

Esther 8-10

Jesus said, *“The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”* Luke 12:16-21 He said, *“...what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”* Mark 8:36

But unfortunately such seems to be the legacy of so many who have a season on the top side of this earth, the pursuit of the things of this world, to the neglect of the pursuit, and priority of God in their lives. And what’s the point of it all in the end? Especially in the context of it serving no eternal benefit, but only making for one’s eternal detriment. We always think we’ll have time to make it right, or to prioritize God in the latter years of life after we’ve pursued our fortune and gotten ourselves secure, then maybe, perhaps at that time we’ll consider our Maker. But the fact is that we’re never guaranteed to make it to our latter years, we’re not guaranteed another day, much less another year, or another 30 years, you never know what the course of a day might bring.

Ask Haman, the OT Hitler that we’ve run across in our study of the book of Esther. He seemed to have it all, a large family, a soaring career, more money than he could spend in 10 lifetimes, and a personal and privileged audience with the king and queen. Yet for all that he wasn’t happy, wasn’t satisfied, wasn’t content, why? Because the flesh is never satisfied, contentment is just ever so slightly out of reach when being sought in the things of this world. There’s always just *one more* thing that I need, *“Then, I’ll be happy, I’ll be satisfied, I’ll be fulfilled.”* For Haman it was just another day, he’d had a grand and glorious evening the night before, spent time with the king and the queen at a banquet, and had been invited back the next evening. He had it all, until he left the palace, there was Mordecai (the Jew) refusing to bow or be intimidated in his presence, and *man* this just ate at him, and he wouldn’t be happy until Mordecai was hanging high, impaled upon a pole some 75’ high.

So he set out the next morning to beseech the king for an order of execution, however that same night the king couldn’t sleep. So he called for the chronicles of the kingdom to be read to him hoping that’d knock him out. And as they were being read they came to the place where Mordecai had uncovered a conspiracy to kill the king. The king says, *“What was ever done to reward that guy?”* The fella reading said, *“Nothing.”* Just then Haman walks in, long story short the king has Haman bestow full honors on Mordecai before the entire city, he had to exalt this guy who just rubbed him wrong. Well, Haman went back home with his head covered, embarrassed, and humiliated, and just as he was telling his wife what had happened there was a knock at the door.

It was time for the banquet, the king was chomping at the bit to find out what it was the Esther wanted to request (she'd risked her life to gain audience with the king, so whatever it was it was important.) She says to the king at the appropriate time, "All I want from the king is my life, and the life of my people, we've been sold to destruction, to be killed, destroyed, and annihilated." The king says, "Who it their right mind would seek to do such a thing, destroy my queen, or for that matter her people?" Esther looks at Haman, and says, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman." Remember he'd issued an act of genocide against the Jews in the king's name.

Well, the king went ballistic, went out to gather himself in the garden (Haman was his right hand man) Haman started pleading for his life, he'd been drinking, he fell across the couch that Esther was on, just then the king comes in and says, "What are you going to rape my wife before my very eyes!" That was all the guards needed to hear, they grab Haman, cover his face and we read in Vs 9 and 10 of Ch 7 (read).

No guarantees what a day may bring, when the sun came up Haman had it all, before the day was over his soul was required of him, how important to have proper priorities. That we seek 1st the Kingdom of God, and *His* righteousness, rather than on the empty and futile aspirations of this world, what are all those riches profiting him now? What advantage is that soaring career at this point? How essential it is that we maintain the eternal perspective.
Vs1-2

So what we have here is that Mordecai was just promoted into the position that Haman had previously occupied. Prime minister, the official representative of the king, notice the king gave Mordecai his signet ring. What that means is anything that Mordecai felt like enacting, he had the stamp of the king's signature, and once you stamped the king's signature on something, it was law, period.

Now everything that Haman previously owned, his estate was given to Esther and she placed Mordecai over all of it, ironic isn't it. We mentioned this Vs last time, "*Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him.*" Prov 26:27 We read is Ps 57:6 "*They have prepared a net for my steps; My soul is bowed down; They have dug a pit before me; Into the midst of it they themselves have fallen.*" Don't be deceived God is not mocked, whatever a man sows that will he also reap, which is another reason that it's so critical that we sow to the Spirit, because to sow to the flesh is to reap corruption. And I say this a lot but it seems that everybody likes sowing to the flesh, but nobody likes harvest time. But its often times a discipline to sow to the Spirit, but the harvest is out of this world, be wise in your plotting, in your planning, in the things that you do and are willing to be apart of. Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are His, sow to the Spirit that you might of the Spirit reap eternal life.

But this leaves us in sort of a good news, bad news type situation. The good news: Ding Dong the witch is dead, Haman has been hung up by his own gallows, impaled on the stake he'd prepared for Mordecai and everything he owned has in essence been given *to* Mordecai. The bad news: The act of genocide that he'd *set* in motion is *still* in motion, remember the king's word is law, there's no reversing it once its come out of his mouth and been stamped by his ring.

Vs3-6

What's going on here? What are we seeing here? We're seeing Esther coming before the throne to intercede on the behalf of those otherwise destined to destruction, she is in essence "praying to the king" for their salvation, their deliverance from the irrevocable sentence of death. And you might notice the fact that Haman didn't care about people, on his own power, platform, prestige, and position. Everything that he owned, Esther now had (And more, she was the queen) but to *her* those things were peripheral, she was willing to lose it all for the sake of the deliverance of those who would otherwise perish. Remember if the king didn't hold out the scepter to her when she entered his presence she would be immediately executed. So she was willing to lose her life, that others might be given life.

We might understand it like this; she had an overwhelming burden for those who were positioned to perish unless the king intervened. As long as the sentence of death, of judgment lie over the people, she couldn't sleep at night.

How many "believers" today share in this type of burden? We spoke a couple Sundays ago about the need for Christians to simply care, because care will result in prayer. Unfortunately most believers today take the apathetic attitude thinking that coming to church once a week, throwing a \$20 now and then in the plate that passes by is sufficient Christian service. Now they're free to do whatever they want with the rest of their time and resources, but there's a people with a death sentence looming over them out there who are destined to destruction apart from somebody standing in the gap. And none of us can do everything that needs done, but all of us can do *something*, at least the *one* thing that we see happening here and that is to stand in the gap, pray, intercede before the King of kings for their deliverance. Allow God to cultivate a burden in your heart for the lost.

Sometimes I wonder if we're not as a culture more like the statement found there in Ezek 22:30 where the Lord said, "*So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.*" In Isaiah 65 the Lord speaks of being amazed and appalled that He could find no one to uphold, no one to intercede, Esther is interceding for her people.

Vs 7-10

1 Thing I want you to see here and then we'll keep moving, the same means that was used to issue the decree of destruction, is here used to issue the decree of deliverance.

The means themselves were neutral (royal horses bred from swift steeds) they could carry a destructive message, or a message of deliverance depending on who was employing them, or using them. Same thing with us today, some people want to write the T.V. off as nothing more than a cesspool of destruction, and no doubt Satan loves to use it as just that, but that same means (T.V.) can be used to carry the message of deliverance. Some people think certain types of music are nothing but destructive, depends on who's wielding the instrument, a gun in the hands of a murderer is a destructive thing, in the hands of a law enforcement agent it becomes an instrument of deliverance. Internet being used to destroy people's lives through pornography and other things, but we can also use it to send the gospel message all over the world, same thing with radio, podcasting and all the rest. So just because something is used in a certain situation to bring destruction, that doesn't make it necessarily inherently evil, in many cases it can be used to bring the good news of deliverance just the same. I'm thankful for the technology God has blessed us with. Sure there are people who will pervert it to their own destruction, but man we can use it to proclaim deliverance in the person of Jesus Christ.

Vs11-14

So the order couldn't be revoked, once it was spoken it was irrevocable law, but another provision could be set in motion that if believed, received, and acted upon could save them. Are you guys noticing the parallel here to the situation concerning mankind in general? There's been a legal decree issued forth from the throne of the King to this world that says, "*The soul who sins shall die.*" Ezek 18:4 The wages of sin is death, and there is *nothing*, or no one who can reverse that order, its law, but another decree has been issued. That still stands, but another provision has been made, that if believed, received and acted upon by faith will save you from the irreversible penalty of death. And of course that provision was made in the person of God's Son who became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. And in this new decree God can still remain just, yet becomes the *justifier* of the one who has faith in Jesus.

But here's the deal, remember Sunday morning we spoke of the fact that it does no good to have a message with out a messenger to bring it. "*How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!*" Rom 10:15

That's where you I come in, the decree has been made, the command, and the commission to carry it to every creature has been given, and we're to be hastened/pressed on by the King's command. Remember how Paul spoke to the Corinthians of how the love of Christ constrained him, compelled him, pressed him on.

See there was a sense of urgency to get the message out, may God impart to us a sense of urgency about getting the message of deliverance in the person of Jesus Christ out to a world otherwise destined to destruction, not knowing that another decree, a provision has been made that will save them by simply believing it, receiving it, and acting on it in faith.

In Vs 11 we note the fact that they weren't to be the aggressors (the Jews), but that they were free to defend themselves against any who would seek to come against them on the day that Haman had ordained for their destruction.

Vs 15-17

When the irrevocable decree of death went out it brought perplexity, the people were confused, there was weeping and wailing, sackcloth and ashes. When the irrevocable decree of deliverance went out it brought light (hope) it brought, gladness, joy and honor, a way of redemption had been provided. Death/destruction brings sorrow, sadness, weeping and wailing, deliverance/salvation; redemption brings joy, gladness of heart, and hope.

And notice in Vs 17 that when the people saw the way things worked out in the end for the people of God they were converted, began to worship Israel's God themselves. God's faithfulness to them in turbulent times impacted the unbelievers around them in a life changing, soul saving way. Listen, why do we go through turbulent times, trials, tough situations? Well, the bible shares with us a # of reasons, but 1 very real reason often has nothing to do with you, but for the sake of others around you. "What do you mean?" So that they might see Jesus *in* you, God's faithfulness in tough times *to* you, that they might be drawn to Christ *through* you. The way that people see you in Christ, and Christ in you during times of crisis impacts them tremendously, many times *eternally* as they come to Christ themselves. Often times when things are hard and the situation is critical in our lives we wonder where we've gone wrong, if there's sin in our lives, or if God is somehow punishing us. Hey, if there's sin in your life repent, but it may have nothing to do with *you* other than the fact that God is using you to reach out to another *through* you as they see God's faithfulness to you, how you turn *to* Him, and trust in Him *in* time of need.

Ch 9

Vs1-5

Again we realize that with Mordecai he utilized his power, his position not simply for personal gain but for the benefit of others. When God blesses you with money, or power, or influence, if you utilize that simply for how it benefits you, you've erred greatly. We're to take the blessing God upon our life, and use it to be a blessing in the lives of others. Is it wrong to excel in what you do? No way, is it wrong to make a good living at what you do? Not at all, but we need to realize that ultimately it doesn't stop there, but that God wants to use us in that position or with those resources to the benefit of others, of His kingdom.

And of course we see here how God turned the tables on Israel's enemies, on the day that they'd hoped to overpower them, the opposite occurred, and God placed the fear of them in the hearts of their enemies and no one could with stand them. Naturally the principle comes into play here, "*If God is for us, who can be against us?*" Rom 8:31 You've heard it before, you and God make an unconquerable majority.

And notice how it is that they overcame, that is defeated their enemies, "...w/the stroke of the sword," Now we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. And having done all to stand we're to stand having put on the whole armor of God, but in those articles everyone of them is defensive except for one, and that one is *offensive*. Which is what? "The sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God," how are you going to defeat your enemy, with grounded philosophy? Deep psychology? "With the stroke of the sword," remember when Jesus was there being tempted in the wilderness, Satan coming to Him, tempting Him to compromise His mission, His position. In each case with out exception how did Jesus overcome? By wielding wisely, and striking accurately with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. It's God's Word that lights our path, that keeps us pure (Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee, how shall a young man cleanse his way, by taking heed according to Your Word), that gives us wisdom and discernment and by it we fight the good fight, wage wise warfare, engage and overcome the enemy. It's by the stroke of the sword.

Vs6-18

So if you average it out there was about 600 men in each province who were killed having taken the offensive position against the Jews. Remember the Jews were only given the right to defend themselves, not attack on a presumption. And apparently Esther received some intelligence or we're not sure what, but for whatever reason she requested permission to allow the Jews (strictly in the city of Shushan) to defend themselves the next day as well and 300 more men were killed. Obviously Haman's sons were on the attack as well, and all 10 of them were destroyed, and the next day impaled, probably as a deterrent to other would be attackers. But notice that it states 3 times that the Jews (even though it was legal to) didn't lay a hand on the spoil. They were sending a clear signal about pure motives, they weren't going to profit themselves off the agenda of the ungodly. They were remaining blameless *even though it was perfectly legal for them to partake in the spoil*. Remember when Paul the Corinthians that all things were lawful for him, but not all things were helpful? There are a lot of liberties that we as believers have that simply send the wrong message, they're not helpful, they give the wrong impression, therefore it's best to simply avoid them. To the Thessalonians he wrote, "*Abstain from every form of evil.*" 1 Thess 5:22 The word "Form" there might be rendered "appearance" if it takes on a shade of gray just steer clear, they didn't want any mixed messages going out as to their motives so they didn't touch the spoil.

Vs19-28

And to this day they still celebrate Purim, it's good to remember our victories in the Lord, they remind us of His faithfulness. We too often forget, so when a trial comes, we freak out, but has always been there for us, and He always *will be* there for us. And surely the book of Esther teaches us that even when we're faithless, He remains faithful, He looks out for us, refuses to give up *on* us, and will never leave nor *forsake* us.

Vs29-32

I like the phrase that characterized Mordecai's speech, "Words of peace and truth" speech seasoned with salt, speaking things necessary for the building up and edifying of one another.

Ch 10

Vs1-3

And may it be so of me, and may it be true of you, "Seeking the good of your people, and speaking peace to all of your bros and sisters here in our Calvary Chapel family specifically and in the kingdom of God at large generally.

Prayer Points:

Father help us to edify and build one another up, rather than to speak ill of and tear one another down. May we be innocent in the things we do, give us sensitivity to abstain from the appearance of evil. And God teach us to wield the sword of the Spirit effectively, with power and precision that we might wage effective warfare. And Father may we be burdened for the world around us who's under a decree of destruction, may we be pressed in a healthy way to make haste and get the message out. That there's been another decree, a provision made, the price paid, salvation made sure by faith in Christ, give us boldness, mingled with love that we might be a light to those lost in darkness. And God we thank You that You're in control, that You'll never leave us nor forsake us, be glorified *through* us.