The Chosen Life
Studies in Esther

Session 18 – What Goes Around Comes Around | Esther Chapter 7

At the second banquet, Esther approaches the delicate task of confronting Haman and pleading for her life and for the lives of her people.

Goals for this Session:

- Discover how Esther confronted her enemy in the presence of the king.
- Consider the realities of reaping what we sow.
- Pray for courage to act and confidence to overcome the enemy.

Ice Breaker

When you need to have a particularly difficult conversation, what helps you most to prepare for it?

Haman's Day of Reckoning

Esther 7:1–10
For nearly a week, Esther has waited for the right time to plead her case with the king.

1. After dinner, the king again asks Esther what she requests and promises that he will grant it. This time, Esther comes right to the point.

    a. Safe to say, Xerxes was not expecting to hear his queen plead for her life. From what you read, would you say the king even recalled signing a death decree? Why or why not?

    b. What can we reasonably assume was going through Haman's mind when Esther reveals her Jewish identity and makes her impassioned plea to the king?

    c. Just like the *troublemaker and villain* who deceitfully plots evil in his heart (Proverbs 6:12) disaster suddenly overtakes Haman. How does it end for him?

Good to Know

A Persian gallows was a sharpened stake made from a tree and used to impale the victim. Much like being skewered, it was torturous and a humiliating way to die. The Romans modified it to crucifixion, which took less work for them and extended the time it took to die.

2. **The adversary and enemy!** What can we learn from the way Esther dealt with her enemy? She was resolved to obey the Lord, come what may. She was fortified by waiting on God, in fasting and prayer, to confront the enemy with courage under fire.

Haman seemed unbeatable until Esther confronted him *in the king's presence*. What weapon did she use? Truth! And so must we. The Bible warns us to stay alert—our adversary the devil prowls around looking for someone to devour.

"Stand firm against him and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are" (1 Peter 5:9 NLT).

"Prayer does not produce weak resignation to the evils we deplore. It is strenuous battle against the powers of destruction. God invigorates us to moral battle."

Eugene Peterson
Praying With the Psalms

How do we resist and stand firm against the enemy? Find your answer from the following verses and put it in your own words. Be practical and specific.

Psalm 118:5–6, 13

Psalm 119:11

Philippians 4:6–8

Ephesians 6:13–18

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.

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked.
A man reaps what he sows.
Galatians 6:7 NIV

Think About It . . .

As you ponder this verse, in what ways is it a warning? In what ways can it be comforting?

Sowing and Reaping

Esther 7:1–10

Haman thought he could do whatever he wanted with no consequences. But God does not allow the wicked to go unpunished.

1. Do the wicked prosper? Maybe in the short run, but God sees the finish line. When the enemy seems to have the upper hand, what can we be certain of? Consider the verses below and share your thoughts. (Look for instructions, promises, and warnings.)

   Proverbs 4:19

   Proverbs 5:21–23

   Proverbs 16:5

   Psalm 37:7–11

2. Waiting for justice can be painful while the Hamans in life get ahead, do harm, and pay no penalty. Like the martyrs who suffered cruelty and injustice (Revelation 6:10) we want to cry out *how long Lord?* But God keeps account and everyone—*everyone*—reaps what they sow.

   Haman got exactly what he deserved and God's providential hand set things right. Can you identify an example of injustice (in culture or in your own life) that you are actively praying to see God's hand put right? Are you willing to be part of the answer? In what way?

3. Sowing and reaping isn't just a physical law, it's a spiritual absolute. Take a few minutes to consider how we reap what we sow in the following areas of life. Share your thoughts.

   ⇥ In our relationships.

   ⇥ In our attitudes and speech.

   ⇥ In our habits and pursuits.

   ⇥ In our giving and service.

"Sow a thought,
reap an action;
sow an action,
reap a habit;
sow a habit,
reap a character;
sow a character,
reap a destiny."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

4. There is another principle of sowing and reaping that we should be aware of. We reap what someone else has sown.

   a. The prime example of this is our salvation. We reap all the benefits of forgiveness now and eternal life in Christ because of the seed that Jesus sowed. When Jesus said that if a grain of wheat dies, it will bear much fruit (John 12:24) He was speaking of Himself. You already know that Jesus died for us but go over the facts again (it'll do your heart good).

      Romans 3:10, 23

      Romans 6:23

      Romans 5:8

      Romans 10:9–10, 13

      Romans 8:1–2

      Romans 5:1–2

   b. We also reap what someone else has sown through the work and prayers of believers who have come and gone before us. The Bible is full of examples. So is history and the heritage of Christian men and women who influenced their world for God's glory and our good. Identify a few people that you directly credit with contributing in a significant way to your spiritual growth.

c. **Sow what you reap**. Plants that are harvested also produce seeds for the next sowing. The farmer sows, tends, reaps, collects the seeds—and sows again. How do we sow what we reap? Put another way, Jesus commands every believer to *pay it forward*. How do we do that?

→ God furnishes the seed. What does He promise to provide and do? (Isaiah 55:10–11)

→ How do we sow what we reap? (Matthew 28:18–20)

→ What ultimately will be the harvest? (Revelation 7:9–10, Revelation 22:1–5)

Gospel at a Glance: Triumph over Evil | Haman's downfall brings a sense of poetic justice. How ironic that the evil he intended for Mordecai was the instrument of his own destruction. Consumed with malice, he ordered the gallows seventy-five feet high, so that everyone would see what happens to the enemies of Haman. But God turned Haman's wicked plan back on him. It gives us a glimpse of Calvary. Jesus said, "The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world will be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself" (John 12:31-32 NLT).

At Calvary, the devil gloated to think of executing God's own Son. But what appeared to be a victory for Satan was the instrument of his defeat. And our salvation. "Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and He is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, interceding for us…not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love" (Romans 8:34, 38 NLT).

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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