

The Battle for Control in the Believer's Life (Part 4)

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[0 : 00] All right, last week we closed up with Queen Esther coming to the realization of what has been taking place in the palace.

! And the decree that Haman created in Shushan that all the Jews would be exterminated, put to death.

But there was another thing that she was aware of and that kind of alarmed her. And that was the idea of what Mordecai had to say to her.

Now remember, Mordecai representing the Holy Spirit and Esther representing the human spirit. Mordecai had said to her, remember, that she was to go in to the king and try to persuade him to change that decree so that the Jews would not be put to death.

Again, remember, at this point, she had not made known that she was a Jew. But that doesn't mean she would be exempt from the penalty of the decree that had been made.

[1 : 29] And so she had those alarming things to think about and sent that reply, remember, back to Mordecai.

And that's what we saw last week. Her rational thinking would be this. If Haman is as wicked and cunning as Mordecai makes him out to be, then at all costs I must survive, for I am indispensable to my people.

That's her first mistake, right? Maybe I can outwit him, beat him at his own game, and thwart his ugly plans. Or maybe there's a better side to his character that needs to be encouraged.

Perhaps, after all, there is some good in him, as Mordecai has overlooked. But to die self-sentenced, no. There must be some more reasonable alternative to death.

And so you recognize that she knew the automatic penalty for stepping in to the court to speak to the king without being summoned by him was automatic death sentence.

[2 : 43] Unless he holds out that golden scepter to her, which is most unlikely in most cases. And so she has a difficulty here. What is she going to do?

And again, it's just like we are trying to determine what the Spirit of God is saying to us and whether or not we're going to obey the Spirit of God. Is there anybody here that never disobeys the Spirit of God?

Is there? I'm glad. Hmm? Yeah. That never has disobeyed the Spirit of God.

The plumber back there shaking his head yes, but I'm not going to go any farther with that. All right. All right. Now, so that leads us to this idea of the Holy Spirit being quenched.

We've looked at some of this before, but keep this in mind. Until Esther was prepared to come to the reality that she has no ability to put Haman to death.

[3 : 49] Until she comes to that point, then Mordecai would be unable to do that as well. And so again, it's the idea of quenching the Spirit of God here. So the lesson to be learned in this, it was as hard for Esther as it is for us today.

It was not her responsibility to hang Haman. Boy, I hope we can kind of let that register in our minds. There are things that are not our responsibility.

Amen? When it comes to our spiritual life. This idea is, it was not Esther's responsibility to put Haman to death.

Even though she's found out what kind of character he really is. Because it was her responsibility simply to do what she was told.

Simply to do what Mordecai tells her. Now, isn't it interesting here, in the book, even in the book of Esther, but in Major Thomas' book, there's no thought, and we don't even see in Scripture, I don't believe, anywhere where anybody else has anything to say to and about Esther.

[5 : 10] Okay? Think about that. It's the picture of the Spirit of God being the one that should be our focus to hear what he has to say to our heart and to our life.

So, it was Esther's responsibility simply to do what she was told, to obey the instructions she's given. Even though death itself would be, more than likely, the only consequence that would come as a result of that.

Now, just as Esther had to die to her own ability to hang Haman, we also must die to our own ability to deal with the flesh.

For we cannot crucify ourselves. That's God's business. Now, think about that just a moment. Have you ever tried to do that? Have you ever come to that point?

I'm sure you probably have. I think all of us have. You know, especially right after we get saved, we understand somewhat of what God expects of us, what the change of our life should be, and the Spirit of God, no doubt, is working in the midst of that, trying to get us to do some of those things, to set the old sins aside.

[6 : 25] All right? And so we go and we go on and go on. How many have been tremendously successful in doing that since the time you got saved?

You guys are either quiet or you're telling the truth. Yeah. Yeah. None of us have. You know, some people, it took longer to come to the realization, oops, I've sinned and I shouldn't be doing these things.

Some of them takes earlier time, maybe a week. Amen? Yeah. Or overnight. All right? And again, sometimes we confuse ourselves in that because we find ourselves still finding some kind of sin being a part of our lives.

So does that mean I'm really saved? All right? A lot of questions arise in those times and through those things. But only God can crucify our flesh.

All right? That's God's business to do and not ours. So give ourselves the liberty. All right? To live under the power of the Spirit of God.

[7 : 37] And that's, remember, that's what Paul says basically in the book of Galatians. It says, don't be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Enjoy the liberty that is yours in Christ Jesus.

What is that liberty that Paul speaks of in that? What's the liberty? You know, is it the idea that I could do anything I want to do, anytime I want to do it, because that's liberty, because I'm saved by the grace of God, I'm secure, I'm on my way to heaven?

And that's locked in. What is that liberty? The liberty he talks about here is not the idea that we have liberty to sin.

Paul refutes that. You know, should we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How can we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? The liberty is that we have the freedom now to yield to and to follow the leadership of the Spirit of God under his control to satisfy the will of God in our lives.

That's the liberty we have. The law didn't give that liberty. Because under the yoke of the law, everybody was trying their best to satisfy the righteousness of God and his holiness, his holy demands of his law, and couldn't do it in bondage.

[9 : 05] Liberty says we have the Spirit of God that we can yield to, and he gives us the ability to do that. And we'll look at that more a little bit later.

All right. So, Romans 6, verses 3 through 4 is the picture there. Notice this. Know you not that so many of us, as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?

Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Now, let's look at something here, lest we get confused with this. The word baptized is a word that's used in classical Greek here that speaks of a blacksmith.

You know how a blacksmith takes that piece of iron and gets it super hot and then puts it on the anvil and smashes it? And then what does he do?

[10 : 05] Puts it in that cold water, right? Or it'd have to be cold, just water, a tub of water. Does that to temper that. That's where the word baptism or baptismal actually comes from, is that idea.

Now, so it gives us the definition, at least the definition of baptizo, which is the introduction or placing of a person or thing into a new environment or into union with something else so as to alter its condition or its relationships to its previous environment or condition.

So that's what the molten steel in the water does. It changes something about that. Its environment, yeah, into the water now. Its condition, it's tempered, it's stronger.

All right? Now, so that's the definition we get here. So, in the word baptism in Romans chapter 6 there, it refers to the act of God introducing the believing sinner into a vital union with Christ Jesus. All right? In order that the believer might have the power of his sinful nature broken and the divine nature implanted through his identification with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.

[11 : 28] So that's the work of what? That's the work of the Spirit of God in the life of the believing sinner. Now, so the condition and relationship of that sinner with regard to his previous state and environment brings him into a new environment, and that is the kingdom of God.

Now, secondly in this, God at the same time has imparted the divine nature, that's the Spirit of God, which gives him both the desire and the power to do God's will, having been raised with him.

Again, Galatians 2.20, 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.

Galatians 2.20. That's going to get drilled into your heart and mind if nothing else does. All right?

So, that's the picture that we have here. That's all the work of God through his Spirit, placing us in that union with Christ, and in that union with Christ, all these other things take place within us.

So, to walk then in the Spirit is to have such utter confidence in him, that's in the Holy Spirit, that you first seek his instructions, then ask no further questions.

[12 : 59] You like that? Huh? First thing you do is seek the Spirit of God. Lord, what are you trying to show me here? What are you instructing me to do?

Give me an indication of that. Impress that upon my heart and my mind. When he does that, what do we do? But Lord, wait a minute.

You know who you're talking to here? Yeah? Yeah, no. No questions asked. Where do we ever get the idea that God doesn't know what he's doing and what he's talking about?

Amen? Yeah. Yeah. But we subconsciously do that sometimes. Lord instructs, gives us opportunity to teach a sudden school class or something.

Oh, but Lord, I can't do that. You know, I just can't do that. Whatever the case. Now, if he says it, we do it. Ask no further instructions.

[13 : 59] To come to understand and be able to sense the direction of the Spirit of God. That's what's so vital. Now, you know, we see biblical examples of people wanting confirmation.

God give me confirmation. And God does give confirmation if we're seeking that with an honest heart and not a heart of unbelief. Okay? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

So, we just do what we're told to do. All right? Now, when we do all this, God makes a promise to us.

All right? What do you think that promise is? This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

Galatians 5, 16. That's the promise. Again, if we're having difficulty with the flesh, it's because we're having difficulty walking in the Spirit of God.

[15 : 04] All right? Because that's the promise that he makes to us right there. Now, I'll put it in the Amplified, because I like the way it describes it.

I say, walk and live habitually. I say, walk and live habitually. Notice that. Habitually in the Holy Spirit. That's responsive to and controlled and guided by the Spirit.

Then you will certainly not gratify the cravings and the desires of the flesh. That's of the human nature without God. Now, let me ask you this.

You can go ahead. Don't be shy. Go ahead and raise your hand at this. How many? Go ahead and raise your hand. Don't raise your hand until I ask the question. Okay.

Come on, plumber. How many of you have sensed at times in your life, in your spiritual life, in your spiritual walk, that you were walking in what you thought the Spirit of God?

[16 : 04] That you were walking in the Spirit of God. Okay? Yeah. I think all of us have at some point. Now, how many of you have found yourself walking consistently with the Spirit of God?

Now, the Holy Spirit is fully able to deal with our flesh. Recognize that. It's fully able to do that.

And then to put it and keep it in the place of death. He's able to do that. It's his business to hang Haman. All right?

Esther chapter 4, verses 12 through 14. We've seen some of this before. They told to Mordecai Esther's words. Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther.

Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall their enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place.

[17:14] But thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? There's that monumental statement.

Now, notice here. I think we've made the statement already. Esther was not indispensable to God, but God was indispensable to her.

Again, God has a divine purpose and will for all of us that have been saved. And we desire to have that will fulfilled.

But what happens when God speaks to us about something he desires for us to do?

And we hesitate. We hem-haw around. And finally thinking he doesn't really see me or care about that.

[18:19] We just walk away from that. Will that particular purpose and will be accomplished? That's what it's saying here.

Yeah? Esther, it doesn't make a difference whether you obey the Spirit of God or not. God's going to do. He's going to watch over his people and deliver his people. He's promised them to do that in centuries past.

All right? But what about us? What about us when we neglect to do that? Okay?

And we miss out on the blessing that comes from obedience to God. Amen? Yeah. Because he honors our obedience.

Just like he did the obedience of the Son to what he did in faithfulness to obey the leading of the Father to the cross and to death.

[19:22] All right? So, Mordecai made it abundantly clear. She's not indispensable to God, but God is indispensable to her. But also, notice that last statement.

Who knows whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? He made it clear here that there was a point in her life now that she has come to.

And there's a lot of dangerous consequences possible in the midst of that. But it's God bringing her to that point where he wants to put her.

Why else do you think she became queen? I'm sure there are many other young women much more attractive than she.

She didn't even put on the fancy clothes to go in to see the king. He didn't like what he saw just as she was. He didn't get her. That's her thought probably. All right?

[20:41] But he fell in love with her because of what her inward character was. Do you not suppose that God caused that to happen in the heart and mind of Ahasuerus?

Yeah. Because he's brought her to the point for which, really, he made all this take place. You know, you go back in this and you have to wonder, well, was God even involved in Vashti's attitude of refusing to go in when he bidden her to come into that banquet?

And then all the things that transpired after that? To get Esther to the place because she knew, he knew what was going to transpire in this decree that Haman declared in the name of the king to put the Jews to death.

Now, so, it's that moment in her life fraught with tremendous consequences, but it would be decisive one way or another.

So here, in essence, is what Mordecai is saying to Heather, to Esther. You stand upon the threshold of that destiny for which you have been chosen and prepared.

[22:13] All right? If you choose right, then this could be your greatest hour. If you choose wrong, throwing it all back into God's face and holding your peace to save your own skin, then do not flatter yourself that you will escape the consequences.

For in seeking to preserve your own life, you will lose it. If you are prepared to lose your life for God's sake, then you will find it.

This is your hour of destiny. Choose wisely. Don't throw it away. That, in essence, is what Mordecai was saying to Esther.

Strong words from him. Girl, you've got to do this. There's no other way here. You've got to do this. Now, such a moment like that comes into the life of every believer to some extent.

Now, of course, there's varying degrees. There's varying degrees of that. It's a moment when God's purpose for your life hangs delicately in the balance.

[23 : 25] being poised upon the threshold of that for which Christ has redeemed you and for which his presence comes to empower you.

Now, well, let's go on here just a minute before we get there.

There's what I want. Philippians chapter 2, verse 12 and 13. All right.

Now, notice the definition here of workout.

Cultivate, carry out to the goal, and fully complete your own salvation with reverence and awe and trembling. Then again, that self-distrust with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrieking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ.

[25 : 10] Now, not on your own strength, for it is God who is all the while effectually at work in you, energizing and creating in you the power and desire, both to will and to work for his good pleasure and satisfaction and delight.

All right. So, work out your own salvation. I like to put it this way. Discover whatever it is that God saved you for and get that done. Complete that. Bring it to its accomplished purpose, God's accomplished purpose, whatever that purpose is.

All right. Now, but you do that not in the strength of the flesh. You do that in the power and direction of the Spirit of God.

All right. Again, it's tempting for us. All right. God, I think I see what you saved me for. So, I'm going to go do that. All right.

And we set out to do whatever that might be and sometimes fall flat on our face because what we're doing is doing it in the power of the flesh and not waiting for the Spirit of God to give us direction and power to do that.

[26 : 22] All right. So, we have to be careful with that. Self-distrust. All right. Not trusting ourselves and our own nature because a lot of the times, you know, Satan knows that it's okay to do quote-unquote religious work if we don't do it under the power of the Spirit of God.

All right. If he entices us to do whatever that might be. All right. But do it in the power of the Spirit of God because again, it's God that is effectually at work within us energizing and creating in us the power and the desire both to do both to have the will to do it and to work for his good pleasure and satisfaction and delight.

And so, that's the picture that we have painted for us in that. That's what we do in our life. Not worry about what anybody else thinks.

Who was it? Who was it? An old preacher years back. 1800s. went to China. Hudson Taylor.

Thank you, Diane. I think it was him that wrote in his book, you know, after some of the things he did and so forth, he just sensed God doing something else with him.

[27 : 55] And so, he spent a lot of time doing nothing. You know, still walking with God, still reading his word and praying, but, but no large enterprises.

People kept saying, you need to go pastor this church over here. You do a great job there. God hadn't told him to do it. People did not understand him not doing anything but waiting.

Couldn't understand it. It almost discouraged him that people didn't understand. You know, some people just don't understand spirituality. Amen?

They don't. Waiting on God, being sure God's showing you what he's wanting you to do and then do it. when God is saying, wait until I show you what to do and then you do it.

So, fulfillment comes from the realization that you do not have within yourself what it takes. Death to all that you are in your own inadequacy is the only gateway through which you may enter into the fullness of all that Christ is so that you may live miraculously in the power of his resurrection.

[29 : 19] That's what Paul said in the book of Philippians. I want to know him as thoroughly as I can know him and I want to know the power of his resurrection. The power that raised him from the dead I want active in my life.

So, we'll then cry from the heart, Lord Jesus, I can't but you can and that's all I need to know. so let's go. Amen?

Yeah. That's where we need to come to. Oops. Then said Jesus unto his apostles disciples the apostles is a disciple and an apostle together.

Alright? In case you were wondering what that word was. Then said Jesus unto his disciples if any man will come after me let him deny himself take up his cross and follow me for whosoever will save his life shall lose it and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

That's a good place for us to stop for tonight. Father, thank you again for your loving kindness and goodness and grace to us today and Father, thank you for your work in our lives.

[30 : 39] Not just in redemption which we are so lovingly grateful for but Father for using us.

Saving us for a purpose other than just getting us to heaven but putting us in a relationship with you to be used of you for Jesus to live his life through us under the direction and power of the Spirit of God.

So Father, we thank you for that but I ask that you enable us more and more to keep being mindful of that and to learn more and more about what it is to seek the direction of the Spirit of God and to know it and then to be able to be obedient to him and follow his direction so that you might accomplish through us all those things you've designed to accomplish through us to the degree you want to do it.

And so we'll thank you for it. Now, thank you again for these wonderful folks. Love them and we pray that you'll continue to bring us back time after time to learn more of you through your work.

And we'll thank you for it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

you