

If I Perish I Perish-02 Ministry From Esther

by Major Ian Thomas

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being dead to self-effort and alive in Christ, and the need to obey God's instructions, even if they seem foolish or weak.

Duration: 42:19

Scripture: Romans 7:14

Topics: "Esther"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the significance of the cross and how it can impact a troubled soul. The sermon references the story of Abraham and how God intervened at the last moment to prevent him from sacrificing his son. It also mentions the divine providences that occur in the Bible, such as Philip meeting the eunuch and Paul encountering Lydia. The sermon then focuses on the story of Mordecai and how he was instrumental in saving King Ahasuerus, leading to the plot of his execution. However, the King is unable to sleep on the night before the execution and discovers Mordecai's role in his deliverance. The sermon emphasizes the importance of God's timing and intervention in our lives.

Transcript

Commencing chapter seven. Dead men cannot die, nor can they be frightened, and responsibility does not rest too heavily upon their shoulders. In fact, there is nothing quite so relaxing as being dead.

Dead, I mean to your own ability to hand henna. Dead, in point of fact, to your own ability to accomplish anything, hey man or no hey man, apart from Jesus Christ. Of course, you can afford to die once you have become utterly convinced that death to yourself is to trade what you are for what Christ is.

But it is right at this point that unbelief rears its ugly head. If you are not wholly convinced that Jesus Christ is willing and able to take over, then you will hang on to what you are like grim death. You may be absolutely certain that you will never know that deep-seated peace that comes from allowing the Lord Jesus Christ to assume responsibility and to get into business.

There is a pragmatic state of mind, in some, to which this total repudiation of self-effort is a part, resulting sometimes in a hostility born of self-justification. It is necessary to be patient with such people, because they are often very dedicated in their desire to serve God. But the whole concept of a Christian life which is nothing more nor less than Jesus Christ himself in action, baffles them as thoroughly as the confidence and peace it gives illusion.

This in itself would be surprising were it not for the fact that no spiritual truth can dawn saved by revelation. The principle involved was perfectly enunciated by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who for 33 years allowed the Father to be in him then through the Holy Spirit what he himself wants to be in us now through the Holy Spirit. He never answered back when insulted.

When he suffered, he did not threaten to get even. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges him. The first is Peter the Thistle, chapter 2 and verse 23 in the Living Letter.

The Lord Jesus reckoned with the Father, and acted at all times on the assumption that his Father was handling the situation, only always taking care to obey instruction. He learned obedience under death, and now, as God, he does not ask you or me to be any weaker or any more foolish than he was prepared to be himself. For the cross was both the weakness of God and the foolishness of God.

For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God, because the foolishness of God is wiser than me, and the weakness of God is stronger than me. The second epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 13 and verse 4, and the first epistles of the Corinthians, chapter 1 and verse 25. This is what baffled the disciples.

They thought that the Lord Jesus Christ was hopelessly packed, and that he was failing to come to grips with the reality. He seemed bent on drifting to disaster. Why did he not get organized? Why did he not cash in on his popularity with the crowd, or pull some political strings? After all, money speaks, and surely the rich young ruler could have exercised a positive influence in getting the movement off the ground.

Whenever the Lord Jesus Christ performed some notable miracle, and someone was healed, why did he avoid those very obvious opportunities for wide publicity, and tell everyone to keep their mouths shut? Why did he not throw his weight around, project his personality, exercise his authority, and confound his foes once and for all by an overwhelming, crushing vindication of his deity? Why did he not let folk know just who he was, and where he had come from? Why did he not justify his claims to equality with the Father, and wipe the floor with his enemies? Why this pitiable show weakness, and this apparent foolishness? Did he not have what it took to be smart? These are some of the questions which must have crowded in upon the minds of his disciples. They did not want the cross, but then, of course, they did not believe in the resurrection. The Lord Jesus Christ could afford to be revived.

He could afford to despatch on. He could afford to be weak, and he could afford to be foolish in the eyes of silly, sinful men, because he knew the one by whom he had been sent, and the one into whose hands he had committed his sins, not only in death, but in 33 years of life. He could afford to do as he was told, and he could afford to die because he knew that someone else was taking care of the consequence.

If you are not prepared to do as you are told, no matter how weak it may make you look, or foolish it may seem to other people, then whatever you may believe about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is still purely academic. You have not yet entered into the goodness. The life of Jesus Christ within you makes human circumstances irrelevant when it comes to the point of obedience to his clear instructions, for to share his life now as he shared his father's life on earth then, is to know as he did that someone else is taking care of the consequence.

I do not mean by this that God's purposes are always irrational in the light of human circumstance, nor that there is peculiar virtue in being eccentric or foolhardy. It is simply that you become delightfully detached from the pressure of circumstance, and it ceases to be the criterion in the decisions which you make. You

do as you are told whether God's instructions appear to be compatible with the immediate situation or not, and you leave God to vindicate himself, and to justify the course of action upon which, at his command, you have embarked.

Upon this basis, Abraham could afford to say the lot. Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me.

If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right, for if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. Genesis, chapter 13, verses 8 and 9. Here was restful indifference to what others might reasonably have argued was legitimate self-interest. Lot could take the left, or lot could take the right, or, for that matter, lot could take a lot.

But God's covenant was still with Abraham, and he knew it. That was all that Abraham really needed to know. Moses could afford to defy Pharaoh, and put his feet in the Red Sea, as Joshua could defy Jericho, and put his feet in Jordan, as long as they knew that God would take the consequence, and give the Egyptians a ducky, and the Canaanites a thrashy.

With the jawbone of an ass, or Gideon's 300, with Aaron's rod, or David's sling, with a pinch of salt, or a little pot of oil, God insists on doing the impossible, and vindicates the faith of those who will obey him. Perhaps you understand what Paul meant when he wrote in so many words, I was in fact crushed, overwhelmed, and desperate. I feared I would never live through it.

I thought I was doomed to die, and saw how powerless I was to help myself. In the first epistles of the Corinthians, chapter 2, verse 8, in the living lesson. But I wonder whether you have gone on, as Paul did, to know God as the one who is overwhelmingly adequate, no matter how hopeless the situation may seem to be.

So, he continues that that was good, for then I put everything into the hands of God, who alone could save me, for he can even raise the dead, and he did. Only pass the sentence of death upon yourself, and you can afford to do as you are told, even as Esther did, though no doubt she was somewhat mystified at the instructions which she received. She knew then that she did not have to ask questions.

Have you come to the place in your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ where you've stopped interrogating him about his intentions? Esther throws a party. Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, Queen Esther, and what is thy request? It shall be given thee to the heart of the king. And Esther answered, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.

Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared. Chapter 5, verses 3 to 5. No doubt, upon Mordecai's advice, the tables were spread.

A sumptuous meal was prepared, and Esther invited the king, and Haman did in. If Haman was to hang, this was certainly a most unusual way to lead a man to the gala. But Esther did not question Mordecai's wisdom.

She did as she was told, and indeed, when again the king gave her the opportunity to lay before him her petition, the queen replied, My petition, and my request is, if I have found favor in the sight of the king, and

if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do tomorrow as the king hath said. Chapter 5, verses 7 and 8. As though to feed the man once were not enough, Haman is invited with the king to a further banquet the following day. If it is possible to kill a man with kindness, no doubt it must be possible to hang a man with hospitality.

Of one thing we may be sure, no matter how curious Esther may have been to the ultimate course of events, Haman was already on his way out. A fly in the ointment! Needless to say, Haman was proud fit to burst at this double invitation to dine with the queen, and went forth that day joyful and with a glad heart. Chapter 5, verse 9. When Haman got home, he called for his friends and Zeresh, his wife, and gave them a typical exhibition of the flesh in boastful, loud mouth, self-approved.

And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself, and tomorrow am I invited unto her also with the king. Chapter 5, verses 11 and 12.

With a show of nauseating conceit, Haman indicates that he is not only now the king's favorite, but the queen's favorite too, and to the exclusion of all others. It is characteristic of the flesh to seek its own aggrandizement at the expense of everyone else. Reading between the lines, and in so many words, what Haman had to say to his friends was this.

Apart from the king, the queen would not let anyone else come to the banquet but myself, and confidentially between you, me, and the gatepost. I do not think she was really enthusiastic about the king being there either. The flesh has an unlimited capacity for self-perception when it comes to enhancing its own reputation.

Basking as he was, however, in his own limelight, there was just one thing that spoiled it all. It was the one big fly in the ointment, for when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up nor move for him. He was full of indignation against Mordecai.

Chapter 5, verse 9. There was one person who still remained unbowed in his presence, and who was patently unimpressed, and in a sudden fit of fury, Haman protested to his wife and friends. Yet all this availeth me nothing so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. Chapter 5, verse 13.

The Holy Spirit always exposes the flesh for what it is, and there is nothing more infuriating to the carnally minded Christian than when the spiritually discerning remain wholly unimpressed in spite of so much self-advertisement. You have probably heard of the man who boasted to his friend, I'm a self-made man, and his friend replied dryly, and not a little unkindly. That just demonstrates the horrors of unskilled labor.

Then said Zeresh's wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and tomorrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thou art. Then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman, and he caused the gallows to be made.

Chapter 5, verse 14. If you are as popular with the king and with the queen as you say you are, suggested Haman's friend, then build a gallows in your garden and speak to the king tomorrow before the second banquet takes place that Mordecai may be hanged thereon. Then you will have nothing further to disturb

your peace of mind or thwart your ambitions.

Haman was highly delighted at the suggestion, and it was not long before the rope was swinging in the breeze. All this was to take place between the two banquets before ever Esther would have a further audience with the king, and on the face of it things were not looking too rosy for Mordecai. Had Esther known what was going on behind the scenes, she might well have been tempted to wonder whether all was really going according to plan.

In the little time that still remained, the all-important issue would have to be decided, for there was a gallows in the garden. Who was going to hang? Haman or Mordecai? Ultimately, this is the all-important issue that must be decided in your heart, as it must be decided within the heart of every true believer. If Christ is on the cross, then self is on the throne.

But if self is on the cross, then Christ is on the throne. There is a gallows in the garden. Who is going to swing? Chapter 8. Lobster.

Mind you, it does not exactly say lobster. It could have been gorgonzola cheese, something rich too late at night, perhaps. But whatever it may have been, on that night could not the king sleep.

Chapter 6 and verse 1. That night, of all nights, the night between the two banquets, just when Mordecai seemed to have been in such mortal danger and on the eve of his intended execution, precisely that night the king could not sleep. He tossed and he turned, he threw the blanket off and he pulled the blanket on. He lay on his back, he lay on his side.

He counted sheep and recited the alphabet, but still he could not sleep. At last, in desperation, he called for the book of records and they were read before the king. Flood's timings are always perfect, not till all seemed lost and the knife was flashing in the sun did God tell Abraham to throw the knife away.

Though due to die at dawn, Peter was delivered from his chains and from the prison by the angel of the Lord, who thus cheated Herod of his prayers. Not by chance did Philip meet the eunuch in the desert, nor Paul encounter Livia by the riverside. These were those divine providences by which God accomplishes his divine end.

I being in the way, said Abraham's servant, the Lord led me and he brought Rebecca home to Isaac. As the pages of the book were read upon this restless night, it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigfan and Tiresias, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. Chapter 6, verse 2. The king suddenly became aware that Mordecai had been the means of his deliverance from those who had plotted his destruction.

The story is tucked away in the last three verses of the second chapter. In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's chamberlains, Bigfan and Tiresias, of those which kept the door, were wroth and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen, and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name.

And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out. Therefore they were both hanged on a tree, and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king. It was not that the king was unfamiliar with the facts, for he had been instructed long since in the story of his deliverance, but never before had it come to him with such startling significance as upon this troubled, sleepless night.

Somehow he had never paused to think that, but for Mordecai's intervention, he would have fallen prey to the assassin's knife, dead and buried. In a cold sweat, and startled at the thought of it, the king cried, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him. His servants might well have added, You never seemed to care, and it did not appear to be of any real concern to you.

You were preoccupied with other things, and this man has gone completely unrewarded. It is possible for a man to live for many years strangely unmoved by the amazing love of God in Christ, and though professing saving faith, so to be preoccupied with other things that the momentous fact of redemption through the precious blood of Jesus remains a matter of secondary importance. The facts are known, but unrelated, until that moment of fuller revelation, when almost inexplicably the significance of the cross stands out vividly in bold release, and a troubled, restless soul is suddenly confronted with the claim of a neglected Saviour.

At the sight of the wounds in his hands and in his feet, the heart cries out to God, What honour and dignity hath been done to him for this? The answer to this question today may be as crushing to us as that given then to the king was to him. There is nothing done for him. Filled with remorse, and a quickened sense of urgency in the matter, the king says, Who is in the court? Something had to be done, and done at once to right this wrong, and the king sought someone to whom he might entrust this solemn responsibility.

Who do you think was there? The picture is magnificent. Who do you think came into the court just at that psychological moment? Now, a hayman was come into the outward court of the king's house to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him, and the king's servant said unto him, Behold, hayman standeth in the court, and the king said, Let him come in. Chapter 6, verse 5. Just as the king was preparing to honour Mordecai, hayman came in for permission to hang him.

Remember, however, what we have already learned in the previous chapter. Though the Holy Spirit may bring conviction within the human spirit, it does not necessarily become articulate at once, nor discernible within the soul. The king, as a picture of the human soul, had not yet become aware of the wickedness of hayman, as it had already been revealed so convincingly by Mordecai to Esther.

Indeed, the king was still fully persuaded of this man's integrity, and to whom could he more confidently entrust the responsibility of honouring Mordecai than to hayman himself. So hayman came in, and the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now hayman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself? Chapter 6, verse 6. Utterly egocentric, and completely obsessed with his own self-importance, it seemed inconceivable to hayman that the king would wish to honour anyone but himself. And, unable to think, save in terms of self-aggrandizement, all the measures he suggested were designed for his own advantage.

And hayman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, let the royal apparel be brought which the king uses to wear, and the horse that the king rides upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head. And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour. Chapter 6, verse 7 to 9. Hayman could just fancy himself being led through the streets of the city, proudly acknowledging the thunderous applause of the excited crowd, gorgeously arrayed in the king's apparel, and with the crown royal set upon his head.

After all, what could be more logical than this? He was the king's favourite, wasn't he? And the queen's blue-eyed boy? Enjoying, as he did, such overwhelming approval, the little matter of putting Mordecai and the gallows in the garden was quite obvious, a foregone conclusion. Hayman could think of nothing more delicious than to see his arch-enemy swinging by the neck as the glorious grand finale to a day of royal acclamation. Then the king said to Hayman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew that sitteth at the king's gate.

Let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken." Chapter 6, verse 10. I would love to have seen Hayman's face, wouldn't you? Livid with rage and white as a sheet, with the last drop of blood drained from his features, Hayman was careful to control his feelings. He did not explode.

He was far too clever for that. Something quite obviously had happened to the king, and although he did not know that the king had rediscovered Mordecai through the reading of the book, he somehow knew that to defy him in his present state of mind would be more than his life was worth. It is dangerous for the flesh when you rediscover Christ through the reading of the book.

It was now for Hayman a question of self-preservation, and he was prepared even to go through the motions of honoring Mordecai if this was the price of survival. The king was not insincere in enlisting the services of Hayman in his desire to honor Mordecai. He was simply ignorant of the character of the man, for the same reason you too may well have harnessed the energy of the flesh in an otherwise quite genuine desire to honor the Lord Jesus in your life.

What you will discover now is what the king discovered then, that the flesh which has its origin in Satan will go along with you. It is quite prepared to engage in every form of Christian activity, even though this may seem to honor Christ if that be the only chance of survival. The flesh will sing in the church choir, superintend the Sunday school, preside at a meeting of the deacons, preach from the pulpit, organize an evangelistic crusade, go to Bible school, and volunteer for the mission field, and a thousand and one things more, all of which may themselves be otherwise legitimate.

If only it can keep its neck out of the noose, it is characteristic of the spiritually immature that they are unable to discern between good and evil. In Hebrews chapter 5 verses 13 and 14, and the baby Christian, like the foolish Galatian, having begun in the spirit, still tries to be made perfect by the flesh Galatians. Chapter 3 verse 3. Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor.

Chapter 6 and verse 11. So Haman did what was commanded, and seemingly to the king's entire satisfaction, for he was so enthusiastic in his desire to honor Mordecai that he was altogether unsuspecting of Haman's duplicity. We must be particularly patient with those whose lack of understanding allows a genuine love for the Lord Jesus to be satisfied with, and sometimes to be quite enthusiastic about Christian activities involving means and methods which, to the more discerning, are heavily contaminated by the flesh.

These are more deserving of instruction than rebuke, for they are still in their spiritual babyhood. Mordecai returned again to the king's gate, but Haman hastened to his house, mourning and having his head recovered. Chapter 6 and verse 12.

To Zeresh, his wife, and to all his friends, Haman lodged his complaint, and poured out the sorry story of his bitter humiliation, and their response to his lament could hardly be described as particularly comforting. You are thrashed, they say, you're beaten. The flesh has few friends in its adversity, and little to comfort it in the day of its calamity.

If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him. And while they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains and hastened to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared. Chapter 6, verses 13 and 14.

With their discomfiting prophecies of impending disaster still upon the lips of Haman's friend, the king's chamberlains burst in upon this gloomy scene, and hastened to bring him to the banquet that Esther had prepared. Time had run out on Haman. The table was laid, and the stage was set.

From the gallows in his garden, fifty cubits high, a rope swung gently in the breeze, and in the heart of Haman there was a sense of doom, the doom of duplicity. The end of chapter 8, commencing now chapter 9. Now, the flesh will threaten, shout, strut, domineer, spout, plot, creep, beg, plead, or sock whatever the situation may demand in the interest of its own survival. In the wicked heart of Haman there were terrible forebodings as he went with the king to the banquet, for he knew that he was beaten.

If the king had come to know the truth about Morikea, it would not be long before he came to know the truth about Haman himself. The flesh hates to be exposed for what it is, and will fight desperately to avoid that awful moment of truth, that moment when the Holy Spirit rips the mask from its sickly face. No doubt Haman planned to be on his best behavior at the second banquet, and he would try to be unusually convincing, though maybe few of the servants fail to notice his unusual nervousness.

When the Holy Spirit begins to convict you, bearing witness to your human spirit that the Lord Jesus Christ is being denied his rightful place in your life, the old Adam nature within you becomes irritable and edgy, yet at one and the same time it will seek to produce the most plausible arguments in justification of its own illegitimate activity. Something told Haman that he could expect no mercy at the hands of Morikei, once Morikei had gained the ear and confidence of the king, and the flesh knows that it cannot blast its way out of a direct encounter with the Holy Spirit. It can only echo the words of Ahab to Elijah, hast thou found thee, O mine enemy? And the Holy Spirit replies, as he did through Elijah then, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.

First Book of Kings, chapter 21, verse 20. And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, Queen Esther? And it shall be granted thee. And what is thy request? And it shall be performed even to the heart of the kingdom.

Chapter 7, verse 2. This must have been a tremendous moment for Esther, for until now, though acting in obedience to Morikei, her total commitment had not brought her into direct conflict with Haman. She had shared the palace with him, living within the same four walls and beneath the same roof, and exchanging courtesies, but from now on there was to be no more compromise. Haman had to be named, exposed to the king as he had already been exposed to her.

Judgment pronounced by Morikei had to be echoed now in the presence of the king, and in the very face of the enemy. From this moment there could be no going back, for this was the point of no return. Haman held his breath, and his brow broke out in beads of icy perspiration as Esther answered the king, If I have

found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleased the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and to my people at my request, for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, slain, and wiped out of existence.

But if we had been sold for bondmen or bondwomen, I would have held my tongue, for our affliction is not to be compared with the damage this will do to the king. Chapter 7, verses 3 and 4 in the Amplified Bible, not only had the king become kindly disposed toward Morikei, but Haman now discovered that the queen herself was wholly identified with his arch enemy, and with that people whose God-given laws were in such direct conflict with those that had had their origin in himself. Within a matter of minutes now, the king would come to realize that the assassin's knife was pointed at the heart of a palace, and that Esther, whom he loved, would fall prey to this commandment published at Haman's behest, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day.

Chapter 3, verse 13. Haman had persuaded the king that such commandments would be his own best interest, whereas it was designed only to satisfy Haman's wicked pride. He would then be able to silence the voice of Morikei, and remove any threat to his own ability to usurp and abuse the authority of the king.

He could exploit the kingdom to his own wicked ends. Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he that durst presume in his heart to do so? And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen, and the king, arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath, went into the palace garden, and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen, for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king.

Chapter 7, verses 5 to 7. The enemy had been unmasked, and for the king the issues were now clear. He had to choose between Haman and Esther. This was the moment of truth, as it is for every human soul to whom has come the revelation of the Holy Spirit, who the human spirit of the wickedness of sin.

It is so easy to become familiar with Bible language without receiving any real revelation of truth. God wants to bring you, no matter how bitter may be the experience, to the place of self-discovery. Thus it may dawn upon your soul in startling reality, in the words of Paul the apostle, We know that the law is spiritual, but I am a creature of the flesh, carnal, unspiritual, having been sold into slavery under the control of sin.

Romans chapter 7, verse 14 in the Amplified Bible. This is what Romans 7 is all about. It describes the exploitation of the soul of man by the subtle principle of sin within, and there is no more lucid illustration of this than that which is to be found in the book of Esther, in the parts played by Haman in the life of the king.

For I do not understand my own actions. I am baffled, bewildered. I do not practice or accomplish what I wish, but I do the very thing that I loathe which my moral instincts condemn.

However, it is no longer I who do the deed, but the sin principle which is at home in me, and has possession of me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. Now if I do what I do not desire to do, it is no longer I doing it.

It is not myself that acts, but the sin principle dwells within me, fixed and operating in my soul. So I find it to be a law of my being, that when I want to do what is right and good, evil is ever present with me, and I am subject to its insistent demands. For I endorse and delight in the law of God in my inmost self, with my new nature, but I discern in my bodily members a different law, rule of action, at war against the law of my

mind, my reason, making me a prisoner to the law of sin.

Oh unhappy and pitiable and wretched man that I am! Who will release and deliver me from the shackles of this body of death? Oh thank God! He will, through Jesus Christ. Romans chapter 7, verses 15, 17, 18, and 20 to 25 in the Amplified Bible. Here, clearly defined, is the contrary.

There is the inner witness of the Holy Spirit to your human spirit, to all that is good and right and noble, and every act and attitude of sin is an offense to your moral conscience, thus enlightened. This part of you says, I acknowledge and agree that the law is good, morally excellent, and that I take sides with it. For I endorse and delight in the law of God in my inmost self, with my new nature.

Romans chapter 7, verses 16, 22 in the Amplified Bible. It is this part of you which is represented by Esther. There is then that other part of you, represented by Haman, described by Paul of the sin principle, which dwells within me, fixed and operating in my soul in Romans chapter 7, verse 20.

The moment of truth will come for you when, together with Esther, you quit exchanging courtesies with the flesh, and repudiated to its face, naming it for the treacherous, wicked, worthless thing it is, without any salvageable content, and fit only for the gatherer. At this climactic stage in your Christian life, you realize that there can be no compromise with the flesh, and that peaceful coexistence with a principle satanically hostile to the law of God, and to the re-establishment of his sovereignty within your soul, is now beyond the bounds of possibility. You realize that it was never God's purpose to improve the flesh, to re-educate it or tame it, let alone Christianize it.

It has always been God's purpose that the flesh, condemned, sentenced, and crucified with Jesus Christ, might be left, buried in the tomb, and replaced by the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He must wear the ring upon His fingers, and once more exercise control in the area of your mind, your emotion, and your will, expressing Himself through your personality. Paul described this clearly in his concern for the Ephesian Christians when he wrote, For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

Ephesians chapter 3 verses 14 to 17. Here again, the inner man is represented by Esther as the human spirit, strengthened and encouraged by Mordecai as the Holy Spirit, and your hearts are represented by King Ahasuerus in his palace as the human soul. And the king, arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath, went into the palace garden, and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen, for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king.

Then the king returned out of the gardens of a place of the banquet of wine, and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was. Then said the king when he forced the queen also before me in the house, as the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. Chapter 7 verses 7 and 8. Haman recognized now how deeply the influence of Mordecai had penetrated the palace, and the arrogance of this would-be murderer was turned into the sulky, sentimental pleadings of a frightened coward.

Haman the Agagite was proving truly his breed, as the flesh itself to the spiritually discerning must always bear the stamp of its satanic pedigree. History was simply repeating itself, for you will remember that after King Saul had fallen prey to the sude persuasion and the deceptive charm of Agag king of the Amalekites, and God had rejected him because he had rejected the word of the Lord, but Samuel moved into the situation. He announced against Agag the sentence of death which God had passed upon him,

and from which Saul had spared him.

Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites Samuel cried, and Agag came unto him delicately, and Agag said surely the bitterness of death is past. The first book of Samuel chapter 15 verse 32. In his own persuasively deceptive way, Agag the Amalekite tried to bluff his way through as though it would be quite unfair of God to be as merciless to him as he had been to others.

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