

IF I PERISH, I PERISH!

by Herb Montgomery
Director | Speaker



The great ladies of Persia and Media, who have heard what the queen has said, will quote this day to all the king's officers, and there will be no end to the disrespect and discord! If it please your majesty, let a royal decree be issued by you . . . never to be revoked,

that Vashti shall not again appear before King Ahasuerus; and let your majesty give her place as queen to another who is more worthy of it than she. When the edict made by the king is proclaimed throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom, all women, high and low alike, will give honour to their husbands . . .

Dispatches were sent to all the king's provinces, to every province in its own script and to every people in their own language, in order that each man, whatever language he spoke, should be master in his own house. (Esther 1:17-22)

The Gospel of Esther. For quite some time now I have believed that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are not the only Gospels in the Bible. In fact, every book of the Bible is a “Gospel” in its own right. The purpose of every book is to illuminate the darkness in each of our hearts in regards to *our picture of God*. Yet, what does the book of Esther contribute to our concept of God and His other-centered love? Though there are many gospel lessons in this book, there is one that stands out above the rest. Two great principles are contrasted.

First, we find women being kept “in line” by decree, control, and fear. Women kept “in line?” That phrase brings a crooked smile to my face. You see, I was raised by a single mom and I can already hear how she would be ranting at the thought of it. But outside of gender issues, notice the principles used by one to control another. Law, control and fear.

Next, we are introduced to Modecai and Haman's scuffle. Modecai refuses to “bow” to show Haman the respect and honor he feels he deserves. So how does Haman respond? “Kill ‘em all!”

What is alarming to me is that many people picture God to be exactly like King Ahasuerus and his servant Haman. God is “keeping us in line” through the methods of Law, through control and fear. We had better do as He says or we'll end up “like Vashti.” But stop for a minute! Isn't this exactly why Lucifer was given *time* and did not immediately meet the fate of death that sprang from his rebellion? If Lucifer would have been destroyed, the angelic hosts would not have understood how or why it came about! But secondly, assuming God had wiped Lucifer out for his rebellion, they would have either rebelled themselves or buckled down under a much more shallow version of “service.” They themselves would have remained loyal, placing their necks under the yoke of the “master of the house.” Their obedience would have been driven by the fear that what was “done” to Lucifer would be “done” to them if they did not submit.

And Haman? Many today feel as if God's final act on this planet will be to, with blood dripping from His fangs, wipe out all who have refused to “bow,” so to speak.

Thoughts to Ponder

“The whole spiritual life is molded by our conception of Him, and if we cherish erroneous views of His character, our souls will sustain injury!”

(E. G. White,
Review and Herald,
January 14, 1890)

Are these really the principles God uses to win our hearts? Absolutely not! God forbid! For these principles can only ever win outward conformity, but never accomplish inward transformity. (I know that's not a real word, but it rhymes, give me some grace.) It will win outward obedience but these principles can never truly win our hearts. At best, they will cement us in our own self concern and self preservation, but never transform us into the likeness of God's self-abandoning love.

Then where do we see God in the book of Esther? Where are the principles of the King and Haman contrasted? It's in the decision made by Esther herself. (My mom would be beaming that it was through a woman!)

When faced with the proposition of death, Esther's mind was set. She would risk all to save the lives of her people.

“Go and assemble all the Jews that are in Susa, and fast on my behalf; for three days, night and day, take neither food nor drink, and I also will fast with my maids. After that, in defiance of the law, I shall go to the king; if I perish, I perish.” (Esther 4:16)

Ponder this well, dear reader. In this statement we see self-sacrifice. We see self-abandonment. We see other-centeredness. In short, we see *love!* Love for her people caused Esther to risk her well-being for the good of others. To put them first rather than herself. Is this where we find God in the book of Esther?

Consider the cross. John wrote these words in response to God's own “risk” that He took to save us:

Having loved his own, He loved them to the end. (John 13:1)

Or as the Amplified version states it:

And as He had loved those who were His own in the world, He loved them to the last *and* to the highest degree. (John 13:1, AMP)

And why? Because control, manipulation, guilt, fear and legislation? No, NEVER! You were made for love from a *willing heart*, not forced devotion! God isn't interested in getting anything *from* you, but in continually giving *to* you. When faced with the prospect of staying on the cross and never seeing His Father's reconciling face again, the God of this universe encountered love for You beyond description. His final thoughts were, “I will save YOU at any cost to Myself, and ‘if I perish, I perish!’”

Dear friend, will you allow this selfless love to become your picture of the God of this universe? If you will, you will truly never be the same.

“For the love of Christ controls us once we have reached the conclusion that one man died for all and therefore all mankind has died. He died for all so that those who live should cease to live for themselves . . .”
(2 Corinthians 5:14,15 REB) †

MINISTRY UPDATE

Soquel Campmeeting Soquel, CA

Let me simply say that this was an incredible experience! If you have never experienced Soquel Campmeeting, let me tell you that it is a Campmeeting like no other. This summer, I was given the privilege of presenting what I consider to be the best news in all the scriptures to two groups during the week.

With the collegiate group, we penetrated more deeply with each presentation into the infinite love that abounds toward us in the heart of our God. This culminated in an incredible encounter with the cross. Many who had been following God out of duty, felt as if they were “seeing” Him truly for the very first time. Hearts were not simply touched, lives were forever changed.

One special experience was that of a young man who was a student at an academy where I had delivered a week of presentations years ago. This young man stated that something took place in his heart that week and that he had been pursuing a correct picture of his heavenly Father ever since. It was truly a blessing to cross paths with this young man as an adult now.



Another experience was that of a young girl who has had a very unfortunate past. With tears in her eyes, she shared that she was feeling, for the first time, that she could truly trust God again. She was so thankful

for the healing God was doing in her heart through the presentations. Truth was contrasted with error. The right picture was contrasted with the lies. The shadows were dispelled, and the dawning of His love took place in many collegiate hearts.

Then, there were the adults in the main pavilion. At the end of each presentation I literally felt mobbed as folks clamored to the front to share. One dear sister who had just been in an accident shared of the healing that took place in her heart toward God as she “saw” Him in the presentation on the “why” of human suffering. Another dear gentleman shared how he felt like He was falling in love with God for the first time although he had been a Christian for many years. In addition, there was a dear saint (she was in her 70’s) who came up to me, threw her arms around me and shared that she was a fifth generation Adventist and was truly feeling that the God of this universe sincerely loved her for the very first time. Wow!! I had the pleasure of meeting precious hearts who have been listening online from all over the globe. (Received some very encouraging news from our Australia listeners.)

I witnessed one changed life after another, as the gospel found its way into the hearts of those who had truly never seen Him as He really is. But one experience that will last in my memory for a long time is that of an elderly gentleman. As he was talking with me, someone else interrupted and asked him when He found God? I’ll never forget the look on his face when he turned and said, “That’s a curious thing to ask. I never knew He was lost. I rather prefer to think that He found me.” What a precious brother in Christ. He got it!

In the middle of the week I was given opportunity to give a presentation on the Cross for the main evening meeting. Christ was lifted up. Truth won the hearts of many. Nearly all who attended came forward to make a decision for our God! Praise Him for His matchless love. I’m sure He felt over-loved and overjoyed as many realized that not only is He in their hearts, but they are in the heart of their God! †



GALATIANS 2:20

by A. T. Jones

Review and Herald; October 24, 1899

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

It may not be amiss to emphasize what this scripture says, by noting what it does not say.

It does *not* say, "I want to be crucified with Christ." It does *not* say, "I wish I were crucified with Christ, that He might live in me." It *does* say, "I *am* crucified with Christ."

Again, it does *not* say, "Paul was crucified with Christ; Christ lived in Paul, and the Son of God loved Paul and gave Himself for Paul." All that is true, but that is not what the scripture says nor is that what it means, for it means just what it says. It *does* say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Thus, this verse is a beautiful and solid foundation of Christian faith for every soul in the world. It is made possible for every soul to say, in full assurance of Christian faith, "He loved me!" "He gave himself for me." "I *am* crucified with Christ." "Christ liveth *in me*." (Read also 1 John 4:15.)

For any soul to say, "I am crucified with Christ," is not speaking at a venture. It is not believing something based on a guess. It is not saying a thing of which there is no certainty. Every soul in this world can say in all truth and all sincerity, "I am crucified with Christ." It is the acceptance of a thing that is already done, for this word is the statement of a fact.

It is a fact that Jesus Christ was crucified, and when He was crucified we also were crucified, for He was one of us. His name is Immanuel, which is "God with us," not God with Him, but "God with us." Since His name is not "God with Him", but "God with us," then who was He but "us"? He had to be "us" in order that "God with Him" would be not "God with Him" but "God with us." When He was crucified, then who was it but "us" that was crucified?

This is the mighty truth announced in this text. Jesus Christ was "us." He was of the same flesh and blood with

us. He was of our very nature. He was in all points like us. "It behooved him to be made in all points like unto his brethren." He emptied Himself, and was made in the likeness of men. He was "the last Adam," and precisely as the first Adam was ourselves, so Christ, the last Adam, was ourselves. When the first Adam died, we, being involved in him, died with him. When the last Adam died, we, being involved in Him, died with Him. And when the last Adam was crucified, He, being ourselves, and we, being involved in Him, were crucified with Him. As the first Adam was, in himself, the whole human race, so the last Adam was, in himself, the whole human race. So when the last Adam was crucified, the whole human race--the old, sinful human nature--was crucified with Him. And so it is written: "Knowing this, that our old man IS CRUCIFIED WITH HIM, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."



Thus, every soul in this world can truly say, in the perfect triumph of Christian faith, "I am crucified with Christ"; my old sinful human nature is crucified with Him that this body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth I should not serve sin." (Rom. 6:6) "Nevertheless, I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me. Always bearing about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus--the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, for I am crucified with Him--that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in my body. For I who live am always delivered

unto death, for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in my mortal flesh." (2 Cor. 4:10, 11) Therefore, the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

In this blessed fact of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, which was accomplished for every human soul, there is not only the foundation of faith for every soul, but there is the gift of faith to every soul. Thus, the cross of Christ is not only the wisdom of God displayed from God to us, but it is the very power of God manifested to deliver us from all sin and bring us to God.

O sinner, brother, sister, believe it. Oh, receive it. Surrender to this mighty truth. Say it; say it in full assurance of faith and say it forever. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Say it, for it is the truth, the very truth and wisdom and power of God, which saves the soul from all sin. †

TESTIMONIES . . .

"WOW! I was at Soquel Camp Meeting. I, and everyone I spoke with who was at your seminar, was so blessed. You put into words (inspired by God) what I wish I could receive when I am asked some of the same questions you get. Why??? We hope to have you come to our area to reach the thousands of young people who need to see God this way. To set the coast of Calif. on real (Holy Spirit filled) Fire."—SM

"I was at Campmeeting 2008 in Soquel, Ca, and I heard you. My Pastor called me over to Parachute Park and said, "This guy is good." I agreed. I had never heard the gospel preached as you had done that night and I was impressed. I went and listened to the "Life Unlimited" series on your website and God touched my heart. Seriously! I get it now, because I see it now. The scales have not fully come off 'cause, as you know, it took years to get this way and I'm only 27! But as I study more I know I will fully see. Anyway, I wanted to thank you for letting God use you in such a way. And thanx to your wife and kids for lending you out so long in the year."—JR

"I'm writing from India. I had communicated with you around 5 months back. Thank you for your help. I am slowly learning about God's love and it has healed me. I was emotionally abused for the first 20 years of my life,

"...You put into words (inspired by God) what I wish I could share when I am asked...WHY???"

and the past 8 years religiously. I'm 28 years old and I joined the SDA church 8 years ago by watching Doug Batchelor with Amazing Facts, a series called Millennium of Prophecy. It was basically out of fear that I joined the church because a lot of fearful facts were presented there and I had no choice...and I was already emotional....it's a long story.

I grew up with people around me really treating me badly at home and at school by teachers and friends. I have emotional disorders, stammering and other things. The true knowledge of God which I am learning from people like you is really healing me.

But since I grew up thinking I am worthless and inferior, I struggle with self consciousness. Whenever I am in the public there is a constant self awareness. I feel like the whole world is watching me and thinking something negative about my appearance. I can't look people in the eyes...even at church. I am afraid to be asked to pray in front of people... they would find out my stammering... until now I guess nobody knows I have stammering...and when they ask my opinion in the sabbath school, I am afraid people will misunderstand my points...I feel like people are gossiping and making comments about me in the church and at the office...and I really don't mingle with people...I feel shy, self awareness, and chained....

I feel comfortable with God sometimes, but with people I am uncomfortable. I want to be positive and free but this burden crushes me constantly when I'm in the presence of people.

Your messages are very intelligent and full of wisdom, I am amazed by the in-depth spiritual meaning that scriptures holds....I thank God for blessing you to bless us...and thank you for taking up the task."—ST

CALENDAR

September 1-5, 2008

Rio Lindo Adventist Academy
Week of Prayer
Healdsburg, CA
707.431.5100

September 5-6, 2008

Good News Tour
Loma Linda, CA
909.558.4570

September 12-13, 2008

Campion SDA Church
Campion, CO
970.667.7403

September 12-20, 2008

Campion SDA Church
Campion, CO
970.667.7403

September 22-26, 2008

Monterey Bay Academy
LaSelva Beach, CA
831.728.1481

September 28-October 2, 2008

Summersville SDA Church
Summersville, WV
304.872.6958

October 10-19, 2008

Lewisburg SDA Church
Lewisburg, WV
304.647.5925

October 24-25, 2008

Mississauga SDA Church
Mississauga, Ontario CANADA
905.608.0013

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