

July 1, 2018 (Hidden) “God is in the place you find yourself”, Esther 1 & 2

Are life's happenings by chance or only a cause and effect of obedience or sin? Our new series, Hidden, is a study of the books of Esther and Proverbs showing us how God is in the everyday moments of life regardless where that is! From this piece of Esther's story, we can affirm, God loves us and cares for us... always.

It seems God is hidden in the story of Esther, but upon a closer look, we see God is not absent, but putting the pieces in place for the rescue and deliverance of his people. During King Xerxes council of war feast, he summons his wife, Vashti, to parade at his command, she refused, and thus is removed as queen. To save face for the King, his “wise” council proposes a solution that allows Esther, a Jew (although unknown at this time), to be selected from a harem of beautiful women as the new Queen. Meanwhile, Mordecai, who was Esther's older cousin and guardian, employed at the Palace's Gate, overhears an assassination attempt against King Xerxes' life. Naturally, Mordecai tells Esther, who tells her husband, the king, so the plot is thwarted, and well, Mordecai goes down into the king's history books as a good guy.

Even though there is no mention of God's name in the context of Esther, He is not hidden, but in the details throughout. Here's what her story says about our story today.

I. God cares for his people.

Esther and Mordecai were Jews who lived in the Gentile-powered territory of Persia. In this wicked place, they likely wondered: “does God still care for us?” It's to this case and point, Esther's story demonstrates that no matter where God's people are, no matter what is going on in their lives, He cares about them. Jews continue to celebrate her story at the annual feast of Purim to remember God's rescue and deliverance of his people. Esther was read in concentration camps to remember God was there in all circumstances. As for Esther and for us, we can trust we are known to Him.

II. God cares even when we don't care for him.

Esther and Mordecai don't seem to be individuals who acknowledge a need for God. Unlike Daniel in a similar situation, there's no testament of faith, no prayer. They shouldn't even be in Persia, but back in Israel rebuilding their homeland as Israel's exile ended during the former King Cyrus' reign. And, yet, here they are. Their disobedience, again, speaks to God's message of unconditional love. We can never do anything to cause God to love us more, nor anything for him to love us less. God occupies the space where we find ourselves -- aware of him or not.

III. God works through the strangest of circumstances.

The book of Esther is a story about God's rescue of his people. A rescue that required a lot of circumstances -- both good and bad -- to bring about this story of deliverance. Just as he carefully scripted Esther's story, He is scripting yours. That means, regardless of the circumstances in which you find yourself, self-imposed or otherwise, God is involved.

Discussion Questions:

1. How has God moved in unseen or unusual ways in your life? How might he be moving now?

2. As our stories intertwine with others' stories, we all become part of God's bigger story. Who might you be encouraging as Hegai, the Eunuch, encouraged and supported Esther?
3. As Christians, we are to speak God's words to encourage each other. What words of life do you go to when circumstances cause doubt in his sovereign grace?