



### **JOHN 20:20**

Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'

### **JOHN 5:17**

In his defence Jesus said to them, 'My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.'

### **START TALKING:**

1. What stood out to you from Sunday's message? What challenged or encouraged you?
2. What has God been doing in your life that we can celebrate?

### **START THINKING:**

1. Dr Cynthia Parker conducted a study on Jewish Culture and how the Jewish people were taught to "reverse into their future" by looking back over their lives and their community and see the hand of God and the goodness and character of God. From that reflection, they then had confidence to face their future.
  - Have you ever felt that God was silent or absent from a situation that you were facing?
  - When you look back on that time, can you see the hand of God, His goodness and His guidance even though you did not recognise it at the time?
2. When you realise that there are no coincidences in God's world, can you see that God has always been at work in the details of your life, even when you didn't give the credit to Him?

### **START SHARING:**

1. Have you ever seen a "major" miracle? If yes, share with the group.
2. What different Characteristics of God are evident within the book of Esther?

### **START DOING:**

Look back on your life. Allow how God has worked in your life "behind the scenes" to build your faith for the situations you face now and in the future.



This Sunday, in part one of our Esther series, Steph encouraged us to be a part of God's story, rather than trying to make Him a part of our story.

In the book of Esther, there is no mention of God, worship, prayer or sacrifice. There are no "big miracles", and yet we can see how God's hand was over Esther, Mordecai and the Jewish nation as a whole.

This is revealed in the following events:

- God arranged for the noble Queen Vashti to lose her place.
- God arranged for a competition to replace Queen Vashti.
- God arranged for Esther to enter the competition which would ordinarily take up to 12 months.
- God arranged special favour for Esther among the other women.
- God arranged for Mordecai to overhear a plot for the King to be killed and have access to both Esther and the affairs of the kingdom. Mordecai shares this plot with Esther and the King is saved.
- God arranged the lot that was cast to give 11 months warning before the planned massacre (Esther 3:12-13).
- God arranged that the decree commanded that the Jews be killed by private hands, instead of by the army of Persia – which would have been much more difficult to stop.
- God arranged that Haman restrain his anger and not kill Mordecai immediately (Esther 5:10).
- God arranged for Esther to delay her request; first asking for a banquet with the king and then another banquet.
- God arranged for the king to have a sleepless night.
- God arranged for the king to send for a certain book during his sleepless night.
- God arranged for the king to listen to the passage about Mordecai in that particular book.

There are often times in our lives when we feel that God is not working in the way that we would like Him to, but God is always at work in the background details because we are His people and

we are a part of His story. We need to learn how to believe what we can't see more than what we can see.

Our sight is one of the most precious gifts God has given us, but it can also limit us to only believing what we can see in front of us with our natural eyes, and when we don't see God doing what we hope for, we assume that He is not doing anything.

*Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

When we realise that we are part of God's story, this scripture comes alive as part of our daily walk with God. We have faith that everything will work to the good for each of His children.

## REFLECTION QUESTION:

Does your faith place you within God's story, or does it place God within your story?