

Esther Series – Timing is Everything Esther 6:1-13

Dave Shepardson, Calvary Chapel Nuevo / wordbymail.com

Timing is everything. It's an idiom. It's a figure of speech. It's something we say. Timing is everything. It's our way of putting significance on the timing of events. Whether it's the good timing or the bad timing, we say, "Timing is everything," but we know, if we've been around any length of time (and if you don't know, just know now), God's timing is perfect every single time. God's timing is always part of his larger plan, his larger purpose, of something that he's doing.

The problem we have with God's timing is that it is not our timing. That's the rub we have with God and his timing. If God's timing were our timing, we'd be perfectly happy wouldn't we? If God would even bring us in on his timing, if he would just give us a heads up so we would know his timing, we'd probably be okay with that - if he would just bring us in on what he was doing.

As we mature in our relationship with the Lord, we come to understand that God is at work, in all things, at all times. We come to know and believe that. The problem is; we know he's at work, but we have no idea what he's doing, and we don't know when he's going to do it. It's important that we know, that we acknowledge, that there's never a time when we're going to sit down with God, give him that knowing wink, and say, "I've got you, God. I'm with you. I totally see what you're doing here." That's never going to happen.

You have no idea what God is doing. I have no idea what God is doing. Here's the best that God gives us. Sometimes God shows us what he's doing in hindsight, doesn't he? He shows us what he's doing when we look back and say, "God that was you. I see your hand. I sense that you were at work. I see the good that you brought out of that." The best we can hope for is to look back and see God at work.

God's timing is perfect. He will not clearly disclose his timing to you. Sometimes he gives you a sense. There have been times here where God has spoken prophetically through some of you and told me that his time is near. Sometimes he uses more than one of you to speak a word to me and say, "This is coming." And I thank God for that.

But most of the time, we're clueless. Here's why. Because God wants us to walk by faith. He wants us to cling to him. He doesn't want us to join him in what he's doing *because* we know what he's doing and we agree with him. Like, "Okay, God. You've got my vote. I'm with you." No. God wants us to love him, and cling to him, and trust not only *what*

he's doing, but *when*, and *how* he's doing. It's all up to him, and we're all in with his plan, whatever it is.

We're going to see today, again, that Esther is such an incredible book of contrast. I didn't tell you we were going to Esther chapter 6, did I? Well, we are. Esther chapter 6.

Today, we're going to see another incredible contrast between those that are in step and those who are out of step with God's timing. You and I are one or the other. We are either in step with God's timing or we are out of step with God's timing. It gets really, really clear. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, please reveal that to us, Lord. God, by your Spirit and by the illustration of your word Lord, show us where we are in step with you, where we are trusting you (clinging to you at rest and at peace), where we're waiting on you, and where we've joined you. Show us, Lord, where we are not; where we are out of sync with you. Where we are on the bad timing side of this line, Lord. Show us, God, where we're fighting you, where we're not trusting you, where we're wrestling or struggling with you, God.

Lord, show us that we can rest in you, that we can rest in what you're doing, that we can rest in your timing, that we can trust you and be so one with you that we move when you say move, we speak when you say speak, we do what you say do, we pray what you pray, Lord. Help us to be in that sync with you. Just like you, Jesus, we're with your Father. When you move, we move. When you speak, we speak. The way you pray and what you pray for, we pray. In fact, Holy Spirit, you pray through us in alignment with your will. Show us that today, Lord, in Esther. We pray in Jesus' name, amen. Praise the Lord.

When we left the scene of Esther last message, we were comparing pride and humility. That was a rough message. After the last message everyone was like, "I don't know if I like you anymore," – which isn't that uncommon at the end of my messages. There was a heavy feeling in the room as we compared Haman's disgusting pride with the wonder of Esther's humility.

One of the main questions we had last message was “why?” Why did Esther not bring up this critical situation to the king and Haman when she had them on her turf in her area of the palace when she was feeding them? Everything was perfect, right? As you read up to the story, you think, “Okay, this is it, Esther. Drop the bomb. Get it done.” Instead of bringing up what she needs to bring up, she asks for a delay. We said, "Why? Why would you delay?" As you begin to see God's hand in the book of Esther, hopefully you said,

"Why did God have Esther delay? What was the reason for the delay?" Well, Esther (and we) didn't know before chapter 6 and 7, but today we find out some of the reasons why God had Esther delay. It's a lesson by illustration that timing is everything.

Just because something is right, doesn't mean it's right *now*. It's possible for God to say, "This is what I'm doing, but not today." We pick up the story today in Esther 6:1 at the end of the banquet that Esther had with the king and Haman in her own quarters.

Esther 6:1 says, "***On that night*** (the night of the first banquet, the same night) ***the king could not sleep.***" What a coincidence. It might have been because Esther fed him bad pizza during the 11:00 news. Have you ever done that?

Sometimes if I don't eat dinner I come from Wednesday night service like, "What can I eat, man?" My wife doesn't have bad pizza, but I'm eating something. I just stand at the refrigerator and eat at 10:00 or 10:30 at night. Sometimes I can't sleep because of that. That's not this. Sometimes God wakes me up because he wants to speak to me. Sometimes we can't sleep because God wants to speak to us. That's the situation here. On that same night, the king could not sleep.

Continuing in verse 1 "***And he gave orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, the chronicles, and they were read before the king.***" This is an interesting choice because this has got to be one of the most boring reading materials the king could have asked for. He said, "Bring me the book of the history of my reign." That's what he's referring to. It's probably a scroll and it just recounts the major events in King Ahasuerus' reign. So he sends one of his servants to the library to grab a scroll.

There were a ton of scrolls in that library. This is stuff that was continually written down. So the scribe (the servant) walks into the library and goes, "Really? You're kidding me. The guy wants me to read him about the memorable events in his reign." he reaches up on the library wall and grabs a scroll, right? Coincidentally, he grabs a scroll that's five years old. In it, there's a memorable event about a guy named Mordecai.

Coincidentally, we read in Esther 6:2 (you know that "coincidentally" is not true; that was sarcasm), "***And it was found written how Mordecai had told about Bigthana...***" I couldn't help but stop right there and go, "you know what, Lord? I kind of like that name." Bigthana. I'm thinking, could I have a few people call me Bigthana? "Hey, Bigthana." I like that name. I like the name Shep, too, but Bigthana is a close second. Sometimes the names speak to you. If anyone else wants to be called Bigthana, you can have it.

He ***"told about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold*** (that's his chamber room), ***and who had sought to lay hands on*** (that means to assassinate) ***King Ahasuerus.***" Just by chance, the king can't sleep this night. Just by chance, the servant grabs this scroll. Just by chance, he reads this story about Mordecai.

In Chapter 2 (that was about five years ago), we had this strange event occur where out of the system of events, out of the flow of events, we read that Mordecai was listening at the gate and he heard these two guys, Bigthana and Teresh, plan to assassinate the king. He told Esther and Esther told the king and gave Mordecai the credit for it. If you read in chapter 2, you see that it just goes back to the story line.

Have you ever had that happen in your life? You're just kind of going along and then something seemingly significant happens. There's a glitch in the matrix. Something happens and you go, "Hey, that was weird. That was unique. That was really odd. That was really strange."

It happened here to me when we started this church. I got to meet Chuck Smith once and the subject of the conversation was that I was coming to Nuevo to start a new church. My pastor introduced me to him and we got to talk a little bit about us coming out here to start this church. Later, there was this accusation that I had started the church without approval from the Movement. It was that little event where I met Chuck Smith and talked to him about it personally. It squashed that accusation.

At the time, I thought, "Wow! That's kind of weird to not only meet Chuck but to have that conversation." It's not normal for little guys like me to have that kind of conversation with Chuck, but later on down the road I could say, "Wait a minute, you can't accuse me of that. I spoke to Chuck Smith himself on this day, at this time, in this place." So, they had to dig up something else (which they didn't really have any trouble doing), but they couldn't accuse me of that.

There was this weird little event that seemed out of place that God said, "I need *this* to happen to handle *that* later." That's happened in your life, especially with the Lord. Something occurs and you think, "That's a little out of place." Just tuck it away because God does that stuff for a purpose. Then when he needs it, he brings it up.

That's exactly what's happening here in Esther 6:3. ***"And the king said, 'What honor or distinction has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?'*** (You can imagine the king sitting up in bed and going, "Wait a minute. What is that? What did we ever do for that character? What did we ever do for that guy? Did we ever give him honor? What honor

was bestowed on him?") *The king's young men who attended him said, 'Nothing has been done for him.'*"

Now that's really odd because in that day and age, for the kings of the East, punishment and reward were really, really big ways to keep the kingdom in order – much the way we parent to keep our kingdom in order. Punishment and reward was a really big deal. We don't go to this extent. Their punishment was a little more extreme, but their reward was really big. When someone did something special for the king, especially saving his life, they would be given a country or something. It's a big deal.

But Mordecai didn't get anything. Why? Because the king delayed it? No. Why? Because God delayed it. How did Mordecai feel five years ago? How would we have felt? "I did a pretty good thing right there and nobody even noticed. Apparently, God didn't even notice what I just did there. I made this sacrifice." I'm speaking from personal experience. "My family and I made this sacrifice and nobody even knows what we did. What's up with that, God?"

God knows, doesn't he? Listen very carefully, please. If we did that in order to be recognized, then God made sure that we were not recognized. If you do something especially for God for your own recognition, then God says, "Okay, that's worthless. I'm going to make sure you don't get recognized for that." The worse thing in the world God could do for us is to recognize us for something we did for him, right? "Hey, God. Could I get the glory for this one instead of you? Is that all right if we share it? I'll take the glory this time. Maybe I'll give it to you next time. We'll see how you do."

No. That's really ungodly. If we do something (even for God) in our family, for our kids or for someone else with motivation of being recognized, then it's right for God to not recognize us. If we do it with the right heart, if we do it with a pure motive without a selfish interest, then we've got to trust God. "God, you put that in the vault." Someday, that will be part of what I can lay down at the feet of Christ.

1 Corinthians 3 explains the Bema Seat judgment. What we've really done for him is gold, silver, and precious jewels and it's going to pass through this fire. And what we've done for ourselves is wood, hay, and stubble. On the other end comes out the precious jewels, gold, and silver. What we've done for God will remain. The most beautiful thing is that when it does, then we'll lay it at Christ's feet because we'll realize that even what we did with the right heart, with pure motives, still wasn't us. It still goes back to Christ.

That's the point. God will put that in the vault and it will come back to you. He's able to use that sacrifice at just the right time, even if that right time is after this life. Sometimes he brings it back up in this life and says, "Hey, that sacrifice? Now is the time." For me and my family, the sacrifices that we've made that we've maybe questioned God about, God has used them (for me, for sure) to break me, to grind me, to pulverize me (I hope you're getting the idea), to turn me into powder. So I said, "Thank you, God. Thank you for that. You used that in my life for good."

Timing is everything and God's timing is always perfect. God brings up Mordecai's action out of pure motive five years ago *now* because it's perfect timing. It's perfect timing for Mordecai, for Esther, and for about ten million Jews. God says, "I need to bring that up five years from now because I'm going to use it to save ten million Jews. That's how big it is. Let's move on."

We've been dealing with good timing so far with Mordecai. That's good timing. How many of you know that we can be on the other end of that timing spectrum? How many of you know that we can just as well be part of seriously bad timing? We can just as well choose (listen to that word carefully because it's chosen carefully) to be like Haman who is the poster boy for bad timing. I told you last message, like it or not, that Haman is the picture of us. He's a mirror.

Haman is a picture of us, and in this chapter, Haman becomes the poster child – the epitome – of bad timing. Remember, it was just yesterday that Haman had dinner with the king and the queen. Then he's leaving and he sees Mordecai and he gets all worked up and has to go have an ego-inflation party. Bring all the buds around, and my wife, and just talk about me for a while. He got his ego re-inflated last message in chapter 5. That was just last night. This is just the next morning.

At the end of the chapter last message, Haman's wife says, "Hey, I know. Why don't you build a huge gallows and impale Mordecai on it?" your Bible might say "hang," but the word is more likely impaled because they impaled more than hung. The gallows would have been this huge platform 75 feet high, maybe, on a hill or a mound or on top of a building. His wife says, "Why don't you just take Mordecai up there (the thing that rubs you wrong) and just impale him for everyone to see?"

Haman probably spent all night building the gallows, overseeing the building. I can imagine him doing like a giddy dance. Do you ever do a giddy dance? He's just giddy. I don't realize when I get like this, but sometimes my family laughs at me. I think, "Oh, I must be giddy." you just get giddy; you just get beside yourself.

Haman has been doing the giddy dance around the gallows all night because he just can't wait to impale Mordecai. He probably hasn't sleep, so he's going to show up at the outer courts of the king's palace probably very early in the morning because he wants to be first. Why? He wants to start this perfect day early. He wants to get to impaling. He wants to get Mordecai hung on this pole so he can have a great day.

So he comes to the outer courts, we're going to see in verse 4. He's there to get the "okay" to impale Mordecai but his timing is bad. The king said, "Who is that in the court?" Literally it's "Who's in the court" but the inference is "Who did I see wander by the door? Who is that in the court?" Esther 6:4 ***"Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to speak to the king about having Mordecai hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for him."***

Haman's out there pacing back and forth. He's just hoping his timing is perfect and hoping he can slip in to see the king. In verse 5 it says, ***"And the king's young men told him, "Haman is (out) there, standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in."*** he's his top advisor so he says, "Let Haman in."

Haman is thrilled. He's thinking, "My timing is perfect. I'm beside myself about myself." The problem is that Haman's timing isn't his real problem. His real problem is his obsession with himself. Haman is a picture of us. He is a mirror of our sin nature. He is consumed with all that he can think about that involves *moi*. "Everything I can think about that involves me, I'm just consumed with it. I'm consumed with my plan, with my desire, with my timing." That's all that's in his mind.

Some scholars believe that King Ahasuerus is probably still in bed right now – that's how early it probably is. So Haman rushes into the king's bedroom, literally, but he doesn't even stop to think about what the significance might be for the king. Have you ever been caught in that? We go, "Oh, I forgot. Something might actually be important to you that doesn't involve me. I forgot for just a second that everything isn't about me." Haman forgot that and so he rushes into the king's bedroom.

He's like, "This is so cool. He's still in his bunny slippers and his robe. He's bringing me right into his bedroom. Man, I must be so important. What's on my mind, what I'm thinking, my goals, my thoughts, and my ideas must be so important he's bringing me right into his bedroom."

Self-focused pride is the most evil of all sins. It is what got Lucifer thrown out of Heaven – self-focused pride.

Here it is. Esther 6:6 So Haman came in and the king said to him, ***“What should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?”*** (You think that's a simple enough question. The problem is that Haman is thinking so much about himself that all he hears is about who? Him. It's a perspective issue and Haman is so wrapped up with himself. It's an over-dramatization of us, but don't look at that other person because God's word is pointing at us.) ***And Haman said*** (end of verse 6) ***to himself, ‘Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?’”***

“Of course the king's talking about me. That's all I ever talk about. That's all I ever think about. I'm here for me; he must be here for me. In fact, this must all be for me.” We've got to come to grips with that's how we think. That's how we feel; that's how we view our self. It's the sin nature. Haman says, "Well, obviously he's asking me how I would like to be honored. This is going to turn out better than I even thought." Remember, Proverbs 16:18 says, ***"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty (or arrogant) spirit before a fall."***

Haman finally believes he's about to get what he deserves and guess what? He's right. He's about to get exactly what he deserves. It just happens to be the opposite of what he thinks he deserves. So let's be careful not to let our own opinions about ourselves affect how we view the events occurring around us.

This is a critically key point. Yes, God is at work in the events around us. Yes, he desires us to join him in what he's doing in the events around us. But know that God's plan is not always about us. Can you believe it? God may have a plan that he wants you to be part of that's actually not about you. It just isn't about you. That's the truth. It's about Christ. It's about God. It's about you becoming less and less and less, and Christ becoming more and more and more.

It's not about God always working things out for you. It's not about God always promoting you. It's not about God giving you what you think you deserve. It's just not about us. It's about Christ. It's about the glory of Jesus Christ. It really, really is. If we view everything like, "This is about me, this is about what God is doing for me," then what we've done is we've scooted God off the throne and we've taken his place. Then we say, "Thank you, God, for helping me be all I can be and get all I can want and become all that I see myself becoming." That's what got Lucifer thrown out of Heaven. He wanted to be all he could be. Read it for yourself. Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.

Here's a correct perspective. "God, I want to be part of what you're doing. I want to join you in what you're doing. I want to be your instrument. I want to be conduit. I want to be

a living sacrifice. I want my life to be consumed for your glory. I want to surrender all that I am for all that you are. I don't want you to feed my ego; I want to reveal your glory. I don't want you to build me up; I want to be torn down to build you up."

I know it's contrary to what sells books. I'm trying not to be too sarcastic, but I'm telling you it's the truth. This concept we see in Haman of, "This is obviously about me," is our Christian culture. "This is obviously about me what God's doing. It obviously has to do with me." No, it doesn't. God, I want to join you in your plans – not for my ego, for your glory whatever it means for me. Haman didn't have that perspective. Haman assumed that God served him. Haman assumed that things were working out for him.

Isaiah 14:14 Lucifer says prophetically according to Isaiah (Read the five "I wills" of Lucifer in Isaiah 14.), **"I will make myself like the Most High."** God says, "You might, but not here. I'm going to make a special place for you where you can be in charge in eternal destruction." God cast him out of Heaven because he wanted to be like God. That's why. It's exactly what Haman wants. Haman wants to be like the king. Look at the picture here. Please grasp it.

Esther 6:7 **"And Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor, let royal robes be brought, which the king has worn (That's a huge deal. Nobody ever wore the king's robes, obviously), and the horse that the king has ridden (no one ever rides the king's horse), and on whose head a royal crown is set."** That means that on the horse's head, there's a royal crown. It's like a headdress that is put on the horse that is like the American flags on the President's limo. What it means is that the person on that horse is the king. That's what it means to put the royal headdress on the horse.

Haman says, "Listen; here's what you need to do. (Obviously he's thinking it's for him.) Dress that guy up like you. Make him look like you. Put him on your horse and put a sign on the horse so that everyone will think he is you. What does Haman want? He wants to be like the most high – not so much God, but he wants to be like the most high in the kingdom. "All I want is your job. All I want is your position. All I want is for the people to focus on me like they focus on you. That's all I want."

Is that the image? Do you see the image? Do you understand that that's the same sin that got Lucifer thrown out of Heaven? "I just want to be like you, God." It doesn't work out well. Haman's got this smug mug; he's got this smug face. He's thinking, "Okay. This is it. I'm the man. Here we go." he thinks he's reached his pinnacle.

This is where the Rocky theme plays in the background. Haman's basking; he can't wait. He knows. "This is it; I've arrived. I'm in the place." Then all of the sudden the needle gets scratched across the record and suddenly there's an awkward silence in the king's bedroom.

Verse 10 says, ***"Then the king said to Haman, "Hurry; take the robes and the horse, as you have said, and do so to Mordecai the Jew (Sometimes it hits and sometimes it hits hard. Do just like you said to Mordecai the Jew. That's right where the Rocky theme stops playing), who sits at the king's gate. Leave out nothing that you have mentioned."***

"Excuse me? Did you just say, 'for Mordecai the Jew'? Not Mordecai the Jew. What about me? What about my plan? What about my dreams for myself? What about where I saw myself in all of this? What about that?" I picture the witch in the Wizard of Oz. "I'm melting! I'm melting! What a world, what a world." I just imagine Haman melting on the inside. "Not Mordecai the Jew; anything but Mordecai the Jew."

Haman has what we call duplicity. Duplicity is a double personality that people have who will maintain positions for themselves. They have a personality that people see and then they have the real personality. The real personality is Haman just dying. He's just in a bowl of melted muck right now but on the outside he's going to keep it together. He thinks he's at the worst of the worst of the worst, but he's not. The worst is still to come, next message.

Haman's dying on the inside, but to follow orders to maintain whatever position he has, we read in 6:11 ***"So Haman took the robes and the horse, and he dressed Mordecai and led him through the square of the city, proclaiming before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor."***

Here's the only risk. The only risk is if you don't see yourself as Haman, the only risk in this text is if we say, "Ha, ha, ha on them," because this is a picture of who we are by nature. The purpose is to say, "God, help me. I repent. Lord, break me. I want to be a living sacrifice for you. I don't want it to be about me; I want it to be about you. I want to bring you glory; not me glory." That's the reason Haman is so over-dramatized.

It's been bad for Haman, really bad; excruciatingly painful and tormenting. But the timing is the worst of all. Haman had just built the gallows that night before. He was going to impale Mordecai on the gallows. He thought it was going to be him that was honored. Timing is everything.

Do you see how God just builds him up and then... "BAM!" God set this up. God set it up for this moment, for this time, to bring about this purpose. When Esther accepted Mordecai's challenge to step up and speak to the king on behalf of the Jews; when she and all the Jews in Susa fasted and prayed for three days and she had her hand maidens pray for three days; when she first approached the king being willing to die when she prepared that first banquet; when she waited and didn't talk to the king about the situation at the first banquet but instead asked them back the next night; when Haman's wife suggested that he impale Mordecai and Haman builds the gallows all night and then he giddy dances into the presence of the king; when the king couldn't sleep, when the servant grabbed the scroll from five years ago and just happened to read about Mordecai; back when Mordecai saved the king's life but didn't get rewarded for it; when the king asked about Mordecai's reward just as Haman was walking in the room; when the king and Haman had two different conversations when they were talking to each other talking about two opposite things.

All of this was according to God's plan in God's perfect timing. We can go back and back and see, "Whoa, God. You were at work. You actually had a plan. You were lining these things up. There's a purpose and your timing is perfect." God had an exact purpose in all of this and I promise you, he can do the same thing in you. He can do the same thing in me. He can do this and *will* do this in our lives.

But please, please listen to this so you don't get an out-of-balance impression. All of this that God was doing, orchestrating all of this, he was doing in the midst of every single person's freewill choice. There are no puppets in this play. None of these people are puppets. God did not say, "Okay, Esther, you act this way; Mordecai, you act this way; Haman, you act this way." These people are not acting against their control. They have total and complete free will.

Our God is so big, so omniscient, so omnipotent, so omnipresent – and all the omni's that he is – that he orchestrates his sovereign plan to come to pass within your freewill choice. However, somebody will choose to be like Haman. You have a choice and I have a choice. We have the choice to be like Esther and Mordecai – trusting God, following him, clinging to him, hearing his voice and going with his timing – or we can choose to be like Haman. We choose which side of this timeline we're on. We choose it.

We can be on the Mordecai and Esther timeline, following God and trusting him. We can be on the Haman timeline, consumed with self-will and self-focus and working towards our own plan and our own goals. Either way, God will still bring his plan to pass. Here's

the difference. We either get to join God in what he's doing or we get removed by God. If you don't think God removes people, wait until next message when suddenly Haman is just not a problem anymore.

Our only choice is whether we get to join God in his plan or we get removed by him so that his plan can still be accomplished. That's our only choice. We see it here in Mordecai (verse 12). What an incredible display of humility and trusting God after all this hoopla. The guy has been riding in the king's robe, on the king's horse with the king's headdress. He's been riding through town with a guy who hates him having to yell out, "This is what the king does for someone he wishes to honor."

Look at what verse 12 says ***"Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate."*** Whatever. You just see Mordecai kicking his sandals in the dirt. He heads back over, sits on his wooden stool at the gate, and he says, "That was kind of weird." Then he just goes back to what he was doing. There's no impact on his ego. There's no impact on his head. He's just like, "That was kind of crazy. They just dressed me in the king's robe and rode me around on the king's horse. Oh, well. I'm going to go back to what I was doing before."

Do you see there's no impact on Mordecai? That's a huge picture – not so much for Haman. Haman and Mordecai are the contrast. Look in the second half of verse 12, ***"But Haman hurried to his house*** (See the contrast? Mordecai's like, "Whatever, I'm going to go back to the gate." But Haman hurried to his house), ***mourning and with his head covered.*** Why? Because his ego has just been crushed.

Verse 13 ***"And Haman told his wife Zeros and all his friends everything that had happened to him."*** Remember it was just last night that Haman's wife says, "Build a gallows 75 feet high and hang Mordecai on it." That was last night. Now look.

Verse 13, second half ***"Then his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, 'If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of the Jewish people, you will not overcome him but will surely fall before him.'***

Talk about fickle counselors. This is Haman's own wife. She knew Mordecai was of the Jewish people, but there's something that happened in Haman being crushed through this and through his telling of the story that his wife goes, "Do you know what? I think you're in big trouble. I think you've just made some really, really bad decisions. Good luck with that." That's hilarious. Baby, thank you for never doing that to me.

I can just see it. Haman is just standing there with his jaw opened like, "What? What did you just say to me?" Verse 14 says, "**While they were yet talking** (while the words were still in the air) **with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried to bring Haman to the feast that Esther had prepared.**" Do you see God's timing? Haman is still with his mouth dropped open and the eunuchs are, "Let's go buddy. We've got one more thing to do tonight." This is a great movie plot. This is a great literary plot. It's so incredible.

Here's the lesson. We see that God's at work to accomplish his plan and his perfect timing. Do you see that in chapter 6? If we are joining God where he's working – if we're trusting him – then we will see him bring his plan to pass through our involvement with him. Not necessarily *for* us, but we get to be part of him. He's not part of our glory; we're part of his glory. If we're joining him, we get to be part of what he's doing.

But we cannot automatically see ourselves as Mordecai and Esther. We must recognize that Haman is the illustration of the sin of pride and self-focus. For you and I, we are more naturally Hamans than we are Esthers. Don't think too highly of ourselves. My nature is to be as self-focused as Haman. It's only as myself is crucified and I become a living sacrifice that God is able to use me to his glory. They both made choices. Esther and Mordecai made choices for God; Haman made choices for himself. I hope the contrast is clear.

Let me share one verse, Romans 8:28 – not the one that you usually read unless you have the Kenneth Wuest's Expanded Translation of the Greek New Testament handy. Kenneth Wuest is one of *the* foremost Greek scholars of our time. He writes a translation called An Expanded Translation of the Greek New Testament where it takes a lot of English words to draw out the Greek. Kenneth Wuest writes Romans 8:28 so incredibly well. I just want you to see one thing.

It says, "**And we know with an absolute knowledge that for those who are loving God** (“love” present tense means “are loving”) **all things are working together resulting in good.**" you guys know it's very misleading for a Christian to say to somebody arbitrarily, "Well, you know God works all things together for good." Wait until we see what happens to Haman next message. I'm just going to tell you right now, being impaled on a 75 foot pole – that's not good. So apparently, that's not true that God works all things together for good.

So what does the Bible say? The Bible says this: "**For those who are loving God, all things are working together for good.**" For those who are loving God with their choices; for those who love God more than they love themselves; for those who have put Jesus

Christ on the throne more than themselves; for those that are loving God, God is at work in all things for good. That's the lesson.

If we are loving God, trusting God, relying on him, and waiting on him then we can know without a shadow of a doubt that God is working all things together for good. Our choice is to be loving God more than loving self; to want God's will more than our will, and to want to join God in what he's doing more than have him accomplish what we want in our lives. Do you see it? Timing is everything. Trust God with his. Let's pray.

Father God, we trust you. We love you. We say together, right now while it's fresh in our minds and our hearts are pierced, Lord, we say we love you more than we love ourselves. We want your will more than we want our will. We want to be part of what you're doing more than we want you to be part of what we're doing. God, we want, we pray, that you would crucify the self-focus of Haman in each of us, Lord. God, that we would be a living sacrifice, that our lives would be consumed for your glory.

That we would do what we do to bring you glory. That we would be part of an eternal kingdom work and that we would be driven by that, Lord. Work out what you would work out for your good, for your plan, in your perfect timing in our lives. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.