

Esther 8:9-11 'The Urgency Of The Gospel!'

Last week's passage was from Esther 8:18 'God's Providence; Therefore Do Not Fret. Christ's Love. And Indifference!' As Esther seeks to complete her task of rescuing her people. Or better put, God rescuing His people through her! V1 "That same day." The day of Esther's second banquet when she revealed herself to be a Jew, Haman's evil plan exposed along with the King's stupidity and inadequacy. Haman hanged on seventy five feet high gallows, his estate given to Esther, and Mordecai installed as grand vizier, and made executor of Haman's estate. All of it being moved by the invisible Hand and Sovereignty of God! One day Haman has Mordecai's life in his hands, and the very next day he is hanged on the gallows which he had built with Mordecai's name on it, and now Mordecai stands in Haman's place of being second only to the king!

And we looked at Psalm 37 where King David writes. "Do not fret because of evil men." "when men succeed in their way when they carry out their evil schemes." Yes three times David writes, "do not fret" rather v3 "Trust in the Lord." V4 "Delight yourself in the Lord." V5 "Commit your way to the Lord." V7 "Be still before the Lord." Because although we don't see it, God is working through every circumstance to bring about His good plan for each of our lives! We saw in Esther's second plea, (unlike her first, in which she was so controlled and measured in her approach) this time as she again placed her life on the line, "pleading," "falling before the king." Weeping. Begging," but it was not for herself but for her people! She and Mordecai were already safe but the job was not yet finished because this had always been about all of her people. So she would rescue them or die in the attempt.

In her actions I explained that we see a clear picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. As He was in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Father if it's possible take this cup from me. Yet not my will but thine be done." And upon the cross, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do," and "it is finished."

And finally we saw in the King's indifference to the plight of Esther's people, (although he favoured her) it was basically just do what you need to do I give you my permission, but I don't need to know. Yes we see our own indifference to the Word of God. Initially until His Spirit enters our heart, but sadly, even after we have claimed the Name of Christ for ourselves it can often be the same!

And so we pick up the narrative in Esther 8:9-14 'The Urgency Of The Gospel!' V9 "At once the royal secretaries were summoned, on the 23rd day, of the third month, the month of Sivan." It is "that same day." The day of Esther's second banquet and Haman's execution. The 23rd day of the third month of the 12 year of king Xerxes' reign. So the first thing that we can see is just as Esther's plea was passionate and urgent, so too is Mordecai's response when given the authority of the king! "At once."

Friends to be honest, when thinking over these things I found it a tremendous rebuke personally because Mordecai and Esther's urgency and passion for their brethren is often not what I find at work in my own actions. You see we could really apply this scene before us to ourselves, by measuring our own fervency and urgency in our prayers, for our unsaved family and friends. And also for our brethren in general! Are we urgent in our petitions and pleas before God on their behalf? Are we fervent in our asking God for His Providence to speak to them? Yes praying for Providence to speak, and the wisdom, boldness and humility in knowing what to say and how to say

it. And I guess further still, we could seek to apply this attitude of “At once,” this fervency and urgency of both Esther’s and Mordecai’s, to the weight and the value that we place upon our own relationship with God! Is it at the forefront of our minds? Are our actions governed by how we see ourselves in the sight of God? What is it that directs my life?

Brothers and sisters I don't know about you, but as I said I found Esther’s and Mordecai’s urgency and passion for their people, a tremendous rebuke for myself. Because as I mentioned last time, in Xerxes’ indifference to Esther’s request, we can be reminded of the danger of our own apathy and indifference to our King’s Word. Instead of it governing our lives with that urgency of keeping us on “the narrow” and “the straight road,” we give it only a passing glance now and then. Only consulting God's road map for life(The Bible) when we find ourselves lost and passing through dangerous and foreign lands spiritually! Beloved a sprinkling of Christianity within what is basically a Pagan life, is not what God calls us to. No it is the urgency of that “taking up of one’s cross daily” which Jesus speaks of. Because we know that this world is rapidly passing away! Revelation 22:20 “He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yea I am coming soon.’”

Yes it is with this kind of urgency then, that we should consider our own relationship with God. And our seeking to serve Him as a reflection of that relationship. Yes “At once the royal secretaries were summoned, on the 23rd day of the third month the month of Sivan. They wrote out all of Mordecai’s orders to the Jews, and to the satraps, governors and nobles of the 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush.”

Now brothers and sisters I want us to remember that as we saw in chapter one, this was a vast undertaking. Those words that Mordecai was about to send, were for the ears of the whole of that 50 million strong Persian empire, not just for the Jews. And this was in effect the gospel in Old Testament terms. As it was clearly the “two edged sword of God.” These words would prove to be a rescuing, (even the good news for God's people) and a call to arms. But for Israel’s enemies, a time of reconsideration, and a warning of the coming retribution! The message to them was consider carefully what you are about to do, because for all of a person’s actions there are consequences and repercussions. Just as in Acts 5, when the Jewish ruling elite wanted to put the Apostles to death, but a prominent Jewish teacher, (who was actually Saul’s own mentor named Gamaliel) stood up to address the Sanhedrin saying; ‘Consider carefully what you are about to do. Because if these men speak only for themselves, then like all the other frauds that have come before them, they will soon disappear. But if they are from God, then you will not be fighting only against men, but against God.’

Yes God's Word is always “the two edged sword.” It always cuts to Redemption and Reconciliation, but also to Judgement and Retribution. So we, (and indeed all of humanity) must consider carefully how we respond to the Word of God. Mordecai's decree must go to every tribe, and every language and to all of the 127 provinces. Everyone must hear and know the message before the great and terrible day of Deliverance and Judgement comes! And again, what a clear picture of Christ’s Gospel. Jesus Himself said in Matthew 18:19-20 “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” And of course followed by that wonderful assurance. “And lo I am with you always to the very end of the age.” Yes when God's Word comes, all of humanity must respond, and in effect they do respond. Because even to hear it and ignore it is indeed a response. “You are either for me or against me” Jesus said. Yes we are either fighting in the army of, and for the king, or we are warring against Him. There is no middle ground.

And Beloved here's the thing: If the Jews had of only received the word in the king’s name and yet done nothing in preparation for that great and dreadful day of reckoning, they would have surely

perished. Yes they had to be not only forewarned, they had to be prepared and forearmed, and also prepared for battle! Their weapons had to be honed and ready. They would have nine months to prepare. They knew the exact date that the enemy would arrive, and they had to be ready to make a stand! Beloved in one way at least the Jews had an advantage over the Christian today, (only one) that it is that they knew the exact day of reckoning, we do not. So we must be ever ready for our King's coming.

Having heard His message, and responded to His call to arms. And knowing that "He is coming soon." Amen! v10 "Mordecai wrote in the name of king Xerxes, sealed the dispatches with the king's signet ring, and sent them by mounted couriers, who rode fast horses especially bred for the king." Yes "Mordecai wrote in the name of the king." Now perhaps it is only me, but I keep seeing images of Christ's Gospel here. What is it that all of the writers of the Bible did. If it is not literally written in the King's Name! Yes "Thus says the Lord." "Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God the Lord is one." Genesis 13a. "And God said." 2 Timothy 3:16 "All scripture is God breathed." And finally, 2 Peter 1:21 "For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried it along by the Holy Spirit." So the True gospel has come, and continues to come to us only in The King's Name. Only those who come to us and speak the words of our King, (of Jesus) are actually from Him! If people speak of fanciful things which have nothing to do with Him, and are not a rooted in Him, His life, His death, His resurrection and ascension. If they speak to us of health and wealth and a life of ease, even heaven on earth, we must beware. Because they are NOT from the King. They have prostituted themselves, (even selling their souls for dishonest gain) like their father's Judas and the devil!

And notice, as we all know, the seal of the king was all important. Without that melting of the royal wax poured onto the edge of the scroll, and the King's signet ring pressed deep into that wax creating the official seal, then those many hundreds and hundreds of dispatches would have been meaningless. They would have been counterfeit. Worthless, or even worse; a deliberate attempt to confuse the people! Oh Beloved, there are many around today who are doing that very thing. Saying that they come in His Name and bringing His message of Truth, but they have not the seal of the King. No they have not the guaranteeing seal of the King's Spirit!

In Ephesians 1:13b-14 we read "Having believed you were marked in him with the seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession to the praise of his glory." Yes our King's Holy Spirit seal of the authenticity of a true messenger of Christ. The Lord Jesus sealed His gospel message of salvation not with mere wax and a signet ring no. He sealed our salvation with His Own Blood and burned that seal with his Holy Spirit deep into our very souls. As the old hymn goes. He sealed my pardon with His Blood, Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

But how do we determine who they are? How do we distinguish the genuine servant of God from the many imposters who so abound today? Well Jesus himself said. "You will know them by their fruit." Yes the "fruit" that they bear, (meaning their words and actions, their integrity, sincerity and the veracity of the holding to Christ's truth) will be the same as that of the Vine, even Jesus Himself, that by God's Grace through His Holy Spirit, we have been engrafted into! Yes though certainly even those faithful messengers are as we are, (all flawed vessels) we will see Christ in them, in their selfless love for us, and with them having no hidden agendas! "Blessed are the pure in heart" Jesus said, that purity of intention. Yes Christ's Blood poured out, and the Holy Spirit of God pressed into that Blood and burned into our very souls. That is the seal of our King!

Brothers and sisters, I want to again point out the urgency with which Mordecai acts. In the first two edicts, the one in search for the new queen, and Haman's murderous plan against the Jews these dispatches were merely sent by horseback riders. But in this case, we read, "those dispatches were sent by mounted couriers who rode fast horses especially bred for the king." This was the express mail. Yes the pony express delivery in the king's name and service. Again, the message was urgent, there could be no delays. Because destruction was coming, so vital preparations had to be made. Time was running out, so the people had to act!

O friends, I keep seeing the urgency of the gospel in these things, yes of the imminent return of the King. Not as gentle Jesus meek and mild, as I've said before, as in those images of a baby on some straw in a barn somewhere that the world just loves, but as the Judge of all the earth, and with a cup of foaming wrath in His Hand! I guess the question is, are we awake. And are we making urgent preparations for His arrival? That's what Paul meant in 2 Timothy 4, as he came to his final words before he would be martyred, and his warning to his son in the faith Timothy. Chapter 4:1-2a "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his Kingdom, I give you this charge. Preach the word." Paul writes as though he could even see Christ coming within his mind's eye. And he calls both The Father and The Son as bearing witness to his words! Of all things Timothy as you live your life for Jesus one thing stands above all else. Proclaiming the decree of the King!

Now Brethren we are not Paul, we are not Timothy, or Esther or Mordecai, but we are all Messengers of the King. We have all been entrusted with His Gospel edict. And we can all take it in our own way to our family, friends and those whom we know. We don't have to be polished preachers, we don't have to be teachers, but we are all messengers, entrusted with Christ gospel message of "Come," while there is still time. And the door of His Mercy is still open! Verse 11: "The king's edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves, to destroy, kill and annihilate any armed force of any nationality or province that might attack them and their women and children, and to plunder the property of their enemies." We need to understand that this was no small thing. Because large unauthorised gatherings together would have been seen as one thing and one thing only. Murmurings of sedition and insurrection. And attacks upon the crown. So to have the king's permission to gather was all important, because they needed to be trained and organised to some extent to defend themselves. You couldn't stand against an army with a bunch of unprepared rabble, no. The Jews in each province would have had to be organised. They would have had to have some kind of plan for their defence. Otherwise when the enemy came, there would have been sheer panic and chaos, and they would have all run for the hills!

Friends yet again, I see the gospel here, and how we are to make a defence of our faith. Paul often speaks in his letters of Christians as being soldiers in Christ's army. In Ephesians 6:10-20 we read "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my

mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.”

Yes “the full armour of God.” Helmets, Shields, Swords, boots. But not physical weapons ready for a physical battle, (although certainly without doubt more and more in our own country, this spiritual war is being manifested in physical ways) but this is a spiritual war. And yes although it does manifest itself in physical ways, it is spiritually that we must be strong and prepared. With our weapons being, Faith. Not merely faith, but strong in the One in whom we have that faith. “The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” “And Pray” Pray, pray, pray, Paul says.

Yes friends as in Esther and Mordecai’s day, it may well be a physical battle, and yet we are in a Spiritual war! They were given licence not to attack but to defend themselves. And yet if they were indeed attacked, they could, (even as Haman’s evil decree said) yes they could “destroy, kill and annihilate, and then plunder their enemies goods and property.” You see Beloved, this is the God of the Bible that the world will not accept. And indeed many who claim to be Christian also do not accept it. That God brings judgement! That there will be an account that all of humanity is going to have to make. If humanity raises their hands against the people of God, it is God Himself that they are attacking. And God takes those attacks upon His people very personally. In the teaching on the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31ff, when all of humanity is spread out before the throne of God and Jesus is seated upon that throne. After the world of humankind is separated, “the sheep to the right and the goats to the left,” the cry goes out from Jesus for His people to “Come.” And the reason that He gives for them being able to come, (while yes as we know that it is through Grace alone, by Faith alone, in Christ alone, from God alone) but yes the reason that Jesus gives us is their responsive love for Him. In the way that they have loved His people! But to the goats, only condemnation, for their opposite response to His gospel message of “Repent” and “Come!” Which is reflected in the way that they have not loved, (and even neglected) to love His people. We read of this in Matthew 25:41-46.

Beloved can you see? That as ignorance is no excuse for breaking the law, (though certainly today even inventing excuses seems to relieve us of our responsibility for breaking the laws of our land) but it is no excuse for breaking the Law of God! But Jesus explains, that not only is the attack upon His people an attack upon Him personally, and those who do so are worthy of hell. Because in doing so we reject His people, His message and ultimately Him and His father who sent Him! And brothers and sisters in Australia today, more and more to hold high the banner of Jesus, is to be the enemy of our society. Israel Felau. And that fellow recently who lost his job because he was part of a church, whose pastor had preached a sermon on homosexuality and abortion many years before, didn't even agree with what his pastor. And was actually an advocate of homosexuality. So he was rejected, even found to be guilty of holding to biblical truth by association. And you know, of every Christian person who came out in support of this man, (after he was abused by everyone from that child of Satan Daniel Andrews, the ABC and everyone else you could imagine) but yes of every Christian who spoke in support of this man. Not one of them, simply said, ‘That we hold to Christ’s Bible, homosexuality is a crime against God, abortion is murder, and for both of these hell awaits for those who do such things or have done such things. But mercy and heaven is available. If they would but come to God through Jesus, repent of those sins and do them no more. But that would be hate speech you see! Yes the gospel of love for which Jesus suffered and died, is no longer about love today it is hate speech. O Beloved, we need to pray that God would have mercy on Australia! So what do we take away this morning?

Well simply, that as with Mordecai’s decree, which was fervent and imperative, the Jews had no time to waste, because the day of reckoning was coming. Well so too we must see an urgency in the

proclamation of the gospel today. Because it is the “two edge sword” of Christ’s coming. Cutting to Redemption and Reconciliation. But also to Judgement and Retribution. And it draws ever near!

Let's pray!