

ESTHER

God - Silent But Not Absent



Esther – Rest from our enemies

Date: Sunday 24th September 2017

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Key Verses: Esther 7-10 (7:2-7, 9:20-23)

Summary

- Esther gets rest from her enemies:
Esther and the Jews gain rest after Xerxes finds out about the plot to kill them but it's only temporary rest. All through the Old Testament God's people only had small periods of rest (Deut 12 – going into the promised land, times of prophets etc).
- Jesus gets us rest from our enemies:
The promised messiah was to bring ultimate rest for people forever. The Jews thought the Messiah would be a warrior king – he wasn't. He brought it in a different way – through the cross. Jesus died for his enemies. We were once God's enemies (Colossians 1:21-22) but at the cross we are set free and can get ultimate rest. If we choose to we can be free from all of the stuff that would cause us to live in a place of unrest. We can bring our 'rucksacks' to the cross and know we are forgiven and be set free.
- How you can have rest from your enemies:
Firstly, need to decide if Jesus died for us – acknowledge our sin, fear, hurts. When we do this God through the Holy Spirit changes us, we can then release the things in our rucksack. Secondly, the gospel values, loves, accepts and affirms you. Life can throw stuff at you – do we act with revenge in mind? Culturally revenge is accepted, even encouraged and can escalate (think of the middle east or Northern Ireland conflicts). Jesus

calls us to be different (Luke 6:26-30). Sometimes people need to face consequences or be challenged. However, be prepared that it may still remain unresolved. We are called to go into the world and give our enemies what we get from Jesus – God’s grace.

Questions for small groups

- When you consider rest – are we living for the next rest (weekend, day off, holiday, ‘me’ time)
- Have we accepted Jesus’ invitation to have true rest from our enemies?
- What’s in our rucksack? What is Jesus asking you to lay down to him?
- Have we ever got revenge? How did it make you feel? What’s your reaction to Jesus’ words from Luke 6:26-30?
- Are we holding back to what God has for us because of the emotional stuff we are holding onto?
- Are we/have we shown hostility which God is asking us to let go of?

To ponder or pray about this week...

Consider this week every time you pick a bag up what are you carrying that God is asking you to lay down – have these things been holding you back?