Surprising Providence

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast. A podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Open your Bible to Esther chapter 2.

! A week or two, I was planning to do two weeks in Psalm 27 on Sunday mornings before jumping back into Philippians.
It's a message that I wrote back in the fall. I was preaching out of state at a conference and had written this message from Psalm 27. And about a week before, they called me and asked if they could change what I was going to do.
And so I said, sure. And so I did something different and thought, well, I'll use Psalm 27 at something else soon. And so a couple of weeks after that, I was preaching out of state.
Marsh and I were flying there and I landed there on the runway. And I got a text from the guy who had invited me to come and speak. And he said, hey, I'm not sure what you're preaching on, but I've heard you have a message from a different part of the Bible.
[1:21] And he said, I'd really love if you could preach that sermon I've heard about to our people here. And so I was like, well, Psalm 27 is getting shelved again. I said, that's okay. We'll just, I'll do it sometime on Sunday morning.

We were kind of in a break between things. And so I thought in December, we're taking a break with holiday stuff from Philippians. And we'll jump back into Philippians after the first of the new year.
So I thought I'll do Psalm 27. Last week and this week, I'll do Psalm 27. And then I woke up Sunday and I wasn't preaching Psalm 27 or any other psalm for that matter.
All that to say, Psalm 27 either is the greatest message you've never heard or it's so bad the Lord is to great lengths to ensure it is never preached.
So if you ever hear me say in the future, I'm preaching Psalm 27. Pretty good bet it's probably not happening. So I moved Esther 1 to this morning because I want to finish Esther this spring semester before our Israel trip.
[2:28] I'll be gone a couple of Sundays to Israel. Then we've got Family Matters and Easter Sunday. And so to kind of try to fit everything in, I needed to move Esther 1 to this morning.

But from tonight on, for the next number of Sunday evenings, we'll be looking here at the story of Esther. Just a reminder, it's on your handout for tonight.
Some of the history, the same thing that's on there this morning, but just some of the history to help you to have in your mind when we're talking about these events unfold.
One of the things that I love about our Men's Institute that helps our men so much is to help them to learn the Old Testament timeline so that all these events and names and books of the Bible that we're familiar with but are kind of jumbled sometimes in our minds.
We work extensively to help them to, by the time they graduate, have a firm grasp of the timeline. And that helps us when we come to the book of Esther to be able to clearly know when that happened.
[3:31] So I'll put some of that on your handout for tonight. That I hope will be a help to you. I want to begin by picking up something that we talked a little bit about this morning.

That the Lord can, and at times does, do miracles in the lives of His people, for His people.
Our God is free to do as He wants to do. And if the Lord wants to do a miracle, He is free to do that. There are not that many seasons in history where He has done numerous public miracles.
Most of those were limited to certain times in the Old and New Testament. But the Lord certainly is free to do any miracle that He wants to do. However, it's not been my experience to see physically dead people raised to life in my lifetime.

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It's not been my experience to see people who could not walk all of a sudden be able to rise and walk. It's not been my experience to look out on the water and see somebody walking on the water. [4:42] The Lord is free to interrupt the natural order and to do miracles if He wants to do them. No one is saying He cannot do that. He is free. We're not. He can do whatever He wants to do.

But miracles are the exception, not the norm. And some people get discouraged with that reality because they think to themselves, if God is at work, if God is doing it, it has to be the miraculous. Well, the miraculous is one way that the Lord in history has worked. Far from the only way. The predominant way that you see the hand of God at work is through His hand of providence.
So, just to give you one quick example from my life. Most of you know us, know the story, but I went to UCO.
I went there the year before Marcy went there. Had a close friend of mine who was in a group on campus that was helping to move in, freshmen, to the dorm room.
[5:45] And so, he and I went to the same church. And so, that Saturday evening, he said, hey, I invited a few freshmen to come to church with us tomorrow. We're going to pick them up.

And I said, great. It sounds good. So, I was driving that next Sunday. And so, he and I were going to go pick up these freshmen. And he told me where to go. And eventually, these three freshmen walked out.
A blonde-haired girl, brown-haired girl, and a black-haired girl. And I said to my friend, Greg, did you meet any guys at move-in? And he said, none that I want to get to know.
And so, these three girls got in our car, and we took them to church. And one of them just happened to be Marcy.
My friend just happened to have met her when they were moving in. When we went to church, there were five of us, and she just happened to be the one sitting right beside me.
[6:45] I had never heard of Newkirk, Oklahoma. That's where Marcy grew up. One stoplight, three casinos. It's changed through the years. I never heard of it.

We only met because my friend happened to meet her and happened to invite her to church, and she happened to say yes, and we happened to go. What would have happened if Marcy would have gone to a different school?
What if I had gone to a different school? What if Greg wasn't my friend? What if Greg hadn't been on part of the group that was helping to move freshmen in?
What if my friend Greg would have had any interest in making a guy friend on campus? No miracles were performed that weekend.
All what some may say random coincidence. I'm convinced of my heart that's the providence of God.
[7:50] I did not realize that day in August I was meeting my wife. When we went to church, I knew two things. I knew that she was really cute, and I knew that she must have been raised in church because she knew all the words to the hymns that we sang.

I listened closer, and then I learned she had a really beautiful voice. It was just a normal Sunday. Nothing miraculous.
Nothing even odd. Nothing of how we met that I just told you would you sit back and say, wow, you should write that down. Quite normal.
Quite routine. Quite mundane. And yet, that's how I met my wife. We've been married 30 years this spring.
Two grown sons, two daughters-in-law, two grandbabies here with us. My partner in ministry for 30 years.
[9:00] What could be more significant in my life than that? And no miracle took place. Just the hand of God at work behind the scenes, accomplishing His purposes, as I kept saying this morning, for His glory and for my good.

That's just one example. You know I'm the pastor here today after 25 years? I'm the pastor here today because I was the associate pastor for three years.
Only reason I was able to have that position is I was already here. But why was I the associate pastor? Well, because a friend of mine who was on staff here had invited me to come and speak at Disciple Now.
I had already preached here before I was on staff here. And there was a Sunday, a weekend, where the pastor here before me was sick, not able to preach on short notice.

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And so they called me and said, Hey, would you be willing to come? I know it's tomorrow, but could you come tomorrow and preach? And I said, Sure, I'd be happy to. So I drove from other church and preached here. That happened a second time.
[10:16] They called me a second time. I came and preached here. When the church needed to hire an associate pastor, I'd already been here to preach to the youth, I'd already been here to preach to the church twice on short notice. We already had that relationship.

No miracles. Nothing even extraordinary. And if it's not your life, it may not even be that interesting to you. It was interesting to me because it was my life.
But it was all quite ordinary. And now in God's kindness, I've been here 25 years. I've lived half my life here.
I raised my family here. And we're still here doing ministry the best we can. Why? Because of the providence of God. God is free to do miracles.
He can. But the story of my life is not a story of miracle after miracle. Not in that sense. But it is one act of providence after another.
[11:21] Now one can say, well that's all just coincidence and feel free to think that if you want. But the Bible that we read and study teaches of a God who does not do things by coincidence or happenstance, but by divine design and purpose.

And if you want an exercise in building your faith, start to look back and see all that God had to do and orchestrate for you to be where you are today. Every one of you could stand here and tell those kinds of stories, couldn't you?
How you met your spouse. How you got your job. How you found your house. On and on and on. Of things that just seemed so common.
So ordinary. And yet God was at work. We return to Esther chapter 2 with that in mind.
As we watch Esther 2 unfold, first verses 1 to 4, write down the word plan. We see a plan unfold in chapter 2.
[12:26] It starts, after these things. Now on these sunny nights, I'm trying to cover a chapter a night at least, and so I want to go a little more quickly than slowly, but I've got to pause for just a minute to help you with what that means.

After these things. Well, Esther's going to come to Ahasuerus in the 10th month of the 7th year of his reign, which means between chapter 1 and 2, there's four years in between.
Chapter 1 happens in 483 B.C. After these things, when the anger of King Ahasuerus had abated, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed against her.
Remember, Ahasuerus wanted to go out and have this military campaign. That's what the whole long feast was like this morning. Does the military campaign?
Does not go well. He's dejected. He's depressed. He's frustrated. His anger has now abated, and he remembered Vashti. Now notice again, what word is missing from her name?
[13:33] Queen. That's been settled. He remembered what she had done and what had been decreed against her. Verse 2. Then the king's young men who attended him said, Let beautiful young virgins be sought out for the king.

Let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom to gather all the beautiful young virgins to the harem and soos of the citadel under the custody of Hegai, the king's eunuch, who was in charge of the women.
Let their cosmetics be given them, and let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti. This was the plan. We've got to get Ahasuerus a new wife.
The historian Josephus says as many as 400 women were a part of this beauty pageant, so to speak. This pleased the king, and he did so.
So Ahasuerus has a queen, Vashti. She refuses to come and dance at his party with all the drunken men.
[14:46] She says, I'm not going to do that. He speaks to his advisors in chapter 1. What are we going to do? And he has these advisors we looked at this morning with more enthusiasm than wisdom, and they say, We've got to get rid of her.

Word's going to get out that she defied you. All the other women are going to defy their husbands and the empire, and we're just going to have mass chaos. That's the fear. And he makes these decisions out of his anger and his fear as we looked at this morning.

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Those are bad ways to make decisions. So they go through with it. Queen Vashti is deposed. He leaves after she is removed.
He comes back from this battle discouraged and defeated, and he starts to feel alone. He thinks of Vashti and what happened.
He thinks of how they removed her. His loneliness gets the best of him, and so he says, We need a plan. And so their plan is, Let's get the most beautiful women from the kingdom.
[15:52] And let's put them through this season, and we will select you a queen. That's the plan.
Verses 5-18 describes the next movement.

That is a promotion. This is where Esther comes into it. Verse 5, Now there was a Jew in Susa, the citadel, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, of Benjamite, who had been carried away from Jerusalem among the captives, carried away with Jechaniah, the king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had carried away.
Now I just want you to make a note of this, write this down. We'll kind of tuck it away until it comes back to us, but there is something here in verse 5, if you're familiar with your Old Testament, ought to alert you.
Mordecai, the son of Kish, from the tribe of Benjamin. That's going to be a really significant factor as the story unfolds.
Mordecai's family had been carried off into exile. All he has known, Mordecai, this man we now meet, is life in the Persian Empire.
[17:17] He lived in Susa, but Susa was not his true home. It's all he's known. But his true home is back in the Promised Land.

Verse 7 says, He was bringing up Hadassah, that is, Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother.
Sounds like a Ray Stevens song to those of you who are old enough to remember Ray Stevens, trying to figure out who is this. This is his cousin. And for the first time, we meet Esther, or, as she's known, Hadassah.
If you want to make a note here, Hadassah is her Jewish name. It means myrtle. In post-exilic times, when you get to the period of times after the exile, it was a word, a name that was meant to symbolize peace and thanksgiving.
Esther is her Persian name. It's a word that means star. Here is Esther living in a foreign land.
[18:30] She is Jewish living in Persia. Likely in her early 20s, her parents are deceased, and she's been brought up by her cousin, a man named Mordecai.

Let's keep reading and see what we learn. The young woman had a beautiful figure and was lovely to look at. And when her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.
So when the king's order and his edict were proclaimed, and when many young women were gathered in Susa, the citadel, in custody of Hegei, Esther also was taken into the king's palace and put in custody of Hegei, who had charge of the women.
That's all it says. There's some questions I have. You probably do too, if you let your mind think just a little bit about the details here.
Was Esther taken by force? Did she have any choice? Did she feel honored?
[19:42] I mean, it's a beauty pageant of sorts. Did it charm her to know that she had been selected, so to speak? Was she reluctant?

Was she scared? Did she have any idea what would be expected of her if this process unfolded? Was it something that was completely unknown to her and she felt like, I have no choice?
Did it seem like this is something incredible that's happened and opened up to her? Or did it seem to her to be something that she had no option in regardless? The text is actually remarkably silent on some of the issues that I would like to know about.
So much of what we might want to ask is just simply not answered. What usually happens are people fill in the blanks with all romanticized kind of ideas to make things as perfect and spotless and shiny and beautiful and holy as possible.
But the fact is there's things here we don't know. What we do know in verse 9 is that the young woman pleased him and won his favor.
[21:08] And he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and her portion of food and with seven chosen young women from the king's palace and advanced her and her young women to the best place in the harem.

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Hmm. Whatever's going on it's a bit complicated isn't it? On the one hand she's beautiful and advancing and she is lovely and not only that but seems to be loved by those who are around her. Seems to be winning favor with people. Seems to be that the people who are around her are really charmed by her and maybe it's good looks and maybe it's sweet spirit and maybe it's a combination of it all.
The text does not give us a lot of information. It's quite uncomfortable to think of this lady who we tend to think of with such romanticized in the spiritual realm ideas and here she is existing in this harem.
And to make it a bit more complicated Esther has a secret. Verse 10 Esther had not made known her people or her kindred.
[22:22] They didn't know that she was Jewish. That's perplexing to me because if you were a faithful Jew there are certain things that you did and certain things you didn't do.

Reading the law praying observing special days keeping yourself distinct and separate from the world.
Some of you are reading through the Bible in a year this year and pretty soon after the mountain peaks of Genesis and Exodus comes the graveyard of best laid intentions the book of Leviticus. Why is Leviticus so difficult? Well because it goes into so much detail of how God's people are to be separate from the world.
It's actually quite fascinating if you read it through that lens. You're to dress different you're to act different you're to worship different there's things you do the world does not do there's things the world does that you should never do and here we find Hadassah Esther and no one even knew she was a Jew it's a bit perplexing Shadrach Meshach and Abednego if you do not bow down to this statue we will put you in the fiery furnace the king says and the music plays in Daniel 3 and everybody bows down except Shadrach Meshach and Abednego everybody knew who they were the king says you can't pray and Daniel says thank you for the information he goes home opens his window and does what?
[24:15] he prays no question who he was Esther had not made known her people or her kindred but before you get too much into what that means of her look at the very next part of verse 10 for Mordecai had commanded her not to make it known she's doing exactly what her adopted father her older cousin Mordecai has told her to do she's doing it seems that she's not living out what all at least the Lord had given his people to do and yet it does seem at the same time she is following the wisdom and instructions of the man who has been provided for her to take care of her in the fact her mother and father have died we'll come back in a little bit to that she didn't tell the people she was Jewish but she listened to the advice of Mordecai verse 11 every day

Mordecai walked in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and what was happening to her Mordecai has found some way of being able to communicate with Esther and by some way being able to exchange messages with her and verse 12 tells us when the turn came for each young woman to go into King Ahasuerus after being 12 months under the regulations for the women since this was the regular period of their beautifying six months with oil and myrrh and six months with spices and with ointments for women when the young woman went into the king in this way she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the harem to the king's palace in the evening she would go in in the morning she would return to the second harem in custody of Sheazgaz the king's eunuch who was in charge of the concubines she would not go into the king again unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name so much for vacation bible school lessons right what do you do with that this is a bit more difficult to make sense of than it might seem at the beginning she's pulled aside with these hundreds maybe four hundred women who are part of this and for six months we train and work on this and for six months we beautify this and then when it's your turn when it's your night you spend the night with the king and there's nothing here except telling us that that's what happened the questions about morality how difficult this was for her was it difficult for her did she fight it could she not fight it all of those questions that inevitably have to be a part of the story are just simply absent from the details that we are given verse 15 when the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abaheel the uncle of Mordecai who had taken her as his own daughter to go into the king she asked for nothing except what
Hegai the king's eunuch who was in charge of the women advised and Esther was winning favor in the eyes of all who saw her and when Esther was taken to the king Ahasuerus into his royal palace in the tenth month which is the month of Tebeth in the seventh year of his reign the king loved

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Esther more than all of the women and she won grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti and the king gave a great feast for all of his officials and servants it was Esther's feast and also granted a remission of taxes to the provinces and gave gifts with royal generosity we have a new queen and the king says let's celebrate let's have another feast and to show what a great day this is and what a great time this is let's pull your taxes back and get you in a celebratory mood and let's give gifts and show generosity so that everybody is happy and everybody is pleased that we have a new queen she is promoted to queen and then it tucked away here at the end of chapter 2 verses 19 to 23 one final event we'll call this a plot a plan a promotion and a plot verse 19 now when the virgins were gathered together the second time
Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate gate by the way we don't know his specific role but to be in this physical position he had to have had some kind of official privilege and some kind of official responsibility interestingly enough Mordecai does not hide his background he's at the king's gate this is a gate had been built by Darius it's 131 by 92 feet we know verse 20 says Esther had not made known her kindred or her people as Mordecai had commanded her for Esther obeyed Mordecai just as when she was brought up by him so she has lost her mom and dad been raised by her cousin who has adopted her and she as she should have done as a child growing up obeyed what Mordecai said he is acting as her father here she is now older and Mordecai tells her don't reveal your background or who you really are and she continues to do as he has said because that has been her custom she had grown up listening to
Mordecai in the place of her father and she just continues to do what she has always done with his advice she's a bit of a complicated figure people try really hard to from the very onset make Esther this Daniel like character her if you know the end of the story Esther absolutely does the hard thing for the good of her people but what do we make of her in chapter 2 she's a bit of a sympathetic figure to me not quite heroic not not in the sense that you think about she's not publicly here in chapter 2 Shadrach Meshach and Abednego and she's certainly not Daniel in the lion's den and yet she's doing exactly what
[31:56] Mordecai has instructed her to do and then when you read the Old Testament how God's people were supposed to be obedient and God fears were supposed to do what the Lord called them to do no matter the cost no matter the risk and the whole point of the Old Testament was that God's people were to stand out not blend in verse 21 says in those days these are the days of the celebration and joy as Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate Bigfun and Tiresh two of the king's eunuchs who guarded the threshold became angry and sought to lay hands on king Ahasuerus and this knowledge came to the knowledge of Mordecai question why were the men so angry they were angry and sought to lay hands on the king there are these two guys who want to kill the king why it doesn't say

I wish that it did how did Mordecai find out the plot it doesn't say it says this came to the knowledge of Mordecai what is this this is the two guys want to lay hands on the king but why why were they angry what were they going to do how were they going to do their plan and how did Mordecai find out about it doesn't tell us I just wonder are there ever things happening in your life and you find yourself saying I just need to know the answer to this and sometimes the Lord shows us and many times he doesn't and we say but I need to understand this and the answer is if the Lord doesn't reveal it to you you don't need to understand it
Deuteronomy 29 29 the things revealed are for us the secret things belong to the Lord I mean we're just through two chapters in Esther today and I've got way more questions than I have answers at this point we're not told how Mordecai learned of this plot but it seems he had to have had some kind of access to some kind of confidential information verse 23 when the affair was investigated and found to be so the men were both hanged on the gallows I don't know exactly what he found out but it seems it was pretty significant we didn't do a lot of time out in the empire we just put you on the gallows it has a way of squelching people who might have a similar idea in the future if you can't sleep at night this week and want to really do some interesting reading do some digging into where the
Medo-Persian empire were more likely to hang! someone or impale them and why words are translated certain! ways it won't help you understand the story but it may help you fall asleep this week and that's where the story ends it was recorded in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king now if you quit reading Esther at chapter 2 verse 23 and the last sentence you read was

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it was recorded in the book of the Chronicles in the presence of the king you would say who cares it's just an ordinary thing you did they kept very detailed records of events and so Mordecai found out about this Mordecai let known what was going to happen the king's life was saved the two guilty men were put to death and they made record in the king's chronicles what
Mordecai did that's it no miracles no fanfare nothing unusual it won't be long till you'll come back to chapter 2 verse 20 to that last sentence and that sentence actually is the pivot upon which the entire book turns just just an ordinary sentence which brings us a few things I want us to consider for implications for us here in Esther chapter 2 number one be faithful in small things and be obedient right where you are be obedient in small things and be obedient right where you are child student part time job worker business owner mom retiree widow widower just be faithful right where you are it was recorded in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king if you know the book you know why that sentence matters if you don't know the book it just seems completely irrelevant at least to anything significant and it reminds me that what we must do is just be faithful right where we are nothing is small that is done for the
[38:26] Lord when I say be faithful in small things I'm speaking of course in the sense of from a worldly perspective every time you are faithful to the Lord you bring glory to his name there is no small act of worship not in heaven's view number two God doesn't reveal everything he is doing nor everything he is preparing you for God doesn't reveal everything he is doing nor everything he is preparing you for that trial you are enduring today is working for your good now and in the future I always kind of chuckle at least silently when someone in our church maybe they've been going through some kind of a trial and they get some kind of a resolution or some kind of understanding they'll say to me now I know what God I figured out what God was doing and I'll kind of smile and say you have no idea what

God is doing you may have learned one thing he's doing 10,000 things and you may have figured out what he was doing in this moment but what he's doing in this moment is preparing you for 10,000 moments yet to come God is always at work and he doesn't always reveal to you what he's preparing you for but the trial you're enduring today is not only working for your good today it's preparing you for something down the road but what we as creatures tend to do is to say God I need to know today what you're doing and God says no you don't you say yeah I do and God says no you don't you say yeah I do and who wins every time oh that's what God was doing and he in heaven smiles!
getting me down to just the one thing I'm doing God is preparing you all the time for things you don't even understand thirdly I love the way one man wrote this I'll just borrow his words God works in mysterious ways and mundane days God works in mysterious ways and mundane days I am grateful part of what the Lord allows me to do in my work with master's seminary is to go and I work with doctoral students on a regular basis and get to go and teach there I was there and that's where I was a week ago right before I fell ill got to be a part of teaching the doctoral students there and just have a very small foot in the academic world door there and I enjoy that very small foot don't anything more than that grateful for a small part of it and the only reason
I get to do that is because I was a student there a decade ago and during that three year program as a doctoral student there were zero days that felt heroic there were a few days that felt crushing but not heroic I remember one specific day Marcy was having some outpatient surgery and I was in the room with her waiting to pull her back and that day was the day that my syllabus dropped by email for everything we had to do and we were waiting for the surgeon to pull her back and I had opened up my email and she was there on the bed I was sitting right beside her and I was looking at all that was to be required that semester and I remember just putting my face in my hands and the surgeon walked in and he said it's okay it's not that big of a surgery and I said I'm not even worried about her I'm looking at my assignments none of that process felt heroic when I finished my dissertation we had finished it defended it edited it revised it it was done done done done done no more to do and
I called Marston in my office and leased along my assistant the time in my office and I was pushing submit and I said we're going to all three put our finger on the mouse because we did it and it felt like great relief but not heroic I just wanted to be faithful as a student I just wanted to do the best that I could nothing felt like I was auditioning I just want to be faithful and the Lord in his kindness through very normal mundane days has opened doors of ministry for me to get to do some things and have some influence on some guys that I feel completely unqualified to have and that whole

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journey was just very mundane but what I learned from that is that God was always working in mysterious ways in mundane days just last month we celebrated
[43:51] Christmas and the angel appeared to Mary it was a mundane day and the angel appears to the shepherds in a normal night while they're just watching their flock so can I just say to you friends keep stacking up faithful mundane days keep piling up faithful mundane days just another day at school be faithful just another day changing diapers be faithful just another day running my business be faithful it's just another day going to ball practice be faithful just another Sunday teaching Sunday school be faithful it's just another Wednesday teaching Iwana keep stacking up faithful mundane days this is how God works in the lives of his people if you go through your life waiting for the heroic miraculous days you will go to your deathbed missing the evidence of God's work all around you number four you don't know all the details in somebody else's life you don't know all the details in somebody else's life let me tell you why I want to mention this it bothers me a bit that

Esther kept her heritage a secret it is a bit problematic to me it will mention soon that she's fasting does not mention that she's praying maybe it's because it's assumed maybe because everybody knew if you were fasting you were praying I don't know it doesn't say she prayed it says she fasted it bothers me to think how could you be faithful to what God has called you to do you are it would bother me if one of our high school students was talking to us and said no one at Mustang high school knows I'm a Christian I've managed to keep that a secret that's troublesome it would concern me if you said that one of the reasons you're so well liked in your office is that nobody knows that you're a believer that's troublesome but she's doing exactly what
Mordecai told her to do she's already lost her parents now she's entrusted herself to her cousin who the Lord has provided to be her father and she's just doing what he's told her to do she goes along with the immoral audition that's a bit troublesome and yet the Lord is working behind the scenes to raise her up for such a time as this I can't I can't wrap my mind around all of that which teaches me that I need to be faithful in my life and just as best I can be gracious toward other people's life I don't know everything going on in her life I can't make sense of all of it but there's facts
I don't know there's details I'm not privy to there's elements of the story the Lord has in his providence withheld from us I don't know everything she's facing I don't know everything she's doing when maybe for her it's just a fast not even prayer I don't know and so rather than keeping my focus on someone else and judging or blaming or condemning them what I ought to do from that is do my best make sure I'm faithful in my own life and just strive to be gracious toward other people because I don't know all the details of somebody else's life think about that before you criticize your co-worker tomorrow or your neighbor next week or your parents that you have a hard time forgiving or your friend who seems to have turned their back on you there's part of the story you don't know there's facts and details that haven't made it to your knowledge so be faithful in your life and gracious in the life of others and then one last implication
God knows who you are where you are what you're going through and what you need God knows who you are where you are what you're going through and what you need and because that's true can we end with where we began in the implication because that's true just be faithful in small things and obedient right where you are and let let the Lord open doors providentially for you be faithful right where you are and let the Lord open doors providentially on your behalf Lord as we have spent this morning and this evening reading the details from this
[50:03] Old Testament book I confess there are things we wish we knew that we don't know there are questions that remain unanswered and as we do our best to grasp the intricacies the nuances of it at times we just have to stop and say we only know what's been revealed and what is revealed is for us and the secret things belong to you so may we be faithful with what you've entrusted to our knowledge may we be faithful in all things even those things that feel mundane knowing you're at work even in the smallest details of our life and again!

we say it's all done for your glory and for our good in Jesus name Amen contro please give one second next let's show en acclimat just an certain fathers time and come in them of them as what can they will their see what they what they know they know what they know they know what they know they know fathers they know they know fathers they know fathers they know fathers they en

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