

Studies in Esther-03 Esther 5-7

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald explores the themes of courage, faith, and divine providence in the story of Esther as she risks her life to save her people.

Duration: 54:23

Scripture: Psalm 121:3-4, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 54:17, Matthew 10:19-22, Matthew 11:28, Hebrews 10:19-22

Topics: "Studies"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker encourages listeners to put their money to work for the Lord and engage in various acts of service and hospitality. The story of Esther is used as an example of how individuals can play a part in God's plan. The speaker emphasizes the importance of fasting and prayer, highlighting how God can work things out even in seemingly impossible situations. The sermon also addresses the current state of the world, including moral decline, political upheaval, and apathy in the church, urging listeners to recognize that they have come to the kingdom for such a time and to take action.

Transcript

Esther chapter 5, and we're really at probably the most exciting part of the book. Esther chapter 5 verse 1, Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house facing the entrance of the house. So it was when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand.

Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter. The king said to her, What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you up to half my kingdom. So Esther answered, If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him.

Then the king said, Bring Haman quickly that he may do as Esther had said. So the king and Haman went to the banquet that Esther had prepared. At the banquet of wine, the king said to Esther, What is your petition? It shall be granted you.

What is your request? Up to half my kingdom. It shall be done. Then Esther answered and said, My petition and request is this.

If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them. Tomorrow I will do as the king has said. So Haman went out that day joyful and with a glad heart.

But when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and that he did not stand or tremble before him, he was filled with indignation against Mordecai. Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent call for his friends and his wife, Zeresh. Then Haman told them of his great riches, the multitude of his children, all the ways in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king.

Moreover, Haman said, Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared, and tomorrow I am again invited by her along with the king. Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, Let a gallows be made fifty cubits high, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it.

Then go merrily with the king to the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman, so he had the gallows made. Well, you'll remember that the book started off with great banquets there at Shushan the palace, and at one of the banquets the king ordered his wife, the queen, to come out, Queen Vashti, and make a public display of her sexual beauty.

And she refused to do it. She was a woman of character. She was a woman of spine.

She was a woman of backbone, and she absolutely, even it was a king of Persia who commanded it. And she was absolutely justified in what she did. Well, the king's advisors said, Enough! The queen must go.

If word of this gets around to the kingdom of Persia, then men will have wives who will not submit to them, and we will have a terrible inrush of militant feminism, and this we must not allow. And so the queen was removed. The crown was taken from her, and she was no longer queen.

And so then, you remember the great beauty contest? They gathered fair young maidens from all over the kingdom of Persia, Medo-Persia actually, and there was a young Jewish maid that somehow got in there, you know? How a young Jewish girl would get in with all of those beauties from Persia? Well, it wasn't normal, let me put it that way. And not only did she get in, but she found great favor in the eyes of the man who was supervising the beauty contest. His name was Haggai.

You see, God in his providence was supervising this whole thing. God was arranging. God even controlled the mind, the intellect of Haggai and his emotions and his will, and he was very favorable to Esther.

And of course, the day came when she was to appear before the king, and what do you know? Of all of those, I don't know how many there were, but they came from all the provinces of Persia, and of all of those beautiful young women, a little nobody, a little Jewish nobody named Esther was chosen. She found favor in the eyes of the king, and she was named to be the queen. How very wonderful.

Now, you know, God has his people at different places at the different times, and out in the king's courtyard there, there was a man named Mordecai, and he was a cousin of Esther. He was not only her cousin, he was her adopted father. He raised her.

She was orphaned when she was young, and he raised her, and he was one of these very clever Jews. He lived for God. How do you know? Well, the rest of the story tells that.

He had a deep place in his heart for God, and yet there he was. He was somehow connected with the king and with the palace there. He had a place of authority out at the king's gate, and one day he, by coincidence, by designed coincidence, by the hand of God, he happened to hear two men there in the courtyard plotting to assassinate King Ahasuerus, and he did what any loyal citizen would do.

He reported the matter to the king, and a record was made in the king's library there, a special volume, one of the many volumes that recorded the incident of the kingdom, the record of the kingdom, and it was recorded. But there was no fuss made about it. It didn't appear in the Shushan Gazette at all, and there was no honor, no medal given to Mordecai, it just passed over.

But don't forget, God is in command of all this, and God's hand works slowly sometimes, but ever so surely. And then the villain appears upon the scene. This is a man named Haman, and I don't know how he ever did this, but he got in good with the king.

He got in good with the king. He ingratiated himself with the king, so that really the king was frankly ready to give him anything he asked for. And he thought, well, I'll honor the king, and I'll ask big, and he asked for the king's, some of the king's clothing.

Wow, what gall he had, huh? And he asked for one of the king's horses. Talk about gall. And the horses, royal horses kind of had a little crown that rode above their heads there, and he got one of those too.

He did everything but ask for the kingship. He didn't dare to do that. And there he was, stuck like a balloon with pride, you know, so proud, and he, everybody was to bow to Haman.

And I guess most people did. Most people just, whenever they see him, they bow and curtsy and do honor to this wicked, wicked man. But there was one man in the kingdom who wouldn't do it, and that man's name was Mordecai, Esther's cousin.

He was a Jew, and from his earliest youth he had been taught, you only bow to God. You only show reference to God. You never bow to a man whose breath is in his nostrils like that.

You never worship a man. Well, of course, this infuriated Haman. So, think of that Jew who refused to bow the knee to him.

And he thought, something's got to be done about this. And he said, if Haman a Jew is like that, then all the Jews are like that. We've got to get rid of them.

And so, he with his counselors wrote up a decree to be signed by the king that planned for the extermination, the annihilation, the destruction, the killing of all the Jews. And they kind of cast lots to see when the date would be, when this execution would take place, and it happened to be, I'm sure, much to Haman's chagrin, 11 or 12 months later, 11 really months later. He would like to have been the next week, I think, or the next day, but he couldn't get the word out to the kingdom at that time.

But anyway, God even controlled that. God even controlled the setting of that date, and it gave the Jews the maximum length of time in which to prepare themselves. And when Mordecai out there at the king's gate heard about this, he really went into a tizzy.

He put on tremendous display, clothed in sackcloth and ashes, and he just mourned, and he wept, and he cried, and he wailed out there. People thought, what's going on? Well, you know how news travels, and eventually the news got into Esther in the palace, to Esther the queen. And she thought, wow, I wonder what happened to poor Mordecai.

He must have been in an auto accident or something. And so she said, well, I'll just send out a new suit to him. And she sent out a new suit to him, but that didn't stop his crying, because he had a broken heart.

And as we said, new clothes don't heal a broken heart. And finally the word got in by the bush telephone. Mordecai got word into Esther what had happened.

A decree had been signed by the king of Persia. It was the law of the Medes and the Persians, and nobody could change it. Not even the king himself could change it, that the Jews must be put to death.

Crisis. God is in heaven, and his people are in trouble. Why isn't he doing something? Well, he is doing something.

He's working it all out in a wonderful way. And so last week we heard this word that Mordecai sent into Esther. He said, look, this is what's happening.

And you're there in that position of authority. You are God's key woman in the kingdom at a time like this. And it's time for you to, if you don't do it, don't worry, you're a father's host.

You will be destroyed. But how do you know that you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this? You've got to go into the king and you've got to present the case to the king and plead for your people. This is the time to act.

Well, this put Esther in a very difficult position because if she went into the king unannounced and if he didn't hold out the golden scepter to her, she'd be killed. And as if that wasn't bad enough, the king hadn't been in touch with her for 30 days. There must have been a cooling of their diplomatic relations, you know, between the king and the queen during the last 30 days.

I don't know what happened. Well, it was a problem for her. Actually, her life was at stake.

Her life was at stake. And I suppose she could have said, well, I got to live, don't I? She didn't say that. She added three very significant words.

She said, I will go. I will go. She really took her life in her hands and she was going to go into the king.

And this is what I call total commitment. And, you know, because she said those three words, I will go, she's a prominent figure in biblical history today. Because she made that total commitment of her life to the Lord.

And I would like to suggest to you today that nobody ever makes history for God without first making that total commitment to the Lord. That's what Paul meant when he said in Romans 12, 1, I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your body a living sacrifice. Holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

That's really what Esther did that day. It was a tremendous, tremendous step. I think of that expression, how do you know that you've come to the kingdom for such a time as this? And, you know, that has a

voice for us today.

For everybody sitting here in the room today, I don't care who you are, there's a message there for you. How do you know that you've come to the kingdom for such a time as this? What time is this? A crucial time in the history of the world. A time of devastating moral decline.

A time of political upheaval. A time of apathy in the church. A time when there's little commitment and little conviction in the church anymore.

A time of disunity. A time when the world is increasingly bashing Christians and the Christian faith. A time when the family is breaking down, the breakdown of family values, and when sociologists and psychologists are listened to more than preachers of the word of God.

Time of the ecumenical movement. Dear friends, it's a time when the world is falling apart. How do you know that you've come to the kingdom for such a time as this? But you say, I'm just nobody, you know, I'm just nothing.

God has a plan for everybody. You'll never know what it is that you present your life to him to find out. You say, what could I ever do? Well, God calls some people to the mission field, not everybody.

What could I do? Well, you could put money to work for the Lord. You could show hospitality to the people of God and to others. There's no end to things.

You could pass out gospel tracts, you know, feed people one to Christ through gospel tracts, distribution of Christian literature, witnessing to your neighbors. That's an exciting thing to think. You could witness to somebody someday that in the future would be a man like Mordecai or a woman like Esther.

You never know. You never know the wonderful things that could happen. Listen, everybody, everybody here has a part to play in the ongoing plan of God.

Well, Esther then called her maidens together and they gave themselves to fasting and prayer for three days. Three days. That's tough, friends.

When was the last time you ever fasted for three days? Well, I've never done it in my life. I might as well be honest. When I start to fast, all I can think of is filet mignon steaks.

But they did it. It doesn't say they prayed, but as we said before, it's hard to think of these women fasting without praying. I mean, that's what it was all about.

They were fasting in order to give themselves to prayer without distraction. That was the purpose of the fasting. As you know, that was very significant.

Sometimes I think that the whole story revolves around that three days of fasting. Because that rang the bells up in heaven. And God looked down and he saw some people there fasting and praying for three days.

These people really mean business. And their prayers can move me to do things that otherwise I wouldn't have done. Incredible, isn't it? Really incredible.

So Esther really now has confidence that God is bigger than any situation. And she believed God and she acted in the confidence that he was going to intervene. Really, it's wonderful when we take a stand for the Lord, isn't it? That's what she did.

The Queen and a Jewess. And now she's just going to take a stand for Jehovah. Wonderful thing.

Your neighbors know you're a Christian? I think of an army chaplain who went into a barracks one day. And the fellows were all lounging around, the soldiers were all lounging around in the barracks. And he stood there at the door and he said, okay, which of you fellows is a Christian? And that put them on the spot, didn't it? And one man got up and he made a public confession of Christ there in the barracks.

That chaplain rescued that fellow from fearfulness and that fellow became a very eminent creature. And he said, without that chaplain, I don't think I'd be standing in the pulpit today. The chaplain nerved him to take that stand for the Lord.

Well, after fasting for three days, Esther probably didn't look her best. Just think of the things that were against her. She could say that all these things were against me.

The king hadn't seen her for 30 days and if she went without the golden scepter being held up, and now she's fasted for three days, she'd probably look pretty ragged, don't you think? I would. She went in anyway to the king. And what do you know? God controlled the hand of that king so that he reached over and he got that golden scepter and when he saw Esther, he held it up to her.

You say, maybe that's what he wanted to do. Listen, God was over all of this. God was controlling that king.

Don't you ever worry about it. And there was no chance that he did that. And you know, that has a lesson for us, doesn't it? God has a scepter too.

And you know that that scepter is always held out to a sinner. It's always held out to a sinner. You say, how do you know? Because I read Matthew 11, 28.

It says, come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, that I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. You shall find rest unto your souls.

And that verse says the golden scepter is always held out. He's inviting people to come to him. He says, the one who comes to me, I will in no wise cast out.

Wonderful, isn't it? So a sinner never has to have that worry that Esther had. Sinner doesn't have to fear. There's always an invitation.

Come to the Lord in repentance and faith. Find an open door. And you know, it's wonderful too that the golden scepter is always held out to the believer too.

Hebrews 10, 19 to 22. Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Wonderful, isn't it? Having boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. And so the scepter is held out to her and the king says to her, now, what is it you'd like? He doesn't even know she's a Jewess. He doesn't even know he's married to a Jewess.

Marvelous, isn't it? He said, what would you like? And we read that today. See, she had been out there in the courtyard and she's going to approach. She positions herself in a position where he might be able to see her.

And you know, God controls his eyes so that he can move right in the direction and he sees her. And he reaches out the golden scepter and then he invites her in and he says, I feel very generous today. I'll give you up to half of my kingdom.

And then, you know, as you read this chapter, I wonder if some of you thought, now Esther blows it. Esther really drops the ball. Here she has the opportunity to plead for her people, to tell the king what has happened.

He doesn't even know that he has painted himself into a corner. He doesn't even know that his wife is Jewish, that he's signed an edict for her extermination, annihilation, destruction, and death. He doesn't know that.

He offers her half of the kingdom and here she can ask for anything she wants. And she says, well, come to a banquet tomorrow. He said, oh no.

What a terrible thing to drop the ball like that, wasn't it? Wasn't terrible at all. So why did she ever do that? Isn't that what she did? Verse six, chapter five, the banquet of wine, the king said to Esther, what is your petition? It shall be granted you. What is your request? Up to half my kingdom shall be done.

And Esther answered and said, my petition request is if I have found favor in the sight of the king, if it pleases the king to grant my petition, fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to a banquet tomorrow. Why did she do it? You know, I don't think she knew why she did it. I think she was just being controlled by the Lord.

But it had to be that way. God has a schedule. God has a timetable.

And certain things have to happen before other things can happen. That's what you see in the book of Esther. Watch as we go along.

Hmm. God tells her, and God can do that. Have you ever had the experience in the Christian life of doing things you hadn't planned to do? I've had that experience.

Why did I do that? Because somebody else was controlling that's why. And that's what happened to Esther. It seemed so unreasonable when the destiny of her people was at stake.

But God said, I know what I'm doing. All my trains run on time. And my ways are not man's ways.

And my thoughts are not man's thoughts. And certain things have to happen before she can successfully influence the king. But for Mordecai, I mean, Haman is absolutely exhilarated.

And I mean, his ecstasy knows no bounds. He's happy beyond description. He, the great Mordecai, the great Haman has been invited to a banquet with the king and with the queen.

Everything is going his way. The world is his except, except that Jew out there at the gate who won't bow to him. This really gnaws at him.

And all the happiness and joy of the situation. He just can't get over that. That there was one man, one man in the kingdom who refused to do him reverence.

What if Haman knew at this time that the queen was a Jewess? He didn't know. He didn't know she was a Jewess. And so he goes home and he shares the news with his family.

And at first, the good news, the good news is that he's rich. He's second in command in the kingdom. Can you believe it? He's second only to the king himself.

And he enjoys the favor of the queen. What more could a man ask for? And tomorrow he's going to a banquet with the king and the queen today. And he'll go to another tomorrow.

But the bad news is Mordecai won't do him homage. And prompted by Satan, his wife and all his friends joined together in one court. They say, no problem.

Build a gallows 75 feet. I don't know why it had to be 75 feet high. I think 17 feet would have done just as well, wouldn't it? He'd be just as dead.

70 feet high? 75 feet high? That's an awfully tall gallows, friend. That's what it was. Just build a gallows 75 feet tall and look, with that settled, you can go to the banquet tomorrow.

This is rather interesting to me. You know, a date had been set. For Mordecai's death, 11 months hence.

Haman couldn't wait that long. He couldn't wait that long. According to his original plan, Mordecai would be killed with the rest of the Jewish people on the day set for their execution.

But no, that wouldn't do for Haman. And God is up there in town, and he's saying, I've set certain immutable principles in the world, and one of them is this pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. That's a law that has to work, and I'll see that it's carried out.

And God looks down, and he sees them building this gallows 75 feet tall, and he's saying, thank you very much. I can use those gallows, but not for what you think. Isn't it wonderful? God is greater than all the evil plots of man, and as we said before, he can make the wrath of men praise him, and he can turn around their evil and bring good out of it.

And so Haman did, but he had to admit that all his money and fame didn't satisfy him because of Mordecai. You know, how typical of the world. Sanctuary.

We said that certain things had to happen before she would blow her cover, before she would reveal that she was a Jewess. Things had to be done in a right way. You mustn't do it too soon.

I say, well, listen, our people's lives are at stake, and the month of Adar is coming. Better get going. Patience.

God has his program. I love the way the verse, chapter 6, begins. It says, that night.

That night. See, this is one of the things that had to happen before that banquet would take place. What? That night the king had, appropriately enough, a king-sized case of insomnia.

He couldn't sleep. That was me last night. Couldn't sleep.

So I can sympathize with this quote. And he turned on his bed light there, and he commanded one of his servants to go to the palace library and get something for him to read. And he did.

The man went to the palace library, and come on, how would he know what to get? And I can just see his hand going up to that shelf and reaching for that particular volume. There are hundreds of volumes there, but his hand goes and just reaches for that particular volume. Why did he choose that volume? I'll tell you why.

Because there was another hand on his hand working that day. The hand of God was guiding his hand. And he brought the volume down.

He didn't necessarily know what was in it. God did. And he gave it to the king, and the king props himself up in his bed with a couple of pillows, and his bed light is on, and he starts to read.

All things. What a coincidence. He reads about an obscure event that had taken place previously, where one of the men, actually a man on his staff, had revealed this plot against his life in Mordecai.

And had he been honored? No, he had never been honored. He had never been honored for it. You know, in God's kingdom, things don't just happen.

They're planned. And here you have a wonderful exhibition of the providence of God. On something as insignificant as a case of insomnia, the destiny of a nation hung.

I tell you, it gives me great thoughts of God. God uses strange things to accomplish his purpose. When I think of insomnia, I have to think of Psalm 121, verses 3 and 4, which God has insomnia too.

Did you know that? I'm so glad he does. Because I'm kept by the insomnia of God. He that keepeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

I think that's beautiful. He that keepeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. Waldward and Zuck say the entire course of history for the Jewish nation was changed because a pagan king, hundreds of miles from the center of God's activities in Jerusalem, couldn't sleep.

That's lovely. That's lovely. So here he's reading about it.

If Mordecai had been rewarded at the time, it wouldn't really have been as timely as it was. This is the time. He could have been rewarded then and forgotten.

But now is the right time for the king to find out about it and to reward him. William Cooper certainly said it. Well, God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.

He plants his footsteps in the sea and rides upon the thorns. Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take. The clouds you so much dread are big with mercy, so break with blessings on your head.

This was the time for the king to honor Mordecai. And this had to happen, I say, before Esther's second banquet at which she would plead for her people. Well, the king is now up and the day is going on in the court there at Shushan.

And the king says, this is the day I've got to honor this man, Mordecai, whoever he is. And so he says to one of his messengers, go out in the courtyard and see who's there at the present time. Did you know who

was there? Haman.

Can God take the legs of a wicked man like Haman and make him walk to just the right spot in the court at just the right time and a servant is rushing out from the king? Oh, come, come, come. And Haman walks in to the presence of the king. And the king says to Haman, what shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor? I tell you, it's really thrilling.

What shall be done? And of course, Haman's chest goes out with pride. No wonder he doesn't burst. My great moment has come.

And he says, I'm going to ask for the works today. So he asks again for, you know, for the royal role, for the horses. He asked for everything but the crown.

And God says, my laws are in effect. This is the time to bring that man down. And so he guides the king to say, okay, Mordecai is the man I want to honor.

Now you go and see that he gets all of that. Devastating. I mean, his balloon has been pricked.

It's just something terrible when you think of it. Haman is absolutely mortified. His balloon is burst.

And he has to honor the one whose death he has planned. I mean, like that, the Lord knows how to abase those who walk in flight. But I'd just like to stop here for a minute.

What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor? You and I as Christians cannot think of those words without thinking of the Lord Jesus. Because the Lord Jesus is the one whom the king and the father delights to honor. It's kind of sad to look about in Christendom today and see preachers building up personality cults about themselves, you know.

Men try to make them prominent and robbing God of the glory, robbing the Lord Jesus of the glories belongs only to him. Generally speaking, publicity is a bad thing in Christian work. Generally speaking, it's a bad thing.

We should have the motto of John the Baptist, the life motto of John the Baptist. He must increase. I must increase.

Ministry, spirit-filled ministry is ministry that exalts Jesus, not the preachers. Good lesson for us all to learn. Don't touch the glory.

That's it. Don't touch the glory. It's wonderful how much you can accomplish for God if you're just determined that God will get the glory, not yourself.

Haman is mortified. His balloon is burst and he goes home. He's got to tell Zeresh, his wife, and the friends that are gathered there.

It's a dark, dark day for Haman. And she says something, you know, she says something that they weren't her words. You know, God can even take a person's speech box, voice box, and cause that person to say things that they hadn't planned to say.

Wasn't their idea? He can even use Balaam's donkey to say things, can't he? And if he can make a donkey talk, he can certainly make a human being talk. You know what she said? If Mordecai, before

whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him, but will surely fall before him. This is the one who just previously said, oh, no problem, build a gallows 75 feet tall.

The same one. And now she said, look, your goose is cooked and your stuffing's overdone. If Mordecai is of Jewish descent, you gain this up.

Without knowing it, she's echoing God's words, I will bless him who blesses you and curse him who curses you. She didn't realize the import of her cheerless prophecy ringing in Haman's ears. So it's time for him to rush off to the banquet.

That his feet are lead, huh? His heart isn't in it, rushing off to that banquet. And so there is the banquet, and there's the king, queen Esther, Haman, Haman, the guest of honor. And the king says, really, come on out.

Don't lead us on here. Tell us what you want. We'll give it to you up to half of your kingdom.

And throwing aside all reserves, Esther reveals that she's a Jewess. And of course, the king has signed a decree condemning all Jews to death. And so she really has dropped a bomb.

She pleads for herself and for her people who have been sentenced to death. And up to this minute, Haman had no idea that the queen was a Jewess. So you can imagine, you can imagine the emotions that coursed through his being when she said that, that the queen was included in that fateful decree.

And Ahasuerus turns to the queen and says, whoever would do such a thing? Forgetting, I guess, that he had signed it and put his signet ring on it. And can't you see Esther pointing to Haman and says, that wicked Haman did it. I mean, you talk about drama.

The first meeting that we had on Esther, I mentioned that this has all the elements of great literature, quite apart from the fact that it's an inspired word of God. It has all the elements. Can you imagine the drama of that moment? There in the royal dining hall, and Esther pointing the accusing finger at Haman, who said, he's a guilty adversary.

The king's furious, absolutely furious. As I say, he's forgetful of the fact that he had been engineered into the plot himself. I really think that probably in a case like that, he was just careless and said, oh, well, if he wants it, you know, if he wants it, I'll just sign it.

Easy to do that sometimes. And so God looks down and he sees Haman leaving the banquet hall in a rage. First of all, he sees the king going out.

The king needs the time to cool off. And so he goes out to the garden. He's just so mad.

He can't stay there any longer. And after a while, he comes back in and Haman is, actually, he looks as if he had a very compromising position. He's by the queen, and it looks as if he's going to assault the queen, but it's not that at all.

He's just pleading for his life. The king doesn't know that. The king doesn't know that.

And so the king feels that his wife is being attacked. Strange, isn't it, that the king would come back just at that time and see just that going on. God's timing.

God's perfect clock. And so there they are, and the king can think of nothing but death for a man like Haman now. Up till now, he was second in command in the kingdom.

And so there was a man there named Harbona, and the king said, you know, we're going to put this man to death. And Harbona just innocently looks out and he sees a 75-foot gallows there. And he just happens to mention, well, look, there's a gallows here.

You can hang him on that. The king says the very thing. They put a cloth over his face, which was a symbol of imminent death, and they take him out and they hang him on the very gallows that he had made for Mordecai.

The scripture says the triumphing of the wicked is short. He made a pit and dug it out and has fallen into the ditch which he made. His troubles shall return on his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown, Psalm 7. Psalm 9 verse 16, the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.

The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. He made a gallows for somebody else. Now he dies in the gallows.

There were times in this book you think, the situation is hopeless for the Jews. There's no way out. It's an immutable law.

It cannot be changed. Where is God? Why doesn't he answer prayer? But now the threads of God's weaving are beginning to make sense, aren't they? Now you're not looking at the underside of the weaving. You're looking at the upper side of the weaving, and you can see a beautiful pattern emerging.

For a while the whole thing was just a bunch of tangled threads, a tangled scheme, but now everything is coming into view. I like those words of Esther when she was pleading, if only we were to be sold as slaves, perhaps I could remain quiet, though even then there would be incalculable damage to the king that no amount of money could begin to cover. She knew that the appeal to that in her plea.

And then what did Mordecai do? I think this is beautiful. Mordecai went back to his usual place at the gates. He didn't have that terrible pride, that terrible arrogance that Haman had.

He had a pretty humble thing to do. He just went back to his usual occupation. Good for you, Mordecai.

I think I mentioned last week that I had Bernard Baruch advisor to president, and he used to just sit on a park bench in Washington, DC. He used to sit on a park bench, and yet he advised I don't know how many different presidents in the history of our country. The scriptures say, I have seen the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a native green tree.

Yet he passed away, and behold, he was no more. Indeed, I saw him, but he could not be found. You know, all through history God has been repeating that story of Haman hanged on the gallows that he had built for Mordecai.

History repeats itself. Man can do nothing against the truth but for the truth. It's wonderful, isn't it, how God can work things out when from our standpoint the skies are dark, there's no way out.

You think even God himself couldn't solve this problem. He does. I'm sure that you've read of that man that was cast adrift in a boat, and he had very little in the way of food and tools or anything else, but he landed on an island, and it was a deserted island, and at least he was resourceful enough to build a hut,

kind of a thatched hut for himself there, protect himself from the elements, and he had the means for making a fire and cooking his food that day and all of that.

One day he was away from the, after he'd been there a long time, and his food resources were going very slim, he'd been away from the hut for a long time, and he looked back and he saw smoke going up. A spark from the fire had ignited the hut, and it burned to the ground. Everything he had was burnt.

He said, but it's tragic. No, it wasn't tragic. A passing ship saw the smoke, drew near, sent in a lifeboat, and he was saved.

Isaiah says, No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper. Every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, says the Lord.

It could be that somebody here today has a hayman in his life. God can take care of him. God can take care of him.

Somebody here might be subject to all kinds of accusations and so forth. Don't even have to answer. A.T. Pearson tells about a venerable saint who looked back on his 80 years, mostly spent in public life, and he said, I've often been wrongfully attacked, but have never attempted to defend myself.

Get that. I've often been wrongfully attacked, but have never attempted to defend myself. I have borne in silence and committed my cause to God, and there has never been a wrong done to me that has not been rectified.

I think that's wonderful. I'm always ready to speak out in self-defense. Not necessary.

No weapon that's formed against thee shall prosper. Every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. We'll go on and finish the book next time in the will of God.

The story isn't over yet. The edict is still there. In spite of all the wonderful things that have happened, their condemnation is still there, and it can't be changed.

How's God going to solve this problem? Come again next week and find out. Shall we pray? Blessed God, we thank you that the scepter of grace is still held out to those who are sinners and on their way to hell. Thank you.

The invitation still is, come unto me all ye that labor. We thank you as believers too that the scepter of grace is always held out to us, that we can come at any time of the day or night and have audience with you. What fortunate people we are.

We thank you for your ways in grace and your ways in providence. We pray that we might have great thoughts of you from day to day, realizing that you are in perfect control, and though at the moment there might be mystery in life, things don't make sense, yet they actually do make sense. Help us to trust when all seems darkest.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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