

Esther Series – The Results of Joining God Esther 9:1-10:3

Dave Shepardson, Calvary Chapel Nuevo / wordbymail.com

In both Ruth and Esther, the one word that rings as true as any church bell is the word “providence”. Really, we've combined Ruth and Esther so that we could get a real, deep, illustrative look at God's providence.

We've seen God's providential care for his people in both Ruth and Esther and we've seen it in very different circumstances. Ruth and Esther are at the opposite ends of the cultural scale. We've tried to make it clear over and over and over again that if God has proven his providential care through the entire Bible, then God will continue his providential care of his people.

If he has proven his providential care of Israel, then he will continue his providential care to us, adopted sons and daughters grafted into that olive tree. That's one of the great elements of peace that we get from this word providence and knowing that God is at work.

But here's the thing that's really struck me through the books and that has really stayed with me in this message. There are really two types (this is a hard word to pick) – two levels – of God's providence. There are two amounts. Like I said, it's a hard word to pick so I just picked the word type. There are two types of God's providential care and we've seen it in these books.

The one type is that kind of distant providence where God is out there on the edge and he is either ruling or over-ruling in your life. Most of the time when you're experiencing this type of providence from God, he is over-ruling your life, which means that God is at work in your life in spite of you. That's one type of providence. Some of us know that providence where God has worked in our lives in spite of us. That's one level or type of providence.

The other level or type of providence is where God's providential care and his level of involvement and his proactive working in our lives is set by us being all-in with him – by us going 100% in, by us surrendering our lives to him. I want you to hear me that God's providential care changes from when you are a marginal believer. If you've prayed, if you've asked Christ to save you, if you've put your full faith and trust in Jesus Christ, then you're saved.

But no matter how far away you are from God, God's providence is still at work in your life because you're his. You're part of his family but it's a distant over-ruling, working-in-spite-of-you providence. Here's what I want you to see today. Mordecai and Esther go to the other providence. They go from that distant, God ruling in their life on the fringes to them being all-in with God. They're all-in; they're sold out; they're fully surrendered. They have nothing else. They just want to join God where he's working.

When we do that, things change. Things change in our lives. God's providential care becomes greater and greater. His proactive working becomes greater. His leading and his guiding and his arranging circumstances changes, depending on whether we are as far from him as possible or as close to him as possible.

Harry Ironside died in the '50s, I believe, but we still call him one of this generation's great scholars. He says, "Saints learn to look for divine intervention as evidence of the Lord's concern." We want God to work in our life to know that God loves us. "But, it is only as one walks with God and trembles at his word, manifesting (or revealing) a real heart for God himself that the special supervision and intimate fatherly care of which scripture speaks is entered into and enjoyed."

No matter how far you are today away from God as a Christian, God is still at work in your life. But it is a distant over-ruling type of providence. This type of providence that Ironside is talking about where you've made a commitment to walk with God, to tremble at his word, have a fearful awe and reverence for his word and to manifest a real heart for God alone, that's a different kind of providence.

As Ironside says, only now do you experience that intimate fatherly care, that special supervision where God goes from over-ruling to empowering your life. I'm not talking so much about the theology of providence, if you're a scholar. I'm talking about application. I'm not talking about what it means on paper; I'm talking about what it looks like in your life.

When God is just radically working in your life you're like, "This is out of control. God's doing more. I can't even keep up with God." That's the kind of providence we see in Esther and we see it change. We see Esther and Mordecai go from people not even knowing they were Jews. At the beginning of the book, people didn't even know they worshipped the God of Israel. We see that where God is providentially working during that time.

But then we see Mordecai and Esther go all-in with God where they say, "Okay. We're going all-in. We're surrendering our lives to God's plan." When they do that, God not only transforms them radically, personally, but he uses them to save a nation. It's kind of a big illustration. You may not have a nation to save, but what about your family? What about the people around you?

If God is only at work at the level where he is over-ruling in your life and he is getting his will accomplished in spite of you, how much more will he transform you and restore you and refresh you and use you in the lives of the people around you if you'll just go all-in with him and if you'll join him in his plan? That's what the message is about.

God will put you in a transformation cyclone. As I was thinking about this yesterday, I just see this tornado of God's transforming power that picks up everything in it. That's the

level of providence that you get when you go all-in with God – when you're not fighting him; you're not running from him; you're not holding back; you're not demanding your own ways. That's what we see today. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, please Lord, show us by picture this truth, Lord. There's a lot of text here, God. Give me clarity and efficiency and help us to see one thing and one thing only today, Lord – that you desire to do greater things in us and through us.

That you desire to work in us, Lord, for our transforming good and for the transforming good of those, Lord, that you would put us in touch with. Show us, Lord, in Esther and Mordecai how we can go from being on the fringe of your providence to being in the center of joining you in your will, your work, and your plan. Bring it to life, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

If you remember when we first met Esther and Mordecai, no one could even tell they were Jews. Not so now, right? By the end of the book they're just on. They are just rocket power on all the way for God. Not only are they experiencing worshipping the God of Israel, but they're actively working to save the people of Israel.

Every chapter we've seen them become more and more willing to join God where he's working. *The more we see Esther and Mordecai joining God in his plan, the more we see God using them for the good of the people around them.* Remember the title of the message is "The Results of Joining God." That's the result. It's a wonderful picture as we close the book of the difference between that distant providential care and that radical transformation of God really having a hold on your life.

Mordecai and Esther have been stepping up spiritually. Mordecai began mourning and fasting. It took him a little effort. It took Esther a little bit to get to it, but that's all right. She eventually joins him in that mourning and fasting. Then they get all the Jews in Susa, and all the Jews in the provinces of the Persian kingdom are all fasting. You see this national change to focusing on God because, of course, of impending crisis. It's the same thing that causes us to focus on God.

Mordecai and Esther are no longer fence-sitters. Now everybody knows they serve the God of Israel and they're at work in his plan. On the other side of the battle line is our antichrist of the day, Haman – our Hitler of the day who has connived with the king to massacre all of the Jews.

So through that mourning and fasting and crying out to God, through that surrender to God's plan, God gives Esther an approach to the king. He gives her this unique step-by-step approach to get the king to the point where she's 1) able to expose Haman for what he is and 2) God is able through her to bring Mordecai into a position where he can be used for the good of the people. So the enemy is exposed and Mordecai is put in a position where he can be used.

Again, that's a result of Mordecai and Esther just going all-in and saying, "Okay, God. What do you want us to do? That's what we'll do." Remember how it worked between the two feasts. In perfect timing, Haman gets stuck and he can't really be involved in the situation anymore. That's the last time I'm going to use that illustration. Haman gets impaled probably. It says "gallows" in the ESV so we think "hung," but it's probably impaled on a pole.

Mordecai is given Haman's ring, which is the king's signet ring so that he can write a response decree to Haman's decree that demanded the annihilation of the Jews. Now Mordecai is given the ring so he can write a decree in response but he can't change that first decree. That's where we're at today. That's where we pick it up. That's where we end.

Here's the thing I need you to see because it's just as true today as it was in 473 B.C. The Jews didn't want this war; the Jews didn't start this war, but God's going to make sure the Jews are going to win this war. So you stamp that on today's headlines. They didn't want it; they didn't start it, but God's going to ensure they win it.

Esther 9:1 (Finally) this is a summary of everything we're about to read. ***"Now in the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's command and edict was about to be carried out, on the very day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, the reverse occurred (just when the enemies thought they had them, the reverse occurred) The Jews gained mastery over those who hated them."*** Again, you're welcomed to stamp that on today's newspaper.

It's no trouble for God to turn the tables on the enemies of his people. It's no trouble at all. David felt that when he was running for so long – ten years plus running from Saul and crying out, "God. When will you deliver me from my enemies?"

And God was saying, "In my time. When it's right, I will deliver you and deliver you completely." God has no problem turning the tables on the enemy.

In fact, in verse two as we start to look at the details, we see that God was at work ahead of the Jews in this situation. Esther 9:2, ***"The Jews gathered in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm. And no one could stand against them. (Why?) For the fear of them had fallen on all the peoples."***

This is the same way that God brought victory after victory in the Promised Land. We see this with Rahab as Rahab comes to the spies and says, "Listen. Everybody's melting. Their hearts are melting because of you guys. We're scared to death of you." Three times in Joshua that same thing is said about the Jews.

God does that. God goes ahead of the Jews. He goes ahead of his people and he establishes victory before the battle begins. God goes before us. God wins the battle before we start fighting.

2 Corinthians 10:4 (one of my favorite verses) ***"For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh*** (they're not carnal) ***but have divine power*** (they're mighty in God) ***to destroy strongholds."***

Our weapons are not what we see and what we can tangibly use. Our weapons come from God and they tear down strongholds. They have divine power and that's what we see here as God goes before and instills fear into the Persians to ensure the Jews' victory.

Not only does God go before his people to ensure our victory, but when we're in the center of God's will, when we have gone all-in, when we are not fighting God but joining God, God will bring important people around us to help us. This is a phenomenal thing (I'm kind of waiting for this to happen to me).

Verse 3 ***"All the officials of the provinces and the satraps and the governors*** (those are all the Persian royalty, the leaders) ***And the royal agents also helped the Jews..."***

Isn't that incredible? This is a kingdom that is now set against the Jews, but somehow God goes before the Jews to make sure that the leaders will help them. How did he accomplish that? This is really important for you to see.

God used Mordecai who had gone all in with him to accomplish this throughout the Persian kingdom. Look at the rest of verse 3 into verse 4 ***"...for the fear of Mordecai had fallen on them."***

Mordecai was nothing. He's an old guy in sandals at the gate. God just used Mordecai. It says the fear of Mordecai had fallen on the leaders of these provinces. Proverbs 21 says, ***"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hands of the Lord. He turns it wherever he will."*** God says, "I need all the governors and the satraps, the provincial leaders. I'm going to turn their hearts to fear (that means to respect) Mordecai."

Verse 4 says, ***"For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces, for the man Mordecai grew more and more powerful."*** Do you see that in verse 4? He became great in the king's house, his fame spread throughout the provinces, and he became more and more powerful. Why? Because God is pouring out prosperity on Mordecai? No. Because Mordecai joined God and said, "God. Whatever you need of me, I'll do it." God said, "Okay. Here's what I need. I need to make you great. I need to give you fame. I need to give you power. I need to make the provincial leaders fear you because I'm going to use you to save my people." It wasn't for Mordecai's benefit. It was for God's benefit.

When we join God in his plan and then he uses us, we say, "God, you're incredible that you would use me. It's just incredible." That's what God will do if you'll just join God where he's working; if you'll surrender your own plan and join him in his plan. That's what he's doing to Mordecai.

Finally, the fateful day comes – the day the Jews were scheduled to be annihilated. Verse 5 says, "***The Jews struck all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them, and did as they pleased to those who hated them. In Susa the citadel itself the Jews killed and destroyed 500 men*** (mark that in your mind)." This doesn't mean that the Jews went off; it doesn't mean that they were the aggressors; it doesn't mean that they were taking vengeance. There was a war on.

I picture my family backed into the corner of a house and a weapon in my hand and a guy coming in my house that wants to destroy my family. I would drop him dead at the door. He will not get two feet into my house because if I know it's either him or my family, then it's him.

That's what's happening here. I don't mean to be overdramatic, but this is war and war isn't pretty. Someone's going to get hurt when the bullets start flying. That's what's happening here and that's what about to happen in Israel again.

God doesn't say to Israel, "Yeah, just let them nuke you. Just let it go. It's one nuclear bomb that'll wipe you off the face of the earth. Just let them build it." No, God actually has enemies. If you don't know this, let me just tell you. God has enemies. There are those driven by a spiritual force that are enemies of God. There is a time like this when they are trying to destroy God's people that God enables his people to win this battle.

You and I, prayerfully, will never have to actually take someone's life in protection of our own or our families. But spiritually, it's very applicable. It's a battle. It's a war. You can't just roll over and let the enemy win.

The Jews are standing up. They take out 500 men who are intent on killing them. Now there's a little bit of a parenthetical scene here. It's important to see. There's some unfinished business in the midst of Esther chapter 9 – Haman, who instigated, instituted, and created this plan for annihilating the Jews. Do you remember where he came from? Do you remember when I said he was an Agagite, which means he was a direct descendant of King Agag who was the king of the Amalekites whom God told Saul in 1 Samuel to destroy because they were such out of control enemies of God?

God told Saul to destroy the Amalekites; Saul did not. He rejected God's command. He did not kill Agag like he was supposed to. God removed Saul for that reason and eventually instituted David. Haman, who designed this plan to annihilate the Jews, is a direct descendant of Agag who was supposed to be killed by Saul, according to the Word of the Lord.

Here's a little problem. In Exodus and Deuteronomy both, God says that he's going to wipe the memory of the Amalekites off the face of the earth. God has enemies. The Amalekites are some of them. God says, "I am going to remove the memory of the Amalekites from the face of the earth." But Haman was an Amalekite.

Starting in verse 7 – there are some scholars who believe this is the end of the Amalekites; watch how it works – ***"And the Jews also killed Parshandatha and Dalphon and Aspatha and Poratha and Adalia and Aridatha and Parmashta and Arisai and Aridai and Vaizatha, (Verse 10) the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews..."***

There are some scholars (maybe they're divided so we can't tell for sure) who believe this is the end of the Amalekite line, and that the reason that these ten sons are killed is for God to finish the work that Saul was supposed to start in 1 Samuel because the Amalekites were enemies of God and God promised in two books that he would remove the memory of them from the face of the earth. God is patient but he will bring his will to pass.

Here's an interesting thing. In the Hebrew Scroll of Esther (Megilat Ester), these ten names are actually put in the shape of a gallows in the scroll. Way to go.

Esther 9:10 ***"But they laid no hand on the plunder."*** So they eliminated the Amalekite race possibly – at least Haman's family. They were allowed to take plunder by the decree, but the end of verse 10 says they took no plunder. Three times in the text it's made clear that, even though the Jews were allowed to take plunder, they did not. Why? Because they wanted to make it clear that the only reason they were fighting was for self-preservation. That's why we have a constitutional right to bear arms. That's not a political statement; it's just a fact. We have a right of self-preservation.

The Jews were exercising self-preservation. Contrary to the world's media (can you believe there would be truth contrary to the media?), present-day Israel has never, in the sense of plunder, materially benefited from the wars they've won. Now everyone would say, "Oh, no. What about the land they've taken? That's plunder." No, it's not.

Listen carefully. This is a political statement. I won't even veil it. Israel has given back huge amounts of land to their enemies who they've taken it from in war. If you're not sure exactly how that compares to us, we took California and Texas from Mexico in 1848. Just took it. We wiped them off of it and said now it's ours.

So when you hear the Palestinian media say, "Well, it's only right that Israel should give this land back," that's exactly the same as you and I saying it's only right for us to give California and Texas back to Mexico. People say, "Well they're – what is that word they use about Israel? Occupying the land." Listen, we are occupying Mexico because California belonged to Mexico before we ran them off it and took it.

Why isn't the world media telling the United States to give Texas back to Mexico? Do you want to try? There's more ability for self-preservation in Texas than all the other states combined. Don't tell Texas they have to give their land back to Mexico. California, we might do it. We might do it, but not Texas. So present-day Israel does not do that.

The second reason Israel has taken land is to push back their enemies from firing missiles into their land to kill their children. Every single day, rockets are fired from the Gaza Strip into residential neighborhoods in Israel. Every day. Tens of thousands of rockets have been fired into Israel from Gaza killing innocent people. Every strike that is made kills an innocent person. Every single strike. People say, "Well, you know, they're just mad because Israel took their land." Yeah? Have Tijuana start sending rockets into San Diego. See how we feel about it.

If Tijuana sent one rocket into San Diego, we would bulldoze them into the ocean. Nobody's going to say, "Well, you've got to let them send rockets into the residential neighborhoods in San Diego. After all, we took the land from them. They're just angry. It's a few thousand rockets killing our children. We have to understand them."

That's what the world media says about the Palestinians in Gaza Strip. Enough politics, Dave. This world is twisted when it comes to Israel. It really is. What Israel has been through, the United States would never stand for. Not for a second. But we're telling them they have to take it.

Esther 9:11 *"That very day the number of those killed in Susa the citadel was reported to the king. (Verse 12) And the king said to Queen Esther, 'In Susa the citadel the Jews have killed and destroyed 500 men and also the ten sons of Haman. What then have they done in the rest of the king's provinces! (That's an exclamation point not a question) Now what is your wish? It shall be granted you. And what further is your request? It shall be fulfilled.'"*

Some say that Esther becomes vindictive here. I don't believe so at all. The king is not expressing shock at what has been done. He's asking the queen, "Have we done enough?" Esther went all-in with God. She stepped up to be used by God and now God has put her in a place where she's deciding if the enemies of God have been taken care of or not. It's not King Ahasuerus that says, "Enough! Enough!" God has put Queen Esther and Mordecai in that place to say. "Are we done here?" That's what the king is saying is, "Are we done? Have the enemies of God been removed?"

Verse 13 *"Esther said, 'If it please the king, let the Jews who are in Susa be allowed tomorrow also to do according to this day's edict. And let the ten sons of Haman be hanged on the gallows.'"* Again, probably a pole.

Esther asked for one more day in Susa – probably, or assumedly, because the enemy was more entrenched in Susa. It was going to take more to root them out. So Esther says, "We

need one more day in Susa to root out the enemy. Plus, is there any way we could get those ten sons who are already dead to become a bulletin board for the people in Susa to kind of send a message if you will." So the king says, "Yes." It sounds gross but it gets the point across. He puts the ten bodies of Haman's sons on (probably) poles to send a message to Susa. "Quit messing with the Jews." I think the message got across.

Esther 9:14 ***"So the king commanded this to be done. A decree was issued in Susa, and the ten sons of Haman were hanged. (Verse 15) The Jews who were in Susa gathered also on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and they killed 300 men in Susa, but they laid no hands on the plunder."*** So another 300 in Susa are taken out but, again, only for self-preservation. No material benefit from the plunder.

Verse 16 ***"Now the rest of the Jews who were in the king's provinces also gathered to defend their lives, and got relief from their enemies and killed 75,000 of those who hated them, but they laid no hands on the plunder."*** you think, "75,000 – that's a big number." It's not big when you understand the size of the Persian Kingdom. 127 provinces, many the size of our states. That's about 600 men per province were killed. Same as in Susa.

Verse 17 gets to the Bible's point (the primary point of chapter 9, not our primary point today). Esther 9:17 ***"This was on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth day they rested and made that a day of feasting and gladness."***

Esther 9:18 is an explanation of the double dates because of the extra day in Susa.

Verse 19 says, ***"Therefore the Jews of the villages, who live in the rural towns, hold the fourteenth day of the month of Adar as a day for gladness and feasting, as a holiday, and as a day on which they send gifts of food to one another."*** This is known as the feast or festival of Purim. This is where it was instituted and we'll talk more about it as we continue here.

So Mordecai is going to ensure that it's done in verse 20. Esther 9:20 ***"And Mordecai recorded these things and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, obliging them to keep the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same, year by year (it becomes a holiday)."***

Verse 22 ***"As the days on which the Jews got relief from their enemies and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and gifts to the poor."***

This is just an explanation of why there is a celebration of these days – because of the work that God did. Instead of commenting on it, let me read Warren Wiersbe. He says,

"The church is always one generation short of extinction and if we don't pass on to our children and grandchildren what God has done for us and our fathers, the church will die of apathy and ignorance."

That's the truth. That's what the world is hoping for. That's what the Prop 8 opponents are hoping for. "If we can just keep up this battle until the kids grow up. If we can get to the next generation and indoctrinate them, then by the time they grow up, we'll take over this country and remove God completely." They're doing a pretty successful job so far.

We must turn our faith to our children and our grandchildren. We must tell our kids how great God is and what he's done for us and how great God is in our country. And we need to set apart days (for us it would be the fourth of July which would be very similar to Israel's Purim) where we say, "God established this country." Yes. It's a patriotic holiday, but we have to know about God.

When you read about God in the foundation of this country, it will blow your mind. As a Christian, it will blow your mind. It is being systematically removed until it can be forgotten. We need to pass on the heritage of faith to our children and to our grandchildren so that the church doesn't die of apathy and ignorance.

Verses 23 to 32. It's a huge section explaining that Haman picked the day to annihilate the Jews by casting lots, which were like dice, called *Pur*. That's where the Jews get the name Purim – from this lot (kind of a dice) that was cast to determine the day to annihilate the Jews.

Just a current-day comment. Unfortunately this celebration is primarily not spiritual in Israel today. It primarily has degraded to an extremely worldly celebration. It's much like our Halloween without the demonic element. They dress up in costumes and they role play the book of Esther. But some silly rabbi some time ago said that people should get wildly drunk on this day. Do you know how people take something out of context and really hang on to it? Well the whole nation has done that, so it's just a phenomenal two days of alcoholic poisoning. That's unfortunate.

But in the synagogues, not so. In the synagogues the Book of Esther is read and they boo Haman and they cheer Mordecai and they send food and gifts. They still celebrate in the synagogues what God did in Esther.

Chapter 10:1 How far did God use Mordecai? The point today is what are the results of joining God. This is the title of the message. What are the results of Esther and Mordecai going all-in with God?

The point is what happens when we join God – when we go all-in with God and just say, "God, I'm yours. Everything I've got, Lord. No matter what, I'm yours. I go all-in, fully

surrendered. I will do what you say; I will go where you go; I will be who you've made me to be"? What happens?

Here's what happened with Mordecai. Esther 10:1 ***"King Ahasuerus imposed tax on the land and on the coastlands of the sea. And all the acts of his power and might, and the full account of the high honor of Mordecai, to which the king advanced him, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?"***

Verse 3 ***"For Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Ahasuerus."*** Do you remember who else was moved to that rank in Egypt? It was Joseph. Just like Joseph was raised to second in command in Egypt, Mordecai was raised second in command in the Persian Empire. Why? God's prosperity poured out on Mordecai? No. Because Mordecai said, "I'm in, Lord. Do with me what you want." And God says, "I'm going to raise you to second in command so you can save my people."

Mordecai was raised to second in command to King Ahasuerus. ***"And he was great among the Jews and popular with the multitude of his brothers, for he sought the welfare of his people and spoke peace to all his people."***

If you haven't been listening or if the political stuff offended you, I apologize. I don't apologize for the truth; I just apologize if it offended you.

Back to the point, Mordecai and Esther started out really slow, man. They really drug their feet. But they had a crisis of belief were they had to decide. "Am I in with God or out? Am I on the edge or am I in the center?"

When they went into the center, they surrendered everything they were. Esther says, "If I die, I die. If going there requires my life, then so be it. I'm in. I'm in all the way." When they did that, they went from *casual observers in God's plan to active participants*. Now they're not on the fringes going, "Yeah. It looks like God's doing something." They're like, "Whoa. He's doing it through me." Do you see the difference?

That's what happened to Esther and Mordecai. Instead of watching God work, God was using them to work. That's what can happen to us. If we will go all-in; if we'll join God where he's working; if we'll just say, "God I'm not holding back. I'm not requiring anything for myself. I'm all-in for you. Use me where you want and when you want and how you want," he will.

He may not use you to save an entire nation but he may use you to save your family. Is it enough? Yeah. It's enough. He may use you to save people that he puts you around. He may actually use you to transform lives in your sphere of influence, wherever that's at. And I promise you he'll begin by transforming *your* life. That's the point. Please get it.

The results of truly joining God. If we'll come off the bench and say, "Coach, put me in the game. I'm tired of watching. Put me in the game." If we do that then number one, our life will be radically transformed because God won't be over-ruling us providentially. He will be *using us* providentially.

Number two, God will use us to transform or even save others around us. That's the result of joining God where he's working. That's my prayer for each of us. Let's pray.

Lord God, all that other stuff you can handle. Lord, the only thing that you're looking for us personally for is to join you or to not join you; to sit on the sidelines and watch you work or to jump in the game and say, "Use me."

Esther and Mordecai did both, Lord. They started out on the sidelines but, God, they had a crisis of belief and they went all-in with you. When they did you met them there and you transformed them radically and you raised them up and you used them to save a nation. God, we don't have any expectations but, Lord, we say, "Use us."

May we be all-in with you so that you're not over-ruling, but instead you are ruling. You're not leading in spite of us, Lord. You're leading us. May we go from casual observers to active participants. May we take a hold of what you have for us, Lord. May we take a hold of it. Lord, we surrender all.

Just tell him right now. Just tell him. "Lord, I surrender all. I surrender it." Get to the point where you say, "God, I'm all in. This world has nothing for me. I want to live for you. I want to see you work in my life. I want to see you work through me. I want to be part of your plan, of your purpose. I want to live in eternity, Lord."

God, make that real in us – today, tomorrow, and every day, Lord, that we are given life on this earth. We pray it in Jesus' name, amen.