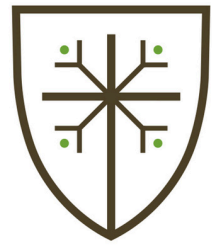


GOD ON THE MARGINS

A story of Jonah, Habakkuk, and Esther

SERMON NOTES



November 2, 2025

SERMON INFO

TITLE

"The Path to Greatness"

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Esther 3:1-6, 6:1-10

1 Timothy 4:6-10

Mark 10:42-45

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do we see a culture of pride playing out in our world today?
2. As Christians, how do we live in that culture with self-emptying lives marked by the humility of Christ?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, Tim continued our series on the book of Esther with a look at the "villain" of the story - Haman - a man who longs, more than anything, for greatness. How can we become people of true greatness?

The Culture of Pride

Last week, Brent introduced us to the world in which Esther is set. The Jewish people are living as exiles in a foreign land, the greatest kingdom in the world ruled by a man who is portrayed as a shallow, impulsive, vindictive fool who is easily manipulated by those around him. In the very first few verses, we see him commanding his queen to present herself in order to be paraded in front of his friends. Now, in our own culture 2,500 years later, we still live under the same stereotypes - rich, powerful men and young, beautiful women - where externals, image, appearance, and reputation, still matter more than character. We see Esther going all in with this system of power. As the text says she "pleased and won over" everyone, eventually the King himself with her beauty.

The Man of Pride

In chapter 3, we meet Haman who craves to do as a man what Esther does as a woman, become great in the eyes and opinions of the world. Haman, the man of pride, lies in every human heart. The text describes how he was promoted and advanced by the king. He had risen to the highest point of power, wealth, and recognition, but the king had to command the people to bow to him. He had to make people do for Haman what they instinctively and willingly did for anyone else in that position of authority. Haman had an external image of greatness but no greatness of character within. And when Mordecai refused to obey the king's command to pay homage to Haman, it enraged him.

Haman hates the truth. He would rather murder Mordecai than face the truth of his insatiable craving for praise, recognition, and approval. That is pride - the spiritual impulse from which all the vices flow. There is a pride of superiority, like we see initially in Haman. But there is also a pride of inferiority that shows up when Mordecai's refusal to bow to him brings Haman face to face with the truth. Pride will make you condescending and cruel to others when you succeed or self-loathing and cruel to yourself when you fail.

The Solution to Pride

The solution to pride is found in the reversal that takes place in chapter 6 of Esther. Haman, who, in his pride, has continually grasped and strived to exalt himself, is cast low. Mordecai, who has been crushed and brought low by the world, is exalted. This reversal is a fundamental principle throughout scripture: if you humble yourself before God, you'll be exalted. If you exalt yourself before God, you'll be humbled. This principle is so pervasive in scripture because it is the nature of God himself. God is humble. God's glory is that he has his eyes always fixed on another - the Father on the Son, the Son on the Father, resulting in a self-emptying concern and mutual honor that is the Holy Spirit.

Mordecai was only saved because his place and Haman's were reversed. The greatest reversal we see in Scripture is found in the person and work of Jesus. He reversed places with us willingly so that we might be clothed in the robe of his righteousness, so he could lead us home to heaven like a person being honored in a parade. Your greatness has been given by grace.