The Chosen Life
Studies in Esther

Session 20 – Never Forget | Esther Chapter 9–10

The book of Esther closes with the deliverance and victory of her people.

Goals for this Session:

- Discover how the Jews were delivered in spite of overwhelming odds.
- Consider the realities of spiritual battle and victory.
- Pray honest prayers that remember and celebrate this chosen life in Christ.

Ice Breaker

Besides holidays or birthdays, is there a memorable event that you observe every year? Why is it special and how do you celebrate it?

Defense and Deliverance

Esther 9:1–19
Eleven months after Haman cast the lot, the day of destruction comes. But not for the Jews.

1. Haman's edict gave haters a license to kill every Jewish man, woman, and child and take their property. Mordecai's edict gave Jews the right to protect themselves and their families from the massacre their enemies had planned.

    a. Even with the second edict, the Jews still faced overwhelming odds. When the day came, what made it possible for Mordecai and the people to overcome their enemies?

    b. Why do you think the narrator emphasized three times that the Jews took no plunder? What did he want us to understand about their reasons for destroying their enemies?

Good to Know

Out of an estimated 100 million people in Xerxes' kingdom, Jews were a small minority (perhaps 15 million) scattered through 127 provinces. It is nothing short of miraculous that they were able to defend themselves and destroy their enemies in two days.

2. The Jews killed the ten sons of Haman the Agagite. Just like dad, they traced their ancestry to the Amalekites, sworn enemies of Israel all the way back to the exodus from Egypt. God cursed Amalek for brutally attacking Israel and said that He would have war with them until they were destroyed (see Exodus 17:14 and Deuteronomy 25: 17–19).

   Bible experts aren't sure why each son is listed by name, but here's an interesting side note. Each name contains the root word *self* in the Persian language. Coupled with the implied meanings of their names (for example: serving; ambition; superior; pity) it's not hard to see a little of Haman in all his sons.[*] So what does that have to do with anything? Just another reminder that seeds of pride and sin can't be ignored.

   a. Months had passed since Haman's execution and his boys were just biding time until they could strike. To leave them be wasn't safe or wise. The day after they were executed, what did Esther ask the king to do, and why?

   b. There will always be "sons of Haman" in life. By that, we mean seeds of pride and sin that can take root and grow trouble. We tolerate or ignore them at our own peril. As an old Puritan preacher named John Owen said so well, "Be killing sin or sin will be killing you."

      The Jews were engaged in holy war and God was on their side to protect and deliver them. We too are engaged in a holy war. Use the following verses to identify how and why we have victory over the enemy.

      Romans 6:10–14

      Romans 8:13

      Colossians 3:5–10

      Ephesians 6:10–17

[*] Definitions based on Herbert Lockyer, *All the Men of the Bible,* Zondervan Publishing

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.

> You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give to you.
> John 15:16 NKJV

Think About It . . .

God's providence is easy to spot in hindsight. We see His hand in choosing Esther and Mordecai, putting them in the right place at the right time. How about you? Looking forward takes eyes of faith, but what can you be absolutely certain about God's plan for you?

The Feast of Purim

Esther 9:20–10:3
The story concludes with Mordecai's summary of events and why the Feast of Purim became an annual celebration.

1. When the book of Esther was written, Purim (pronounced purr-em) was still a relatively new tradition. The writer was helping the Jews understand why they celebrated Purim.

   a. **Remember why.** The feast of Purim was instituted so that God's people would not forget when and how they were delivered instead of destroyed. A death warrant was issued against them and yet they were still alive.

   "In God's hands, intended evil becomes eventual good."
   Max Lucado

   Take some time to remember the day of your salvation. Consider what these verses say about how and why you've been delivered instead of destroyed.

   Romans 8:1–2

   Ephesians 2:4–5

   Titus 3:4–6

   b. **Why remember?** The events of the Esther story show God's unlimited power to keep His promise, even many centuries later and far away from the place it was made. The message of Purim is that God is still in control. Consider the verses below and share your thoughts.

   Romans 8:28

   2 Peter 3:8–9

   2 Corinthians 1:20

   1 John 2:25

2. For you personally, what has been one memorable insight or takeaway from reading Esther?

   a. Suppose someone asked you to explain what the story of Esther has to do with God and why it's relevant for today. What would you tell them?

Gospel at a Glance: Purim and the Story of Esther | Purim celebrates God's hidden providence in protecting His people from destruction and bringing everything to its rightful conclusion. In Esther's story, evil appears to be winning but God reverses everything. Evil is turned back on its head and ultimately shows that even what the enemy intended for evil has been used for good. **"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, pleading for us" (Romans 8:34 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

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Notes

©2017–2018 Harvest Christian Fellowship, All Rights Reserved.