

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Living out the gospel with
one another in our homes

Date: 11 Feb 24

Text: Esther 2:1-23

Message: Ted Rastatter

Questions: Jason Finke

Following Vashti's removal as queen, the king's attendants suggested the he replace Vashti by bringing in beautiful young women into the king's harem. Then the one who pleased the king would be made queen in Vashti's place. One of the women taken into the harem was Esther. She found favor with Hegai who was in charge of the harem so that she received cosmetics, food, choice maids to serve her, and the best place in the harem. When it was her turn to appear before the king, Esther found favor with the king and was made queen. Meanwhile, Mordecai became aware of a plot to kill the king which he reported to Esther, who in turn informed the king. The plot, and Mordecai's reporting it, were recorded in the book of the chronicles, which will be important later in the book (Esther 6).

The main point of the sermon was that even when God appears to be absent, He is still working. Ted organized the sermon around three points.

1. **He is working in the midst of human depravity**
2. **He is working through the least likely people in the least likely places**
3. **He is working in His own timing**

Discussion

1. In the sermon, Ted noted that we should not mistake God's hiddenness with His absentness. Even though God is not mentioned in the book of Esther, His providential work is still apparent. Are there times when you feel like God is absent? Why does it feel like He is absent in these times? How can we remind ourselves that God is not absent even when He seems hidden?
2. Ted stated that God is working in the midst of human depravity. He compared Esther's situation to the plight of human trafficking victims today. Yet God ultimately used this evil situation for the redemption of His people. He also cited the example of Joseph and how God similarly used that evil situation to deliver His people (Genesis 50:20). How can remembrance of Joseph's and Esther's stories encourage us when we are confronted with evil? **Read Romans 8:28-30.** What does this passage teach us about God's work in a believer's life?

3. Ted also discussed how God is working through the least likely people in the least likely places, which is seen in His use of Mordecai (an exile) and Esther (an exile and orphan) to save His people from destruction. What are other biblical examples of God using unlikely people to carry out His purpose? How do these examples encourage us that God can use our messy lives for His purpose?

4. Finally, Ted explained how God is working in His own timing. **Read Genesis 40:14, 40:23, 41:1, 41:9-14, and 41:39-41.** How do these verses demonstrate God working in His timing? Can you think of any other biblical examples of God working in His timing? How can these examples encourage us when we are required to wait for God to work?