

It comes back to story

Esther

Week 10
FAMILY & GROUP DISCUSSION

Irony and Peripety (Esther 6)

INTRODUCTION

Esther is unaware that the clock is ticking for more than just God's people. A separate clock is counting down for Mordecai. Haman has built a 75' gallows (pole) and plans to ask the king for permission to impale Mordecai on it first thing in the morning.

DISCUSSION

Describe a time when your good work or loyal service was overlooked like Mordecai's. Did it change your attitude toward your job or your boss?

Have you ever had to eat your words, like Haman, because you did or said something that was motivated by pride?

EXPLANATION

Describe a time when you "saw" the invisible hand of God working in your life. Would others agree that this was God or would they say that it is coincidence?

APPLICATION

Can you identify the "tiny" miracles in your life that God has providentially used to fulfill His purpose and promises to you?

How often do these circumstances involve trials and hardship? Why do you think that is?

It comes back to story

Esther



Irony and Peripety (Esther 6)

Proverbs 21:1
Psalm 2:10-12
Romans 8:35-39

Esther 4:14
Job 11:7-9
Romans 8:28
Genesis 12:3

Exodus 17:16
Galatians 3:10
Philippians 2:9-11

Week 10 Notes

& SCRIPTURE VERSES



Irony and Peripety (Esther 6)

Proverbs 21:1 *"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases."*

Esther is unaware that the clock is ticking for more than just God's people. A separate clock is counting down for Mordecai. Haman has built a 75' gallows (pole) and plans to ask the king for permission to impale Mordecai on it first thing in the morning.

Esther 6:1-3 Just another sleepless night?

We can speculate as to why King Xerxes couldn't sleep that night. But scripture gives no apparent reason for it, except for God's sovereign plan to deliver His people. Xerxes unusual choice of late night activities leads to the discovery of Mordecai's life saving loyalty some five years earlier. This is no coincidence! The fact that Mordecai was never recognized sets the king on a mission to rectify this oversight.

Esther 6:4-5 Irony

This is arguably the most ironic chapter in the bible. As Haman plans to kill Mordecai, the king now plans to honor him. And they find themselves needing each others help to accomplish their individual plans. The king needs an advisor to tell him what to do and Haman just happens to be in the courtyard. What appears to be a lucky moment for Haman proves to be a providential moment for Mordecai.

Esther 6:6 All that he ever wanted

If there was ever a picture of pride going before the fall, Haman is it! In another delicious irony, the king asks Haman what should be done for the man the king delights to honor. But the king left out a crucial piece of information about "who" was to be honored, just like Haman left out the crucial piece of information about the identity of the people who were to be destroyed in chapter 3. Haman quickly fills in the blank "thinking to himself," who would the king possibly want to honor more than me? This is his golden opportunity.

Esther 6:7-9 The man the king delights to honor

For Haman, there was no other honor left but for him to partake of the king's own power, prestige, and stature. All he wanted was to be treated like the king. Haman could see it clearly—his very own parade through the city of Susa where everyone could see the extent of his honor. This was going to be his dream day! But all of a sudden it starts to rain on his parade.

Esther 6:10-14 Haman's terrible, horrible, very very bad day

Can you imagine Haman's face when he finds out that it was Mordecai that the king intended to honor? What a crushing humiliation! To have the honors that he coveted bestowed on his prime enemy, and worst of all, he would personally be the one to proclaim Mordecai's honor. Irony upon irony. Haman's own words had come back to haunt him. The phrase that rolled so deliciously from his lips earlier must have tasted like ashes in his mouth by the end of long day shouting in front of Mordecai "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor." The tide is turning. It's no longer Mordecai mourning in sackcloth and ashes, but Haman running home, mourning with his head covered.

Peripety and the invisible hand of God

The book of Esther is characterized by a literary term called peripety, which refers to a sudden turn of events in a story that reverses the intended and expected outcome. Chapter 6 is actually the pivot point of the entire story in the book of Esther, and we see that the invisible hand of God changes the course of history to accomplish His purposes and protect His people starting with the king's sleepless night. The work of God's invisible hand is seen so clearly that even Haman's unbelieving wife and friends understanding what is happening. Haman is on his way down and Mordecai is on his way up.

God's work in insignificant events

Previously in Israel's history, God used mighty miracles to deliver His people and fulfill His promises. But here in Esther, we see God using the ordinary events of life (the king's sleepless night and the decisions of less-than-perfect people) to realize His promises to His people. Many believers' think that if they don't see a "miracle" then God isn't paying attention or that He's not involved. But our God is so great, so powerful, that He can work even without "miracles" through the ordinary events of billions of people, through the ages of time to accomplish His purposes and fulfill His promises. God works in our own life often through events that were unexpected and that seemed insignificant at the time. It's the tiny miracles of God that directs our steps.

Bow now or bow later

Haman seemed to have it all: fame, wealth, position, and honor. But in the space of 24 hours he was disgraced and dead. He was living under a curse for opposing the God of the Jews. We have all done the very same thing (Gal. 3:10). Nothing short of perfect obedience offered from a perfect heart meets God's standard, and all who fall short (which is all of us) are under a curse. We might be enjoying the good life in every way, just as Haman was. But our fall could be just as sudden as Haman's, and take us from our present comforts to face a holy God in an instant. You and I should expect nothing but death! But for those who trust in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for their sins, they will see the ultimate peripety—the ultimate reversal. Because of His death and resurrection, our destiny can be reversed from death to life against all expectation! But we must bow to the man whom God, our great king, delights to honor—His son Jesus Christ. All of our knees will bow before Him one day, whether we like it or not. Why wouldn't we bow before Him now, because of the great love He has shown us?

