

Turn in your Bibles tonight to Esther 7. As we have studied through this book of the Bible, we have seen the providence of God displayed and how it has related to so many aspects of Scripture to point to our reality of redemption through Christ. The nation of Israel was in a place where they were going to be destroyed unless God stepped in. Because of the edict that had gone out there appeared to be no hope for them at all.

We, in our sin, are without hope and if God had not stepped in there would have been no redemption for us! But by the grace of God, the Lord Jesus Christ came to pay for our sins, as he bore our sins in his body on the Cross. Jesus paid the payment of sin by dying on that cross, was buried but showing he has complete victory he rose again the 3rd day. Revealed himself to well over 500 people (1 Corinthians 15) and is at the right hand of the father right now in his glory!

But to receive that redemption we must repent of our sins, turning from them, and living a life of obedience in the Lord in accordance with his Word!

The title for tonight's message is, "The Destructiveness of Pride!" It is pride that causes many an individual to pave their own way to Hell. Among the warnings and the hearing of the Gospel and seeing the truth they allow pride to hold them back to surrendering their life to the Lord Jesus and escape Hell. In God's Word we can see his disdain for the prideful.

Proverbs 16:5

⁵Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished.

I used this quote before, and I want to use it again tonight. This is from C.S. Lewis from his book, Mere Christianity.

"The vice I am talking of is Pride or Self-Conceit: and the virtue opposite to it, in Christian morals, is called Humility...According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere flea bites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind."

— C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

Pride is the essence of all sin! We continue to see this in the life of Haman. Remember it was back in Chapter 5 that Esther came before the King uninvited with the chance that she may lose her life by doing so. But King Ahasuerus held out his scepter and allowed Esther to come before him.

The King asks Esther, "What is your request? It shall be given you, up to half of my kingdom." Esther invited the King, as well as Haman, to come to a feast. So, they came and again the King asked Esther, "What is your request?" Esther said come back tomorrow and I will ask you. Haman was so happy about being there is says that he was joyful and glad of heart.

To give a quick review:

1. On his way home Haman saw Mordecai and his wrath burned within him. But he controlled himself and called all his friends over and shared with them what a great man he was. Even boasted about how he was the only one that the Queen asked to come and feast with her and the King.
2. But even all of that meant nothing as long as Mordecai was alive. So, the plot to kill Mordecai was made.

3. The King had a restless night and through the reading of the Chronicles he was reminded how Mordecai had saved him against an assassination plot and nothing had been done to honor him.
4. So, the King wants to honor him, and Haman happened to come by to ask permission to hang Mordecai on the gallows but instead was asked by the King that if the King wanted to honor a man what should be done.

After he gave this extravagant way, he would honor such a man. What did he find out? He had to do that for Mordecai! Would you say his pride was hurt a bit?

You would think so but, in our pride, sometimes we don't see the obvious in front of us. After leading Mordecai through the streets, he runs home with his head covered and he receives this warning from his wise men and his wife.

Esther 6:13

And Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him. 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."

But he did not heed the warning! He made no move to reconcile the issue at hand. Haman allowed the anger and hatred his pride has brought into his life to let it rule his actions. This choice in his life will now bring his demise.

You should be at Esther 7 so let's read verses 1 and 2.

Esther 7:1-2

¹ So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. ² And on the second day, as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king again said to Esther, "What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."

Here we are at the 2nd day of the feast that Queen Esther had asked the King and Haman to.

So, what is going through Haman's mind at this time as he was walking to the feast and now, that he is at the feast? Was he still fixated on his hatred for Mordecai? Or now as he sat in the palace feasting and drinking with the King and the Queen did his pride once again take over and say? Yep! I am the man!

Mordecai doesn't have anything on me!

I believe we have two thought patterns here.

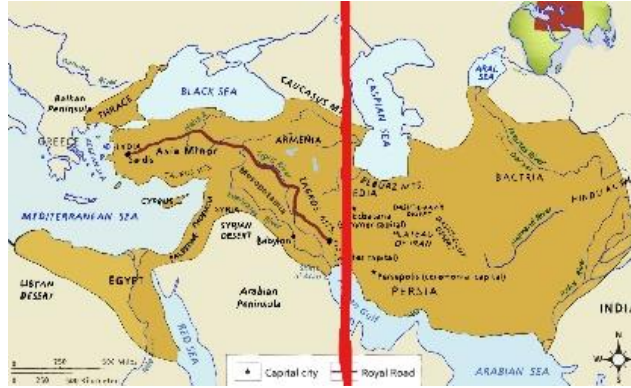
1. The one I just described with Haman in pride.
2. King Ahasuerus had to be thinking, "What was this request that would cause to Esther even at the chance of her death by coming to me without me asking her to come?"

Now all of this is happening quickly. Let me timeline this really quick.

From Chapter 1 to the point that the edict to destroy the Jewish nation had gone out across the land and to the point Esther found about the plot is about 9 years. But from the time of her hearing about it, calling the nation to a fast, Esther going before the King to ask he and Haman to a feast, the King having a sleepless night, Mordecai being honored and paraded around town by Haman and now the second day of the feast is 5 days.

King Ahasuerus then prompts Queen Esther again to make her request. The King makes a statement of, “What is your request? Whatever it is, even up to half of my kingdom I will fulfill it!” Now that is not a literal statement. This statement by a King was that he was about to be very generous. I joked with Matthew when he taught this back in Chapter 5 and we saw King Ahasuerus say the same thing.

If I was Esther, I would have said OKAY.



I would have pulled out a map and drawn a red line right down the middle and said, “I’ll take the half that includes Jerusalem, and all the Jews will live with me. I will summon you if I need you! Thank you very much, you and Haman can now leave! Have a good life! But that would not have really solved anything. Once again, an enemy was out to destroy the people of God and they needed to be dealt with directly.

And now Queen Esther with her request unfolds the reversal that we have been talking about over these past few weeks. Verse 3 and 4!

Esther 7:3-4

³ Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted me for my wish, and my people for my request. ⁴ For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have been silent, for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king.”

Esther brought a couple of surprises before the King. In her request she is going to reveal a few things. Now, Esther was very shrewd here. Primarily she was being led by the Lord. That is a very important point for us that as we are needing to deal with many situations in our lives. We should seek guidance from the Lord. Remember Esther and the whole nation fasted for 3 days for her so she would handle this with great wisdom.

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

The wisdom Esther was needing was not her own. She needed to hear from God and get his direction on how to deal with what was before her. This was not Esther’s plan! This was God’s! Let’s use some very familiar verses to describe this.

Proverbs 3:5-8

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. ⁷ Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. ⁸ It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

That is the issue a lot of the times for us. We approach life with the mentality of what we want, when we want it and how we want it! Also, we may say, I can figure this out and sometimes going before the Lord is our last thought which should always be our first thought! But it is the Lord we should lean into when it comes to all our decisions.

But here are Esther's surprises that I mentioned earlier!

1. She didn't ask for wealth or land but her life!
2. Also, the life of her people. Revealing to the King she is a Jew.

Without just saying it Esther did implicate the King in this horrible deed of annihilating the Jews according to the edict he signed. Esther brought to the mind of the King the killing of the Jews was not going to be a beneficial thing for the King.

Maybe if we had just been sold into slavery, this way they could have still served the nation, I could have let that go. But the mass murder of my people! I could not stay silent!

As we look at this, the King's mind had to be full of all kinds of thoughts. He just heard his wife's life was being threatened. Her people? Who are her people? What will the King do?

Esther 7:5-7

⁵ Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has dared to do this?"⁶ And Esther said, "A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.⁷ And the king arose in his wrath from the wine-drinking and went into the palace garden, but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm was determined against him by the king.

Who was this that orchestrated the deviant plot? Your most trusted advisor! Your right hand man! Haman! Can you imagine the look that was given to Haman! The King in his wrath rose from his seat and had to walk out of the room and he went out to the palace garden.

The Hebrew word here used for the phrase, "In his wrath", is Hema. It means rage, hot displeasure, fury! But the King had a lot to process here. Do you think there was a lot of pacing back and forth going on? Maybe some face scrubbing?

What have I done? Her people? So, she is a Jew! How did I not know? Oh! Yeah! Queen Vashti! We went and brought in all the virgins! Mordecai is a Jew! He saved my life! But Haman! I trusted him! The edict! The certain people! That was the Jews! Was that all a lie? The edict! I can't change it! What am I to do? Ahasuerus had a decision to make.

Well, so did someone else! Haman is in the palace with the Queen! What is he doing? Verse 7 tells us he is there begging for his life because he saw the look in on the King's face. Children, you know that look you get from your parents, and you know this is not going to turn out good for me! Husbands, you know that look too! That look when you know you are in trouble! Haman was in trouble!

Remember the word reversal has been used quite often during this study. We are about to see the great reversal in the life for many people. But we are about to see a great reversal in the life of Haman! A proud, vindictive, vile, evil man! The desire for power, the desire to be worshiped, as well as the self-worship he had of himself. This desire brought him to a point where he would do anything for power, to be worshipped.

Haman relished in the fact that he was to have people bowing at his feet as he passed by! But seeing that one man, Mordecai, would not bow, sent him in to such a rage that he is willing to have the whole Jewish nation annihilated. His desire for power and his self-adoration of himself was so great, that when the King wanted to honor a man and the King asked him what should be done for this man.

Haman thought well who else would the King want to honor but me! So again, a speculation, the Haman's desire was to be King himself. Haman, said this man you want to honor, put on the royal robes, put him on the king's horse and parade him around the city that this is the man that the King wants to honor.

But where is Haman now? Haman is bowing, no he was falling before the feet of Queen Esther, a Jew, begging for his life!

Esther 7:8-10

⁸ And the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. And the king said, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?" As the word left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face. ⁹ Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, "Hang him on that." ¹⁰ So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated.

It was custom during that time for many nations that when they ate, they reclined on a couch and some versions translate this word as a bed. Well evidently the King's little walk didn't help his anger. When he walks back into the area they had the feast, "What does he see?" Haman at the couch of Esther, hands on her, begging for his life. But that was not what King Ahasuerus observed in his mind. What he saw was Haman attacking the queen!

This was an offense and the eunuchs in charge of protecting and taking care of the queen sprang into action and had Haman's face covered and bound before as the words were coming out of the Kings mouth questioning what is going on. What is now to be done? Look at verse 9 and 10 again.

Esther 7:9-10

⁹ Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, "Hang him on that." ¹⁰ So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated.

I get a feeling here that Harbona didn't like Haman very much! Now, Harbona is one of the seven eunuchs mentioned in Chapter 1 that served the King. It was these seven eunuchs that were sent to go get Queen Vashti and tell her the King has asked her presence at the feast so he could parade her beauty in front of everyone. Harbona shares possibly another surprise on the King. Haman had gallows already prepared for which he was going to hang Mordecai on. 50 cubits high!

It doesn't look like the King hesitated. Hang him on that! Then the wrath of the king abated! Reversal!

What we have seen is the culmination of a verse we have used several times in this study.

Proverbs 16:18

¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

This has been said in past sermons and we used it in the description of tonight's teaching that pride is the essence of all sin.

You see it is pride that got Satan defeated and kicked out of heaven. Remember Satan is a created being. He was an Angel before the throne of God and just like Haman allowed pride to swell up in his soul and he desired the worship that only God is worthy of having. In his self-worship Satan felt he deserved the bowing down of every soul before him. He wanted to be God!

Proverbs 21:4

Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin.

What does a lamp do? It guides your path. Pride for the wicked will lead to a path of sin. Tim spoke to this on Sunday when he mentioned that the eye is the gateway to the heart! Tim referenced the Gospel of Matthew; I am going to reference the Gospel of Luke. In Luke Chapter 11 verses 34 to 36 Jesus says this.

Luke 11:34-36

³⁴“Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. ³⁵ Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. ³⁶ If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.”

In Psalm 10 verse 4 it says this.

Psalm 10:4

In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him, all his thoughts are, “There is no God.”

It is the prideful that says, “I am a good person, I don't need God!” But we would not know what is good if it wasn't for God! It is the prideful that says, “I don't need to be accountable to anyone!” But without God we would not be taking our next breath! He is the giver and sustainer of life! It is the prideful that says, “There is no absolute truth, I create my own right and wrong!” But God is the author of all truth, and he has given us truth through his glorious and beautiful gift of his Word! Amen! Amen!

What catches your eye? What you are focused on is where your life will be directed to! Is it all about you? Is it the desires of the flesh, the desires of eyes, and the pride of life as described in 1 John Chapter 2?

May I warn even those of us that claim Jesus Christ as Lord about pride. Pride is a self-worth that we can put on ourselves. It is elevating ourselves to the point that we can become critical, divisive, and carry a self-righteous attitude. But with that said! It is a self-righteousness for those that say there is no God! It is the beginning of time deception by Satan by which Satan deceived Adam and Eve, that you can be like God.

It is Satan's pride and the pride of billions of people that will cause them to have the same end that Haman received. There is an eternity that waits for each and every person! It is not King Ahasuerus that these people and us will be standing before. But it is the King of Kings, and Lord of Lord, King Jesus! And for those that have never repented of their sins and show that through a life of humble obedience, it is not gallows that they will be impaled on. They are cast into Hell forever.

As we have looked at the pride of Haman. There is a complete opposite to pride that was shown by both Mordecai and Esther. Humility!

As much as God hates pride, he seeks humility. Now, humility does not mean we are weak. Humility does not mean we become a door mat for everyone. Humility is directed towards God in the fact that we recognize he is deserving of our worship! He is deserving of our lives! Humility is the recognition that we receive all grace and strength through God! Humility makes sure that the Lord gets all the credit!

Jeremiah 9:23-24

Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches. But, let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord."

Whatever intelligence, whatever strength, whatever talents, whatever wealth is a gift from God. That knowledge of God should replace any boasting. It is humility that says I will follow you and obey your Word! In Psalm 51, David in his repentance says:

Psalm 51:14-17

¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. ¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. ¹⁶ For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Do we understand that in our sin we are guilty of Jesus' blood? Salvation begins with our understanding of our being guilty. In that knowledge we are brought to a point of humility and brokenness, and we now offer to God our heart which is a description of saying we are giving him our life.

We have seen the destructiveness of pride. All of Haman's intelligence, wealth, power could not save him when his sin was brought before the King. The same for everyone that stands before King Jesus! But there is still hope for those that are lost. What are we doing about it?