

Esther: God is at Work in His Absence

(this transcript has been lightly edited for readability)

If you read the book of Esther, you may wonder why in the world is this in the Bible? It is the one book of the Bible that does not mention God at all. Yeah, you heard me right--God's not in the book of Esther, and you would wonder then how does this fit in this redemptive story? I thought this story was the biography of God, God's story, the redemptive story, ultimately the story of Jesus. We've seen God's presence in all these books; we've seen the way that He works; we've seen His love for His people; we've seen Him; we've seen Him; we've seen Him. And now we don't see Him. Why? What in the world is going on?

I think the absence of God in Esther is why Esther is in the Bible. It's about those moments in the history of God's story and in the history of our story where God does not seem anywhere to be found, where God seems absent. And maybe the drama of Esther is how will the people of God live when God doesn't seem near? How do you live in those moments when God doesn't seem near?

Listen, don't judge the quality of your faith by your excitement on Sunday morning when you're surrounded by people with hands raised, and you're remembering the truths of the gospel. Judge the nature of your living faith in those moments where none of that exists, where you're alone, and it seems like the heavens are brass, it seems like the promises of God don't include you. It seems like God has walked away, when it looks like bad people are prospering.

You see in Esther arrogant kings, no heart for God, who have power. And you would think maybe that Esther then is a different biography; it's a biography of a woman who gains power and changes the story. But it's not that. It's that in those moments where God seems most absent, God is actually actively working. He will never stop working until His work is complete.

And as I have said before, this is a theme throughout all the Old Testament. God raises up unlikely instruments; He raises up this woman whom He uses to continue to protect and propel His plan for His people and His plan for the ages, His plan of redemption.

This God who seems absent is actually working to protect and preserve His story. You shouldn't conclude, because you can't see the hand of God, that God isn't at work anymore then you should conclude that the sun isn't shining because you're in your basement and you can't see it. These are these moments where you have to do what Hebrews 11 says, "You must believe that God exists and He rewards those who seek Him." I'm not going to give way to belief in the functional death of my Redeemer even in moments where I do not see His hand.

The power of the message of Esther is that God is not absent even in the moments where He seems He's absent. I'm thankful for Esther. I'm thankful this book is in the Bible; it confronts the deepest of our questions and gives us hope.

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