

Esther

God's Silent Sovereignty

How Long Will Evil Prevail?

Esther 7:1-10; Romans 12:9-21; Revelation

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / July 24, 2022

I. God Can Use One Person to Resist the Onslaught of Evil in Our World

Esther had to make some decisions, plans, and take specific action. She didn't just sit around.

Divine sovereignty and human responsibility work together like two pedals on a bicycle. It's never either-or. God is always advancing His purposes *and* He also uses His people in the process.

The Bible gives us a theological balance of prayer and action, of leaning on Christ and leading people to Christ, of resting in the Lord and walking with Him, of waiting in silence and speaking the truth in love.

"I often meet people whose reaction to the events of life is to sit down somewhere and wait for the Lord to act. This is not a good plan. On the other hand, some people are totally frantic in their endeavors. They are trying to take care of everything, as if somehow the destiny of the world depended upon them. Every so often, though, I will meet someone who has grasped the wonder of this truth. There is about him or her a fragrance, a busied restfulness, because they recognize that the providence of God does not remove them from the realm of responsibility."

~ Alistair Begg, *My Times Are in Your Hands*

When you believe in God's providence as well as His calling on your life to use you for His glory, you can maintain this beautiful balance of "busied restfulness."

II. God Did the Only Thing that Could Ever Triumph Over Evil in Our World

Colossians 2:9-15 "For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in Him, who is the head of all rule and authority. ¹¹ In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Him."

III. God Has Us Here Now to Overcome Evil with Good

See Romans 12:9-21

A. It Matters How You Fight

Romans 12:21 "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

This is an upside down, backwards kind of fight, but it's not wimpy. The Greek word for "overcome" here is "nika" which is a very forceful word that means to victoriously overcome.

B. It Matters Where You Start with this Fight

1. Start by Seeing Yourself as Part of the Problem

Romans 12:3 "For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but think with sober judgment..."

Romans 12:16 "Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight."

Until you see yourself as part of the problem instead of just outside of it looking on, you'll never have the humility to love others, forgive others, and overcome evil with good.

“It was granted me to carry away from my prison years on my bent back, which nearly broke beneath its load, this essential experience: how a human being becomes evil and how good...It was only when I lay there on rotting prison straw that...it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either—but right through every human heart—and through all human hearts.”

~ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*

Solzhenitsyn refused to adopt a victim mentality. He took time to examine his own heart and recognize that his heart had the capacity to do the same evil that was being done to him.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?
¹⁰ I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind...”

2. Start by Loving Your Own Kind Here in the Family of God!

Romans 12:10 “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”

If we can't do it right here in our own church family with everybody who knows and loves Jesus, what are the chances we'll ever do it out in the world with people who mock us, attack us, and even seek to harm us?

C. Then Radically Love Those Outside the Church Who Do Evil Against You

Romans 12:20 “To the contrary, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’”

Luke 6:27-29, 35 “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either... ³⁵ But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.”

The spirit of this age may wield the weapon of hate as an asset now, but the people of God are still called to be radically different. Hate will never get it done because God calls us to love people and leave vengeance to Him.

IV. God Alone Is the One Who Will Bring It All to an End

Romans 12:17 “Repay no one evil for evil...”

Romans 12:19 “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’”

“The only means of prohibiting all recourse to violence by ourselves is to insist that violence is legitimate only when it comes from God...My thesis that the practice of nonviolence requires a belief in divine vengeance will be unpopular with many Christians...Soon you would discover that it takes the quiet of a suburban home for the birth of the thesis that human nonviolence corresponds to God's refusal to judge. In a scorched land, soaked in the blood of the innocent, it will invariably die.”

~ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*

See Revelation 6:10-11 | 16:5-7; 17-19 | 19:6-7; 11-13 | 21:1-5