

It's Time - Living For Jesus In Our Day

Sunday, December 22, 2019

OVERVIEW

VIDEO: The Bible Project - Esther

It's Time to stop swimming in cultural currents – Ch 1

It's Time to clothe ourselves with the beauty of Holiness – Ch 2

It's Time to take a stand for what's right – Ch 2

It's Time to understand that everything is written down – Ch 2

It's time to understand who our enemy is and how he operates – Ch 3

It's time to BELIEVE that we were created to fulfill the purposes of God - Ch 4

It's time to walk in Humility rather than pride – Ch 5

Esther 6 New International Version (NIV)

Mordecai Honored

6 That night the king could not sleep; (Psalm 121 the lord does not slumber or sleep) so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. ² It was found recorded there (Everything is written down) that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes.

³ "What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this?" the king asked.

"Nothing has been done for him," his attendants answered.

⁴ The king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about impaling Mordecai on the pole he had set up for him.

⁵ His attendants answered, "Haman is standing in the court."

"Bring him in," the king ordered.

⁶ When Haman entered, the king asked him, "What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?"

Now Haman thought to himself, "Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?" ⁷ So he answered the king, "For the man the king delights to honor, ⁸ have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. ⁹ Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's

most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, ‘This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!’”

¹⁰ “Go at once,” the king commanded Haman. “Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king’s gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended.”

¹¹ So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, “This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!”

¹² Afterward Mordecai returned to the king’s gate. But Haman rushed home, with his head covered in grief, ¹³ and told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him.

His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, “Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him—you will surely come to ruin!” ¹⁴ While they were still talking with him, the king’s eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esther had prepared.

It’s time to hold on to the hope that He has not forgotten about us

There is this wonderful phrase that occurs in the bible in both the Old and New Testaments that says... “God Remembered” We are told God remembered Noah, God Remembered Abraham, God Remembered Rachel, God heard the groaning of the Israelites and Remembered his covenant with Abraham. Later the Israelites are told that when they go into battle in the promised land they are to sound a blast on the trumpet and they will be remembered by God and rescued. It is used in Psalm 98 to speak of the salvation of God being brought to all the earth. In Acts those words are spoken to Cornelius by an Angel who says “**God** has heard your prayer and **remembered** your gifts to the poor.” And it is spoken twice in the book of revelation when speaking about the city of Babylon and God’s judgement upon it.

God Remembered - It immediately grabs our attention, because our first thought is. “Wait A minute!” God is omniscient how can he forget something.

And that is the point. He can’t! It is an anthropomorphic way of getting the opposite point across to us that God never forgets about us. Perhaps from our perspective it looks like God has forgotten us, but that is only our perspective bound by the limitations of time and our human understanding.

This is not remembered in the since that something or someone slipped God's mind for a while, and then suddenly God said oops I forgot about that, guess I better do something. But this is remembered more in the since that it was never out of God's sight or mind. God has not forgotten about them and God has not forgotten about you!

There are two verses in Psalms that help us understand this concept.

Psalm 136:23 New International Version (NIV)

²³ He remembered us in our low estate *His love endures forever.*

Psalm 112:6 New International Version (NIV)

⁶ Surely the righteous will never be shaken; they will be remembered forever.

So as we look at the events of Esther Chapter 6, let us remember that God never forgets...

1. Even though the night may be long and dark

Maybe you are going through something that is difficult, dark and has lasted a long time. When I think of long and dark experiences, I think of Noah.

Noah knew what it was like to feel alone and abandoned. It took Noah between 50 and a hundred years to build the ark. Other than his family, no one else stood with him, no one else was saved. It rained for forty days and forty nights, but he was on the ARK for at least a year.

Psalm 121

¹ I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? ² My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. ³ He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; ⁴ indeed, **he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep** ⁵ The LORD watches over you—the LORD is your shade at your right hand; ⁶ the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. ⁷ The LORD will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; ⁸ the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

2. Even though there may be no tangible proof

David must have had days when he questioned God's promise of being King. Especially, when he looked around at his surroundings for proof. After all a cave is a far cry from the throne.

Philippians 4:19 New Living Translation (NLT)

¹⁹ And this same God who takes care of me **will supply all your needs** from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.

3. Even though others may be passing us by

Paul waited for years before being recognized as an apostle. There must have been days when it felt like everyone else was getting to fulfill the purposes of God for their lives.

4. Even though we may feel time is running out

Abraham had a promise of God, but he was getting old. So much so that he began to take things into his own hands to get the heir he was promised. That resulted in Ishmael.

Jairus knew time had run out for him when a messenger came to tell him not to bother Jesus any longer because his daughter was dead.

Mark 5:36 New International Version (NIV)

³⁶ Overhearing^[a] what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

Psalms 94:18 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁸ When I said, "My foot is slipping," your unfailing love, LORD, supported me.

5. Even though our dreams may have died

Joseph must have thought for sure that he had misinterpreted his dreams. That God had forgotten about him

Lazarus was dead and Mary and Martha's dreams of having Jesus heal him were crushed.

6. Even though we may have forgotten Him

Left Behind In Africa

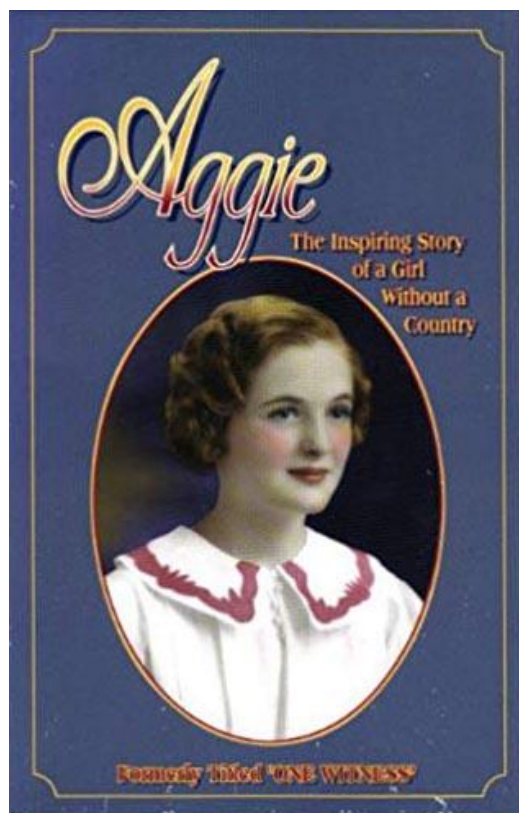
Isaiah 49:13-16 New International Version (NIV)

¹³ Shout for joy, you heavens; rejoice, you earth; burst into song, you mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.

¹⁴ But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me." ¹⁵ "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, **I will not forget you!** ¹⁶ See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands...

A Story of Eternal Perspective

BY AGGIE HURST FEBRUARY 18, 1986



Back in 1921, a missionary couple named David and Svea Flood went with their two-year-old son from Sweden to the heart of Africa—to what was then called the Belgian Congo. They met up with another young Scandinavian couple, the Ericksons, and the four of them sought God for direction. In those days of much tenderness and devotion and sacrifice, they felt led of the Lord to go out from the main mission station and take the gospel to a remote area.

This was a huge step of faith. At the village of N'dolera they were rebuffed by the chief, who would not let them enter his town for fear of alienating the local gods. The two couples opted to go half a mile up the slope and build their own mud huts.

They prayed for a spiritual breakthrough, but there was none. The only contact with the villagers was a young boy, who was allowed to sell them chickens and eggs twice a week. Svea Flood—a tiny woman of only four feet, eight inches tall—decided that if this was the only African she could talk to, she would try to lead the boy to Jesus. And in fact, she succeeded.

But there were no other encouragements. Meanwhile, malaria continued to strike one member of the little band after another. In time the Ericksons decided they had had

enough suffering and left to return to the central mission station. David and Svea Flood remained near N'dolera to go on alone.

Then, of all things, Svea found herself pregnant in the middle of the primitive wilderness. When the time came for her to give birth, the village chief softened enough to allow a midwife to help her. A little girl was born, whom they named Aina.

The delivery, however, was exhausting, and Svea Flood was already weak from bouts of malaria. The birth process was a heavy blow to her stamina. She lasted only another seventeen days.

Inside David Flood, something snapped in that moment. He dug a crude grave, buried his twenty-seven-year-old wife, and then took his children back down the mountain to the mission station. Giving his newborn daughter to the Ericksons, he snarled, "I'm going back to Sweden. I've lost my wife, and I obviously can't take care of this baby. God has ruined my life." With that, he headed for the port, rejecting not only his calling, but God himself.

Within eight months both the Ericksons were stricken with a mysterious malady and died within days of each other. The baby was then turned over to some American missionaries, who adjusted her Swedish name to "Aggie" and eventually brought her back to the United States at age three.

This family loved the little girl and was afraid that if they tried to return to Africa, some legal obstacle might separate her from them. So they decided to stay in their home country and switch from missionary work to pastoral ministry. And that is how Aggie grew up in South Dakota. As a young woman, she attended North Central Bible college in Minneapolis. There she met and married a young man named Dewey Hurst.

Years passed. The Hursts enjoyed a fruitful ministry. Aggie gave birth first to a daughter, then a son. In time her husband became president of a Christian college in the Seattle area, and Aggie was intrigued to find so much Scandinavian heritage there.

One day a Swedish religious magazine appeared in her mailbox. She had no idea who had sent it, and of course she couldn't read the words. But as she turned the pages, all of a sudden a photo stopped her cold. There in a primitive setting was a grave with a white cross-and on the cross were the words SVEA FLOOD.

Aggie jumped in her car and went straight to a college faculty member who, she knew, could translate the article. "What does this say?" she demanded.

The instructor summarized the story: It was about missionaries who had come to N'dolera long ago...the birth of a white baby...the death of the young mother...the one little African boy who had been led to Christ...and how, after the whites had all left, the boy had grown up and finally persuaded the chief to let him build a school in the village. The article said that gradually he won all his students to Christ...the children led their parents to Christ...even the chief had become a Christian. Today there were six hundred Christian believers in that one village...

All because of the sacrifice of David and Svea Flood.

For the Hursts' twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, the college presented them with the gift of a vacation to Sweden. There Aggie sought to find her real father. An old man now, David Flood had remarried, fathered four more children, and generally dissipated his life with alcohol. He had recently suffered a stroke. Still bitter, he had one rule in his family: "Never mention the name of God-because God took everything from me."

After an emotional reunion with her half brothers and half sister, Aggie brought up the subject of seeing her father. The others hesitated. "You can talk to him," they replied, "even though he's very ill now. But you need to know that whenever he hears the name of God, he flies into a rage."

Aggie was not to be deterred. She walked into the squalid apartment, with liquor bottles everywhere, and approached the seventy-three-year-old man lying in a rumpled bed.

"Papa?" she said tentatively.

He turned and began to cry. "Aina," he said, "I never meant to give you away."

"It's all right Papa," she replied, taking him gently in her arms. "God took care of me."

The man instantly stiffened. The tears stopped.

"God forgot all of us. Our lives have been like this because of Him." He turned his face back to the wall.

Aggie stroked his face and then continued, undaunted.

"Papa, I've got a little story to tell you, and it's a true one. You didn't go to Africa in vain. Mama didn't die in vain. The little boy you won to the Lord grew up to win that whole village to Jesus Christ. The one seed you planted just kept growing and growing.

Today there are six hundred African people serving the Lord because you were faithful to the call of God in your life...

“Papa, Jesus loves you. He has never hated you.”

The old man turned back to look into his daughter’s eyes. His body relaxed. He began to talk. And by the end of the afternoon, he had come back to the God he had resented for so many decades.

Over the next few days, father and daughter enjoyed warm moments together. Aggie and her husband soon had to return to America—and within a few weeks, David Flood had gone into eternity.

A few years later, the Hursts were attending a high-level evangelism conference in London, England, where a report was given from the nation of Zaire (the former Belgian Congo). The superintendent of the national church, representing some 110,000 baptized believers, spoke eloquently of the gospel’s spread in his nation. Aggie could not help going to ask him afterward if he had ever heard of David and Svea Flood.

“Yes, madam,” the man replied in French, his words then being translated into English. “It was Svea Flood who led me to Jesus Christ. I was the boy who brought food to your parents before you were born. In fact, to this day your mother’s grave and her memory are honored by all of us.”

He embraced her in a long, sobbing hug. Then he continued, “You must come to Africa to see, because your mother is the most famous person in our history.”

In time that is exactly what Aggie Hurst and her husband did. They were welcomed by cheering throngs of villagers. She even met the man who had been hired by her father many years before to carry her back down the mountain in a hammock-cradle.

The most dramatic moment, of course, was when the pastor escorted Aggie to see her mother’s white cross for herself. She knelt in the soil to pray and give thanks. Later that day, in the church, the pastor read from [John 12:24](#): “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” He then followed with [Psalm 126:5](#): “Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.”

(An excerpt from Aggie Hurst, Aggie: The Inspiring Story of A Girl Without A Country [Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1986].)