

(Gospel in the Book of Esther) 5. Mordecai Speaks Peace to All His People

by Roy Hession

The victorious life is not about conquering sin, but about Jesus conquering us, and we enter into this victory through repentance and faith, acknowledging our guilt and shame and appropriating God's righteousness.

Duration: 54:50

Scripture: Esther 9:20

Topics: "Esther"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the victory of Mordechai and the deliverance of the Jewish people as depicted in the book of Esther. The speaker emphasizes how Mordechai's enemy was ultimately defeated and how Mordechai himself was elevated to a position of power. Additionally, the speaker highlights how the Jewish people throughout the 127 provinces were able to participate in this victory by standing up for their lives and even attacking their enemies. The speaker draws parallels between the events in Esther and the redemption found in Jesus Christ, suggesting that the book serves as a picture of our own redemption.

Transcript

Shall we turn once again to the closing chapters of the book of Esther. The more I read this wonderful book, the more sure I am that the Holy Spirit designed it to be a picture of our redemption in the Lord Jesus Christ. The picture is too accurate, sometimes down to details that we haven't been able to mention.

It's too accurate a picture for this to have happened by accident. The Holy Spirit, even before Jesus came, was filled with the thrilling news he knew was coming and he had to give us precious foreshadowings of the Lord Jesus. Now we're going to read chapter 9 from verse 20, and that little closing one, chapter 10.

And Naudekei wrote these things and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far, to establish this among them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and the fifteenth day of the same Yeri, as the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy and from mourning into a good day, that they should make them days of feasting and joy and of sending portions one to another and gifts to the poor. And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun and as Naudekei had written unto them, because Haman the son of Hamadathah, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the

Jews to destroy them and had cast poor, that is to say, lost, to consume them and to destroy them. But when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device which he devised against the Jews should return upon his own head and that he and his son should be hanged on the gallows.

Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name of Purim. Therefore all the words of this letter and of that which they had seen concerning this matter and which had come unto them, the Jews ordained and took upon them and upon their seed and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail that they would keep these two days according to their writing and according to their appointed time every year. And that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province and every city.

And that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed. Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail and Naudekei the Jew, wrote with all authority to confirm this second letter of Purim. And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth, to confirm these days of Purim in their times appointed according as Naudekei the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them.

And as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry. And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim. It was written in the book.

And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land and upon the isles of the sea, and all the acts of his power and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Naudekei, whereunto the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? For Naudekei the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed. What a lovely happy ending to this story. You can't put it down now, not without affecting tech recording.

I'll stand back a bit. We put on an extra loud speaker because of my terrible habit. You take it off.

All right, then you can turn it up, and if I'm lowering my voice, raise a hand over there or there. Now, yesterday morning, we, or the last two mornings, we've been seeing two things. First of all, the victory of Naudekei.

How his enemy was humbled and hung on the very gallows which he had intended for Naudekei, and how Naudekei was lifted to the supreme place in the realm. And then yesterday, we saw a second thing. Not only the victory of Naudekei, but how the people scattered throughout the 127 provinces actually entered in to that victory and gained their freedom.

It wasn't enough for this great thing to be done in the palace. The people had to do something very simple. They couldn't have done it but for that, those changed conditions there, but they had to do it.

As the letters went out, they understood they had a legal right to do two things. To stand for their lives and even to go on to the attack and put to death all their enemies, all the members of the anti-Jewish, the anti-Semitic party. It's quite clear that if they hadn't put them to death, the anti-Semitic party intended to put them to death, and the edict gave them the legal right to turn the tables, and the fear of Naudekei was upon the people that none dared to resist.

And so there were two things, the victory of Naudekei in the palace and the simple act of standing for their lives and entering into that victory out in the promises. Now we've seen that they picture two very important things. First of all, the victory of the Lord Jesus on our behalf.

And he gained that victory by submitting to the very day that Satan thought was his greatest weapon. But in dying there, he didn't die for his own sins, for he had none. As he hung there, the Lord laid on him the iniquity of his own, and his blood fully paid the price of the world's dreadful sins, and thereby robbed Satan of the ground of his power over the sons of men.

We've repeated it so often, I'll repeat it again. By death, Jesus has destroyed him that had the authority of death, that he might deliver them who, through fear of death or fear of anything else, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. One of the great hymns, one of Bonner's hymns, has a lovely line which says, great victory or sin and death and woe that needs no second fight and leaves no second foe.

I don't think for a moment I've adequately spoken of that victory. The extent of it, the depth of it, the height to which it brings the sons of men. We can only use fake words, but oh, I believe God wants to give us personal revelations of the wealth of that which the Son of God did for the poor imprisoned sons of men.

Yes, we've seen and tried to see something more of this great thing that Jesus has done for the sons of men, but then we also saw how we enter into that victory, and we saw it was by repentance which is implied in faith. The emphasis invariably in the New Testament is we get saved by faith, that we're justified by faith, and whereas repentance is much talked of, faith is sometimes more spoken of in the New Testament than repentance, but it is always implied. Repentance is always implied.

Take the scripture, for instance, one that has been a blessing to me. To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. That simple faith that God justifies the ungodly is counted for a righteousness which that man doesn't otherwise possess, and he's counted as righteous.

The blood of Christ can make it, but he has to believe on him who justifies not the righteous, but the ungodly. Doesn't that imply that you confess yourself to be such, and that you do so in specific matters too, and therefore saving faith can only be really exercised on a man who acknowledges himself to be bankrupt, and therefore we enter by faith, but we mustn't get that idea as a sort of mental persuading yourself. I must confess I've sung that hymn, Standing on the Promises.

I must stand, I must stand, I must stand. I haven't repented. I'm cold, or the standing of the world won't help me unless I see the causes of my coldness, my ruin, my fresh bankruptcy.

Then in that place faith lays hold, these gracious provisions, standing in my helplessness and defilement on the promises, I now conceive perfect present cleansing in the blood for me, and we enter by repentance and the faith that in its helplessness accepts and stands upon the promises that speak of this great victory of sin and death and woe, that needs no second fight and leaves no second foe. Now, I'm not now recapping. We're going on to that from the last, yesterday morning, but I want to cover a little fresh ground, and we didn't have time yesterday.

That, as I see it, is victory. There's a great deal of talk and a great deal of right longing for the victorious life, but I think we've all got muddled. I have in the past, and certain lines of victorious life teaching have nearly been the death of me, because I couldn't get there, and all I got from that victorious life teaching

was a bad conscience.

Well, and so the Lord's had to show us that everything in the Christian life is just so much simpler and, in a sense, so much easier than we've made it for ourselves. To be free from the guilt of sin, and all that goes with it, is victory. I know that the normal idea of victory is to get to a place where you no longer have need to repent, where the wings begin to sprout between your shoulders.

Well, my wings have taken a long time coming. But can we go back to something I think we sought to establish in the earlier mornings, that the power of sin basically consists in its guilt. Much else comes on top of that.

Remove that, and we can really sing the song of a soul set free. Now, I know that with the first great day we'll be lost, the guilt of our sins, but Satan knows how to trip us up, and his purpose in tripping us up is, as I've said before, to give us again that sense of cut-offness, of darkness, of lack of peace, and of guilt, of not being good enough, and feeling out of the fellowship of the people, not being able to join with them in their praises. And if you feel like that, well, why continue? Why not compromise with the world, and have some of the things the world gives you? And one thing leads to another, but it's based on the fact of the guilt of sin, and the fact that my sin, whatever it is, has given Satan his opportunity and legal right to bring much else.

Now, when that is removed, his superstructure of accusation, and misery, and fear topples down, and we are free. And more than that, the consciousness of grace reaching me again and again gives me a motive for holiness that all the standards of a victorious life never will. I'm given the motive of love for the one who's reached me again.

You see, Paul is at pains to contrast faith with works. We're saved by faith, and we get everything else by faith, and not by striving or works. Well, you say, don't you do anything? Oh yes, faith works.

Faith works harder than works does. And there's a little verse in Galatians which says, faith which worketh by love. Look that up.

I haven't got the reference here, but it's about chapter three somewhere. Faith which worketh by love. I cannot work my soul to save.

For that my Lord hath done, but I would work like any slave for love of God's dear Son. And the man who knows this basic victory is a man who loves his emancipator, and who fears to play with that which wounds him. He may be tripped up, but oh how quickly he repents, because love has got hold of his heart.

And how zealous the emancipated soul, emancipated by the grace of God and not by its own efforts, is in the service of his Savior. As I say, speaking for myself and I, I think we're always safe to judge other people by ourselves. We're always told not to do it.

It's the safest thing in all the world, because we're all made in the same mold. Someone has said only some people are moldier than others. That's all right to say, as long as you see that you're the moldier one.

Now, I want to have a little digression here to speak of what victory really is a little more in detail. I can only share with you my own thoughts and how it's come to me, and maybe it will help you. As I see it, there are three aspects of victory for us.

First of all, there is Christ's victory over me, and this is absolutely fundamental. The victorious life is not you conquering sin, but Jesus conquering you, and that continues. Not me overcoming sin, Jesus overcoming me.

Not me trying to be better and better, but Jesus doing to me what he did to Jacob, breaking me, overcoming me to confess sin. Now, that's the basis of victory. That is, that's a victorious man who lets Jesus overcome him and break him, and out he comes with the thing that's gone wrong.

It's a wonderful thing. I can give you only but an illustration. We could give it for our own experience, but one story comes to my mind.

William and Negendra and myself were in Brazil once, and with a dear American missionary who became very close to us and who shared our vision very completely. And we were at a certain conference, and perhaps it was true, the organizers didn't quite see the vision as to which way the conference should go. And our messages were, so to speak, covered over with a lot of other messages pointing in varying directions.

And it could have been said that perhaps what we had to say was getting lost in all the different emphases that were given by different speakers in that conference. Actually, we had to trust the Lord that he wouldn't let it get lost, and he didn't. But our American friend, he really felt strongly about this, and we were sitting around the table with some of the leaders of this conference, and he was really telling them, very politely, of course, not very strong, but really trying to show them that they ought to see to it that the conference had one end and not many.

It was quite gentle, but it was critical. You could tell that by the fact that they were defending themselves very nicely, very gently, but you could tell. He said this, then they said something else.

And by the way, that's always the effect of being critical. It makes the other person defend themselves. And as this conversation went on, one of us whispered to our friend, I think you're being critical.

And of course, he was being critical on our behalf, but we've said, nonetheless, it was being critical. So he went silent, and the conversation went on, and then suddenly he broke the silence. He said, brothers, God has shown me, I'm sorry, I've been criticising you.

Will you please forgive me? Oh, no, no, you haven't been criticising us. I've been criticising you, and I've been the one that's wrong. Well, the whole fellowship took a different turn and entered onto a new plane.

That was victory. It wasn't my friend Ernie Gilmore overcoming sin, but Jesus Christ overcame Ernie that day. Who likes, in the middle of a thing, where you thought you were so right and the other person so wrong, to have admit that you were wrong.

Now, that's ever the basis of victorious life. And you and I aren't anywhere near victory unless we're willing for Jesus to overcome us, and conquer us, and take us captive of each new point. That's the first aspect.

His victory over me, not my victory over sin. Then there's a second aspect of victory. His victory for me.

And this is that aspect that we've been thinking of in the book of Esther. I would call this the sinner's victory, because it's only appropriated to the man who confesses himself to be such. It isn't the saint's victory, it's the sinner's victory.

Sounds almost like a contradiction in terms. Let me suppose an instance which could be very easily quoted in actual cases, but just a theoretical instance which is so common. Here's a brother who loves the Lord, and he's been in fellowship with his brethren closely, but God tells him, you haven't been in the light with them as you should.

And so, Jesus overcomes him. He's going to be truthful to them. And he tells them of perhaps a shameful failure in the past.

Well, there's a sense in which we can praise for that victory. But I can see several of those brethren who've heard that saying to Mother Mother, that brother still needs to get the victory, or God give him the victory. Now what do they mean? Do they mean, will you bring him to a place where he'll never do that thing again? Well, suppose the sort of thing that he confessed is something he will never do again.

Hardly conceivable. Because its consequences might be so sad, and so on. Oh no, we aren't praying that he won't do it again.

We're praying that he'll get the victory. Why? Well, when you had to come out into the light, how do you feel? Terribly ashamed. Hardly lift up your face.

You don't seem to be able to praise. You say, well, that's what I really am. How terrible.

Victory is when that man praises. And he sees to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that declares him to be right, who admits himself to be wrong, that man's faith is counted for a righteousness which is as great as that of George Muller, or the man who's never failed. That's victory.

And to be coming into that victory continually and quickly. For some of us, there's an unnecessary time lag, not only over big transgressions, but over some small transgressions. And we repent and mourn, and mourn and are sad.

Oh, what a wonderful thing is, if we so saw the blood of Jesus, the finished work, the righteousness which is there for the one who admits himself to be wrong, and we quickly repented and out into freedom. Now, this is the victory which we've been really thinking of, and I would say is, once again, basic. The first is his victory over me, continually, and then his victory for me, which I enter in by repentance and faith.

You remember that phrase where God had to reprove Samuel for mourning over the downfall of Saul? God had to remove Saul as a failure for being king, and Samuel prayed to God all night for that king. Oh, give him another chance. Oh, what a pity he had such wonderful possibilities, such a fine-looking fellow.

And in the morning, God had to say, how long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him? Take your horn of oil, and anoint his successor, even David. And sometimes that's a trouble with us. We're not getting into victory because we're mourning for Saul.

We're not really mourning for sin. We're not mourning in true repentance as to what our sin has done to him. We're mourning for ourselves that we haven't improved any more than we have, that after all these years, here's this failure again.

And what will people think? We're mourning for Saul, instead of praising for Jesus and his blood. I haven't time to give more illustrations of this, but I could give illustrations of two people who had the same failure, and came into the light together. One of them, the next day he was out praising and being used of God.

The other was still saying, oh dear, a missionary feeling like this, or a preacher feeling like this. And the reason was one accepted himself to be exactly what God said he was. He was reconciled to his own wickedness.

He accepted that all the Bible said about fallen man was true of him, and he entered straight in to that righteousness which the blood of Jesus proffered him, that rightness with God, perfect and entire. The other, as I remember a brother telling me, said, I was sort of licking my wounds. I was mourning for Saul.

Well, I've been all too slow. But that's the way, and that's victory. Oh, it's a great day of victory, when the sinner rejoices in God his Savior.

If God before me, the sinner who's repented, who can be against me? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Shall Christ, who died for me? He can't, because he's died for me. Shall God, who justifies me? He can't do two things at the same time. He can't condemn me and justify me.

There's nobody left. You can stand before your brothers, emancipated, forgiven, and give a sinner's testimony, who's been lifted up and forgiven and set free. Now, that's victory.

Then there's a third aspect of victory, which we can call his victory in me. Now, this certainly is a little nearer the popular conception, but it does not stand by itself. It's based on, first of all, his victory over me, as I break the conviction, and then my coming into this victory of the cross.

And as I do so, I'm made a partaker of the very life and nature and disposition of the Lord Jesus increasingly. The picture of the vine and the branch helps here, perhaps. He's the vine.

I'm not the vine. I haven't got to produce victory. I can't.

All I can produce are the works of the flesh, never the fruit of the spirit. But in that branch, there's the life of the vine, the risen Lord Jesus, and the fruits which are produced are never characteristic of me. The works of the flesh are me.

Bad temper, irritation, jealousy, impurity. And if I'm trying to improve my life, that's all I get out of it. And even my righteousness will only minister to my pride.

But if I'm learning to walk with Jesus, allowing him to have victory over me, and come as a sinner into the sinner's victory, I find I've got another life, not mine, his. And I find I've got a peace that isn't mine, a gentleness with others that isn't mine, a love for other people that isn't mine, a zeal that isn't mine, a consecration that isn't mine. It's his.

And now he's living in me. But let's say clearly it's based on those first two. I must confess for years I was working hard on the third, and because I didn't know any better, God did bless me up to a point.

And then there came a time in my Christian life and in my Christian service where everything faded, where I lost the power of the Holy Spirit even in ministry. So I used to go back, say, Lord, I am crucified with you, you are living in me. I am the branch, you are the vine.

Nothing happened. Because the time when I got to go deeper and come, and I had to forget that for quite a time, and learn to let Jesus get victory over me, over many, many things in home and with my brothers, and he's still having to do it. And I sometimes am guilty of resisting him.

There's no victory then. And then I had to learn again, having been reduced to the sinner's place, that there was the sinner's peace, and the sinner's righteousness, and the sinner's victory. I had to learn the gospel all over again.

In fact, for a time, I couldn't even preach the gospel to anybody else. I simply did it. Because it doesn't matter, I'm in no hurry.

You haven't got to be a success. Please turn the cassette over now. Do not fast wind it in either direction.

But it doesn't matter, I'm in no hurry. You haven't got to be a success. And I had to learn again to let him get the victory over me, and learn again to enter in to that which Calvary provided for paupers.

Then, increasingly, the mind that was in Christ becomes anew. Let me say another thing about victory. In its nature, the case is largely unconscious.

You don't know how much victory grace has given you. Because things that once were wild alarms do not now disturb your peace. The things you are conscious of are the remaining things that do disturb your peace.

And the Lord wants to help us on the remaining things. A lot of things seem to remain, and they will to the end of our days. Plenty of scope for grace to do ever deeper work in our lives.

Oswald Chambers has a lovely phrase somewhere where he talks about conscious repentance leading to unconscious holiness. And the holiness, of course, is the life of Christ in us. But you aren't always conscious of that.

You're conscious of the things where you've got to get right with the Lord. Others see the beauty of the Lord upon us. I think conscious holiness would be a very obnoxious thing.

People who are consciously holy, do you enjoy their company? But all those are so quick to see themselves at fault, and ask your forgiveness, and why you feel the very love of God pouring out through them. Well, now that is a digression. But I must say I think it's important, perhaps, to get clear on those things.

And now just from this last portion of Esther, two things. We've seen these two letters. There was a third, and that was the letter sent to the emancipated Jews in joining them to keep those two days in the year as a feast, as a memorial of the days wherein they were delivered.

And in verse 22 you've got the phrase, you're to keep these days as the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow into joy, from mourning into a good day, that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions to one another, and gifts to the poor. Now, just that phrase, as the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies. I was interested to see how the Revised Standard Version puts it, as the days on which the Jews got relief from their enemies.

Has there been a day in which you've got relief from your enemies, those enemies that are basic to our misery and bondage? God wants us to have a day in which we get relief from our enemy. And we've seen what his basic tactics is, to get us to sin, and that he might tell us we're out of touch with God and wrong everywhere else, and to tell us that the way back's impossible. I want to give a few illustrations of what this

is, that we might really ask ourselves, have I got relief from my enemies yet? Have I got a day that I can commemorate? I remember as a young Christian, loving the Lord and eager in his service, walking along once, and I saw a man carrying a text.

You know, a big text up here, prepare to meet thy God, free from the wrath to come, and other encouraging texts. The wicked shall be turned into hell. It's God's word, we won't say they're wrong to be carried.

Anyway, as I saw this man, I said to myself, you know, I think those people do more harm than good. And then a little voice said to me, but would you be willing to do the same? Well, I think I would, if you really asked me to, Lord. All right, said this little voice, go and carry a text up and down the street.

I couldn't do it. I was a God. Then a little voice said, well, now you've disobeyed me.

You can't expect any more blessing until you obey me. And I was in bondage for two weeks, in misery. What was the use of me praying? What was the use of me doing anything? Here was something which I disobeyed God, and I couldn't and wouldn't do it.

I was in the position, very largely, of the Jews, under the edict of Haman. Now, I didn't see it. I thought it was the voice of God.

But I praised the Lord for that, for the day when he gave me relief from my enemy, in that matter. I don't know how it happened, but somehow it came to me. I said to myself, what's the net result of all this? I'm absolutely miserable.

I said, who makes the children of God miserable? Does God make his children miserable? He knows how feeble they are, but he doesn't make them miserable. If it isn't God who's making me miserable, then who is it? It came to me, it was the devil. And he'd been simulating the voice of God, and giving himself a wonderful time over my misery.

And then I understood, too, from the scripture, that the devil who told me these things was a liar. And I was free. And Jesus brought me out.

It was a day when I got relief from my enemy. And, you know, I settled it with the Lord that day. I said, Lord, I've learned something.

Whenever I hear that sort of voice accusing and urging me to do one difficult thing after another, and one fanatical thing after another fanatical thing, Lord, I want you to understand, on principle, I'm just not going to obey it. If I should go too far, if I should take this too far, Lord, and make a mistake and disobey you, I know you'll forgive me. But you've taught me something.

This is the sort of relief, sometimes, that some of us need from our enemies. And some of us can have gone on for years in bondage like this, feeling you ought to have done something, you couldn't get yourself to do it, and now you're finished, largely. I once, years ago, wrote an article along this line.

And a man wrote to me. He said, if I'd read that article twenty years ago, I wouldn't have the state of nerves I have now and the grey hairs in my head. Oh, we didn't know the ways in which Satan can change the children of God when all the time he's a defeated foe and his accusation has been answered in the blood of Jesus.

Your righteousness before God does not consist in being able to do this hard thing or that. Jesus' life, love, and righteousness is for those who can't do nothing, anything, but that righteousness there. It's a wonderful thing when grace comes to our rescue and shows us it's, amen, trying to get a hold on us again.

I remember another occasion when I was asked to do the first piece of service for God I'd ever been asked. I was in the Crusader class, and there were a lot of Crusader classes in northwest London, and we had a lovely Crusader fellowship for the senior boys once a month. Wonderful time we used to have.

And one day they asked me, would I be the secretary of this Crusader fellowship? Oh, I said, how wonderful. I would certainly love to. And I snapped up the offer.

I said, yes, I'll be the secretary. And then later, I think there was a mixture of conviction and accusation. I think the Holy Spirit did show me that there'd been pride in my ready acceptance of that position.

I could see myself standing out in front and doing things with power and little position. And then I thought, well, I have to give it up. That was the reason why I said yes.

I can't possibly. So I wrote to the one who asked me, a dear, sacred man. I said, I'm so sorry, for reasons that I cannot go into now, I cannot be secretary of the fellowship.

He didn't know why. And he had a time with me, and I'm so grateful for the loving counsel of a father in God. And I told him what it was.

I said, it was only pride. And therefore I can't do it. If I can't do a thing without pride, I won't do it at all.

But he said, the blood of Jesus cleanses from pride. The devil, it's the devil who says, now, don't do it. You can't do it without pride, therefore don't do it.

If that were the case, none of us would do anything for God. The whole army of God would be paralyzed. And that's what the devil wants.

And he wanted me to be paralyzed. And I found there was a way of liberty. I found, yes, it was pride.

But God's way was not to do it, not to stop doing it because of pride, but to do it without pride. And here was his way. If Satan brought pride, there was a fountain filled with blood.

I could have tentatively cleansed and go on with doing the thing that God was calling me to do. And that was another day when I got relief from my enemies and came into the good, the victory of the cross. And we could go on.

I wonder if I may be permitted to tell something that we listened to yesterday in the team meeting. I won't give it in detail. It's not my place to give another brother's testimony.

But as it illustrates this point, I know he won't mind me just mentioning, one of our dear brothers with a shining face told us he'd got relief from his enemies for something that had been an accusation on his heart for 12 or 13 years. Something which he wasn't willing, as he told us, to call sin and put right. And as he told us what it was, one can understand his reluctance.

It wasn't easy. It was a very costly thing to commit himself to be wrong there and put it right in the way it needed to be put right. It wasn't difficult, the actual thing, it was only difficult on pride.

But you know, he told us with glowing face how Jesus won the victory over him. He didn't win a victory over sin, but Jesus won the victory over him. And the thing, the letter was got ready to be posted today.

And he got relief from his enemies. He could see the blood availing for a man like that in a new way. It's a great word.

In the day when they got relief from their enemy. Now Jesus wants us to get relief from our enemies. And to go home relieved.

And I feel the effect of a true preaching of the gospel among the people should be relief. How burdened and accused and struggling we've been. Pity as we know so feebly how to proclaim this wonderful good news for bad people, relief from their enemies.

And that day was to be had in perpetual remembrance. The days of Purim in the Jewish calendar to this day are as important as the days of the Passover. For they celebrate the two great deliverances that Israel had from Pharaoh out of Egypt and from Haman in the kingdom of the Medes and Persians.

And these letters went out and they had to keep it in remembrance. Had a feast day. They were not only to remember their own deliverance, but to show compassion one to another, to send portions to one another and gifts to the poor.

A great day. And you know, you and I are called to remember. The days when we got relief from our enemies.

Remember is one of the great gospel words. You've got it in Ephesians 2. Look at verse 11. Ephesians 2 verse 11.

Wherefore remember, chapter 2 verse 11, wherefore remember that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the flesh made by hands, that at that time ye were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world, but now in Christ Jesus. You who were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Israel at a later date was told to remember the whole of the pit from which they were hewed.

Yes, we're to remember that happy day. On those happy subsequent days when Jesus washed our sins away. And you know, we can turn those hours of failure into glorious assets if grace reaches them.

Because what that testimony of how you got relief from our enemy, God can use that if you're willing to give it to other needy souls. Some of us say I could never give that testimony. It might not be right ever for you to give it in public.

But you might find yourself meeting a needy soul. And you can tell them I've been as low as lower than you. But I've got relief from my enemy.

It's a great day to remember. But I don't really think that God is calling us to try and forever remember the day of our conversion. I've sometimes been a bit troubled about when I give my testimony, how I was saved.

Because I'm not sure whether I'm remembering it. It happened in 1926, a long time ago. And I have a nasty feeling that I am remembering not the incident, but my frequent recountings of the incident.

And you know, these stories can grow little whiskers in the passage of time. And I don't think what we're called when we're taught to remember this great day when we got relief from our enemy is forever to try and remember the details. Some of us, our conversion, it happened so long ago, we can't remember anything.

There was a day, must have been, when you pass from death into life. No, when was the day when we got relief from our enemies? That dark day at Calvary. That's the day.

Potentially, there I got relief from all my enemies. Again and again I come into the good of what? Of that victory Jesus won for sinners. And maybe we could even regard, I don't know if I'm stretching this, you could regard this Feast of the Purim as typical perhaps of the Lord's Supper.

That's all it is, to help you to remember that day. That dark day for Jesus, but that bright day for you when you got relief from your enemies. Now the last thing we want to look at before we close is a last picture of Mordecai.

I turn back to Esther. The last verse of the book is a lovely picture of our Lord Jesus. For Mordecai the Jew was next unto King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of a multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth or the good of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

How sure that made the people of Israel. They got one of their own next to the King, Supreme Prime Minister, exercising all the authority of the King, and doing so all the time with an eye to the good of the people that were once condemned to death. What a picture that is of our Lord Jesus.

Before the throne of God above I have a strong, a perfect plea. A great high priest whose name is love, and ever lives and pleads for me. My brother, who's been where I've been.

He said, Jesus hasn't been where I've been. He hasn't been sunk in sin. Oh yes, he has, on the cross.

He took it all. He tasted the bitterness of it all. He's finished it.

He's my brother, looking after my interests, sending help from the sanctuary, just as often as I needed, and I come to his footstool for it. Would you like to look at Hebrews 9? Hebrews 9 24, we see our Mordecai next unto the King for us. 9 24, for Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

He's there for us, nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entered into the holy place every year with the blood of others. For then must he often have suffered, since the foundation of the world, but now once in the end of the world, end of the age, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Do you notice the three occurrences of the word appear? He hath appeared, he does appear, he will yet appear, once he has appeared, to accomplish that great victory of sin and death and woe for us on the cross and at the empty tomb, but now he does appear in heaven for us.

The fact he's there at all is really our plea, that that's our place too. If our surety who paid for our sins is free, we are free too. If he by his blood has title to enter there, we have too.

The mere presence of the Lord Jesus in heaven is the sinner's title to know that he too continually can be in the holy place. My name is graven on his hands, my name is graven on his heart, I know that while in heaven he stands, no tongue can bid me death's depart. There he is for us in every conceivable way, not even your failures.

He'd separate you from God if you go quickly to Jesus, for he's there for situations just like that. He's come to the kingdom for such a time as your sin gets you into. If you're only willing to let him get the victory over you in any new matter, you'll find all is well between you and God, and help comes from the sanctuary on a scale you never dreamt possible.

As we close, just look in detail at what is said of Mordecai, four things are said of him which are all true in a greater degree of our Lord Jesus. First of all, we're told in verse three that he was next unto King Ahasuerus, and the Lord Jesus is co-partner of God's eternal throne. We read that God has committed unto him all authority in heaven and earth.

Do you know now God does nothing in the world directly? It's all done through Jesus. So if a man says, oh God, I won't eat this, do you know what God says? Go to Jesus. He's got it for you.

All authority is given unto him. Jesus himself said, thou has given me authority over all flesh. For what purpose? To oppress them, no, that I might give eternal life in the power of a divine authority that not even Satan can resist, to those that thou has given me.

And my Jesus, your brother, mine, next unto the king. And then we read that he was great among the Jews and accepted of his brethren. Is Jesus great in your eyes? I think growth in holiness practically is growth in appreciation of Jesus.

Sometimes I meet brethren, I feel so poor in this one matter, not in attainments, because these brethren I think about are so quick to tell me of their failures. What is the difference? Where have they grown? Their appreciation of Jesus, their appreciation of what he did for them and what he is to them now. Sometimes I feel my wealth in that respect is all too small.

Remember in Old Testament times, the Jew who bought a burnt offering, he could bring a book, a lamb, a kid, or if he was too poor for that, two turtledoves. What do these varying offerings picture? Do the saints of God bring varying offerings for their peace? No. But you do bring a varying appreciation of the one offering.

And I think that is what is pictured there. And sometimes I feel I've only got a turtledove appreciation of Jesus. But God said, that's all right, it's an appreciation of Jesus.

And that is your wealth. If you've got any wealth at all, it's the extent to which we appreciate Jesus, the extent to which he's great among his brethren and accepted among his brethren. And we accept what grace is offering us.

Well, only the Holy Spirit can lead us on. There's the way of growth. It isn't growth in goodness.

You talk about growth in grace. It's not growth in goodness, but growth in grace. Appropriating, appreciating all that my high priest in heaven and on earth is to mean to me, and letting him mean it.

Thirdly, he's there seeking the wealth or the good of his people. The amazing thing is that all that Jesus has, even in his heavenly session now, is for others. Nothing is for himself merely, though no one merited it more than he.

It's all for others. He appears in the presence of God as a just reward of his own suffering. That's true, but he doesn't say that.

He appears in the presence of God for us. And dear one, Jesus is seeking the wealth, the good of his people, even when he has to deal with you deeply, even when he has to humble you, when he has to get deep victories over us. It's all he's seeking, the wealth of his people.

How wrong we are to be as fearful as we are about the future. I've got a savior at God's right hand seeking the wealth of his people. And fourthly, it says, speaking peace to all his seed.

That's the work of the Lord Jesus, to give you peace, not to give you trouble, to peace. It's Satan who beats the saints, it's Jesus who gives them peace. If there isn't peace, it may be one of two things, either they're not letting him win that victory over me in some matter, or having let him do that, I'm not seeing the provisions of grace.

But that's his purpose, speaking peace. And you know, it's a lovely thing to think he's there to stake responsibility for all my failures. Why should he take the racket instead of me? I don't know, but he does.

Perhaps it's not right to say he does, he has. And that once finished work is enough for everything else that may happen. And if I'm prepared to say, yes, Lord, you're right, I'm wrong.

My righteousness is as grand and perfect as that of the archangel Gabriel, for not my attainments, but the blood is all my peace. And he speaks peace to all his seed. We've often spoken of that verse, Colossians 3.15, may I just leave it with you? Let the peace of God rule in your heart.

It doesn't say rule your heart, but rule in your heart. And apparently the word in the Greek rule is to arbitrate. Let the peace of God arbitrate in your heart.

Be the referee, for normally peace is to be the settled portion of the child of God. And if that peace is disturbed or shaken, it's because God wants you to see what's done. We've often given the illustration of the referee in a game of hockey.

The game stops when he blows his whistle, and they look to him, free hit there, on the game goes. Another whistle, what is it? Free hit that side. At the end of the game, you hardly recognize and hardly remember the various fouls, for the moment it was put right, on the game went.

Let the peace of God be the referee, that's what he's got for me, even for a failure on the condition I've admitted. But if something goes wrong, which I'm not willing to admit, then that peace is disturbed. But the moment I see it and take it to him, he speaks peace to all his seed.

Well, may the Lord bless us in this. And may we get into the good of it. I want to more.

We're all learning together the wonderful wealth of our Mordecai for us. Let us pray. Lord Jesus, we thank thee thou has given us a way in which we can afford to repent and acknowledge the worst about us.

For we are seeing more and more that when we acknowledge ourselves to be wrong, thou dost then say we're right. But a very different rightness with thyself from that which we were seeking for. The sinner's rightness, perfect, entire.

It gives us freedom and liberty to rejoice in God our Savior. Thank you, Lord, for this wonderful way. Help us be those that know how to say yes to thee quickly, momentarily.

And we praise thee thou art as delight to speak peace to all thy seed. We give thee praise in our Savior's name, our Father. Amen.

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