

Esther 2:19-23

Hey Podcast listeners, Brookes here. We're making our way through the book of Esther and we're paying special attention to being on mission. We're looking at four quick verses in chapter 2. Esther 2:19-23

As we've been reading, we just finished what really amounts to an ancient bachelor TV show. We've got a rich guy with a power complex, King Ahasuerus, who decides the best way to find a new queen is to take the best looking girls in the kingdom and to parade them in front of himself for 6 months.

Esther is chosen as the one that catches the king's eye and that's how we get to where we're at. But there's an interesting detail that will play a big role in the rest of the book. Verse 20 says: "Esther had not made known her kindred or her people, as Mordecai had commanded her..." So Esther is queen but no one knows that she's Jewish. Now, I'm not sure that we can draw out a ton of practical implications here, I certainly wouldn't suggest that we take Esther's cue from her astuteness and hide our own religion among our peers. But I think what we can see is that God's providence, that being God's control over circumstances that seem bigger than we can control, plays hand in hand with our own responsibility. Esther obeyed her uncle, Mordecai and God was faithful to use her craftiness to bring about his glory later on in the story.

We see another similar theme pop out in the very next verses. Mordecai happens to be in the right place at the right time and hears about a plot against the King. The same king that paraded a bunch of good looking virgins in a beauty pageant last chapter. The king isn't a good guy but Mordecai sees an opportunity for Esther to gain favor with him. Mordecai passes the death threat on to Esther who passes it on to the King who in turns hangs the men who made the

threat against him. Honestly, if the book of Esther were a movie, it probably would be directed by Martin Scorsese and probably rated a strong R.

It's a weird story that Scripture showcases because it's almost like Esther and Mordecai are playing a political game. The King certainly isn't a very good guy and they could have just let the situation play out to see if he gets assassinated. Instead they use this information to gain influence with the King. Esther and Mordecai don't merely sit idly by and watch situations play out but rather take initiative. This happens all through the story. Keep an eye out for it.

It reminds us again that there are two sides to the coin of providence. One side is God's control and sovereignty over situations that seem outside of our control and the other is human responsibility. Mordecai and Esther use information they learn and show great courage and initiative not only here but throughout the story. And eventually we'll see how it leads to flourishing for God's people. While at the same time, God providentially moves situations for his glory. Divine providence and human responsibility.

This is true for us today. We can take great hope and joy in the fact that God is in control. But it doesn't stop there because he calls his people to engage with his mission. Following God is not a passive activity, just the opposite friends! Following God means exactly that, *following God*. Trust in God's control but follow him boldly friends!

Let's pray:

Lord, thank you for your control over situations that seem out of our control. Along with that, I ask that you would grant us the boldness to take action where we need to take action and give us the grace to trust in you where you are calling us to trust in you. Amen.