

(Gospel in the Book of Esther) 2. Esther at the Court for Her People

by Roy Hession

Roy Hession's sermon explores the themes of courage, divine timing, and the spiritual implications of Esther's story in the context of God's providence and human action.

Duration: 53:41

Scripture: Esther 4:16, 1 Corinthians 8:5, 1 Corinthians 15:56

Topics: "Esther"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of living moment by moment in God's love and receiving life from above. He shares a personal story of a woman who experienced the grace of God in forgiving her sins and removing their consequences. The preacher also uses an illustration of a man turning a handle to save a diver in the ocean to explain the nature of the deliverance Jesus has accomplished for humanity. The sermon concludes by mentioning the Old Testament as a pictorial way of teaching the truth of Jesus' work and referencing the plot of Haman against the Jews.

Transcript

Will you turn again to the book of Esther, which I remind you comes after Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and then Esther. We're going to read a little bit again of verse of chapter 4 and move into chapter 5. Verse 10. Again Esther spake unto Hathag and gave him commandment under Mordecai.

All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces do know that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come in unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one lord of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter that he may live. But I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days. And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall their enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place. But thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed.

And who knoweth whether thou come to the kingdom for such a time as this? Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer. Go gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan and fast ye for

me. And neither eat nor drink three days, night or day.

I also and my maidens will fast likewise. And so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law. And if I perish, I perish.

So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther had commanded him. Now it came to pass on the third day that Esther put on her royal apparel and stood in the inner court of the king's house over against the king's house. And the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house over against the gate to the house.

And it was so when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court that she obtained favour in his sight. And the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near and touched the top of the sceptre.

Then said the king unto her, what wilt thou queen Esther? And what is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom. And Esther answered, if it seemed good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him. Then the king said, cause Haman to make haste that he may do as Esther hath said.

So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared. And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, knowing of course that merely coming to the banquet was not the real request she had. What is thy petition? And it shall be granted thee.

And what is thy request? Even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed. Then answered Esther and said, she was in no hurry. My petition and my request is this.

If I found favour in the sight of the king and if it pleased the king to grant my petition and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them and I will do tomorrow as the king hath said. Then went Haman forth that day, joyful and with glad heart. But when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, nor trembled for him as it is literally, he was full of indignation against Mordecai.

Nevertheless, Haman refrained himself. And when he came home, he sent and called for his friends and Zeresh his wife. And Haman told them of the glory of his riches and the multitude of his children and all the things wherein the king had promoted him and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.

Haman said, moreover, yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself. And tomorrow am I invited unto her also with the king. He's getting his head well and truly in the noose.

Yet, he says, all this availeth me nothing so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's table. A good story, even at the level of a story, isn't it? Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high and tomorrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereof. Then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet and the thing please pay them.

And he calls the gallows to be made. Just one or two preliminary remarks before we get down to the subject. Rather like the Irishman who said before he opened his mouth to speak he'd like to say a few words.

I saw a note I'd scribbled down somewhere which I'd got from somewhere else as to why possibly the name of God of Jehovah does not appear in this history. Somewhere I got it that it's very likely that this whole book was lifted out of the chronicles of the kings of Persia. It was just put in as one of the records of their reign.

And the Hebrew copyists copied it out because it was such an important turning point in the history of God's chosen race. And as they copied it out they saw the acrostics, the five hidden acrostics of the name of Jehovah. And as I said in some of the old manuscripts you can see where the Hebrew copyists have made big the letters of Jehovah, J-B-E-H, whatever it is, just certain letters.

Notice that they didn't have any vowels in the Hebrew language. That's just a little matter of interest. Then another preliminary thing I want to say is that though we are looking and learning much about our wonderful redemption accomplished in the Lord Jesus in this Old Testament story, you will understand that we're not basing any teaching on this story.

It would be quite improper to take a piece of history and seek to base teaching about the redemption of Christ on a story in which his name does not even appear. And it's very important that when we handle the Old Testament in this way, and I'm sure the Holy Ghost intends we should, normally one doesn't base teaching on it, but rather we see in it an easily assimilated picture of teaching which is given elsewhere. I should hate people to say these folks at this conference take extraordinary liberties with the Bible.

I don't think we are. The things that we shall see illustrated here are taught everywhere else in Scripture in a very direct way, in many other places. But what we do find, that God has provided in our Old Testament a wonderful picture book.

And although we are adult or supposed to be like children, we find truth presented in a pictorial way, easier to assimilate than when it is given to us in an abstract way. And God knows we're like that. That's why he provided all those Old Testament ritual and sacrifices, to picture beforehand the work that our Lord Jesus was going to accomplish.

But it's all taught clearly in positive forms in our New Testament, but prophesied and illustrated in our own. Now yesterday, I suppose the main weight of our message was concerning the plot that Haman hatched against the Jews, by which plot they all came under sentence of death to be executed on a specific day. We saw that Haman's hatred of the Jews was based on his hatred of one man who himself was a Jew, Mordecai.

And that hatred in turn was based on pride. He had such a terrible pride that he couldn't bear to see anybody not bowing down to him. And because Mordecai wouldn't, therefore he was full of indignation, and he thought scorned to lay hands merely on Mordecai, which he could quite easily do, he planned the complete destruction of all Mordecai's nation.

And we read yesterday that as a result of the plot he hatched, and the permission he got from the king, the posts on the horses went out through the whole 127 provinces of the Empire of the Medes and Persians, with that terrible edict of death, that on a certain day every Jew was to be slain and destroyed at his property plundered, and everywhere those postmen went there was great consternation and mourning. Even the Persians themselves were perplexed at this. Now I'm going to repeat a little of what we said yesterday, because I think we sometimes need to hear things twice to really grasp it.

We saw that Haman was a picture of Satan, and we heard, we understood that Satan is the Hebrew word for adversary. We looked at that passage which gives us a little peep, it would seem, into Satan's origin, that he was the anointed cherub, exalted to a high place in the heavenly hierarchy, even as Haman was exalted by Ahasuerus. And then pride came into his heart, he wanted to be above everybody, he wanted to exalt his throne and to be like the Most High himself, equal with the Most High.

But we saw there was one that would not bow down to him, that was ever above him, it was the Eternal Son, and the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And God's decree was that in all things he should have the preeminence.

And Satan found there was one above whom he couldn't get, and because of that pride and insurrection, God cast him out of heaven. Satan is indeed the fallen angel, and his heart was full of bitterness to the one who'd charity supremacy, who'd been the cause of his casting out, the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father. And he became their enemy, but being able to hit back at God direct, he found his only opportunity was to hit back at God via his children, via the race that God had created as a pleasure for himself.

And in the garden you see Satan, like Haman, hatching his plot. He provoked them to transgress and disobey the one and only prohibition that God had put to them. You see, God had to give a prohibition, how else was he to know whether man was walking in obedience with himself if he never had any chance to disobey? It was a simple test, it could have been simpler, it was so easy.

You can eat of every tree, except just one. There was no hardship. Easiest thing in the world to have gone on for centuries.

But the devil knew that that was the one thing, and he fixed man's eye on that. He blinded man to all that was given, and fixed his eye on the only prohibition. He does the same thing today.

You may eat of every tree of the garden. How much God has given us is just one or two things. And instead of being content with all he has given, we get obsessed with the limitations that are put upon us.

And modern life, and modern teaching, and modern psychology fixes us on the limitations. We must be free! We must express ourselves! We must be free, able to endow, why should there be any prohibition? And we forget how much he's given, and are made to concentrate on the few, beneficent prohibitions. Until at last we, like Adam, feel we're martyrs! And the forbidden thing is done.

Well now, the purpose of Satan causing man thus to sin, was not merely to do something unethical, not merely to wound the heart of his Heavenly Father, but he knew something of the holiness of God. He'd become the object of that holiness in its judgment himself. And he knew what a Holy God couldn't but do when sin came in.

He knew by then experience of the wages of sin was death. And he wanted to involve man in the same misery that he had got into. And that very misery of man, thus engineered by Satan, would be his surest way of striking back at God.

For God mourns when he sees man in misery. Even when that misery is the result of man's own sin, even when it has to be implemented by God's own edict, he has no pleasure in the death of the sinner. He mourns over a lost world.

The headmistress of this school has a very wonderful picture. It's a copy of the original, and it was given to her by Mr. Fred Mitchell in gratitude for the fact that she allows the CIM to come here every day, every year, for a conference. It's a lovely copy of the original which she allowed us to display it once.

I think she displays it to the girls only once a year, lest it should become too familiar. And it pictures the world, a great globe, and fallen right over the world is the Lord Jesus with his head buried, and his hands upheld in agony. That's all.

What a servant. What sorrows are his? Who provoked them? Amen. Satan.

Just what he wanted. Heaven plunged into mourning by man's sin. And involving the Godhead in the most costly thing the Godhead has ever had to do.

Now that is the purpose of Satan, towards God. His purpose towards us is to make us miserable, to bring us into darkness and to death. And I think we need to understand that wherein the power of sin consists, and the power of Satan.

You might think a man who's under the power of Satan is an absolute dissolute man who's staggering from one pub to another. Not, he is. But he isn't the only one.

And when you talk about the power of sin you may get the idea that it implies someone who's played with a sin for so long that now it's become a habit and they can't stop it. No, the power of sin consists in something worse than even that. The power of sin consists in its guilt.

Which guilt is imposed upon us by the very law of God. And it is Satan who takes advantage of that situation to see that that sense of guilt is well and truly rubbed in. And he brings a lot of other things too.

But that's the basis of his power. Now there's a, I have had myself always thought, and I think perhaps it's still generally thought, that I've come to see that the guilt of sin and the power of sin are not two things, two different things. If you really do think of the guilt of sin and the power of sin as two separate things, you are forced to preach a first blessing and a second blessing.

If they're two states of sin, then there needs to be two works of grace. And that is the basis, and it's a theological basis, of the teaching of entire sanctification, which some of us have found a great trouble to us. It's nearly been the death of us in the past to try and get that second blessing, but never seem to stay, if we got it.

You see, the first blessing deals with the guilt of sin, when I'm saying, but there's something further, for the power of sin. And even this difference is enshrined in that famous hymn, Rock of Ages. It says, save me from its guilt and power.

The guilt is one thing and the power is another. Well, I can only share with you, I dare not be dogmatic, but I'm coming increasingly to see, and it carries with my own experience, that the power of sin is its guilt. You haven't got to be repeating a sin again and again to be under its dominion.

A man may have committed a particular sin once in his youth, and he may never have repeated it again. But for the rest of his life, he may be under its dominion, because the guilt of it is still there. The accusation of it is still there.

The guilty conscience of it is still there. There's a story that came out, I think, of the Reader's Digest, of a man of about 70 or 80. He went to the police to confess that he had stolen a football challenge cup, when he was a boy of 17, and melted it down and sold the silver.

And he says, I'm the man who's stolen that thing. And so they had to look back in their records, and sure enough, 57 years before, there was the record of a cup stolen, and they could never find, they never found out who had stolen it. And they said, how is it that you, after all this time, have come to confess this? He says, I'm an old man, and this thing is troubling.

He'd been under the dominion of that thing for 57 years. He hadn't gone on stealing silver challenge cups. Only one challenge cup, and he was under the dominion of it.

That was sin's power. Satan had got him. He says, you can't pray, you don't go to church.

And I'll tell you the reason why men and men don't go to church. First, I think men have a more acute guilty conscience than women. Because, I'm not joking, because, and I mean this seriously, our sex battles are more intense.

And a man knows his failures more acutely than a girl does. She has them, but they're more subtle. Why is it that men don't go to church? Unconverted men, as readily as unconverted women.

They will say, you can't go to church, you know what you've done. Men will be always doing it. It's under dominion of sin.

You see, it's just a little more acute. That's all. But equally so, don't let the girls think they're less sinners than men.

They are just as bad in each and our particular way, that the man perhaps has a more acute sense of it. He's under the dominion of it. Satan has got him.

And the reason I say again, as I have come to see it, why Satan wants me to sin, is not merely that I should do something unethical. Not merely that I should wound God or wound somebody else, but that I should as a result fall into his hands. So he can accuse me, he's got a right to.

My heart accuses me, and darkness comes, and with that many, many other things, all the rest of the problems. Yes, he may get you to get into a habit about it, but the basic thing is guilt, which Satan has enforced because of the law. Now, as I say, we're pausing on this because unless we see the nature of our bondage, we shan't understand the nature of the deliverance which Jesus has accomplished for poor people, which is gloriously pictured, as we shall see later on in this story.

May we look at one verse about the work of the law. 1 Corinthians 15 56. 1 Corinthians 15 56.

The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin. What gives sin its strength? It says here is the law, the ten commandments, the moral standards. First of all, the law and the moral standards seem to provoke sin.

If you're told not to do a thing, it seems to make you want to do it. And Paul says in Romans 7, that sin took occasion by the commandment. The effect of the law on the human heart is the same as the effect of pouring water online.

It steams, it gets all hot. Well, you say, look, it gets some more water. Put it out.

The more water you put on it, the more it steams. And that's the effect of the holy prohibitions of God on hearts which are born centred on themselves. And so the law of God is rather, and the commandments and all these moral standards we have, rather than weakening sin, seem to give it strength.

But I believe Paul means something even deeper than that, when he says the strength of sin is the law. If we see the power of sin is its ability to accuse us, can you not see that the higher a man's standards are, the more sensitive his spirit, the deeper will be his accusation of himself. And he's the more under sin, under the power of sin, than a man who cares little about moral standards at all.

Therefore it's quite evident that the way of embracing higher moral standards is not the way of life, but it turns out to be, in experience, the way of a deeper death. How foolish then, says Paul, for men to think, to seek to get right with God by the law, by espousing high standards. It only adds to the burden of sin.

They give it strength. It has the more power to accuse us. I know how often I've been accused by the high standards I've set myself.

I wouldn't have had quite such an accusation had they not been so high. They did nothing to give me strength, but they did everything but more to condemn me. And back of all this is the plot of Satan.

Hebrews 4 verse 14, we see his role in all this picture. Hebrews 4 14, I'm sorry, Hebrews 2 14. For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, Jesus also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power, the authority of death.

That is the death. In other words, sin has given Satan his authority over the human race. His authority to keep you down.

His authority to see that you taste of the wages of sin is death in all its many forms. For as we saw yesterday, it isn't only eternal death, there are many deaths we die before that final second death. And even the saint, who will never taste the second death because he's saved, may know many a minor death because of the sins that he allows and doesn't repent of.

And so that is the plot that Satan has had. And men go on burdened and in the dark, not knowing how burdened they are, till one day they lose that burden. Staggering from problem to problem.

For someone has said, when you're a problem, everything else is a problem. Don't blame the problem, maybe the problem's in your own heart. And it's exactly what Satan wants.

And his purpose isn't merely to make us miserable, but in making us miserable, to hurt the heart of deity, who loves the sons of men so much. Well then, that is what is pictured, I take it, by this terrible plot of death. Please turn the cassette over now, do not fast wind it in either direction.

Well then, that is what is pictured, I take it, by this terrible plot of death, which Haman hatched, by which he intended to destroy the whole Jewish race. And there was the answer. The provision beforehand was by a chain of circumstances, which we've seen.

A Jewess was elevated to be the queen of the realm. There she was, one of this very people within the king's court. Secondly, Mordecai, her uncle, who occupied, it seems, some sort of official position, a minor civil servant maybe, had heard of a plot against the king's life some years before.

He'd reported it. The two eunuchs had been put to death, and the king was saved. And that was duly recorded in the Chronicles.

But neither of these two facts were known, at least not generally. Certainly to say, more than once, Esther did not show her people. She did not disclose, and Mordecai told her not to disclose where she came from.

And Mordecai's act was also largely unknown. The king didn't know it, or if he had, had forgotten it. Had Haman known that Esther was a Jewess, that the king owed his life to Mordecai, he never would have made the plot he did, for he would have known it was doomed to failure.

He did it in England, and he only succeeded in circumventing his own downfall. And so it was that when this terrible situation did arrive, Esther had come to the kingdom for such a time as this. Provision was made before the need ever arose.

And that is wonderfully true of the grace of our God in providing redemption for us from the fraud and the sin. God has provided, ahead of time, his answer, his remedy for the people whom he loves so much and whom Satan plans to destroy. Satan has devised means whereby God's children should be destroyed.

But God has devised means whereby his banner should not be expelled. And the wonderful thing is this, God's means anti-dated Satan's. He devised means for man's restoration even before man ever fell in sin.

And so God didn't have to look round suddenly for a remedy to scratch his head. The remedy had already been provided in his mind and purpose. Will you turn to Revelation 13, verse 8? Verse 8, we break into a sentence here.

All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, that's Satan, whose names are not written in the book of life, of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. From the foundation of the world, even before sin came, in the mind of God, Jesus was the Lamb slain. Redemption was accomplished for sin before there was any ever sin to be cleansed or paid for.

It just needed to be fulfilled in time. But it was a settled, accomplished thing in eternity. You have the same thought in 1 Peter, chapter 1, verse 20.

Verse 19 says, we are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. Sin and the wreckage that Satan has caused has not taken God by surprise, had he known it. Had Satan known it, he never would have attempted this way of attempt.

But it's quite clear that Satan and the rulers of this world didn't know it. Will you turn to 1 Corinthians 2, 8, and you have something along that line told us. Verse 7, 1 Corinthians 2, verse 7. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, 1 Corinthians 2, 7, even the hidden mystery which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew.

For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Had he known it, Satan would have known that even his victory apparently in Eden was doomed to failure. But he didn't know it.

And like Haman of old, he staggered on in what he thought was victory, which thank God as we shall see has proved to be his complete defeat. And so it is that when the situation arises of need, of darkness, and

misery, of complications and problems, we find that Jesus has come to the kingdom for such a time as that. Let's have a look at the Lord Jesus having come to the kingdom for such a time as this, 1 John 2, 1. The epistle of John, not the gospel, chapter 2, verse 1. And if any man sin, we have an advocate.

Hasn't taken God by surprise. We've got an Esther. We've got a friend at court, a barrister who answers on our behalf.

With the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He doesn't say, oh no, he didn't do it. Oh yes, he has to admit the truth.

We have to admit it too. And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours also, but also for the sins of the whole world. And that's the lovely thing.

We find he loved me ere I knew him. We find that our worst failures haven't taken him by surprise. They've been anticipated in his death upon the cross, in his rising again, and there in glory is our advocate.

It doesn't say if you repent, you have an advocate. It says if you sin, even if you don't repent, you've got an advocate. But it's when you repent and come to his footstool, that the peace that he effected for us through his blood becomes effectual in our heart, and we're reconciled to God and restored to him.

If you look again at the familiar verse, Hebrews 7.25, you see our Esther in this time of need within the veil. For us, Hebrews 7.24 we'll read from. But this man, because he continueth ever hath an unchangeable priesthood, wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Dear one, you've got an high priest, you've got an advocate, you've got a friend at court, and he's not merely the son of God, he's the son of man. There's a chorus we used to sing, and we perhaps will dig it up one day. His name is Jesus.

He is my friend. He's human as well as divine. I want you to meet him.

I want you to greet him, this wonderful saviour of mine. And friends, the devil wants you to believe he's against you. How can he be when he died for you, when he bears those bleeding wounds in glory, presenting them on your behalf? And it matters not what the situation may be, what the failure may be, nor how difficult your temperament is, nor how often you get under its power.

You've only got to go to Jesus, to his footstool, and you've got a friend at court who knows how to deal with a sinner's case, how to cleanse him, how to restore him to God, how to deliver him from all his accusations and bring him out into the sunlight, how to solve his problem. If only he'll learn how and where to repent, because all this provision is to sinners who confess themselves to be such. But this is sometimes to see in a situation where you're the sinner.

It's a wonderful thing to know first how to repent, and then to be taught of God where to repent. While you're the righteous man, the sinner's advocate hardly applies to you. But if God can help you to see where you're the sinner in the situation, the whole of the work of the Lord Jesus is on our behalf, and we shall find his power put forth for our deliverance, and the solution of the very problems which our sin has contributed to.

Now for the last part, I want to think, say three things about the intercession of Esther on behalf of her people. The first thing I want to, I've seen afresh, is the fact that she identified herself, in fact she was identified completely, with these people under sentence of death. She didn't seem to say, well, I'm a queen, it doesn't apply to me.

She says it applies to me as well. If they die, I die. You can see that in chapter 7 of Esther, verse 4. For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish.

I and my people. It says the edict is upon them, and it's upon me too. Your queen is going to die in the slaughter if this edict stands.

And even Mordecai, I had to point that out to Esther, in chapter 4, verse 13, when he sent that message to her, think not with thyself, but thou shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews. And therefore their death was her death, completely identified. On the other hand, if she could obtain life for herself as a Jewess, it would also mean life for the whole nation which she represented.

And that's the great thing that the scriptures teach us about our high priest, our advocate, about the fact that he makes intercession for us. It's based on the fact that our death is his death. If the sinner dies who's believed on Jesus, it would seem that the saviour must die too.

He has linked himself indissolubly with the sinner. He took my sins and my sorrows, he made them his very own. He took that burden to Calvary and suffered and died alone.

He took my sins as his own. As it says in 2 Corinthians 5, he was made sin. And because he was made sin, the wages that were due to me are now due to him.

And that's what happened on the cross. My death became his death. He never would have had to have died but for the fact that my sins deserve death.

And in identifying voluntarily himself with my sins, then my death becomes his. And it did indeed become his. But the opposite holds good.

If that's the case, his life, his liberation from that death must be mine. You see Jesus was our surety. I was the one who'd incurred the debt but he accepted responsibility for it.

Maybe you thought well that's all right, he's got a big bank balance out of his infinite holiness, he can pay off the world's sin and still remain intact. But the shock the world has got is this, the moment the Lord Jesus became surety for the world, the world's sins were such that they even extinguished his eternal relation, temporally, with the Father. And our surety had to go into debt for us.

But if that surety comes out, it can only mean that somewhere along the line the debt's been paid. He wouldn't have been out if the debt hadn't been paid. And the fact that he rose again meant that the debt had been paid.

The blood that he shed was of such value to God, gave such infinite satisfaction that it was enough for the sins, all the sins for which he'd stood surety. And he was out. But if the short is free, the sinner is free too.

His freedom is the sinner's freedom. There's the story told of Wesley's father, a vicar of Epworth was it? And he was put in jail for debt. In the old days when men did that foolish thing, they put men in jail for debt.

How could a man pay his debt if he was in jail? It couldn't work. But we could imagine, could we not, of someone offering to stand surety for Mr. Wesley? And Mr. Wesley being grateful, he didn't want to have to leave his family destitute. He would think perhaps that the man had plenty of money to pay off his debt, instead of which he sees his surety go to prison.

Well, I thought you could have done it, but man, do you know what your debt was? Maybe Mr. Wesley might not have known the full extent of his debt. Not even his surety could have paid it. Out of his own account, he had to go into prison.

Well now, in a sense, Wesley's not in prison. Wesley's father's not in prison. In a sense, he's free yet he's not free.

How does he feel when he meets those creditors? He's not free. But if three days later his short is out, then Wesley knows somehow it's been paid, and he's free. He bore on the tree the sentence for me, and now both the surety and the sinner are free.

You are as free as he is from the accusation of sin. Jesus puts you in the same standing with God as he has now. You are as free from accusation and condemnation as a son of God.

And that it is, whereas our death was his death, his life and his liberation is ours. And if Esther gets life for herself, she's got it for our whole people. And that's that on which his intercession for us is based.

Just check that by looking at John 14, 19. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me, because I live. Because I'm out from sin's judgment, you can be too, you will be.

Because I live, you shall live also. Romans 4.25, you have the same great thought. Jesus, who was delivered, as we imagined Wesley's surety was, into prison, who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

His freedom is our freedom. His clearing of sin's accusation means our clearing too. And that's the one who's my advocate, my high priest.

Then a second thing about Esther's intercession for her people is that she based it on her personal merits in the eyes of her husband. If you turn to chapter 7, verse 3, you will see how she speaks. Chapter 7, verse 3. Then Esther the queen answered and said, if I have found favor in thy sight, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request, if I have found favor.

If I don't find favor in thy sight, then the whole thing falls down to the ground. But this is her great appeal. You'll see her again saying it twice in chapter 8, verse 5. She repeats it.

Chapter 8, verse 5. And said, if it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and the thing seemed right before the king, and I be pleasing in his sight. She little knew how attracted she was to the king. He couldn't refuse her.

He'd chosen her before all other women, and the moment she started basing her plea based on whether she was pleasing in his sight, she'd got it. And the Lord Jesus bases his intercession on our behalf, on his own merits. If I be pleasing, I'm a sinner's surety, I pay the debt, I'm free, but, and if I be pleasing, if this blood is acceptable to thee, it's enough.

Set them free. On Sunday night, Fred Barth added a verse to the famous hymn, nothing either great or small. Listen to it.

God accepted what was done, raised him from the dead, welcomed this victorious son, crowned his royal head. If he's satisfied with Jesus, God is satisfied with a penitent who knows how to hide in Jesus. If the blood of the Lord Jesus, if the sacrifice he offered there is enough for God on your behalf, why isn't it enough for us? It may be because we aren't willing to own up to the whole truth.

But let a man be willing to own up to whole truth and blame nobody but himself and the Holy Ghost will show him the merits of the Lord Jesus with the Father on his behalf. My salvation doesn't depend on my appreciation of the blood of Jesus. It depends on God.

When I see the blood, and how do I know God's satisfied? God accepted what was done, raised him from the dead. Or another hymn says, if Jesus had not paid the debt, he ne'er had been at freedom's end. And as if another hymn says, the golden gates have welcomed thee, and we who've repented and come to thee may enter in.

And so it is the whole Godhead on our side. And I think the only thing left for us is just two simple things, repentance and faith. We've got to know how to repent.

You see, it's Satan who's engineered it, but it was I who sinned. God doesn't want me to struggle a bit better, but to acknowledge the truth. And the moment I've been willing to do that, and I go to Jesus, all the grace of God is at my disposal.

And it matters not what the situation is that I've created. If I'm willing to acknowledge I'm the one, I'll find that Jesus not only forgives the messer, and puts him at peace with God, but stage by stage he un-messes the mess, and leaves you with nothing but praise. And from above he sends down life and life more abundantly.

Just a last illustration. Let's suppose you are in a boat, and you see a little rowing boat, and you see a man with a bit of machinery, he's turning a handle. You say, what are you turning that handle for? Oh, he says, I've got a friend down there.

What do you mean? Well, he can't see the pipe, and there's a diver down in the depths who would otherwise die for the fact that he's got a friend up there. And just as long as that friend turns the handle, that man down there is going to live. Should anything happen, and he doesn't, he would fail indeed, but he isn't going to fail.

He turns the handle. And if you could dive down and see that man at the bottom of the ocean, you see, then how do you live down here? Human beings aren't like fish. Shall I tell you how I live? I've got a friend up there.

Moment by moment I'm kept in his love. Moment by moment I've life from above, as I take a penitent place at any point when he shows me. And these whole provisions of grace are for such a time of sin, for such a plight as you have got into.

In one of the early weeks, I tried to give a message in which I think I rather boasted of the grace of God. I don't know, afterwards I hope my, I rather boasted in the grace of God what it'll do, not only with sin, but with its consequences. And then a woman came to me afterwards, she told me a story.

I was on the spot. I said, I prayed, I said, Lord, we've boasted in your grace, now don't let us down. That night afterwards, she lost her birth.

And the next day, wonder of the times, a letter came. She had at last repented of the years, and the letter came, which gave every promise that that broken hope, which gave the victorious renewed. I just wanted to hear the news.

And thank her, oh yes. But nothing much happened until she was willing to be broken. She said, me Lord.

And then she found that Jesus had come to the kingdom for such a time as this, and it wasn't too much for him, it never is. He's a sinner's friend right the way through. So this is real good news for us.

Yes, we know something of the machinations of Satan, but there's someone who's foretold it, who's ready to put forth his grace and power and his deliverance, on behalf of any penitent among us. Let us pray. Lord Jesus, we're so grateful for this good news.

Because Lord, we do find ourselves in plights and positions, which we've been contributed to, which sometimes we are solely responsible for. Darkness and coldness, and bondage, and problem. But we thank thee there's nothing too hard for thee.

There's no problem that thou canst not solve, because thou hast already dealt with a basic one. That of our sin, in thy body on the tree. Lord Jesus, do educate us as to how to repent, and go to thee, and where to repent, so that we can become the recipients of this abounding grace.

We ask it in thy dear name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18710.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/roy-hession/gospel-in-the-book-of-esther-2-esther-at-the-court-for-her-people/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net