

"The Change of Power"

Part 2

Esther 8

Introduction: Tonight in our study of Esther I want to go back to what we looked at the last time and consider these events from a different approach. I will title this study:

"Removing Obstacles"

Many times in life we encounter immovable objects which can bring seasons of darkness and gloom and even periods of depression. It can be a family member with a strong will who will not listen to sound reasoning. In this situation it can be a son or a daughter who has decided to venture down a path which you know is not wise. You do all you can, but it changes nothing. It can be a person who has come in your life who is just straight up set against you and there seems to be nothing that will change their attitude toward you. It can be a financial obstacle. You have needs and you can never seem to gather what is needed to get everything finished that needs to be finished. It can be a health obstacle that has come into your life and has turned your life upside down. It can be something where you live or where you work. The point I want you to see is that life has many obstacles.

Esther, Mordecai and the Jews in the Persian Empire also faced some rather challenging obstacles that looked to be immovable. In our study tonight I want us to see that with God all things are possible.

1. The Obstacle of the King's Heart

Notice Esther 8:1

The last time we were together we looked at this verse and how the king gave the riches of Haman over to Esther, but we did not talk about how amazing this was. This is the same king who had the 6-month banquet to cater to his own ego.

Esther 1:1-4

Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:)

² *That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace,*

³ *In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him:*

⁴ *When he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and fourscore days.*

This is the same king that had Vashti removed because she embarrassed him in front of all his guests.

Esther 1:10-12

¹⁰ *On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king,*

¹¹ *To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on.*

¹² *But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.*

This man is very powerful. With the wave of his hand he could have a person executed. He was the man who promoted Haman and gave his ring to him. He basically said, "You write the laws, and I will sign them."

Now, all at once this man changes his mind. All at once his heart is softened to the consistency of soft butter.

Notice Esther 8:1-4

When he sees the tears of Esther his heart is filled with compassion for her.

No matter how hard a person's heart is, God can soften it. No matter how powerful the man is he is no match for the mighty power of God.

Proverbs 21:1-2

The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

² *Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.*

Notice the words of Betsie ten Boom:

"There is no pit so deep but that He is not deeper still."

We can extend the words of Betsie and say, "There is no heart so stubborn that God cannot soften it. There is no man so mighty that God cannot bring him down."

Application:

This means God can change the most stubborn heart in a wayward son or daughter and He can do it overnight. There is not one person whose has their heart set against you that God cannot soften and turn their heart. There is not one hard hearted, stubborn spouse whom God cannot change. God can bring the most mighty people to their knees if He desires to.

Daniel 4:28-33

²⁸ All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

²⁹ At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

³⁰ The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

³¹ While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.

³² And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

³³ The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

If God can change the heart of Ahasuerus and the heart of Nebuchadnezzar, then He can certainly change anyone's heart that we must deal with.

2. The Obstacle of the Death Decree

Not only was there the obstacle of the king's heart that needed to be dealt with but also the obstacle of the Persian law. In Daniel 6 we get valuable insight as to why this was an obstacle.

Daniel 6:8, 12, 15

⁸ Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

¹² Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

¹⁵ Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

The king's heart had been changed but the death decree was another challenge.

Notice Esther 8:5-14

This is amazing! The decree could not be reversed so the king allowed Mordecai to write up another decree in which the Jews were permitted to defend themselves on the 13th day of the 12th month. But they were not just permitted to defend themselves but also to kill their attackers and even take their belongings. The king provided his scribes and stamped the document with his ring making it official. The announcement was then distributed throughout the kingdom. The new decree did not cancel out the previous decree, but it did place the Jews on level playing ground with the Persians.

Things like this just did not happen! The king gave permission to counter a law that had earlier been established and stamped with his ring and then he gave permission to a foreign people to kill his own people in self-defense. We can clearly see the hand of God on this counter decree. No king would sign this against his own people. But this king did.

Application:

Looking at what happened here in Esther, it should remind us that with God all things are possible. It should also remind us that our God is greater than anything that we face in this life. God has His will, and it will be carried out.

Ephesians 1:11-12

¹¹ In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

¹² That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Let us notice what is recorded in Daniel:

Daniel 4:35

³⁵ And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Whatever stands in front of us is but nothing against our Lord.

Psalm 91:1-6

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

² I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

³ Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

⁴ He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

⁵ Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

⁶ Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

3. The Obstacle of Gloom

From the time the death decree was issued the Jews were living under gloom. The joy had been stolen from their lives. Every morning they got up there was a reminder that they were one day closer to execution day. When they went to bed the fear was there, when they woke in the night the fear stood over them waiting to attach itself to their daily lives. The gloom was impossible to escape. But the gloom was about to lift.

Notice Esther 8:15-17

Verse 16 is a very revealing verse. When the death decree was countered the Jews THEN had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. Before they were living in a gloomy darkness with no joy or gladness.

Notice Esther 8:17 again.

When the joy of the Jews was made manifest many of the Gentiles became Jews because the fear of the Jews fell upon them. This means the Gentiles would come alongside the Jews and accept Judaism. Ruth helps us to see what this would entail.

Ruth 1:14-17

¹⁴ *And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.*

¹⁵ *And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.*

¹⁶ *And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:*

¹⁷ *Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.*

One day the Jews were facing the gloom and the next day they were rejoicing. The darkness had lifted and the manifestation of the hand of their God on their lives was obvious.

Conclusion/Application:

The obstacles of gloom and despair are very difficult to live with. But we live in a fallen world and therefore, sadness, darkness, and sorrow are the results of sin in our world. Let us keep in mind when these times come, they have come to pass and not to stay.

Psalm 30:5b

...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

Lamentations 3:21-23

²¹ *This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.*

²² *It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.*

²³ *They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*