

Articles and Sermons :: Occupy Till I Come - A. B. Simpson

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From "Herald of His Coming":

Occupy Till I Come!
By A. B. Simpson

"Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esth. 4:14).

The stories of Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther are great miracles of Providence and are full of instruction for us who live in these last times, of which those days are typical and prophetic.

God was pleased to work, as no doubt He will work in these days, by the feeblest instruments, and by those least likely to accomplish their purpose. He used a captive in Babylon, the holy Daniel, as His instrument for humbling the whole empire of Babylon, and for putting Nebuchadnezzar, its king, upon his face before Jehovah.

God used this same Daniel, by his believing prayer, to bring about the restoration of the captives to their land and home under the decree of Cyrus. He also used a few humble workers, under Zerubbabel and Joshua, to restore the ruined city and temple.

And still later the Hebrew maid, the beautiful Esther, was His chosen instrument to save her whole nation from extermination through the craft and cruelty of the wicked Haman. The lessons of her life are full of holy teaching for us in these last times.

In the present instance she had been asked by her uncle, Mordecai, to use her influence with the king to counteract the fatal decree that Haman had already secured against the Jews. Hesitating for a time to risk her life by going uncalled into the presence of the king, her good uncle addressed to her these solemn words, reminding her of the very purpose for which she had been raised up, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

To each of us, like Esther, God has given a kingdom of influence and power; and has, in His providence placed us in times and circumstances best adapted for the exercise of the power entrusted to us.

Our Kingdom

Beloved, do you recognize that even your person, your natural attractions, your intellectual gifts, all are a trust from God and for God that you might sacredly use your personal influence and power to advance His kingdom?

Our social position and circumstances are part of our kingdom. God led Esther, in His providence, into a palace and made her the bride of a king, giving her thus an influence that practically controlled the whole world.

Likewise, God has given to each of us our places in life, our relationships, our friendships, our family ties, our wealth or poverty, our occupation and business — as channels of holy influence and opportunities of service for His kingdom.

We have not the placing of ourselves, but the filling of our place. Sometimes the humblest place is as important as the most prominent, even as the little jeweled pivot in the watch is the axis of the whole machinery.

The little maid in Naaman's house turned the fortunes of the great prince of Syria, and Joseph in a prison or a kitchen was as important a factor in the world's history as Joseph on the throne.

Let us, therefore, recognize every place in life, and every circumstance that comes to us as a definite occasion for some heavenly purpose; let us seek to use it for the service and glory of our God.

Are you in the family circle? You are there to be a blessing to those around you. Are you rich? Your money is not your own, but a "trust" for God. Are you in a business position? You are there, not merely to seize the opportunity for gain and

d aggrandizement, but to glorify God and to be a blessing to all with whom you come in contact.

Are you a workman in the factory? You are there for the salvation of somebody, or for the uplifting of the name of Christ in the face of some dishonor or insult, or to set an example in which they shall see and recognize the Master.

Are you surrounded by uncongenial and unholy associates? You are there that you may bring to them the light that they will never read in the Bible or see in any volume but the living epistle of your life.

God help you to recognize your kingdom and to use it for your King!

Your Spiritual Experiences Constitute a Still Higher Kingdom

You have been born again that you might become the parent of other souls. You have been led through the varied experiences of your Christian life that, as you tell others the story, their hearts may be converted, comforted, and instructed. Every discipline through which you pass is meant to prepare you to lead another soul through a similar pathway.

Do you suffer? It is that you may comfort others with the comfort wherewith you yourself were comforted of God (2 Cor. 1:3-4). Are you happy? It is that you may shed your radiance upon hearts that are overshadowed with gloom. Have you been saved from peril and temptation? It is that you may guard others against the snare. Have you been established, strengthened, settled? It is that you, in turn, may go and strengthen your brethren (Luke 22:31-32).

Your Spiritual Endowments and Privileges Constitute an Even Higher Kingdom

God has given you His exceeding great and precious promises. What a kingdom of holy influence! But it is given to you to use for His service. Are you doing this? Are you entering into all the fullness of your inheritance for His glory and service?

God has given you His precious faith. Are you using it as an engine to bless others, to glorify God and to build up His kingdom? And like Abraham, are you staggering not at the promises of God through unbelief, but strong in faith, giving glory to God? (Rom. 4:13-21).

God has given you His mighty Word. It is the Gospel, the power of God unto salvation. What a kingdom of truth! How it breaks and heals the hearts of men! How it sanctifies, stimulates, ennobles, moves, revolutionizes the whole of human society! Are you using this mighty force for the spread of the Gospel and for the establishing of the kingdom of truth in every land?

God has given you the Holy Ghost, the mightiest Power that a mortal can possess in His indwelling you, in His omnipotence to possess you, to use you, and to work mightily through you. Are you using this mighty Power? Have you yielded yourself to His possession? Have you received the baptism of power for service? Are you letting Him work in you the gifts of Pentecost? (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).

And God has given you the power of prayer, the arm that moves the Arm that moves all things. Oh! the power of believing prayer to open the heavens, to bless the hearts of men, to conquer the power of Satan, to bring salvation near, to overcome the most formidable difficulties and foes, and to accomplish all that our weak, human hands are unable to do! What a kingdom God has given us!

And then what prospects: the hope of His Coming, the inheritance of His glory, the assurance that we shall reign with Him! Surely we should walk as the children of a King; and with real faith and courage, and with holy inspiration and dignity, go forth to represent Him (2 Cor. 5:20).

The parable of the pounds is intended to impress this solemn lesson. It reminds us that our King has given to each of us a trust to occupy, with the command, "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13). We can make much or little of it, as we are faithful and diligent, or the opposite.

Each of us has an equal chance, and the different lives are due not so much to the larger endowments as to the more faithful use of the trust committed (Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27).

When He comes, each of us shall be called to meet Him and to present our accounts to receive the reward in proportion.

on to our faithful service. What a responsibility it lays upon us to have received so much; for to whom much is given, of him much is required (Luke 12:48; Rom. 14:12).

The Full Resources of His Grace

There is no service which God expects of us for which He has not made the fullest provision in the infinite sources of His grace. We cannot dare too much, if it be in dependence upon Him; for He has given us all fullness, and He sends no one warring upon his own charges; but He is able to make all grace abound toward us, so that we, always having all sufficiency in all things, abound unto every good work (2 Cor. 9:6-8).

Shall we go to the armory of our King and, clothed in His infinite power, meet His expectation for us, attempting great things for God because we expect great things from God?

Do we realize, beloved, the high place which He has given us? It is even as Esther's. The church of God is the Bride of the King of kings and has been raised from nothingness and worthlessness to share all His resources and glory, to represent Him in all His fullness, to draw from Him in all His might, and to use His power to establish His own kingdom.

Oh! shall we clothe ourselves with His glory and then go forth to do His bidding and to bring in His kingdom? Do we really know that we have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

O daughter of Zion, awake, awake; put on thy strength, thy beautiful garments; shake thyself and sit down. Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion, and go forth in His glory until a wondering world shall say, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" (Song 6:10; Isa. 52:1).

Esther had been raised up especially to meet the times; likewise God has prepared each one of you for the very crisis in life which you are to meet. No sooner does He prepare an instrument for service than He shows the service for which it has been prepared. As soon as Paul was ready, the Gentile missions were opened for him. As soon as Philip had obeyed the Spirit and had gone down to the desert, the eunuch appeared to receive his ministry.

Signs of Our Times

God teaches us that each age of the world has its special significance: and when He Himself walked the earth, He severely blamed the men of His generation that they did not understand the signs of the times. He expects us to understand the meaning of our generation, the meaning of our age; and, like David, to serve our own generation by the will of God.

The Holy Spirit is promised to give us discernment of spirit, to catch the meaning of our surroundings; and the thought of Jesus, our Master, as He leads us in the work of today and the conflicts of the present age.

Our times, like Esther's, are times of great activity on the part of the adversary. The devil was busy seeking to destroy the hope of the Jews, the chosen race; and Haman had almost accomplished the extermination of the Hebrew people.

Had his plan been unchecked, in a few weeks the promised line through which the Messiah was to come would have been cut off; and the hope of the world's redemption would have been wrecked.

It was, therefore, as indispensable that Haman should be counteracted as it was that Jesus Christ should come in the flesh. It was a momentous issue. Satan had some conception of it, and had brought forth his masterpiece of cunning and cruelty; but he was outwitted and more than matched by the infinite wisdom of God as He worked through the instrumentality of Esther's life.

So, today, the devil is busy, busier than ever, because he knows that his time is short. He is trying to destroy the Bible and the church of God. He is turning the church into a worldly club, the ministry into an ambitious profession.

And outside the church, he is giving birth to various forms of evil on the one hand, while on the other he is absorbing the hearts of men in the pursuit of pleasure, the love of money, the strife of politics, and the ten thousand dazzling objects of human ambition and false desire.

His great object is to destroy the spiritual life of the church of Christ and to take a living, supernatural Christ out of our Christian faith. God help us to understand him, and to hold fast our kingdom of faith, of power, of holiness and hope. And, armed with the panoply of God, may we be able to withstand the hosts of darkness in the evil day, and having done all, to stand! (Eph. 6:10-20).

Strangers to God!

Like the times of Esther, this is a time when souls are in peril. Her people were in danger of perishing. Are there not those around us on every side who are in greater danger? Are there not those in our families now who are perishing without Christ? Are there not those in our social circles who are strangers to God, and dying without His heavenly love?

And are there not, in the wider circle of the world, billions of immortal souls passing one by one with every breath we draw, unsaved into the presence of the Judge, while their blood is sprinkled upon our luxuries, and the dark shadow of their curse falls upon our selfish brows, if we have not done all in our power to save them?

Are these not the times to which prophecy has looked forward, when the tidings of the Gospel shall be borne on flying wings, and He shall come quickly? (Matt. 24:14).

The unsaved are appealing to us, and He who hears their cry is looking to us also. Oh! shall we be found listening and responding; for how knowest thou, brother, "whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this"?

We Are in the Closing Hours of This Age

God has been striking with a mighty hand the sins of the nations. He is preparing highways through some countries unparalleled in the history of the world. He is marching on. There is a sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees and of a voice that bids us bestir ourselves, for the Lord is gone out before us to deliver the Philistines into our hands (2 Sam. 5:24).

Brother, knowest thou that thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? Awake to meet the meaning of the age and the fruit of a lifetime, and let us be found workers together with God in what is perhaps the last campaign of the Christian dispensation! (2 Cor. 6:1-2).

Like Esther's, it is a time of crisis. All men are conscious of a strange stirring in their hearts today, a looking for something that shall happen; and the students of prophecy are interpreting this deep cry as the answer back from the holy page that its signs are converging to a focus in this solemn decade. "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him!" (Matt. 25:6).

Oh, what a privilege to be permitted to live in such a time as this! What a responsibility it involves to walk with Him in white, with heedful mind, obedient will, uplifted eye, and humble, holy confidence; for the Son of Man is as a man going upon a journey, who gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work (Mark 13:34), and commanded the porter to watch.

Let us be like men who wait for their Lord's appearing, and who work to hasten it (Luke 12:13-59).

Perils of Neglect

Beloved, are you using the glorious opportunities which other generations would have prized and hailed with delight? And, day by day, are you watching for opportunities, recognizing them when they come and gladly hastening to meet them?

Oh! let us rise to meet His highest expectation; let us claim our responsibility and service to the full: let us be found worthy of the glorious times in which our Master has allowed our lot to be cast!

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