



On Sunday I often listen to the service on Radio 4. Last week Sam Wells spoke about Moses and the burning bush. God's mission for Moses was to release a nation from lockdown. I was struck that the burning bush was likened to the way God's heart was on fire for Moses and is ablaze with love for each one of us.

Let's pray, *"We are thankful for God's love to us made abundantly clear to us in our bible and especially by Jesus, in his life, death and resurrection. May we appreciate that love, which can not be extinguished, more and more and be able to share it in all sorts of ways no matter what our current circumstances may be. We are thankful to be able to worship our loving and awesome God and pray that we will be challenged and changed by what we are taught from the life of Esther."*

## Song

I've heard a thousand stories  
Of what they think You're like  
But I've heard the tender whisper  
Of love in the dead of night  
You tell me that You're pleased  
And that I'm never alone

You're a good, good Father  
It's who You are  
It's who You are  
It's who You are

And I'm loved by You  
It's who I am  
It's who I am  
It's who I am

I've seen many searching for answers  
Far and wide  
But I know we're all searching for answers  
Only You provide  
Because You know just what we need  
Before we say a word

You are perfect in all of Your ways  
You are perfect in all of Your ways  
You are perfect in all of Your ways to us

Love so undeniable I can hardly speak  
Peace so unexplainable I can hardly think

As You call me deeper still  
As You call me deeper still  
As You call me deeper still  
Into love, love, love

Anthony Brown | Pat Barrett

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## Esther

The book of Esther is a peripety – a story where there is a reversal of destiny through a sudden and unexpected turn of events: the Jews seem destined to be destroyed, but instead are saved.

The Kings' splendour at start mirrored by Mordecai's at end  
Esther & Mordecai save the king, at the end save the Jews  
Haman is elevated and banquets - vs Mordecai elevation and banquet  
Esther's two banquets are each side of the central pivot – the king being reminded of the past and changing his course of action, he was saved so saves another.

## Teaching - book of Esther

- Where am I being proud? Where am I more concerned with how I appear to others and how they treat me rather than how I treat others? Where am I losing control of my anger, or not trying to control it all? Where has society brainwashed me into seeking first its values rather than God's kingdom?
- What are our God-given skills and talents? Are we using them or are we trying to fit ourselves into the mould that society says we belong in?
- Are we encouraging, inspiring and promoting others in their kingdom work, or are we constraining them by putting them in a box that society says they belong in? Are we willing to work and actually working outside of society's ideas and ideals of our roles where applicable to further God's kingdom and his work?

## Prayers

Almighty, loving & wonderful father who always watches over his children.

Your love for us has no comparison, your mercy and goodness are infinite and with you nothing is impossible. You are our God, our Father who will never leave us.

We are living in very difficult times that we don't always understand and which can leave us anxious, worried and fearful. Forgive us for the times when such situations make us doubt that you are there with us.

Thank you for the technology that allows us to communicate with our family and friends even when we can't see them face to face.

Thank you that we have the freedom to meet in your name without fear of persecution.



Aert de Gelder (1645-1727)

Thank you for your infinite mercy.

We ask for your help in fighting the coronavirus pandemic and for the development of a vaccine to control it so that we can return to normal life where we can, once again, meet, hug and share freely without fear.

We ask for your strength and patience for all those who have to isolate and we pray for quick recovery for those poorly with the virus.

We pray for your protection for students and staff in schools.

We ask for your wisdom and protection for the NHS.

We pray for equality, justice and peace for the whole world, where people do not have to risk their lives to secure a better future.

We ask for strength for the relatives of the young family who died this week in the English Channel and for others like them.

We also pray for wisdom for the rulers and leaders of each nation, for them to make the best decisions for the benefit of all their people.

Please heal our land.

We pray in the name of your son, Jesus.

Amen

## Song

He's coming on the clouds  
Kings and kingdoms will bow down  
And every chain will break  
As broken hearts declare His praise  
For who can stop the Lord Almighty

Our God is the Lion  
The Lion of Judah  
He's roaring with power  
And fighting our battles  
And every knee will bow before Him

Our God is the Lamb  
The Lamb that was slain  
For the sins of the world  
His blood breaks the chains  
And every knee will bow before the Lion and  
the Lamb  
Every knee will bow before Him

So open up the gates  
Make way before the King of kings  
The God who comes to save  
Is here to set the captives free  
For who can stop the Lord Almighty  
Who can stop the Lord Almighty

Who can stop the Lord (Almighty)

Brenton Brown | Brian Johnson | Leeland Mooring

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He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor. Esther 9:22

Make me a channel of Your peace  
It is pardoning that we are pardoned  
In giving to all men that we receive  
And in dying that we're born to eternal life