

Esther Series

Message Three

Coincidence, I Think Not

ESTHER 5: 1-14 *On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, in front of the king's quarters, while the king was sitting on his royal throne inside the throne room opposite the entrance to the palace.*

2 And when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won favor in his sight, and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

3 And the king said to her, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom."

4 And Esther said, "If it please the king, let the king and Haman come today to a feast that I have prepared for the king."

5 Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly, so that we may do as Esther has asked." So the king and Haman came to the feast that Esther had prepared.

6 And as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king said to Esther, "What is your wish? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."

7 Then Esther answered, "My wish and my request is:

8 If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my wish and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come to the feast that I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said."

9 And Haman went out that day joyful and glad of heart. But when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he neither rose nor trembled before him, he was filled with wrath against Mordecai.

10 Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and brought his friends and his wife Zeresh.

11 And Haman recounted to them the splendor of his riches, the number of his sons, all the promotions with which the king had honored him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and the servants of the king.



12 Then Haman said, "Even Queen Esther let no one but me come with the king to the feast she prepared. And tomorrow also I am invited by her together with the king."

13 Yet all this is worth nothing to me, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

14 Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows fifty cubits high be made, and in the morning tell the king to have Mordecai hanged upon it. Then go joyfully with the king to the feast." This idea pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made.

ESTHER 6: 1-14 *On that night the king could not sleep. And he gave orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, the chronicles, and they were read before the king.*

2 And it was found written how Mordecai had told about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, and who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

3 And the king said, "What honor or distinction has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" The king's young men who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

4 And the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to speak to the king about having Mordecai hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

5 And the king's young men told him, "Haman is there, standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in."

6 So Haman came in, and the king said to him, "What should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?" And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?"

7 And Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor,

8 let royal robes be brought, which the king has worn, and the horse that the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown is set.

9 And let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble officials. Let them dress the man whom the king delights to honor, and let

them lead him on the horse through the square of the city, proclaiming before him: ‘Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.’”

10 Then the king said to Haman, “Hurry; take the robes and the horse, as you have said, and do so to Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king’s gate. Leave out nothing that you have mentioned.”

11 So Haman took the robes and the horse, and he dressed Mordecai and led him through the square of the city, proclaiming before him, “Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.”

12 Then Mordecai returned to the king’s gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered.

13 And Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, “If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of the Jewish people, you will not overcome him but will surely fall before him.”

14 While they were yet talking with him, the king’s eunuchs arrived and hurried to bring Haman to the feast that Esther had prepared.

MESSAGE GOAL:

The goal of this message is to help you learn how to discern God’s providence at work in your circumstances, which is crucial because you will never see God at work behind the scenes until God sees you moving in accordance with His will.

INTRODUCTION:

When you have been a police officer for many years, you know a lot of funny stories about people.

A man was placed in a lineup because the police wanted him to repeat what the victim said that the robber said.

So, the police told the suspect to say, “Give me your money, or I’ll shoot you.”

Without even thinking, the man blurted out, “That’s not what I said!”

Case closed!

A lot of people would say that thief had bad luck!

Our world is consumed with the concept of luck, happenings that seem to randomly take place.

I don't believe in luck, because I believe in God.

We hear people say all the time, "Boy, you sure are lucky," or the opposite, "That was really bad luck."

But the book of Esther teaches us that there is no such thing as luck in God's creation.

There is divine providence, often hidden as in Esther, that may look or feel like luck.

Sometimes the outworking of God's providence gives the impression of chance events happening, as we have seen.

But the reality is that the divine God is at work, causing or allowing events to work toward the achievement of His purposes.

This is true because if we have learned anything so far from this study of Esther, it is that God's kingdom purposes and plans cannot be thwarted.

What appear to be random or "lucky" happenings are the result of God's providential movements in history.

We are emphasizing providence in Esther because it teaches probably more clearly than any other book in the Bible that providence is God's way of staying anonymous.

In those times when God doesn't want to be out front and work in spectacular, obvious ways, He will work behind the scenes to orchestrate what appear to be chance happenings, coincidences or just good or bad luck on the part of the people involved.

Esther chapters 5 and 6 are loaded with these seeming coincidences, God's work behind the scenes.

How can I discern God's providence by looking at this story in Esther?

- 1. BY SEEING DIVINE INSIGHTS IN SPECIAL WAYS, PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY**

Esther 5: 1 *On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, in front of the king's quarters, while the king was*

sitting on his royal throne inside the throne room opposite the entrance to the palace.

Take notice that the Queen positioned herself physically in a place where she could be seen by the King.

When you couple this physical action along with what took place in the latter part of **Chapter 4**, you have a powerful and productive combination.

One of the most fruitful ways to receive the added insight we need is by the spiritual discipline of fasting.

Remember that Esther had called for three days of fasting and prayer.

Fasting raises our spiritual “antenna” higher to get the picture of what God wants to do and to hear what He has to say about the situation.

Fasting married to faith allows God to reveal a plan to you.

One reason we miss God’s “coincidences” is that we fail to raise our spiritual antennas, so we don’t pick up spiritual signals.

2. BY TAKING A STEP OF FAITH, EVEN IF IT’S RISKY

Esther 5: 2-5 And when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won favor in his sight, and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

3 And the king said to her, “What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom.”

4 And Esther said, “If it please the king, let the king and Haman come today to a feast that I have prepared for the king.”

5 Then the king said, “Bring Haman quickly, so that we may do as Esther has asked.” So the king and Haman came to the feast that Esther had prepared.

Many of us are waiting on God to act, while God is waiting on us to act in faith first.

The Scriptures are full of examples of this principle:

Moses’ mother put him in a little basket in faith that God would protect him (**Exodus 2: 1-10**).

Later, Moses had to hold out his staff and his hand over the Red Sea before God would part it to allow the Israelites to pass through on dry ground and escape the Egyptians story. (**Exodus 14: 15-22**)

The priests of Israel had to step into the swollen Jordan river before God would open it up and allow Israel to cross into the Promised Land. (**Joshua 3: 1-17**)

Ruth just happened to be gleaning in the fields of Boaz when he just happened to visit the fields at that exact time so he could protect and provide for her and Naomi. (**Ruth 2: 1-17**).

And out of that came the line of King David—and the Messiah.

One of the most fascinating cases of this principle at work is in the early life of Saul, in relation to finding his father's lost mules (**1 Samuel 9**).

God didn't show up for the three Hebrew young men in **Daniel 3** until they took their stand for Him.

He didn't show up for Daniel in **Daniel 6** until Daniel took his stand and got tossed into the lions' den.

Faith is measured by footsteps.

God sees faith because "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (**Hebrews 11:6**).

3. BY EMBRACING HIS PROVIDENTIAL TIMING

Esther 5: 6-14 *6 And as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king said to Esther, "What is your wish? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."*

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God is so detailed in His coincidences that He leads the servants of King Ahasuerus to the right book in his royal annals.

Proverbs 21: 1 *The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.*

And He makes them read the right page.

God's providence, to an extent is tied to time, even though the time may cover years.

He hasn't forgotten where you are, and He is always at work in your circumstances.

4. BY UNDERSTANDING THAT HE IS CONTROLLING "UNCONTROLLABLE" CIRCUMSTANCES

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The words, “That night” is the key to Esther’s story, and it can be the key to your story.

There will be that special moment when God brings together a special set of circumstances involving a special set of people to begin putting your answer together.

No matter how much power or position people have, there is only one God.

But we have to put up the spiritual antenna first to see God act.

Matthew 6: 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

If our spiritual receiver is off, we don’t get the picture, even though God has His answers all over the place.

MESSING UP GOD’S WORKINGS: The lavish tomb of the Egyptian pharaoh King Tutankhamun, better known as King Tut, was famously discovered and opened in the early 1920s.

The gold-laden tomb quickly became a tourist sensation, but after years of tourists tramping through to see this amazing site, the dust they brought in, the humidity and even the carbon dioxide from their breath began to damage the wall paintings and affect other parts of the tomb.

It got so bad they had to close the tomb for almost a decade to do restoration and install protections such as walkways and a ventilation system.

Sometimes, like over-eager tourists, we can become so impatient to try and figure out what God is doing that we rush into things in order to see what’s going on.

ROYAL AMBITION: During World War II, Alan Brooke, who was chief of the British imperial general staff, remarked to King George VI that although the British field marshal Bernard Montgomery was a good soldier, “I think he is after my job.”

The king replied, “I thought he was after mine.”

If Montgomery did wish he were king, he certainly would not have been the first person in a position of leadership or privilege to hold that ambition.

Haman had kingly ambitions, which is why he suggested that the person the king wanted to honor should wear his ring and ride his horse.

These were symbols of royalty that said to the people the man wearing them was in line for the throne of Medo-Persia, so Haman thought he was setting himself up for the future.

But God had a big surprise for Haman—as He often does for us when we get puffed up and start thinking we would like to be king in our lives.

But there is room for only one King on the throne of our hearts.

“Unless there’s contact with God, He could be moving, and we could be missing it. When there is no contact, no dependency on God in fasting and prayer, there is no faith in action on our part.

Therefore, there are no ideas coming into our minds that we have not previously considered about how to deal with a seemingly impossible situation.”

I want to challenge you to live under the providential hand of God even when it looks like it’s not working out—to humbly go before Him and confess, ‘I don’t know what to do, and I’m afraid.’”

Tell God when you are suffering from fear so that you can hear Him say, “fear not, I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Let Him speak this to you in a very personal way.

Then you can say with conviction, “I am going to trust You.”

Esther was afraid, but she acted in faith.

Even though you think something should have happened long before now, remember that God is doing a series of things at the same time because His kingdom is bigger than just you.

You are not the kingdom: you are a representative in the kingdom to be used by the King for the kingdom’s advancement in His perfect timing.”

Our God is a God of intersections.

He connects things that don’t look connectable when the timing is just right, even though everything looks wrong.



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God is at work when circumstances look uncontrollable, when life looks unpredictable, and when sin looks unstoppable.

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Four Points

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- 2. BY TAKING A STEP OF FAITH, EVEN IF IT'S RISKY**
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