



BELLVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Congregation of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

PO BOX 552 • BELLVILLE • 7535
 LINGEN STREET • BELLVILLE • 7530
 TEL: 021 948-2417 / 021 948-2529
 FAX: 021 948-2419
 e-mail: bellville@presbyterian.org.za

Esther

~ Brent Russell ~

- I want to tell you the story of Esther
- A young Jewish girl who becomes the queen to a King called Xerxes who is King of Persia
- But I need some help from you to tell the story
- Whenever I say the word:
- Party - "Woohoo!"
- Mordecai - "Yaaaay!"
- Haman - "Boooo"

- King Xerxes has a party for politicians
- Wanted to show off his wife Vashti she refused so he had her disposed of
- He needed a new queen so he organized a kind of beauty pageant
- Hannasah niece of Jew Mordecai who lived in town called Susa
- She is chosen as one of the beautiful virgins and sent for 'beauty' treatments
- She went to 'see' the king - he is so impressed that he gives her Vashti's crown
- Mordecai uncovers a conspiracy - Esther tells king and Mordecai is honoured
- Some time later Haman is given great status and all except Mordecai bow to him
- Haman hates Mordecai and so lies about Jews to get them all killed
- Mordecai tries to convince Esther that she must help her people or she will be killed
- Esther requests to see the king - often would be met with death - she schmoozes him with banquets
- Haman getting more and more angry with Mordecai
- Has a gallows built to hang Mordecai
- King reads about Mordecai finding out about the conspiracy asks Haman what should be done
- Thinking the king wants to honour him Haman tells the king about honouring this person
- And so Haman is ridiculed
- Finally Esther exposes Haman's lies about the Jews and he is hanged by the king
- The king issues a decree that the Jews may defend themselves as they see fit-He could not revoke the previous decree
- And so Jews win victory - Mordecai is honoured

Read Esther chapter 4

Even when you ignore God he is still in control

- The book of Esther has always been something of an **enigma**
- It has been in the **Jewish scriptures** for tens of hundreds of years
- And the fascinating thing about this book of the Bible is that it is the only book where **God is not mentioned once**
- Not once...

- Try as you might there is **not one reference** to God
- There is no mention of anyone in the story **praying or seeking** God's counsel
- There is no time when anything of **God's revelation** is spoken of

- **Not once does any character in the story make any allusion or mention of God**

- **He is simply absent from the storyline**

- Even though the Jewish girl Esther and her uncle Mordecai are **part of the people of God in Persia**
- **There seems to be no acknowledgement of God in any way**

- **But yet God is still in control**

- As you work through the **happenings** in the story there are too many things that happen in quite specific ways for them to be chance or coincidence
- Everything about the **timing** of happenings
- People being in the **right place** at the **right time**

- **It is clear that God is in Control**

- **As religious, pious and devout as we want to be there too will be times in our lives where we will and have already ignored God**
- There will be those times when because of life we simply **forget to pray**
- There will be times when we **forget the importance of the scriptures**
- Times when though we **claim we belong to God** nothing will let others know that this may be true

- **Christians operating in stealth mode if you will**

- **Yet God is in control**

- There are and will still be times when we have **not responded to his presence** in our lives
- There are and will still be times when we have **not sought his guidance or his support**
- There are times when the **busyness of life has so overwhelmed us that we forget that God is God**

- **But yet God is in control**

- And so as we **look back** on our lives, sometimes only years later, we see that his hand was upon us
- **We see him working within us and also with us**
- **We see that He guided and continues to guide us forward and onward**

- We look back to the times when **we have ignored him - he has not ignored us**
- We see times when **we have not acknowledged blessings from Him - Yet he has continued to bless us**
- **We have forgotten Him entirely - But he never forgets us because we are his people**
- He purchased us with a marvellous price the words of a song go – we belong to Him
- **Hebrews 13:5 carries this promise of God: "I will never leave you or forsake you"**

- **2 Timothy 2:11-13 reads thus;**

If we died with him,
 we will also live with him;
¹² if we endure,
 we will also reign with him.
 If we disown him,
 he will also disown us;
¹³ if we are faithless,
 he will remain faithful,
 for he cannot disown himself.

- Even though the Jews in the story of Esther have forgotten about God he is with them and is still in absolute control of them and their lives
- **And he will use them for his purposes**

There are no coincidences - Esther is placed there for that purpose (4:14)

- **So it is evident from Esther's life and even our own that God is in control whether we acknowledge him or not**
- And if we take this statement to its **logical conclusion** then we have to say that in life there are no coincidences
- **Someone once said that there are only God-incidences**

- If God is in control – Then there are **no such things as flukes**
- If God is in control – Then there is **no such thing as a stroke of luck**
- If God is in control - there are **no accidents or chances for those who love the Lord**

- If you are part of the people of God you belong to Him
- **The Bible is also clear that 'all things work for the good of those who love the Lord' – Romans 8:28**
- And we do love the Lord and so we believe that things will work out for the good of us - His People

- **There is no coincidence that Esther is where she is at this time in history**
- For Esther her time as queen was to **save her people** in Persia from destruction by Haman and Xerxes
- **The purposes of God required that she be who she was, where she was, when she was**
- **She was there to serve the purposes of God**

- **In chapter 4:14 of the Book of Esther Mordecai says to Esther "Who knows, but you have been put in such a royal position for a time like this"**
- Esther God has put you right here right now because he wants you to save your people

- **There are chances or flukes but simply put all things work as God says they must work**

- **And so Esther is where she is because God wants to bless her and use her to bless her people**
- This young woman who belongs to the 'People of God' has been put in this position not by coincidence but because she is being used for the good of those who love the Lord
- **If God is in control and we believe then that there are no coincidences in life**
- Then in your heart today I want you to be able to begin to try to answer this eternal question:

- It is a question that must change the way you at every aspect of your life
- It is a question that must change who you are as a person

"Why are you who you are, living where you are in September of 2004?"

- There is a **great story about a businessman** who used to interview people
- And he'd get them relaxed and then suddenly throw them the question
- "What is your purpose in life?"
- Most would not have a clear answer
- Powerful men and women would stumble and stutter their answers to him
- The man recalls though a Christian businessman saying this: "To get to heaven and to take as many people with me as I can!"

- **Friends we believe that God is in control**
- **And we too believe that he has purposes for things to happen**

- Then we must ask ourselves these questions:
- **For what purpose has God put me in the job/school/university/church that I'm in?**
- **For what purpose am I living where I am living?**
- **For what purpose do I have the gifts I have?**
- **For what purpose am I living in this country?**

- **For what purposes of God am I here right now?**

- **Mordecai tells Esther you are living as queen for a time just like this**

- **And each and every one of you are living your lives for a time just like this**

Conclusion

- **God has great plans for your lives**
- **There are no coincidences about who you are as a person**
- **There are no coincidences that you have the personality that you do**
- **There are no coincidences that you look and speak the way you do**
- God saved you in Jesus for a specific purpose in this world
- Your goal is to find out what it is that he wants you to do
- **Read - Psalm 139**

- **And there have never been more exciting times to live in than now**
- **The world is changing so fast**
- Technology has allowed us to communicate better and faster than ever before and we can be part of the catalyst that changes the world for Christ

- But we must do something – it requires of us to be the living stones that make up God's temple

- Not dead stones stuck in immobility or apathy

- **In vs. 14 Mordecai warns Esther that if she remains silent God will use other people to bring about his plans and that she too will not escape destruction**
- **Luke 19:40 if we keep quiet even the stones will cry out**

- **We must move in these exciting times so that the world may know Jesus**
- **We cannot and must not remain static, or immobile**

- The world is **seeking spirituality** in all sorts of places and in all sorts of ways
- And you have the answer to all their questions: His name is Jesus
- So many **people are hurting** around us – broken marriages, crime, disease – and we have the healer: His name is Jesus
- There are those who are **needy**- emotionally, spiritually and physically – and we have everything they need for wholeness: His name is Jesus
- There are **people who see no hope** in this life or in the next one – and we have the perfect hope: His name is Jesus
- **Friends the world needs Jesus in all sorts of ways and God wants to use you to pass on the wonderful knowledge of the good news of Jesus Christ**
- **So Christians next time someone crosses your path ask yourself what is it that Jesus wants me to do here?**
 - How can I tell this person about Jesus
 - How can show person Jesus
 - How can I be like Jesus to this person so that they might know Him
- For what purpose has God sent me to interact with this person
- **Esther's story starts off quite hopelessly;**
- **Let me be blunt here: a prostitute wife to a foreign, godless king...**
- Isolated from her people as ladies of the harem where until she died
- **But God uses her to save her people from destruction**
- I imagine most of us are in far better starting places than this young Jewish girl in a foreign land
- **God will use us to save the world**
- **What is it that God wants you to do?**
- **What am I doing here? What is my purpose?**
- **'You have been put in such a position for a time like this'**
- **May God use you to save his people!**