

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG291 – Preparation for Purim

I want to start with the fact that we are coming into the Feast of Purim, and that is going to be in just over a week that we go into the Feast of Purim. It has been very, very much on my heart because, number one, Purim is always a phenomenal time that we enter in to be a part of. I encourage you to read the book of Esther and to study it carefully, because there is so much significance in it for what God is doing today and how He works with us. It is a very unique book, because it never mentions God once, but it has so much of God and how He moves with us in it, and Purim is always a tremendous celebration.

I just wanted to point out a couple of things as we come into this time of Purim. One is to encourage you to go to the podcast from this week, the title is, *Times of Refreshing*. It is *Growing In God* number 289, which is amazing to think we are just about to hit that 300 podcast mark. But this is the *Times of Refreshing*. This was a message that was brought in this meeting a couple of weeks ago, when Silas and Shuma and Leo and Carina were here with us in Maui. Silas brought a wonderful message about the times of refreshing. Part of the emphasis of that was the question, what is the prelude to the times of refreshing? And the prelude, of course, involves our repentance and our coming before the Lord. I think that as we are entering into the time of Purim, those are very, very encouraging remarks for us. I know I have had so many comments about this podcast as it came out, and I am really thankful for that. I am glad people enjoyed it, and Silas, you need to know how many people have contacted us and said this was a great message and it meant a lot to them. It really is a special thing.

So what I wanted to do was to emphasize again a Scripture in Second Chronicles chapter 7, verses 12-16. For the last several years, this Scripture has been something that we have emphasized, and not only us, but many in the body of Christ have been emphasizing this Scripture. I want to read it to us. It says,

Then the Lord appeared to Solomon at night and said to him, "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place... [speaking of the Temple that was being dedicated.] "I have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that My name may be there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually."

This is the result of Solomon's prayer to the Lord, that if Israel sinned or they fell out of favor with God, but they came and prayed, that God would hear the voice and would heal the land; He would remove that which was coming against them and really save them from the consequences of how they had been walking. I want to tie this into Purim, because there are some really interesting aspects to the story of Purim. We know, of course, about Esther, or Hadassah, who became the queen in replacement of Vashti. We know that the king really loved Esther and had a deep love for her. We know how Mordecai had raised Esther, and how he was coaching her from the sidelines and getting news to her so that when

Haman came to determine to destroy the Jewish people, it set in motion these relationships between Esther and Mordecai and the king that are at the heart of the story.

If we kind of bring it into today's world, you realize that the king, and this kingdom, really represented probably the largest part of the world at that time. And one of the things that is interesting to me about this is because, of course, we relate Haman to Satan himself and to demonic plans to destroy Israel, and we see that being set in motion again today. We see antisemitism on the rise. We see the threat of war, nuclear war against Israel, ballistic missiles coming in. Right now Israel is preparing to defend against that; the United States is placing itself in position to defend other nations also. But it should really get our attention that here we are, days away from celebrating Purim, and we find the world almost positioned in a similar place, where the success – I hate to use that word – of the demonic plan, the satanic plan to destroy Israel and to destroy the Jewish people and her allies, is amazingly effective. You see that in the story of Purim, that Haman was effective in going out to all of the kingdom and rallying everyone against the Jews; and we are talking again about much if not all of the civilized world, or existing nations, rallied to kill all the Jews. That is an effective plan that he had going.

Some people would say, "Why do we celebrate Purim? What does it have to do with us? We are Christians," and all of that. Well, if you go back to that timeframe and you consider, if Haman was completely effective in his plan, if he was successful, there would have been no Jews; which some people would not mind maybe in their craziness over antisemitism. But, no Jews, no Jesus; that could be a problem for some of us. And so you say, "Does it affect Christianity? Does it affect us as believers in Yeshua?" It certainly does, because that plan, having been effective, would have ended the line of Christ, and there would have been no birth of Christ. There would be no cross, and no resurrection, and the things that we see in salvation for the world would have been thwarted. And by the way, that is the plan, and was the plan behind the plan. You do not see that overtly stated in the book of Esther, but we understand where this was all going. And so, you had this tremendous, effective tsunami set into motion to bring about the destruction of the Jewish people, and you could say of Israel also; because they are Israel, and there would have been no land of Israel that could have come into being had they been wiped out.

So, this is a scary story, when we see this. And I think it helps us to understand that we live in such times. I feel like we are as much on a precipice right now in history as they were in that day on a precipice of disaster. And it does affect us; and Israel going forth from this time does affect the Kingdom of God. You may say, "I do not see how it affects the Kingdom of God." Well, if we remember, when Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father, He ascended from the Mount of Olives, and it said, "Just as you have seen Him go, He will return." So He is returning to the Mount of Olives. He is returning to Israel. The coming of Christ is happening in that place. So, of course Satan would still like to see the destruction of the Jewish people and of all of Israel, because if he is effective in it now today, literally the Kingdom of Christ is destroyed from the fact that He is a King, but He has to have the land and the people to rule over. And so, you could see the demonic brain whirling about what he is attempting to accomplish, continually through and up to this generation, to destroy God's plan, which, according to God, He has already established the Messiah as King, and He will rule and reign on earth.

So, what we see as news in the Middle East is something that definitely impacts the plan of God, the Kingdom of God, and all that we stand for as believers. So I feel like one of our positions is this place of coming before the Lord in repentance. I think we humble our hearts, we repent of our wicked ways. There is a lot I think that the body of Christ needs to cleanse itself from, that we need to release

ourselves out of; we need to humble ourselves. And I think it is more than just saying, "Let's pray for Israel. Let's pray for what is going on in the Middle East." Let's humble our hearts, because I think it is really dependent on us. We know part of the story of Esther is that she went through these months of purification. That is what this repentance is, it is seeking this purification process of Christ's body and of the people, and I would just say Jews and Christians alike. This call, these Scriptures, these verses that we are reading are from the Hebrew Bible; and so they apply to them, and we are grafted in, and they apply to us, and we are looking to see this process of purity.

It is a time when we see what is happening, not just to pray against this army, or pray for that army, or pray for this political situation or that political situation; this is our time to come before the King. The response, and what we see take place in the book of Esther, was all about them and their appearing before the king. Mordecai, Esther, they had to be able to stand before the king. And as Esther made very clear, she said, "I cannot just walk into the throne room of the king because that is a death sentence. You do not walk in unless you are invited in. And he has not invited me, the king has not invited me into his presence, so how do I go present to him this problem?" And I think we should have that same feeling. There needs to be a cleansing and a purity on us that enables us to come boldly before the throne of grace and stand in the Presence of God right now. When Esther did that, she told Mordecai, "Hey, you guys pray for me, because I am going to do what you are saying. I am going to go walk into the throne room. I am going to stand before the king. And if he does not extend his scepter to me and accept me, I am dead."

I think that we have that same feeling. To stand in the Presence of God is not a small thing. It is more than just saying, "Hey, we are going to voice some prayers, and we are going to believe for the Presence of the Lord." No, we need to have our spirits and our hearts in a place; and I am talking about the whole body of Christ. I am talking about us individually, as well as the body, to be able to come and stand before the King; and because of the repentance, because of the humbling of ourselves before Him, that there would be His grace extended to us to hear our petition and to respond to that petition, which we know that the king did. He responded to Esther and said, "What is it that you want?" That is a very deep part of the story of Esther. It is a deep reality surrounding the celebration. If we are going to celebrate Purim, one of the things we must have is this purification drive and preparation drive in our hearts, because it is about us one-on-one with the King. And I do not know about you, but I always live in that reality, that there will be that time, whether it is before I die or after I die, that it will be me and Him in the throne room standing together eye to eye, and facing the reality of my life and my heart and my walk with Him, and all that I have done. And like Peter says, I do not want to be shamed away from His Presence. I want there to be that ability for us to stand. That is a big part of the story of Purim.

Another interesting part of the story that I think comes into play, and again, it is part of this idea of our hearts and our humility and our preparation, is the fact that the king made certain decrees. He dealt with Haman, and he saw that Haman was to be hung on his gallows. And I think there will come that time that God will deal with Satan once and for all. But that did not end the story. And I always have to go back and keep reading this, because this is where it really can get kind of confusing. You have to really reach for revelation and understanding of what was transpiring. Because Haman was dead; his sons were dead; he took away his property and gave it to Mordecai; but the decree did not change, and the Jews were still facing death and annihilation. So Esther comes back around again to the king, and it is interesting because there comes the point where the king says, "Look, I gave you the signet ring. I give you the authority. I am not going to remove the decree that was declared in my name that would bring the annihilation of the Jewish people, you deal with it." And I think, "Wow. Lord, I really wish You would

deal with it. I really wish You would deal with the things that we are facing in the world today. I wish You would be the one that would just divinely, miraculously come down out of heaven, because who knows how all of this should turn out and where things should go?" But God handed it back to Mordecai and Esther, and they had to make new declarations that could not reverse what had been proclaimed, but dealt with the situation nonetheless. It was given into their hands. And I feel like if we are really going to look at the story of Purim, we have to face the fact that the ultimate victory that came was not because of what the king did, it was because of what Mordecai and Esther and the people did in rising up to save their own lives from the threat that was there.

And so I feel like, as we celebrate this, it is so important that there be a deep humility in our hearts and spirits and a deep purification process that prepares us for the time of Purim. Because at some point I think there is going to be God putting things into our hands to deal with that are way beyond our ability and our knowledge and our understanding. But we are going to have to reach in and believe that He moves in this day and age through anointed, prepared vessels who are able to carry that signet ring in righteousness, in justice, in honor before Him, that are able to carry His authority. And I believe this is what He is looking for in the body of Christ, that His anointing would rest upon the body of Christ to move in the earth today to see the Kingdom come and be established, and the things that need to be dealt with are dealt with in all righteousness and justice.

That is what I am believing to see transpire during these days of Purim; and I hope this helps you, as you get ready for this time, to walk in faith that this be a Purim celebration that will be remembered in history. We bless it. We believe for it, Lord, in the name of Yeshua HaMashiach.

Amen.