

Our Daily Homily - Esther

by F.B. Meyer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of ruling one's own house, showing worthy leadership, and standing alone for God, and it highlights the role of Esther in God's plan of deliverance.

Scripture: 1 Timothy 3:4

Topics: "Divine Purpose", "Godly Leadership"

Description

F.B. Meyer emphasizes the importance of godly leadership within the home, drawing parallels between a man's authority in his household and Christ's authority from the Father. He highlights Esther's pivotal role in God's plan for deliverance, illustrating how God prepares for our needs even when His presence is not overtly acknowledged. The sermon encourages believers to recognize their positions as opportunities for divine purpose and to act with love and integrity, as exemplified by Mordecai and Esther. Meyer reassures that God is always at work for our good, urging us to trust in His plans and to seek the welfare of others. Ultimately, he calls for a life marked by selflessness and a commitment to peace, reflecting Christ's character in our interactions.

Transcript

That every man should bear rule in his own house. Esther 1:22

ONE of the prerequisites in choosing a presiding officer in the early Church was that he should rule well his own house; "for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?" (1 Timothy 3:4,5).

When a man bears rule as husband and father in the love of God, there is no issue of commands which conflict with primary obligations; rather than that, his authority represents the Divine authority. As Christ received his authority from the Father, so does a man derive and receive his from Christ; and in the recognition of his delegated right and ability to lead, the entire household becomes well ordered. The relaxation of the bonds of authority and government in our homes is one of the saddest symptoms of national decay, as it is among the predicted signs of the end (2 Timothy 3:2,3).

But, on the other hand, you must show yourself worthy to lead and rule your home. Your character must be such as to command respect. Those whom God has put into your charge require that you do not use your authority for selfish or capricious ends. Above all, love is the source of the truest authority. We count nothing hard or irksome that we do for those we love. Show love, and you will win love; and on love will be

built respect, reverence, and obedience.

One of the most eloquent of modern Italians has said truly: "You can only obtain the exercise of your rights by deserving them, through your own activity, and your own spirit of love and sacrifice!" Christ's golden rule holds good in every phase of life ■■ "In all things, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Hadassah, that is, Esther. Esther 2:7

THROUGH this one girl■life God was about to save his people, though He was all the while hidden from view. The peculiarity of this book is that there is no mention of the name of God; but there is no book in the Bible more full of the presence and working of God for his own. His name is clearly in the watermark of the paper, if it do not appear in the print.

We know that the meshes of evil plotting were laid for the hurt of Israel long before the fatal decree was made for the destruction of the entire nation; but here we find that God has begun his preparations for deliverance long before. In the beauty of Esther, in the position her uncle held at court, in the favor she won with the king, in the discovery through Mordecai of the plot against the king's life, there are the materials of a great and Divine deliverance. God was clearly beforehand to the devil. The angels of light were on the ground before those of darkness were marshalled.

It is a sweet thought to carry with us always: God prepares of his goodness for the poor. He prepares the good work in which we are to walk, and the deliverances by which He will succor us in the hour of need. Do not dread the foe, be not fearful nor dismayed, as he draws his net around thee; God has prepared a way of escape, so that thou shalt be able to bear it. In the meanwhile, rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; trust in the Lord; wait for the Lord; be silent to the Lord. He is more farseeing, his plans more far■reaching, his help more certain, than all the stratagems of evil. God laughs at them. Into the pit they have dug, thine enemies shall fall.

But Mordecai bowed not. Esther 3:2

THERE was stern stuff in this old Jew. He was not going to prostrate himself before one so haughty and so depraved as Haman, albeit that he was the king's favorite. To be the only one in a city office that does not laugh at the questionable story; to stand alone on shipboard against the gambling mania; to refuse to countenance cleverness which is divorced from cleanness, and genius which is apart from goodness ■■ this is to do as Mordecai did in the gate of the king's palace.

Only God can give this power, since of ourselves we are as reeds shaken by the wind. Sooner might a single ear of wheat resist the breeze that bends all its companions in the same direction, than we stand alone, whilst all our associates bow, unless God Himself enable us. But God is prepared to enable us. Listen: "I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." But the mistake we are so apt to make is to brace ourselves up by resolution and firm determination, in anticipation of some impending struggle. To do this is to fail. Live in Christ, look up into his face, derive from Him strength for the moment and at the moment; and often wrap about thee that exceeding great and precious promise, "I will make him to become a pillar in the temple of my God; and he shall go no more out; and I will write on him the name of my God." Oh to stand pillar■like amid men, bearing up the temple arch of truth, and inscribed with God's name, whilst the crowds go and come on the pavement beneath!

"Greatly begin! though thou have time

But for a line, be that sublime ■■■

Not Failure, but low aim, is Crime!"

Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? Esther 4:14

WHAT grand faith was here! Mordecai was in God's secrets, and was assured that deliverance and enlargement would come to his people from some quarter ■■■ if not from Esther, then from some other; but he was extremely anxious that she should not miss the honour of being her people's emancipator. Therefore he suggested that she had come to her high position for this very purpose.

We none of us know, at the first, God's reasons for bringing us into positions of honour and trust. Why is that young girl suddenly made mistress over that household? Why is that youth taken from the ranks of the working■people, and placed over that great City church? Why is that man put forward in his business, so that he is the head of the firm in which he served as an office■boy? All these are parts of the Divine plan. God has brought them to the Kingdom that He may work out through them some great purpose of salvation. They have the option, however, to serve it or not. They may use their position for themselves, for their own emolument and enjoyment, that they may surround themselves with strong fortifications against misfortune; but in that case they court destruction. Their position and wealth may vanish as suddenly as it came; or ill■health and disaster may incapacitate them.

If, on the other hand, all is used for God, though at the risk of perishing ■■■ for it seemed to Esther as though the action to which Mordecai urged her meant that ■■■ the issue is blessed. Those that love their lives lose them; those that are prepared to forfeit them keep them. The wheat grain which is buried in the soil bears much fruit.

The king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Esther 5:2

WHAT a beautiful type this is for each of us in our approaches to God!

For the repentant sinner. ■■■ You may have said with Esther, "I will go into the king's presence, and if I perish, I perish." But it is impossible for you to perish. None ever perished at the footstool of mercy. God is faithful to his promises, and just to his Son; and He can do no other ■■■ He wants to do no other ■■■ than forgive. As you stand amid the throng that surrounds his throne, He will espy you, and accept you graciously, because of the God■Man who sits at his right hand, and ever lives to intercede. In his name you may come boldly and obtain mercy.

For the suppliant. ■■■ You have a great boon to ask for yourself, or another. The King's court stands open; enter and lodge your petition. He will be very gracious at the voice of your cry: the golden scepter extended, his word passed, that He will answer with the whole resources of his kingdom. The answer may not come at once, or in the way you expected; but no true suppliant was ever turned away without his complaint or cause being graciously considered, and in the best way met and adjusted.

For the Christian worker. ■■■ Surely Esther represents a Paul prepared to be himself accursed, a Luther, a Brainerd. It is a lovely sight when the child of God is so oppressed with the burden of other souls as to sacrifice all else in order to plead their cause. Surely such find favor with God; they are kindred spirits with his own, and He bids them share his throne. God will do anything for those who are consumed by his own

redemptive purpose.

As thou hast said, do even so to Mordecai the Jew. Esther 6:10

HERE indeed was a turning of the tables! Haman doing honour to the humble Jew, who refused to do honour to himself. Surely that day the old refrain must have rung through Mordecai's heart: ■■ "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's." And there was an anticipation of yet other words: ■■ "For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name: behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

How evidently God was working for his child. The gallows, indeed, was being prepared, but it would be used for Haman; whilst the triumph that Haman thought to be preparing for himself was to be used for Mordecai.

This is not an isolated case. Any one who has lived a few years in the world and has observed the ways of God could duplicate it with instances that have come under his own notice. Dr. Gordon told us once of a church in Boston that would not admit colored people; and after a few years it broke up, and the edifice is now occupied by a flourishing colored church.

Trust on, beloved friend, amid scorn, hate, and threatening death. So long as thy cause is God's, it must prevail. He will vindicate thee. Them that honour Him He will honour; whilst those that despise Him shall be lightly esteemed.

"Though the mills of God grind slowly,

Yet they grind exceeding small;

Though with patience He stands waiting,

With exactness grinds He all."

What is thy petition, and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? Esther 7:2

AMID the sensual conceptions of marriage that obtained in this heathen empire there was doubtless a consciousness in the king's breast of the essential unity between himself and his beautiful queen. She was his better self, and in her pleading he heard the voice of his own higher nature. To nothing less than this could he have made so far-reaching a promise. It was not so much Ahasuerus pledging himself to Esther, as Ahasuerus, the king, awakening to the appeal of a nobler Ahasuerus, for the most part buried. Such is the power of a pure and noble character awakening a nobler life. Will you try by your unselfishness and purity to awaken those around you to see and follow an ideal, which shall presently assume the form of the living Christ?

In these words of the king we are reminded that God is willing to do beyond what we ask or think. Not to the half of his kingdom, but to the whole extent of it, has God pledged Himself, "according to the power that worketh in us." But our prayer must be in the name, or nature, of Christ; that is, the nature of Christ must pray in us, and God must recognize Himself come back through the circle of our intercession to Himself. The Spirit must make intercession in us, according to the will of God. When the unselfish, lovely,

and holy nature of Jesus pleads in us by the Holy Ghost, there is nothing that God will not do for us, even to the whole of his kingdom.

"If ye abide in Me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name He will give it you."

Sealed with the king's ring. Esther 8:8

IN chap. iii. 10 the king took the ring from his hand, and gave it to Haman. It is evident that he had resumed it from his chief officer's finger before sending him to execution. It was now entrusted to Mordecai, because it gave validity to the documents that proclaimed liberty to the Jews. Notice those words: "The writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's seal, no man may reverse," and apply them to that sealing with the Holy Ghost, of which we read so often in the New Testament.

On the molten wax the ring, with its royal device, or perhaps the cutting of the royal profile, was pressed, giving sanction, validity, and irreversibility; so on the tender heart of the believer in Christ, the Holy Spirit impresses the likeness of Jesus. The seal does not leave an impression of itself, but of the sovereign; and the Holy Spirit reveals not Himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and aims only to leave the mark and superscription of Christ on the character. The word character is used in Hebrews i. 3 (see Greek). How wonderful, that as the image or character of the Father was impressed on Christ, so the Savior's image and character are impressed on us! "Him hath God the Father sealed," says the evangelist. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye were sealed," says the Apostle.

This sealing us with the likeness of Jesus is God's attestation. It is his witness that we are born from above, and are become his sons and daughters. It is God's sign manual of his intention and decree that we should inherit an irreversible portion; and when God has once passed and sealed it, neither man nor devil can reverse it.

The Jews had rule over them that hated them. Esther 9:1

YES, my reader, a similar reversal awaits us in the near future! Now, the god of this world and his followers bear rule over us, and work their way with the servants of God. They butcher them like sheep, and scatter the ashes of their homes to the winds; and sometimes it seems as though God had forgotten to avenge the cause of his saints. But the hour is coming when the Almighty will arise on our behalf; and to him who has patiently kept his works unto the end, He will give authority over the nations. Listen to these great words: "Behold, I give of the synagogue of Satan, of them which say they are Jews, and they are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." Words more applicable to the case of the Jews in the days of Mordecai, and to the history of the Church, it would be impossible to find.

But mark a notable distinction. In the case of the enemies of the Jewish people, there was no quarter. Destruction and death were meted to those who had breathed out persecution and slaughter. But in the case of Christ and his Church, power is viewed only as an opportunity of securing salvation and life. The Saviour said, after his resurrection, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth; go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: and lo, I am with you always." And the Church says, as through suffering she passes to the

right hand of power, "Lay not this sin to their charge; but out of our persecutors raise apostles to carry the Gospel to the confines of the earth."

Seeking the good of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed. Esther 10:3 (R.V.).

THIS epitaph on the life of a simpleminded, truehearted man, might be yours also. Why should you not from this moment adopt these, twin characteristics? Go about the world seeking the good of people. It does not always mean that you should give them a tract, or a little book. It is much easier to do this than to sacrifice your own good in order to seek theirs. You may be quite sure that some little act of self-sacrifice or thoughtfulness for a weary mother, or crying child, for a sick friend, or for some person who is always maligning and injuring you, would do a great deal in the way of preparing an entrance for the Gospel message. It is thus that the genial spring loosens the earth and prepares the way for the germination of multitudinous life. Count the day lost in which you have not sought to promote the good of some one. Adopt as your own the pious Quaker's motto, "Do all the good you can, to all the people you can, in all the ways you can."

Speak peace to people. ■■ Soothe agitated and irritated souls. Throw oil on troubled waters. There are worried and anxious hearts all around us; a word of sympathy and earnest prayer with them will often remove the heavy load, and smooth out the wrinkles of care. Let the law of kindness be on your lip. Do not say sharp or unkind things of the absent, or allow your lips to utter words that will lead to bitterness or wrath. Seek peace and pursue it. And in order to this, let the peace of God that passeth all understanding keep your mind and heart.

"Come, my beloved! We will haste and go

To those pale faces of our fellowmen!

Our loving hearts, burning with summerfire,

Shall cast a glow upon their pallidness."

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