

Sadness Turned to Gladness

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[0 : 0 0] Take your Bibles, if you would, and go with me to Esther chapter 9. Esther chapter 9. It is a thrill to be in the Word of God, to know what it has to say. We have been in a story, and we're almost finished with this story.

And in the story, if you recall, there was a new queen set up, and her name would be Esther. No one knew that she was a Jew. And in the story, there was this guy named Haman.

And Haman was like number two in the kingdom. And he loved his power, and he loved who he was. And everybody respected him but Mordecai the Jew.

And Mordecai the Jew didn't show him the respect he wanted, and he wanted to get rid of Mordecai. To do that, he decided to destroy an entire nation. And so in this whole book, we have lived under the cloud of death.

At any moment, all of the Jews are going to be destroyed. He has got a date set by the king. It is an accepted fact that they will be killed. All of their goods will be stolen from them.

[1 : 0 3] Of course, they'll be dead. It won't matter much. But their children will be dead. Their wives will be dead. Their pregnant ladies will be dead. It is going to be a horrible massacre. But Esther, in the middle of that time, goes in and speaks to the king and gets his favor.

And when she gets his favor, which we've gone through quite a bit of that, he allows them to make another law. Basically, that law becomes you can defend yourselves on that day.

When they come against you, you do not have to let them kill you. You can rise up and fight. And so in Esther chapter 9, finally, the sadness will become gladness.

Finally, we will move from the threat of death to the joy of life. Finally, we will experience complete and true victory in our lives. So if you would, go with me to Esther chapter 9 and verse 2.

This is a story of self-defense. In Esther chapter 9 and verse 2, the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the providence of the king of King Hazarus to lay hold on such as sought their hurt.

[2 : 1 3] Underline, they would lay hold on such as sought their heart. No man could withstand them for the fear of them fell upon all people. They were simply going to defend themselves from those that wanted to hurt them.

This story is not the story of how God allowed his people to become a vindictive people and a murderous people and go against all them. It is a story of them standing for their lives, self-defense.

Look at Esther chapter 9 and verse 16. The Bible says, the other Jews that were in the king's province gathered themselves together, underline, and stood for their lives. They stood for their lives.

And they had wrestled enemies, and underline, slew of their foes 75,000. But they didn't take anything that belonged to them. They simply got to defend themselves.

They gathered together to defend themselves. The first law had said, oh, we're going to lose our life. The second law said, you can defend yourself. Look at Esther chapter 9 and verse 1.

[3 : 17] In the 12th month, the month of Adar, on the 13th day, the same, when the king's command and his decree drew near to be put into execution, in the hope that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them.

The enemies hoped to have power over them. It was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had ruled over them that hated them. So it's a story of self-defense.

And in this day, in Esther chapter 9, a couple of days' time, all those who rose up against them, all those who tried to kill them, will be defeated.

I need you to understand, as you work your way through this passage of Scripture, there's always an application. When you look at the Bible in the Old Testament, you can always find a New Testament application.

When you look at the Bible in the Old Testament, you can find something that works in our life. And I'd just like to tell you there's a law against you. There's a law that says every human being will die.

[4 : 14] And every human being will go to hell. The Bible says, for the wages of sin is death. Romans chapter 6 and verse 23, God said, you sinned and you'll die.

And everybody's going to die. You don't die for your daddy's sins. You don't die for your mother's sins. You die for your own sins. But in the same way, in the book of Esther, he made a law above the law.

He made a way out by another law. You see, in the Old Testament, they're going to kill you. But then he says in the book of Esther, I'll give you another law that says you can protect yourself.

The law says the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life. So there was a law. There is a law. And it's still in effect. And it rules all across the entire world that every human being will one day physically die and go to an eternal hell.

They will be cast into a lake of fire. There will be burning and gnashing of teeth. And your mother may go there. Your aunt may go there. The people in foreign countries you never heard of may go there.

[5 : 17] But there's this law that says the wages of sin is death. This morning, are you under the old wage? If you are, that ought to cause sadness in your heart.

And no matter how much you try to drown it out, no matter how much you try to act like it's not true, in your heart of hearts, you know you've sinned against the Holy God. And you know that sin separates you from God. And you know that you are in trouble.

You feel it when you're alone. You feel it when you hear preaching. The fact is you don't really like Bible preaching because it seems to remind you that you are going to die and go to hell.

But I need you to know that just like he allowed those Jews to defend themselves, he has a law above that law. The law is the wages of sin is death.

But the gift of God is everlasting life, eternal life. You can live just like those Jews that day. On that day when they were all prepared to die.

[6 : 16] On that day where week after week and month after month they'd all known, time's drawing short. Any day now we're going to die. Until Esther stepped in, they had no hope.

And until Jesus stepped in, you had no hope. But he died for you. And on the cross of Calvary, he took your sin debt. And you won't go to heaven because you're good. And you won't go to heaven because you became a Baptist.

And you won't go to heaven because you joined a church. And you won't go to heaven because you took the Lord's Supper. You went to Mass. You won't go to heaven because you were a good neighbor. You'll go to heaven because a bigger law took over. And that is that Jesus died for you.

Go with me if you would to Esther chapter 9 and verse 2. The story is really about a secret deliverer. We have watched God behind the scenes in all this story.

You've come through the book of Esther. You know that the book of Esther, God's word, God's name is not even mentioned. It's the only book in the Bible you read from the beginning verse to the last verse that God's not mentioned.

[7 : 17] And he may not be seen, but he is there. And he is active and he has been working and he's been orchestrating events to save his people. In Esther chapter 9 and verse 2, something begins to happen to their enemies.

In Esther 9 and 2, the Bible said, The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king to lay hold on such it would do them hurt. But I need you to underline this. The fear of them fell upon all people.

All of a sudden, all across the nation. And by the way, the Jews are outnumbered. There's no way they couldn't have destroyed the Jews. There's no way the Jews should have been allowed to live. There's enough people to take them out.

Haman's got his crowd. They could have taken them out. But God did something. He put a spirit of fear in them. They all of a sudden began to realize, I mean, we're in trouble.

We're in trouble. And they began to realize that they couldn't stand. You see, God was at work. And God was showing them that he was going to work. Look at Deuteronomy. They had that promise in Deuteronomy chapter 2 and verse 25.

[8 : 23] Just write that in the margin of your Bible. The Bible says, And I will begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations. You know what God did? God. God. He's not mentioned.

He's not seen. But he put his fear into their lives. And they began to fear Mordecai. They had no reason to fear him. They outnumbered him. They had no reason to fear him.

They could have defeated him. But God placed a fear in them. Esther chapter 9 verse 3. The last part of the verse. The fear of Mordecai fell upon them. Chapter 9 verse 4.

Mordecai was great. And his fame was out all the province. And he waxed greater and greater. God was at work in this book. Just like he's at work in your life right now.

Whether you recognize it or not. You need to understand something. That God of heaven loves you. And he has brought you to a place today where you can hear the good news. And the good news is that you don't have to go to hell.

[9 : 20] And the good news is that you don't have to suffer for your sins. And the good news is that the wages of sin don't have to be true for you. Jesus died for you. And you can know that.

He loves you. And he wants you to enjoy victory. Just like he did with his people. But I need you to understand something. Those Jewish people those days had to believe what was written.

And they had to act on it. And you must believe what is written. And what is written is this. You are a sinner. You have failed a holy God. You do deserve to go to hell when you die.

But Jesus died for you. Jesus was buried. And he rose again. And that's how you'll get saved. The story is a story of self-denial. Look if you would at Esther chapter 9.

Esther chapter 9 and verse 10. Esther chapter 9 and verse 10. The ten sons of Haman were killed. They slew them. But on their spoil they laid not their hands.

[10 : 16] Now here's the original story from the very beginning of the book of Esther. Here's been Mordecai's or Haman's plan. Haman's plan has been to pay the king big money and to get rich by killing these Jews.

God's people had prospered. God's people because they were God's people. They didn't waste their money. They didn't have more than one wife. They weren't given to drunken orgies. They were given to hard work and saving their money.

And so all of a sudden these prosperous Jews are going to die. And that's going to be the plan. And Haman's going to kill them. He's going to take the money. He's going to pay the king a bunch. And he's going to have it.

That's not what the Jews are going to do. You see it's a story of self-defense. It's not a story of taking. It's a story of just protecting their lives. And so they denied themselves. Look in chapter 9 and verse 10.

Underline this. They didn't take the stuff. On the spoil laid they not their hand. They killed over 76,000 people total. They could have taken all of their goods.

[11 : 16] They could have taken their money. They could have taken all their animals. They could have taken it. But they did not do that. Look at Esther chapter 9 and verse 15. There was an opportunity to get rich. Even among those people in the capital.

But they don't do it. Chapter 9 and verse 15. But on the prey they laid not their hand. Underline it. Last phrase. They did not take the other people's stuff. See they weren't. This wasn't a war.

Haman was attacking to get rich. And kill somebody he didn't like. Mordecai and his people are just defending themselves. Don't kill us. Don't kill us. We don't want your stuff. We just want to be left alone.

The Jews weren't trying to get rich. Esther chapter 9 and verse 16. They laid not their hands on the prey. This is a story of self-defense not taking advantage.

The Jews aren't out to get rich. The Jews aren't killing people to get rich. I need to say something to you right here about self-denial. Every born-again believer.

[12 : 15] Every born-again believer ought to know that we're not in serving Jesus to make money or to prosper. And as much as that may go against the grain and as much as everybody in the world may hate that very thought, I want you to know that you don't serve God so you can get rich.

I need you to know you don't serve God so you can get rich. You serve God because God is good. You serve God because he saves you. You don't serve God so you can make money. We are people who take up our cross to follow Jesus.

That's what the Bible teaches. There's always a desire to get ahead. There's always a desire to take advantage of every opportunity. But as born-again believers, we do not live to get.

As born-again believers, we don't live to say, God bless us. You didn't tithe this morning, Lord willing. I hope you didn't. You didn't tithe. And you've never been taught that. John's never said one time anything like that in an offering devotional.

We didn't give so we get rich. You didn't give so God would pour out blessings on you. He will pour out blessings, but we don't do it for that. And if he didn't pour out blessings, we'd still serve him. And many of his blessings won't be a dollar for a dollar.

[13 : 25] Many of his blessings will be his other things he does. We don't live to get but to give. We are not for ourselves. As born-again believers, when you decide to follow Jesus, you're not in this for you.

You're in this for him. You're not in this to build your kingdom but to build his kingdom. We live in self-denial. Next, go with me if you would to Esther chapter 9 and verse 5.

It's a story of self-destruction. See, the Jews only will defend themselves. You would think that they would have backed off knowing the law, but they didn't. You see, all those people that had wanted to kill the Jews, they knew what the rules were.

They knew they'd had permission. Now they know they don't have permission. They knew that they could kill them. They had a written warrant for the destruction of the Jewish people. But now they know the Jews have another thing.

But they're going to end up getting killed. Because there's just something about holding on to sin and not acknowledging what's right and wrong. There's just something in our lives that says, I'd rather do what I want than what God wants.

[14 : 31] I'd rather live for me than I would to live for God. Look at Esther chapter 9 and verse 5. The Jews smote all their enemies. With a stroke of the sword. And slaughter.

And destruction. And did what they would unto those that hated them. And in the palace they killed, verse 6. Five hundred men. Apparently at this very same time, Haman, you know, he's already been killed.

And he has ten sons living. And you would expect. You say, can I just be honest with you? God can make it so clear you're going to lose. But you won't accept it.

God can make it so clear that you need to submit yourself and obey. But you won't accept it. God can make it so clear that you've sinned against him. And you need to get right. But you won't accept that.

That's what we do with sin. We hold on to sin. And in this story right here. In this story right here. They know that there's a law written for them not to fight. They know they should have given up.

[15 : 28] They should have just retreated. Nobody had to die that day. The other law was published. And this law was published. By the way, you don't have to go to hell. And your friends and family don't have to go to hell.

Though the Bible says you will. Jesus died so you wouldn't have to. But we want to hold on to who we were. We want to hold on to what we want. We want to hold on to our sins.

Look at chapter 9 and verse 10. The 10 sons. They ended up slaying them. But they didn't even take their stuff. They didn't take their stuff. They were just defending themselves.

Many were dying. Because of their hate filled. Angry hearts. Hate filled. Angry hearts. Look at Esther chapter 9 and verse 12. And the Jews have slain and destroyed 500 men.

And the 10 sons. You know what happened, don't you? Can you not understand this? Listen to me. If you understood that everybody was going to die and go to hell. And you knew there was a solution in Jesus.

[16 : 27] Wouldn't you take it? If the Bible says the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God's eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Wouldn't you step forward and say, I don't want to die.

I don't want my family to die. I want my family to come to Jesus. Wouldn't you say that? I would hope you would. I would hope that today you would trust Christ as your Savior. On that day in the kingdom, they all knew.

If you rise against the Jews, you're going to die. But here's what ends up happening. You prefer your sin over what's right. You're probably saying something like, I plan on getting really right with God one day.

When I get old, when I get old and I've had all the fun I could have. When I get old and I can't make more money. When I get old and life's not about me. But I'm going to get right with God.

Fact is, I might even do it next year. But this year, I'm so enjoying my sin. And that's why they died that day. Every one of them could have lived.

[17 : 28] You hear that? The Jews didn't go out and attack. The Jews just stood ready on the day when they came. They all got together. Can't you see all these Jews huddled in a circle? Swords and spears and arrows ready.

And then these people came and said, we're here to kill you. And they said, you're not doing it. Death is here to take you to hell. But Jesus said, it's only happening if you won't trust what he did on the cross of Calvary.

300 more were so stubborn that they had to die too. In Esther chapter 9 and verse 15, they slew 300 more men. You would think when Haman died that everybody would say, whoa, whoa.

Back it up. Back it up. Back it up. I'm sorry. Please forgive me. I'm not going to hurt the Jews. I want to do right. But it's like you like your sin so much, no matter what happens, you won't give it up.

You're here and you're not saved. You're here and your sins haven't been forgiven. You're here and you're thinking to yourself, I am a good guy. I've done what's right. I'm a good neighbor, but you won't trust.

[18 : 32] Other people died all over the country. In Esther chapter 9 and verse 16, they gathered themselves together. They stood for their lives and 75,000 men ended up dying. In the middle of the story, we found a shouting declaration.

Look at Esther chapter 9 and verse 13. Haman couldn't succeed and now the 10 sons can't succeed. It says in Esther 9, 13, the last part, let Haman's 10 sons be hanged upon the gallows.

Can I remind you that these gallows are like 75 feet tall? Can I remind you that all over the city, everybody going by would have been like, wow, that's where they hung Haman. That's where the 10 sons were.

Isn't that where they were going to hang Mordecai? But man, the tables have turned. The tide has changed. Something's different going on. It was like, wake up. But they didn't wake up.

This was a show of power and how the enemy has been defeated. It's a warning to any that would continue to fight. Haman's down. Now his 10 boys are down.

[19 : 38] Everyone could see and spread the news. Haman's cause has failed and all associated with it are cursed. Can I just tell you that the cross and the empty tomb are a shouting declaration.

They say, there's an enemy who would take you to hell. There's an enemy that would see you burn in hell forever. He rises against Christ. He brings against you death.

He brings against you destruction. He wants you dead. But God, loving us, came to earth as a human, died on that cross, shed his blood, was taken down on that cross, was buried.

And even the religious people said, they'll try to make like he arose. They put an army, a Roman army guard. But Jesus arose.

And he proved that he had power over death. This morning, he has power over death in the grave. Jesus died, but he didn't stay dead.

[20 : 47] All of us can see an empty tomb. My favorite part of a whole trip to Israel was the empty tomb. I had a blast at the empty tomb. There was a Christian guy there named Bob telling a story.

And he loved Jesus. And it was so obvious. And I just sat there the whole time like, we could just sit here the rest of the time. I could just stay here the whole week. It don't matter. Listen, this guy talk about how Jesus died and was buried.

It's a shouting declaration. Satan has lost. Death has lost. Life has won. You can be saved. That's what's going on in Esther chapter 9.

When those 10 guys were hanging there on the gallows, everybody ought to have looked up there and said, the way of sin doesn't work. The way of sin brings death.

The way of sin is horrible and I no longer want it. But that's not what they do. That's not what you're doing. You can walk right by Haman's 10 guys hanging on the gallows.

[21 : 42] And you think to yourself, well, that's their problem. That's not my problem. And you don't realize that God's given you a warning that you can be saved. I have a question for you. Do you have victory over sin in the grave?

Now, you listen to this. And I know I'm one of the oldest people in the world, but you listen to this. Your day of dying is fast approaching. And some of you will die long before you get my age. Huh?

You don't want to admit that. You want to face that. You don't want to see that. But people at your age die all the time. If you don't know Jesus, look up and see the 10 sons of Haman hanging on those gallows.

Look up and see Jesus down on a cross for you. Quit playing with your eternity. Quit acting like I got time. Quit acting like it doesn't matter. And realize you do have to make a decision.

By the way, you are making a decision. Every week you put it off. Every week you put it off, you're making a decision. Don't do that. Esther chapter 9 and verse 17, we see a celebration declared.

[22 : 44] What had been a terrible day, all of a sudden became a day of rejoicing. Esther 9, 17, on the 13th day and the 14th day, they rested.

If you got your Bible open, underline rested. Underline rested. Do you understand what happened? Do you understand what happened? They had been waiting to die.

I know most of you have no idea what that feels like. But I had about 24 hours where I felt like that. When I got kidney cancer. And I went in and the doctor said, you're going to live, but you're going to lose your kidney.

And this is what's going on with you. I'm an intelligent person. So I went to the internet. And on the internet, it was real clear. They often give you hope, but you're probably dead.

And then they started, I read everything about it. And then people at the church were even coming up to me and said, oh, I had a friend that had that. And they lived. I had a friend and he died. I'm like, both of y'all just keep quiet. I'll be better.

[23 : 45] And so, I mean, that first day, I can remember just being in shock. I just thought to myself, it's over. This game has run. It's timeout. My course is over.

I'm about to die. I mean, here I am trying to always be joyful in the Lord and excited. I can remember that next day thinking to myself, well, I got to figure out how to take care of Betty. Got to figure out how to take care of my family.

Got to figure out what I'm going to do about everything. I called Betty in. I said, sit down. We need to talk. Here's how to do this. Here's how to do that. Let me teach you how to do all this because I'm out of here. And I'll just be honest with you.

You say, how did it feel? Horrible. Scary. Pressure. Dark. You say, don't you know you'll go to heaven when you die? Yeah. It's a getting there I'm not too sure about.

But here's the deal. Here's the deal. They've been living with that. They've been living with that. They've been told they're going to die. They've been told they were going to get to defend themselves. But how's that going to go?

[24 : 44] What if they come and get you with a half a million soldiers, not 75,000 soldiers? And they turned it into a day of rest. And look at it. And they made it a day of feasting and gladness.

Whoa! Glory to God. We were going to die. Let's have a party. We're not dying. We're going to make it through. And on the 13th, verse 18, 13, 14, and 15th day, they rested and they feasted.

And it was a glad day. In verse 19, it was such a glad day they had Christmas. Look at your Bible, verse 19. A day of gladness and feasting. Good day. And they sent portions to one another.

I mean, they're like, we're still here. I got a little extra. You don't have some. I'm sending you some. You don't have it. I'm sending you. Hey, let me send you a small little gift to tell you. Woo! Woo!

We're going to live. We're going to live. It's good stuff. They were able to rest from all the pressure of impending death.

[25 : 45] They were in celebration of their salvation from their enemies. Chapter 9, verse 22, they ate. They sent gifts and they helped the poor. Look at verse 22. They rested.

As the days were in the Jews, rested. They turned from sorrow to joy, mourning to good day. And they made them days of feasting and joy and sending portions.

One another. And gifts to the poor. That's what happens when you truly understand salvation. That's what happens when you truly understand salvation. You don't have to worry.

You don't have to lay down at night and wonder if I don't wake up, what happens to me? You don't have to wonder about if I get sick, what happens to me? You don't have to wonder about that. You can know for a fact that if you die, you'll be in the presence of God.

It'll be a blessing for your family to know that. It's a time to give thanks. You were going to die, but you will now live. You were under the sentence of death, but you now have life.

[26 : 42] And they were to never forget that. Look at Esther chapter 9 and verse 27. They were to keep these two days every year. It was a memorial. And here's the truth.

We should never forget what God's done in our lives. I got saved in 1962. So 62 plus 50 is like 12, right? I mean, I've been saved a long time.

And it's easy to kind of get used to being saved. It's easy to kind of get used to the fact that you'll go to heaven when you die. But here's what the Bible says. You need to be celebrating. You need to know for a fact you're going to go to heaven when you die.

You need to be going, glory to God, I'm going to go to heaven when I die. Glory to God, I'm ready to meet God. Are you able to do that? Can you with confidence say, when I die and whatever happens after that, I'm all right.

The Lord has taken care of me. Now I want to give you a spiritual discussion before we close if I could. You don't have to look these verses up. But in John 3, 18, you, just like the Jews, were marked to die.

[27 : 47] Everybody in the room needs to understand that. The Bible says in John chapter 3 and verse 18, if you underline that later in your Bible, it says this. It says, he that believed not is condemned already.

Someone told you that when you get to heaven, they're going to weigh your good stuff and your bad stuff. And as long as your good stuff outweighs your bad stuff, you're going to get to go to heaven. Totally not in the Bible. Totally not true.

Totally a lie made up by religious people and good moral people. Here's what the Bible says. You're already marked to die. What you don't realize is there's already a UPS sticker on you that says, origin here, final destiny, hell, lake of fire.

Already marked. Already marked. You're already in the system. They send out the notes and say you want to keep up with where you are. You're 10 years closer to dying than you were 10 years ago. You're getting closer to dying.

You're almost at the factory. Now hospice is called in or whatever. And you are on the verge of dying and going to hell. You need to wake up and realize that. You need to wake up and realize that you are condemned already.

[28 : 54] There's no nice way of putting this. Just because you're a Baptist, just because you're a good person, you cannot go to heaven. There's a law written against you, just like it was against the Jews.

In Ezekiel chapter 18 and verse 4, the Bible says the last part, the soul that sins shall die. But you need to know, just like there was a law written against those Jews in the book of Esther and God allowed there to be another law written that was more powerful, there's another law written for all of us.

In Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 2, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. You know what Jesus did? He sat down and said they deserve to go to hell.

They deserve to pay for their sins. But I'll write a plan. And in my plan, I'll take their sin. And in my plan, I'll take their suffering. And in my plan, I'll give their new life. And he wrote this plan.

And then he said, I just won't write a plan. I'll finish the plan. And Jesus died on the cross and paid your sin debt. Who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despised him in shame, and he sat down because he was finished.

[30 : 01] You can be saved. Your day of mourning can be turned to joy. For a believer, death has lost its sting because we have eternal life.

Do you know? Do you know? Are you sure what's going to happen with you? When the dreaded words are stated, you can take him home now.

When the dreaded words are stated, she has cancer. When the dreaded words are stated, we don't have much hope. A born-again believer can have hope.

But if you're not born again, you're still under the curse. The wages of sin is death. But, but the gift of God is eternal life.

Would you trust him today? Would you be saved? Would you quit messing around? Would you quit being religious? Would you quit being Baptist? Glory to God, quit it. Get saved.

[31 : 05] Know that your sins are forgiven. Know that you're going to heaven when you die. May it happen to be, go the sin or not? No. I'm not chosen to burn theá. Let's see.

lim lim, tea-jalm, you can do those good things. Put to be free. For myidentified simple morning, why _____ you verloren. Let's just crisis. I don't know. Let's just ■, like, a glimpse of nature at the court and do what you say.

Once we're here to go, they're like, let's go to write here. Go, you take it back. If you're going to listen for what happens, you can do it.