

Trusting God When You Cannot See His Hand: **The Hidden God Who Uses Broken People**

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- ❖ Do you ever use the Book of Esther in your counseling?
 - It's hard to do that if you're confused about the point of the book:
 - Should we tell female counselees they should be like Esther?
 - Should we tell male counselees they should be like Mordecai?
 - Or, is this just going to be one of those books we don't use much in counseling? And if it doesn't fly where the rubber meets the road in the counseling office, why is it there at all?
 - Luke 24:42
 - Where do we see the Gospel, the Christ, the church, God's Kingdom, the Sovereign God, the King in this book?
 - How can it help us today? Is it a morality tale, a place where we learn how to be like good people and not like bad ones? Are Esther or Mordecai our examples? Of what?
 - What do we learn from it? A very strange book indeed that doesn't even mention the name of God...And perhaps that's the point.
- ❖ A brief overview:
 - How Mordecai and his cousin Esther ended up in Susa.
 - Why were they still there?
 - The opening stories: Ahasuerus, Vashti, the king's excesses and ridiculousness. We're meant to scoff at the world's power-brokers, especially tin-pot puny braggarts like Haman.
 - But...Why did Mordecai decide to disobey Haman's edict? He had obviously compromised on other issues. Why balk at this one?
 - And...Why did Mordecai counsel Esther to obey the King's edict? Don't be confused. This isn't a love story. This is the story of ungodly authority taking ungodly advantage of his position of complete power. And yet Mordecai let his cousin go into the king's harem to prepare for his cruel abuse. This king chooses the most beautiful virgins in his empire to force into his harem so that he would be amused.
 - What can we learn? How does this story help us? How does this story help our counselees?
- ❖ God uses severely flawed people to accomplish his will.
 - That's good news.
 - Neither Esther nor Mordecai are role models. We're not to look at this story and say, "Be like them."
 - Yes, they were both faithful but they were also terribly flawed.
 - God doesn't need our perfect obedience to accomplish his will. In fact, he seems to love to use the weak (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

- ❖ God gives liberties to evil dictators for his own hidden purposes. (Romans 13:1-2; 1 Peter 2:13; Daniel 2:20-22)
 - That's good news.
 - God allowed the pagan nations to continue to grow more wicked fulfill their purposes: (Genesis 15:16; Daniel 8:23; Matthew 23:32; 1 Thess 2:16).
 - God appointed Pontius Pilate, Herod, Caesar, Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrin to accomplish the salvation of our souls. (Acts 4:25-28) "See the edifice he is able to build on our sin!" Every time the Roman lash was laid on the Savior's back it was for us and according to God's plan (Isaiah 53:4—*Smitten by God*).
 - God is in charge of those in authority in our counselees' lives.
 - Godly authority is better than ungodly authority, of course. God can and does use both (1 Corinthians 7:20-21).
 - We are to pray that we might "lead a peaceful and quiet life" (1 Timothy 2:2).
 - But this (our family, particular church, country) was never be God's kingdom on earth. He's got another kingdom altogether.
- ❖ God has a plan that stretches far beyond our temporal understanding.
 - That's good news.
 - There is a kingdom that is taking over all the other kingdoms of the world.
 - It was cut out of a mountain without hands. The incarnate virgin born Christ (Daniel 2:45).
 - God is building his kingdom, not ours. Your kingdom come must mean something! (Matthew 6:10, 33).
- ❖ God's Son doesn't shout out his name in the streets. He doesn't even need to be mentioned to accomplish all his will.
 - The hiddenness of the gospel.
 - The power of the gospel.
 - Contrast this description with that of Ahasuerus (Matt 12:18-21).
- ❖ We don't need to worry and scheme.
- ❖ We can seek to be faithful and trust and know that even when we fail, he never does.
- ❖ We may use any lawful means to make our lives and the lives of those around us better.
- ❖ We can know that even if we're in a context where his name isn't mentioned and where wickedness rules, he's still going to rule and overrule.
- ❖ We have a Righteous, Loving King who is presently gathering a Virgin Bride for himself from all the peoples and nations of the world. She is not the most beautiful woman around but he will cleanse her, beautify her, present her to himself in splendor (Ephesians 5: 25f). His love will make her radiant and she'll live in his pardon, protection and provision forever.