The Chosen Life
Studies in Esther

Session 17 – Sleepless in Susa | Esther Chapter 6

God oversees every detail of life. He determines when a "chance" encounter becomes a turning point in the life of an individual or the course of a nation.

Goals for this Session:

- Discover how circumstances turned to Mordecai's honor and Haman's disgrace.
- Consider God's providential use of ordinary events to serve His purposes.
- Pray honest prayers that humbly trust in God's presence and perfect timing.

Ice Breaker

Think of three significant life changes you've experienced. Which category would you put them under? ☐ Right on time. ☐ Just as I planned. ☐ Who would have thought?

An Unrewarded Deed and An Unwitting Servant

Esther 6:1–14
While Haman plots Mordecai's death, he unwittingly plans the ceremony to honor him.

1. In this chapter, the narrator gives us a front-row seat to watch God's plan come together. We see what neither Haman nor the king can see.

   a. What was on the king's mind that morning? How did Haman figure into his plans?

   b. What was on Haman's mind that morning? How did the king figure into his plans?

   c. What was on God's mind that morning? How did they both fit into His plan?

Good to Know

The book of the chronicles was the official record of Persian kings, with every official court transaction recorded. Extraordinary acts of service were noted and promptly rewarded to show generosity and promote loyalty. For some reason, several years slipped by without Mordecai being honored for saving the king's life.

2. Just as before, Haman rushed home to tell his wife and friends about his day. This time, however, there was no bragging or boasting. Seeking comfort, what did he get?

   a. While they were right in what they said, it makes us wonder how they meant it. What do you think? Were they advising him to abandon his plan (the one they suggested to begin with) or were *they* abandoning *him*?

   b. At any rate, they confirm what the narrator has been leading us to all along. There is no such thing as chance or blind fate. Someone is behind all these random events and reversals. According to God's Word, why can you be certain that God has a purpose and will carry out His plan for you?

      Deuteronomy 31:8

      Psalm 139:3–6

      Isaiah 55:8–11

3. Mordecai's actions right after the parade say a lot about what kind of man he was. Does his example inspire or instruct you? How so?

"Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil's reach as humility."

Jonathan Edwards

If you were in a similar position as Mordecai, with your enemy humiliated and the chance to get back at them, what harm would there be in gloating? Consider the verses below and share your thoughts.

Romans 12:17–19

Proverbs 24:29

Proverbs 27:2

1 Peter 5:5–9

Memory Verse
As you memorize this verse, make it part of your prayers every day. Ask the Holy Spirit to work it into your heart and mind.

Pride ends in humiliation, while humility brings honor.
Proverbs 29:23 NLT

Think About It . . .
Do I pursue self over service? How graciously do I take correction? How often do I admit that I'm wrong and apologize? How easily do I forgive?

Inconspicuous Providence

Esther 1–6 Overview

1. **All things work together for good**. Seemingly trivial and unrelated circumstances all fit together in the plan of God. Keep in mind that Esther and Mordecai did not know just how things would work out. When you string seemingly insignificant details together, who is in control? Use this simple exercise to review what has happened in the story so far. Fill in the blanks from memory or scan the previous chapters for help.

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1) Ahasuerus gives an elaborate _____.
2) Vashti refuses to _____.
3) The king's advisors tell him to _____.
4) Later, the king sponsors a kingdom-wide _____.
5) A Jewish man named Mordecai is raising his _____.
6) Esther is taken to the palace because she is _____.
7) Hegai befriends Esther because _____.

1) Ahasuerus chooses Esther to be _____.
2) Esther keeps her Jewish identity _____.
3) Mordecai foils a plot to kill the king, but his deed is _____.
4) Haman is promoted but Mordecai refuses to _____.

1) Isolated in the palace, Esther hears that Mordecai is _____.
2) A trusted servant, Hathach, relays messages between _____ and _____.
3) Esther breaks protocol but the king extends _____ and offers to give her _____.
4) Haman has a gallows built and plans to kill _____.
5) The king can't sleep and plans to honor _____.

2. We have seen God working quietly to bring circumstances and events together in this story. In hindsight, can you trace God's finger connecting the dots in your own life? In what way?

3. From our limited vantage point, life doesn't always make sense and it isn't always fair. Good deeds are overlooked; evil actions go unpunished. Do you tend to pray more—or less—about life situations that don't seem to make sense to you?

   Consider the verses below and explain how or why we can trust God to know exactly what He is doing, even if we don't understand.

   Proverbs 15:3

   Jeremiah 29:11

   Jeremiah 32:27

   Isaiah 41:10

   Romans 8:28

   Philippians 2:13

Gospel at a Glance: The Robe of Righteousness | Haman was certain that the king intended to honor him, and he wanted nothing less than the very best the king had to offer. Wearing another's garment was a symbol of sharing in their character and power—and Haman thought to himself, who is more deserving of esteem than me? Self-confidence blinded him from seeing the king's intention and reminds us that God's favor has nothing to do with our deserving it (Titus 3:3-5). No one is good enough and never will be, apart from repenting of their sin and putting saving faith in Jesus (Romans 10:9-10, 13). But God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV). This is good news! God offers nothing less than His very best to every undeserving sinner who comes to Jesus.

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10a NKJV).

Adoration **C**onfession **T**hankfulness **S**upplication

"Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people." Ephesians 6:18 NIV

In each session, we will take time to pray—for others and for ourselves, for our church, our communities, and our nation.

As a focus for prayer, you can use the memory verse, another scripture, or simply what the Lord has impressed on you from the chapter. No need to be profound or elaborate, just authentic.

Record your simple prayer, including each element here.

A_____

C _____

T _____

S _____

Group Prayer Requests

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