The Chosen Life
Studies in Esther

Session 19 – Reversing the Irreversible | Esther Chapter 8

Haman's removal was a reason to celebrate, but the edict was still in effect. Esther went to the king again, pleading for mercy to spare the lives of her people.

Goals for this Session:

- Discover what Esther and Mordecai did to intervene for their people.
- Consider what God has done to outwit and outmaneuver the enemy's evil plan.
- Pray for bold faith and divine appointments to share the Good News.

Ice Breaker

When the odds are seriously stacked against you, what is your response most likely to be?
☐ It's impossible; why try? ☐ Accept and make the best of it. ☐ There's always hope, go for it.

A Providential Reversal

Esther 8:1–8
Even though Haman has been exposed and put to death, his evil plot is still in force.

1. After Haman's execution, the king's anger subsided (Esther 7:10). It appears that Xerxes was outraged because Haman put the queen in harm's way, but he had no thought for the Jews. But God, though not mentioned, never stopped thinking of them.
   a. Because he was executed as a traitor, all of Haman's estate was forfeited to the king. What did Xerxes do with it?
   b. Now that the king knew Esther was Jewish, she was free to tell him who Mordecai was in relation to her. We saw how life dramatically changed for Esther in chapter two; now it's Mordecai's turn. Ironically, Haman's downfall leads to Mordecai's advance. How so?
   c. Think of the ways that Mordecai's promotion would benefit Esther in particular, and the Jewish people in general. Note what comes to mind.

2. At this point (verses 1–2) the king could easily have put the whole episode behind him. But God's people are still in danger. From verses 3–8, explain what is similar—and different—this time as Esther goes to plead with the king.

   Her courage:

   Her demeanor:

   Her intercession:

   His response:

3. Some things never change. Does a particular situation or circumstance cause you to feel that way? Take a few minutes to identify the obstacles and what seems impossible about it.

   Esther's intercession was fueled by compassion and focused on reversing the irreversible. What about us? As you plead to our King for that insurmountable situation, what can you know for certain?

   Jeremiah 32:27

   1 John 5:14–15

   James 5:16b

   Philippians 4:6–7

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.

Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.
Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.
Ephesians 6:10–11 ESV

Think About It . . .
God foresees every trick the devil may use on you. Is your spiritual armor in place? If not, why not? Which piece do you feel most in need of today?

Good News Travels Fast

Esther 8:9–17
Mordecai's carefully worded decree in the king's name goes into circulation right away.

1. Everything that wicked Haman acquired through greed and deceit was providentially given to Mordecai, illustrating that "a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous" (Proverbs 13:22 NIV). Mordecai leveraged his own *for-such-a-time-as-this* moment to help save his people.

   a. Describe what this counter-edict would accomplish for the Jews.

   b. The wording of Mordecai's decree mirrors almost exactly the same wording Haman used (Esther 3:13) with one significant difference. What did Haman's decree command the people to do?

   What did Mordecai's new decree allow the Jews to do in response?

Good to Know

Haman's edict was issued with the king's authority and could not be rescinded.

Mordecai's decree, also issued with the king's authority, gave Jews the right to defend against any who might attack them.

Essentially, this was a way to circumvent the first edict.

2. Imagine the buzz of activity after Xerxes gave Mordecai permission to write a new law. The date set to kill the Jews was still about nine months away, (see Esther 3:13 and 8:9), but Mordecai expedited getting the new edict into circulation. What would motivate him to act with urgency? Note what comes to mind.

3. In contrast to the confusion that gripped the city of Susa after the first edict (Esther 3:13) what was the response in *every city and province* wherever the king's second decree was proclaimed?

   a. By now we're familiar with the twists and sudden reversals in the Book of Esther. In this chapter, we see the complete reversal of Mordecai's position. From sackcloth and ashes, condemned to die—but how things have changed!

      Now Mordecai emerges from the king's presence wearing royal robes and a crown. And he bears good news of deliverance for his people! The enemy no longer had the power of death over them.

      "If you have no joy in your religion, there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere."

      Billy Sunday
      1862-1935
      Former baseball pro and great American Evangelist in the early 1900's

      This is a good place to pause and think about our own experience. In what ways are we like Mordecai?

      In what way are we like the couriers in verse 14?

   b. Someone took time to share the gospel with you—are you ready to tell someone else? Jesus said, "Preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere" (Mark 16:15 TLB), and your own story is a simple way to do that. Take a few minutes now to consider what you would say. Use the prompts for help and write a brief personal testimony in your own words.

      ✓ ***My life before Christ***. Describe how you were before Christ in a sentence or two.

✓ ***My life changed.*** Tell how you came to know Christ. You can include key elements of the gospel such as:

- I realized I was a sinner (Romans 3:23, 6:23).
- I recognized Jesus died for my sin (Romans 5:8).
- I repented of my sin (Acts 3:19).
- I received Jesus as my Savior (Romans 10:9–10, 13).

Try to keep this to three or four sentences.

✓ ***My new life in Christ****.* Briefly explain how your outlook and purpose in life has changed as a result of knowing Jesus as your Savior and Lord. (Again, three or four sentences.)

Gospel at a Glance: Reversing the Irreversible | Esther went to the king on behalf of her people asking him to reverse the edict of death. Not even the king himself could revoke the law, but he issued a new decree to save the Jews from death. Our own salvation is clearly illustrated in this.

In Esther, the irreversible decree of death and the counter-measure to ensure life were both issued by the king; sealed with his signet ring. God's law of holiness emphatically declares that, "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4 ESV). Ever since the fall of Adam, the law of sin and death has been in force (Romans 6:23), and God will not revoke that law. Instead, God put another law into effect through Jesus Christ, who bore the guilt and penalty for our sins on the cross. By His death and resurrection, Jesus reversed the irreversible. "Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2 NIV). This is the good news that God sends us out into the world to share in every language, to every nation.

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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