

The Lord's Message: God Is at Work- God's Plans Are the Best

Date: July 23, 2023

Where: Tilghman United Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: Esther 5:1-14

I want you to think about a time when you had to confront the boss, your parent or parents, your grown child or children, a pastor, or a leader of the church. What did you do? How did it turn out? In today's message, we will see that if we pray to God and listen to Him before the confrontation, God's plans are always the best.

Let us pray.

When we ended the story of Esther last Sunday, Esther had decided to go to the king, even though she was putting her life in jeopardy. Before she goes in, **Esther 4:15-17**, she and her attendants are going to fast for three days, so that she can listen to God and His plan. She also asked Mordecai to gather all the Jews together in the Medes and Persian's capital city of Susa to fast with her.

In chapter 5 God's plan is put into place. Even though there is no mention of God, one can clearly see that it is God's plan being implemented. It starts with Esther inviting King Xerxes and Haman, the two individuals that are responsible for the edict to annihilate the Jews, to a banquet. We have learned that King Xerxes loves to have parties. A banquet in his honor would be the perfect occasion for Esther to tell him that she is a Jew. If his edict is conducted, she will be killed. Haman is so full of pride that he thinks the banquet is being held in his honor. Look at **Esther 5: 10b-12**. Esther has two banquets for the king and Haman.

You would have thought that Haman would be on cloud nine. King Xerxes evaluated him above all the nobles and officials. He has vast wealth. He has many sons. He got his revenge on not only Mordecai, but all the Jews. He is invited by the queen to a banquet where only he and the king will be attending. What more could Haman want? In **Esther 5:13**, Haman says that he is unhappy because he sees Mordecai, the Jew, sitting at the king's gate.

His wife suggests that he just have Mordecai killed in the most excruciating way for everyone to see. (**Esther 5:14**) God is at work.

If you remember, Queen Esther had planned for two banquets for King Xerxes and Haman. Why two? The reason becomes clear, and we see God's plan start to unfold. In **Esther 6:1**, the king cannot sleep. The king orders that the book of the chronicles be brought in. The book of the chronicles is just the Books of Chronicles 1 and 2 in the Bible. The book contains all the exploits of the kings of the Medes and Persians. If we recall from Esther chapter 2, Mordecai had stopped a plot to assassinate the king. In verse 2, the king happens to open the book to this recording. This is not a coincidence. This is a "Godincidence." In verse 3, the king discovers that he has not properly honored or recognized Mordecai for saving his life. Now you cannot make this stuff up. As the king is pondering this, Haman shows up in the court. In verse 6, the king asked Haman what should be done for the man who the king delights to honor? Of course, Haman is thinking that the king is going to honor him. He says in verse 7-9. You can see Haman get all puffed up until the king says that is an excellent idea, "I want you to do this for Mordecai, the Jew that sits at the king's gate. Talk about deflated ego.

Look at verse 11, Haman is leading Mordecai around on horseback and calling out "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!" Haman is most likely muttering under his breath the whole time. He goes home and he is grief stricken. He tells his wife and friends all that has happened to him. Before this, the wife and friends had told him to build the gallows on which to impale Mordecai. Look at what they are saying in verse 13b. Do not oppose Mordecai, you will not win. While they are discussing this, the king's eunuchs show up to escort Haman to Queen Esther's banquet. Haman might be thinking to himself, well at least I will be the honored guest at the queen's banquet.

Let us go on to **Esther 7:1-2**. When we go to a banquet, it usually lasts 1 to 2 hours. King Xerxes held a banquet that lasted 7 days. We do not know how long Queen Esther's first banquet lasted. We are told here in verse 1 that the second banquet is on the second day. At this time, one would think that the king and Haman were very intoxicated. The king drunkenly says, "Queen Esther, I will give you anything you want, even half of my kingdom. What is your request?"

Queen Esther asks King Xerxes in verses 3-4 to spare her life and her people's lives. The king questions who is responsible for taking her life and her people's lives. Esther responds in verse 6 it is Haman. This is God at work. Queen Esther is following God's plan. She invited both the king and Haman to a banquet for God's plan to be conducted.

The king storms out of the room and goes into the garden to contemplate that which Esther has told him. Haman knows that his goose is cooked. Queen Esther is lying on the couch. Haman goes to her asking her for mercy and in the process trips and falls on the queen. You cannot make this up.

It is at this very moment that King Xerxes comes back into the room. Look at verse 8. Now there are other attendants of the king and queen in the room watching all of this unfold. One of those, Harbona, has a suggestion for the king to deal with Haman (verse 9). Haman is impaled on the 75 ft pole that he had set up for Mordecai.

Queen Esther took the time to fast and pray to God seeking His wisdom. She was willing to put her life on the line for God's people. With the encouragement of Mordecai, she was seeing that the purpose for God to make her queen over the Medes and Persians was to save the Jewish people. She followed God's plan and saved herself and the Jewish people.

How many times, when we are faced with difficult situations, do we turn to God and seek His wisdom? Daily, we should turn to the Lord seeking His help and follow His plan. God is at work. God's plans are the best! Amen.