

# ESTHER

God - Silent But Not Absent



## Esther – Maturity in the Kingdom of God

Date: Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Speakers: James Hill, Becky Stamps

Key Verses: Esther 3 & 4

### Summary

This story is set in the period of exile. When we seek to define life on our own terms then we find ourselves outside of God's good purpose for us. That is a description of exile. It happened in the garden (Creations story in Genesis). Adam and Eve defined their own parameters and found themselves on the outside of God's purpose. It happened before the story of Esther and it happens when we live our life out of step with God's purpose and parameters.

Redemption history is the story of God stepping in to save his people from their mistakes, and from the powers that seek to destroy them. During the Exodus, the conquest of Canaan, and ultimately at the cross, we see God at work, freeing the slaves, giving exiles a home and restoring creation into a right relationship with Him.

We are given a choice: to see only our circumstances or to see beyond them, to our place in God's big story. We can choose to see ourselves as powerless against the culture we live in, the challenges in our workplace, home or school – or we can choose to be faithful and courageous, trusting God and our power and significance as part of His great story (as Esther and Mordecai eventually do).

## Questions for small groups

- Read through chapter Esther 4:12-17
- Mordecai demonstrates that he knows he's part of a bigger story of redemption; this gives Esther courage and helps her understand the significance of her position. How can we make sure we see our lives and work as a significant part of God's purpose for the world?
- As soon as she makes the decision to try to help the Jews, Esther asks all the people to fast with her. How easy do we find it to ask others to stand with us when we're facing a battle?
- Mordecai and Esther are a blended family: she listens to him, he helps her find courage and she forms a plan for them both to carry out. What qualities do we want to see formed through our families and what steps can we take to make sure they are?
- We are called to be God's image bearers in our places of work. How can we reflect Him in the choices we make and the way we interact with colleagues, clients and others?
- Spend time reflecting and praying as a group for the choices and challenges people are facing in their workplaces, families and other areas.