet God was at work. You ought to wake up and realize he is at work. You ought to seek to know him and to know his will. You ought to be yielding to him to be used of him.

[28 : 57] You ought to watch carefully and gratefully for the hand of God in your life. All my life, I've looked at all the little things that happened. I've seen how God saved me when I could have died in that car wrecker. I've seen how God washed over me, how God gave me the wife he gave me, how God even brought me to this church.

God's doing all that stuff. God's doing all that stuff. Not because I'm such a good driver. Not because I happen to know somebody that's smart. Not because I'm lucky. God's at work in my life. God's at work in your life.

God's putting it all together to save his people. Esther's now been chosen queen. She's going to be able to influence the king. We'll find out about that later. Mordecai has now been placed in leadership.

He's in the gate of the city. He's down at city hall now. He's somebody. And then coincidentally, coincidentally, no coincidentally, no coincidentally, but coincidentally, two of the king's guards are talking and Mordecai hears him and they're talking and they're going to kill the king.

And Mordecai's like, now you can't get away with that. Look if you would. Esther chapter 2 verse 21. 21. 21. Mordecai sat in the king's gate and two of the king's chamberlains. Big tan. Big than. Boy, I like that guy's name. Big boy.

[30 : 05] And Teresh, of those which kept the door, they were angry and they sought to lay hand on the king. They plot to kill the king. Mordecai learns it. And so when it became known to Mordecai, Mordecai goes and tells Esther and Esther goes and tells the king's people.

They write it down and she certifies it in the name of Mordecai. So she goes into the guys that keep the records and she says, by the way, my stepdad, my uncle Mordecai, he heard it.

They're going to try to kill the king. The guys, the secret service of the king. They said, all right, we'll take care of that. They go and get those two guys. They're going to hang them up on some trees. Nobody knows what's happening here. Nobody knows that God's allowing all this to happen.

So Mordecai is going to climb in rank in the king's mind. Nobody knows that. So they go and they hang them on the tree in Esther chapter 2 and verse 23. And the stage is now set for God's people to be rescued.

And they don't even know they're in danger yet. They don't even know they're in danger yet. The fact is, they're not in danger. But God knew before they were even thought to be in danger. That's the God you serve.

[31 : 08] Can I get an amen right there? Did you know he's watching over me? Did you know he's taking care of me? Did you know that he's hearing and answering my prayers? And when I'm too dumb to pray, he's still at work in my life.

What a God. What a God. What a God. Remember, God's not even mentioned in his book. But what seems like a coincidence is much more than that.

God is at work behind the scene. And no one knows. No one knows. God's going to orchestrate whatever it takes to save his people. Can I tell you something?

God knows about your life. Romans chapter 8 and verse 28. For all things work together for them that love God and are called according to his purpose. He's at work in your life.

Did you know the moment you got saved, God said, you are predestined to look like Jesus. I am going to make you look like Jesus. Romans 8, 29. And you say, well, I'm not really seeking him that much.

[32 : 07] If you're saved, you don't really have a choice here. If you're saved, you don't belong to yourself. Can I get an amen right there? And if you're saved, here's what God said. I know what you are today.

And I know about your adulteries. And I know about your drunkenness. And I know about your arrogance. And I know about your pride. And I know about your bitterness. And I know about all your failures. But I'm at work in your life. And when I get through at the end of your life, you're going to look like Jesus.

You are predestined to be conformed to the image of his son. And I don't know what God's doing. I don't even see it. So all of a sudden, something happens. I used to tell the young people in Peru, it's like that ant that's on the table.

You've never seen that because you're all so rich. You've never seen an ant on your table. But in Peru, they're often on the table. And sometimes they'd be looking around for a piece of bread. And there's a piece of bread right there. I mean, it's right there. And this big old ant, we're looking around.

He's walking around that table. And I just looked down at that table. And I said, the bread's over that way, you dang bad. He doesn't go that way. So I put my hand there. And he goes over. He goes, hmm, obstacle in the way. And he turns and walks in another direction. And I just keep moving my hands.

[33 : 07] And he goes, look at this. I stumbled onto this bread. I'm like, you didn't stumble, you dang bad. I guided you to it. I predestined you to get there. And here's what God's doing in your life.

This isn't predestined to salvation. This is predestined to it. If you belong to Jesus, you're going to end up looking like Jesus. Huh? When you got saved and you got put in the family, God went to work in your life.

He's already been at work in your life. But God is going to make you look like Jesus. You say, well, I don't know. God's not that mentioned in my book. Welcome to Esther. You say, I don't really spend that much time with God.

Well, maybe he's going to need to drive you to your knees. And something's going to happen. And you're going to be like, why did that happen to me? And then later on, you'll tell me your story. And you'll say, I had this crisis in my life.

And I didn't know where to turn. And I called on God and got my life right. And I'm going to be like, found the bread, didn't you? Some of you are playing games with danger, buddy.

[34 : 02] See, it's not about me. He saved you. He's at work in your life. We are not our own. We are bought with a price. And so God's at work making me what he wants me to be.

When it all is said and done and we all get to him, we're going to look like Jesus. We shall see him as he is. Because 1 John 3, verse 3 says something like this. If you have that hope, you purify yourself.

I know I'll be like him. Could you put up 1 John 3, 3 real quick and let's see if that's what it says. Every man that had this hope in him purifies himself. Because I like, could you show them verse 2? In verse 2, see, I'm headed towards Jesus.

And I want to be like him. Beloved, now we are the sons of God. It does not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him. For we shall see him as he is.

Austin, you can play games, son. But you belong to me. And so, and then one day you wake up and you start seeing, I don't know how I started living this new life.

[35 : 10] I don't know what got me humbled enough. You were predestined. You are not your own. And Esther and Mordecai are going to be used to save the nation of Israel.

They're going to, and honestly, can you not imagine? Mordecai's like, honey, I know they picked you up, but let me tell you, just listen to that big shot. He knows what he's doing. He can probably get you in there.

Let's just hope it all works out and you get to sleep with the king and he likes you. And Mordecai's not like, let me go pray a while. Let me go fast a while. Let me go look at, like Daniel, let the nation look at Israel and pray towards Jerusalem.

No, no, no. Let's just work our plan. Let's work our plan. They're scheming and they're conniving and they're working and they're control freaks and they think they're in charge. But all along, behind the scenes, God's at work.

God's at work. God's at work. And I just want you to know he's at work. He will accomplish his purpose. You're a born again believer. He will accomplish his purpose.

[36 : 12] Now, to be honest with you, I'm pretty sure some of you aren't his. You're not really born again. Because being born again is not being a member of a church. It's not just saying, hey, I want to join up with you guys.

I'm not joining up. It's coming to a place in your life when you realize you're a sinner and you deserve to go to hell. It's coming to a place when you realize you failed Almighty God and you cry out to him and say, I need you.

And you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ. So if you're not saved, you're headed to a horrible place. He is at work. He brought you here today.

He is at work in your life. He's calling you to be saved. You ought not play with this. If you're a Christian, why would you kick against the pricks? That's a Saul reference.

Why would you fight against God working in your life? When God has big plans for you, let God be magnified. Let God be glorified in your life.

[37 : 10] I want to add■■■■ descriptors. I want to allow you to be saved. Let God be glad your life. When you're a Christian, why would you watch a good look? What is a Kathationé who County Community College Committee Committeerament? The Coast Police Committee Committee Committee Committee. The Ohio ■■■■gy Society Committee Committee Committee Committee gleich Oh, the chain is still taking place.

In the., when you always take 12. The truth is as it is, you can leave a dollar because you have a tooth. In the evening, it's a coach that's worth at work with your sister- Kate winning and I have any idea what you do to do.