messageNOTES

Behind the Scenes

where God's at work.

The Book of Esther

Roger Ellis
Pastor of Equipping

Here we are at the headwaters of 2012. The holidays are over. The mundane day-to-day of normal life lies ahead. Tomorrow or the next day most of us are back to the same old routines. 2012 will have its share of joys and sorrows, ups and downs, triumphs and tragedies. And in the midst of it all God will be at work, whether we see Him or not, behind the scenes. The story from the book of Esther pictures the following truths for us:

1 **God is always** at work behind the scenes **whether we recognize it or not (1:1-10:3)**

2 **God does not have us (you) in this place at this time** by chance or by mistake **(3:7, 9:1; 4:13-16)**

a. trust His placement – Esther 4:14b

b. trust His timing – Esther 4:14c (Acts 17:24-28)

c. trust His plan – Esther 4:14a

3 **Recognize what God has done &** celebrate it! **– Esther 9:20-32**

The one thing:

Get to know Him! Watch for Him! Trust Him! Celebrate Him!

taking it home

{ notes for small group, family & personal study
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keeping it real

1 Tell of a time in your life when you faced a set of difficult circumstances. Identify the turning points in your story. Did it seem as though God was at work, or did it feel like chance?

look at the book

2 Do a character study of Esther, drawing particularly from Esther 4:1-5:8. How would you describe Esther's strengths and weaknesses? What did Mordecai think of her? How hard would it be to take the initiative and embrace the risk placed in her lap?

3 How is it possible for God to actually work behind the scenes overseeing the affairs of men and women and yet not override their free will to make choices? What does the story of Esther show? What do these verses have to contribute to your answer?

a. Genesis 50:20

b. Romans 8:28

the next step

4 From one of the options below list specific times of struggle, pain, tragedy, uncertainty, joy, blessing, and triumph. How have you seen God at work behind the scenes? What do you need to do to become more observant?

a. For the year 2011

b. For the past five years

c. For your life story

my next step this week is to:

- ❍ memorize Esther 4:13-14
- ❍ complete *Taking it Home* question #4
- ❍ read *The Horse & His Boy* by C. S. Lewis
- ❍ Other _____