

# Gods healing people

The book of Esther is a beautiful short gem of a book found in the Old Testament.

Its a story that many are familiar with thru the movie...  
*'One night with a king'*

## Part 1

### The party doesn't end well

The most striking characteristic of this book is that the word 'God' is never used. God is not mentioned. There may be many reasons but if I may offer my thoughts

God is clearly at work in this book

- He is orchestrating history
  - He is ruling the nations
  - And He is working thru individuals...at times the most unlikely
- This is a story about what God does thru individual people to change their world

It's as if God is saying thru this book...

*'When you let Me reign in your private world...When you let Me work thru you...I can change the world thru you'*

### Dwight Moody

I love biographies...particularly short ones

In 1872 a man called Henry Varley said these word to a simple, uneducated shoe salesman...Dwight Moody.

*The world has yet to see what God can do with one man fully consecrated to Himself.*

*Moody... "those were the words sent to my soul, through you, from the Living God. As I crossed the wide Atlantic, the boards of the deck of the vessel were engraved with them, and when I reached Chicago, the very paving stones seemed marked with 'The world has yet to see what God will do with a man fully consecrated to Him.' Under the power of those words I have come back to England, and I felt that I must not let more time pass until I let you know how God had used your words to my inmost soul."*

### Where does this book fit in?

#### 1. Historically

Persia became the world super power after Babylon in 539

In the 100 years of history recorded in the bible there were five kings

- Cyrus was the first king of Persia and it was he who decreed that the Jews could return to Israel and rebuild the temple
- Cambyses followed him
- Darius was the third king who helped with the completion of the temple
- The next king was Xerxes
- Artaxerxes was the fifth king who reigned over the time of Ezra's return and the rebuilding of the wall by Nehemiah

### **Xerxes**

486-465

He was a bit of a dismal king who led an unsuccessful campaign against the Greeks

- It was during the reign of Xerxes that the story of Esther played out

## **2. Politically**

Persia was a massive kingdom stretching from North Africa to India to parts of Europe...Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine

It was a cruel regime of corruption and brutality. Although it seemed on the surface to be tolerant of Judaism the reality was it is very oppressive

- Before Esther...Zerubbabel rebuilt the temple under huge oppression and threat
- After Esther...Nehemiah rebuilt the wall under oppression and threat  
Xerxes carried enormous power...to do good and do evil...to pass good laws and to pass stupid ones

## **3. Biblically**

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah cover almost a hundred years of history from the time the Jews were allowed to return to Israel after the Babylonian exile in 539 BC

Esther fits in between chapter 6 and 7 of the book of Ezra

- Ezra Chapter 6 ends in 495 BC
  - Ezra Chapter 7 begins after 465
- And somewhere in this 30 years the book of Esther takes place

## **4. Geographically**

The story took place from Suza

Suza was a city in SW Iran near the border of Iraq, Kuwait and the Persian gulf

## Chapter 1

This chapter makes for very interesting reading

King Xerxes appears to be this generous benefactor...friend of the world

- He throws a huge party...an extravagant party that goes on for days...everyone is invited
- It's a party just for men. The women have their own tea party with the queen

*Est 1:5 ...the king gave a banquet, lasting seven days, in the enclosed garden of the king's palace, for all the people from the least to the greatest who were in the citadel of Susa.*

*Est 1:6 The garden had hangings of white and blue linen, fastened with cords of white linen and purple material to silver rings on marble pillars. There were couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and other costly stones.*

*Est 1:9 Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace...*

The world is a sad place...its party doesn't have a happy ending

It runs a fantastic marketing campaign. It talks about all the fun but never mentions the cost

### **Abortion**

Some years ago there was an abortion clinic franchise that used the slogan 'Safe abortions'

I have seen adverts for free abortions

Abortion is never safe and its never free

I would like to look at three scriptures that show the party of the world for what it is

### **1.**

*Est 1:7 Wine was served in goblets of gold, each one different from the other, and the royal wine was abundant, in keeping with the king's liberality.*

*Est 1:8 By the king's command each guest was allowed to drink with no restrictions, for the king instructed all the wine stewards to serve each man what he wished.*

No restrictions...each man served what he wishes

- Whatever you want...you can have it

- If it feels good...do it

Well...not entirely!

On the surface the world seems so tolerant...you can do whatever you want

- As long as you attend its party...as long as you get drunk on its wine.
- Stay sober and have your own opinion...disagree with its definition of fun

## 2.

*Est 1:10* On the seventh day, when King Xerxes was in high spirits from wine, he commanded the seven eunuchs who served him...

*Est 1:11* to bring before him Queen Vashti, wearing her royal crown, in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was lovely to look at.

*Est 1:12* But when the attendants delivered the king's command, Queen Vashti refused to come. Then the king became furious and burned with anger.

The irony of this chapter...which is the conundrum of the world

As soon as you say one person is free to do whatever they want, it comes at the cost of another's freedom

The freedom for these drunken men to lust, to fornicate, to satisfy their lecherous sexual desire...came at her expense

For them to have their freedom cost her hers.

## 3.

*Est 1:22* He sent dispatches to all parts of the kingdom, to each province in its own script and to each people in their own language, proclaiming that every man should be ruler over his own household, using his native tongue.

The men were horrified at the behaviour of the queen

If word got out that the queen disobeyed her husband...remember it was a boys party

So they kept the matter under wraps

- The sent out a note to the entire world that the queen disobeyed her husband and so would be banned and banished for the rest of her life...and let this be a lesson for all women...respect, submit, obey...
- Gentlemen...you are the king of your castle...Its all about you

## Conclusion

This first chapter of Esther starts off by painting a picture of a happy world



But in the end you see it for what it is

- Confused, controlling and corrupt
- It is wretched
- And its not going to end well

2500 years later... And nothing has changed

But God

The words spoken to Dwight Moody

*The world has yet to see what God can do with one man fully consecrated to Himself.*

*His revelation came when he realized it could be any man. He didn't have to be educated, or brilliant, or anything else. Just a man! Well, by the Holy Spirit in him, he decided he'd be one this men*

## Part 2

# A flower in the desert

We have looked at the unhappy state of the world  
Confused, controlling, corrupt

The bible uses the picture of a physical desert to describe a spiritual desert...a state empty of God; a moral barren wasteland. A place that may be super religious but have no reality of the goodness and glory of God

The voice crying in the desert in Isaiah 40 is not so much about the physical geography but the spiritual reality

- A physical desert is empty, barren and lifeless
- A spiritual desert is the same...empty of God, barren of goodness, no life of God

You may live in the most inhabited, lush and idyllic, and prosperous city in the world yet be in a spiritual desert

### **Yet God...**

Gods grace is attracted to deserts...His life and love flow to the dry places

This is seen so simply and beautifully in Jesus

**Mar 2:16** *When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw Him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked His disciples: "Why does He eat with tax collectors and sinners?"*

**Mar 2:17** *On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*

**Isa 55:13** *Instead of the thorn bush will grow the juniper, and instead of briers the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, that will endure forever."*

At the time of Esther, the people of Israel were in a spiritual desert, oppressed, hopeless and lifeless

**Est 2:7** *Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother. This young woman, who was also known as Esther, had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died.*

## 1. We see this picture so fully completed in Christ

*Isa 53:1* Who has believed our message and to whom has The Arm of the LORD been revealed?

*Isa 53:2* He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him.

*Isa 53:3* He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces He was despised, and we held Him in low esteem.

*Isa 53:4* Surely He took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered Him punished by God, stricken by Him, and afflicted.

*Isa 53:5* But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed.

To the world Jesus was a nobody

He was the tender shoot in a hostile desert...yet He was the Saviour of the world

- He held the life, light, hope, salvation, deliverance...of the world
- His word carried power to save, heal, forgive, encourage, deliver...

*Joh 1:10* He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him.

*Joh 1:11* He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him.

## 2. Every saint is 'Jesus in the world'

*Mat 28:19* Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

*Mat 28:20* and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

*Act 1:8* But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

**We are not the 'saviours of the world'...but the 'Saviour of the world' lives within us**

We are His light, His instruments, His messengers, the conduits of His healing and salvation

And just like Esther was a 'nobody'...and Jesus was a 'nobody'...we too are nobodies

Yet we carry the life, and love and glory of God

## 2 Corinthians

This book makes some seemingly absurd claims about believers

**2Co 2:14** *But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere.*

**2Co 3:5** *Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.*

**2Co 3:6** *He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

**2Co 4:5** *For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.*

**2Co 4:6** *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.*

**2Co 4:7** *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.*

**2Co 5:18** *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:*

**2Co 5:19** *that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*

**2Co 5:20** *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

## 3. The bride prepared...beauty is painful

**Est 2:12** *Before a young woman's turn came to go in to King Xerxes, she had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments prescribed for the women, six months with oil of myrrh and six with perfumes and cosmetics.*

The word used for beauty treatments is scouring

This word for purification is used only one other time in scripture

**Pro 20:30** *Blows and wounds scrub away evil, and beatings purge the inmost being.*

The bride had been called and chosen but there was a preparation required for her to 'change the world'

- She had to look and smell different
- It wasn't much fun. It sounds like she spent twelve months at the spa being pampered and massaged...but it was more like twelve months at the dry cleaners being scrubbed and ironed
- The years of damaged skin from the harsh desert climate had to be healed. It wasn't a one off application but a daily massaging of the oil

Being chosen for queen was quick and easy...becoming queen was a different story

As the bride of Christ on earth...as the people of God in the world...as myrtles in the desert...

The deep work of the Holy Spirit is too conform us into the image of Jesus...to be the reflection of Him in the world

**Rom 8:28** *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.*

**Rom 8:29** *For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*

**2Co 3:18** *And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

This is nothing new

**Gen 1:27** *So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.*

**Gen 1:28** *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.*

From the beginning of creation God intended us to reflect Him...to bear God fruit in the world

Mankind lost that brilliance...in Christ we find it again

Now in Christ we are that reflection again...go and be it

#### **4. What does it look like to 'look like Him'?**

- What does being an Esther in a sad world look like?
- What does being in the image of Jesus look like?



## Part 3

# A little faithful man in a big unfaithful world

Last week we looked at Esther...today Mordecai

Who is Mordecai?

**Est 2:5** *Now there was in the citadel of Susa a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish,*

**Est 2:6** *who had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, among those taken captive with Jehoiachin king of Judah.*

**Est 2:7** *Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother. This young woman, who was also known as Esther, had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died.*

### **A faithful man**

Faithfulness is such an underrated virtue in the 21st century. We see this in every scene of life from unfaithfulness of parents to the unborn child in the womb...to husbands and wives in marriage...to the way governments run countries

- Ex 34:6...compassionate, gracious, patient, loving and faithful
- It's a name of God  
**Rev 19:11** *I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True.*
- It's a fruit of the Spirit

There is a delightful story in the book of Jeremiah

**Jer 35:5** *Then I set bowls full of wine and some cups before the Rekabites and said to them, "Drink some wine."*

**Jer 35:6** *But they replied, "We do not drink wine, because our forefather Jehonadab son of Rekab gave us this command: 'Neither you nor your descendants must ever drink wine'*

**Jer 35:10** *We have lived in tents and have fully obeyed everything our forefather Jehonadab commanded us*

Jehonadab lived 350 years before...that's like 1670 for us...fourteen generations ago...we struggle to obey our parents...

### **1. Faithful with little**

Scripture is full of stories of those who were faithful in the little

- Barnabas

- The boy with his lunch box

Mordecai understood 'faithful in the little'

- He was faithful with one orphan/cousin before he was entrusted with a whole nation/family
- He was faithful in the kings gate before he was entrusted with the kings palace...faithful in obscurity, in private, before he was entrusted in public

### **Luke 16:10**

- Faithful with little...
- Faithful with another's...
- Faithful with money...

His faithfulness in this 'small' opened the door for something much bigger

### **Faithfulness is recorded**

Nothing happened at the time...there was no reward in the moment

**Est 2:23** *All this was recorded in the book of the annals in the presence of the king. God kept the king awake one night...*

What opportunities are coming your way...what keys have you been given now that will unlock a door in the future?

## **2. Faithful to His people...with his family**

**Est 2:11** *Every day he walked back and forth near the courtyard of the harem to find out how Esther was and what was happening to her.*

He had adopted his cousin

He could not control where she was but he could know her condition

**Est 4:1** *When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly.*

He didn't retreat to his own interests

He stood up for the rights of others instead of hiding in the shadows.

Life groups



### 3. Faithful to the king

**Est 2:21** *During the time Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Xerxes.*

**Est 2:22** *But Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai.*

- He had been enslaved as a child
  - He had been in exile his whole life
  - He was alone
  - The king was not a righteous person
- He had issues  
Yet...
- He was part of the solution not the problem  
The fact our world has become lawless does not give us the right to be lawless... *'Everyone is doing it...'*
  - Mordecai was prepared to go unrewarded and unnoticed

### 4. Faithful to God

**Est 3:2** *All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honour to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honour.*

This world is full of Haman's right now  
The world is no longer content with Christians not condemning its practices...it wants Christians to condone them

Courage and discernment to know when to stand and when to kneel

#### ***Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and the golden image***

**Dan 3:12** *...Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up."*

#### ***Daniel and Darius***

**Dan 6:10** *Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.*

- What does not bowing down look like right now?
- How do you know when to bow and when to stand?

**If by Rudyard Kipling**

*If you can keep your head when all about you  
 Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
 If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
 And treat those two impostors just the same;  
 If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
 To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
 And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
 Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'*

*If you can keep your head when all about you  
 Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
 If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
 But make allowance for their doubting too;  
 If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
 Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
 Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
 And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:*

*If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;  
 If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;  
 If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
 And treat those two impostors just the same;  
 If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
 Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
 Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
 And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:*

*If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
 And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
 And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
 And never breathe a word about your loss;  
 If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
 To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
 And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
 Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'*

*If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
 Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,  
 If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
 If all men count with you, but none too much;  
 If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
 With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
 Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
 And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!*

**1Pe 1:17** *Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.*

Living faithful to God will cause you to live with the unpopular crowd at times

His faithfulness was a little key that opened big doors

***The key looks nothing like the content***

The key to my workshop

My workshop is filled with tools and bikes

Most times the little thing we have to be faithful in looks nothing like the big thing we will be entrusted with

## Part 4

# Now is the time



### **Anne Frank**

12 June 1929 Frankfurt, Germany

February or March 1945 (aged 15) Bergen-Belsen concentration camp

You may disagree with her application but listen to her hearts desire...

*I can't imagine living like Mother and all the women who go about their work and are then forgotten. I need to have something besides a husband and children to devote myself to! ...*

*I want to be useful or bring enjoyment to all people, even those I've never met. I want to go on living even after my death! And that's why I'm so grateful to God for having given me this gift, which I can use to develop myself and to express all that's inside me!*

*When I write I can shake off all my cares. My sorrow disappears, my spirits are revived! But, and that's a big question, will I ever be able to write something great, will I ever become a journalist or a writer?*

History is a strange reality

- It's much easier to live thru second hand...from another time or another place
- Its easier to read about the pain, the challenge, the difficulties...than to live thru them

Reading about Anne Frank is moving and inspiring...I guess living with her would have been simply terrifying and indescribably horrid

## **We know the story of Esther**

An official decree is passed by the king that cannot be undone. Even if he looks back and comes to his senses

It's a decree for the genocide of all Jews living under Persian rule

- Mordecai sends a copy to Esther and asked her to plead with the king for the Jewish people
- She writes back and basically says she can't
- Mordecai sends her back his famous '*for such a time as this*' message

**Est 4:13** *he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape.*

**Est 4:14** *For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"*

**Est 4:15** *Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai:*

**Est 4:16** *"Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."*

When it comes to time...your time, your place and your space...

## **1. God hasn't made a mistake**

There are so many verses about time

So many references to time and dates in the bible

**Gal 4:4** *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son...*

*But when [in God's plan] the proper time had fully come...*

*But when the appropriate time had come...*

Mordecai wanted Esther to understand why she was in the palace...at that time. It wasn't a mistake

**Act 17:26** *From one man He made all the nations. that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He marked out their appointed times in history...*

Mordecai was desperate that Esther see the bigger picture

- We are Gods healing community in this time...in this season...and we can't back down
- Seasons like this make our world small...send us into survival mode

### ***What can I do?***

Let the Holy Spirit lead you

- Pray
- Give...of your love, care, finances, time...
- Communicate
- Visit
- Share your faith

### ***We can't relive time***

The opportunities to shine in this time will never come again

*Rob*

## **2. God has a view of our times**

**1Ch 12:32** *from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do*

Mordecai walked wisely. He made some interesting decisions

**Est 2:10** *Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so.*

**Est 4:8** *He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to instruct her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.*

This time we are living in 2021

We cannot be ignorant...neither can we be too clever

Do you know how many messages I get a day explaining the state of the world?

Conspiracy theories...vaccines...

**Isa 8:11** *This is what the LORD says to me with His strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people:*

**Isa 8:12** *"Do not call conspiracy everything this people calls a conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it.*

**Isa 8:13** *The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, He is the one you are to fear, He is the one you are to dread.*

## Some of my biggest blunders have not been the 'what' but the 'when'

**Ecc 8:5** *Whoever obeys his command will come to no harm, and the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure.*

**Ecc 8:6** *For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter, though a person may be weighed down by misery.*

### **Gestation periods**

Let the work, word and will of God gestate in your heart until the right moment

- The Stripe-faced dunnart or the elephant
- 11 days; 655 days

## God holds your time in His hands?

**Psa 31:15** *My times are in Your hands*

**Deu 33:27** *The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.*

- God created time
- He placed us in time
- He relates to us in time
- Yet he is beyond time

This story of Esther speaks to me of two things

- Purpose
- Peace...confidence

