

We Don't Deserve to be Here

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[0 : 00] Please turn back to Esther 8. What a good challenge to trust Jesus with your life. I pray that everyone in here is doing that, not just with eternity, but every part of your life. I want to give a little bit of review here because it's been a week since we were in Esther.

Also, I could tell when I came up earlier, I was going a little faster into the story than some of you may be ready for. Because it's been an entire week since we were here. Even though I've been in it some this weekend, some of you might have been a few days.

Or maybe you're a guest here with us today. I just want to remind you about this incredible story that we find here in the Bible of Esther. So, we started off in chapter 1 when we started in February.

Vashti was the queen there. And the king, Xerxes, that's what I'm going to call him because his other name is a lot harder to say. All right? So, I hope that's okay with you. The king there decided that he wanted his wife to come and to dance before him and his friends.

And Vashti said, it ain't going to happen. All right? And so, he said, all right, we'll just have to replace you. I can do that. I'm the king. So, he puts on a beauty pageant in chapter number 2. And it's there that Esther comes and Esther wins.

[1 : 03] And at the end of that chapter, her cousin who was raising her, Mordecai, was raising Esther. Mordecai, he overhears this conspiracy theory. It's not on YouTube. There's no aliens involved, okay?

But it's just a conspiracy theory that they're going to overthrow the king. And so, God put Mordecai in that position to hear about it. And so, he shares that with the king. And that gains favor with him.

Chapter number 3, a guy named Haman is in the story. And Haman is in a place of position. And people have to bow down to him when they enter through the gates he's at. People do that.

Except the man named Mordecai, who was Jewish, says, I'm not going to bow to you. I only bow my allegiances to the God of heaven. And so, he wouldn't bow. And Haman, being full of pride, which will lead to his destruction, he gets mad about it.

And so, things escalate quickly. He not only wants to kill Mordecai, he wants to kill all of Mordecai's people. He sets out to kill all the Jewish people there.

[1 : 59] Chapter number 4, Mordecai tells Esther about the plot. Mordecai knows that Esther is now in the palace there in Shushan with the king. She's now the queen. And Mordecai tells her, there's this man out to get all of us.

And don't think that you're going to be safe there. They're going to come and get all of us and all of the land. And there's a decree that's gone out about it. And that's how the king would do it. The king would allow Mordecai at the time, or Haman at the time, to write a decree.

And he would take his signet ring of the king and he would stamp it. So, Haman and then later Mordecai in the story, they're kind of like prime ministers. So, the king, he enjoyed all the nice things about being a king.

But day-to-day stuff, he kind of let, to the prime minister, he kind of let Haman take care of it. So, he wrote a decree, an edict. I'm going to refer to it as the decree of death. Because when we read it today and we see about it, it goes out to all the land.

It gets translated in every language. Everybody there hears about it. It says, on this certain day that was set, about 10 months out, on this day when it comes, it is this, it can be, we're going to purge all the Jewish people.

[3 : 03] There's going to be a complete destruction of them. You have all the power needed just to take their land from them and to destroy them. And to say that King Xerxes, he was not a micromanager at all.

He was kind of, he just kind of let people do their thing, it looks like here, right? He said, you write that decree. I'm a little busy. Why don't you just write it? And he let him write it and he sends it out across the land. So, Esther here prepares a banquet.

And she invites the king to come to her banquet. He says, she comes before him. And with very risked her life to do so, she goes before the king. She asks everybody to fast for three days. And she goes before the king.

And the king says, what do you want? And she said, I just want you to come to a banquet that I've prepared for you. So, he's going to go to the banquet. And then he's like, Haman, you get to come as well. Haman's feeling pretty good about himself because he's getting to go to the big party of the day where everybody is at.

And so, he goes there with them. And so, Esther prepares this banquet. And after the first banquet, she asks for another banquet. At the end of it, instead of asking for a request, she said, if I could just have something, I would like for you to come back again.

[4 : 08] Then we get to chapter number six. And the king, he wants to honor Mordecai. What happens at the night, he goes to bed and he can't sleep. And Netflix isn't working.

So, he's just laying there and he's bored. And so, he calls for somebody to come in and read a story to him. It doesn't sound like a very manly, kingly thing to do, huh? You come read me a story here. Rock me to sleep.

And so, they get somebody. That's their job to chronicle what's going on. And when they write the story, he remembers that a guy had told about that conspiracy to kill him. And he said, what did we do for that guy?

Did we honor him? So, the next day, Haman's out in the hallways there. And they said, come in here, Haman. I got this guy that I really want to honor. I just think a lot about him. He's just a really good guy.

Let's do something nice for him. What would you like to do? Haman, thinking it's about him, says, well, what I would do if I was you, I'd go into your closet. I would get your best clothes. I would put it on the guy. I'd give him a nice horse.

[5 : 02] I'd ride him through town. I'd say, this guy is the man. Everything, just listen to him and do that. And the king says, great idea. Let's get Mordecai and we'll do it. And you'll get to take him around on the horse.

And we begin to see things begin to change here. Then we know that at the banquet, Esther tells her husband, she says, there's somebody coming to trying to kill me and my people.

She reveals that she's Jewish. And she points and he says, that's the guy right there. He is the man that is trying to kill us. And so, the king goes out into his garden. He's walking around. And he's just like, what am I going to do about this?

Well, Haman, not thinking things through, he has a couple of choices. He could run off. And everybody's like, well, of course he's guilty. He's up to something, right? He could go bother the king. But he didn't want to be seen in front of the king too soon because the king's still mad.

So, he makes the third choice, which ends up being the worst choice. He goes into the room of Esther and he throws himself down on the couch. And he's begging for his life. And the king comes in and he says, what in the world are you doing, buddy?

[6 : 01] You're certainly going to die. You just made this decision for me so much easier, all right? And so, he is then hung upon the gallows, which he had prepared to kill Mordecai. I know some of you have heard it week after week, but it's still a great story, isn't it?

Week after week. And then that's where we get to. And so, you say, well, shouldn't we be done now? Isn't it time for us to move over to the book of Job, which is our next one in the series? I mean, Haman is gone, so the threat should be over.

Well, the problem is, is that evil decree, that edict is still out there and it's still active. When the time comes, then it still can be put into place. Because even though Haman has died, the letter that was sent out is still out there among the people here.

And we're going to see in this story how God can move an irrevocable decree of death and how he can change it. I learned a new word, which is good, you know? I'm from a small town in Kentucky.

I should learn more words, right? And so, this week I learned the word eucatastrophe. It's a great word. And it means not catastrophe, but it's a good catastrophe. It's when evil fails and in righteousness suddenly triumph.

[7 : 04] Don't you love that? In older movies, especially in westerns, we had more of that, right? At the end of it, you always knew that the good guy was going to win. That's what I like. But now movies end and they're just dark and they give you no, nothing's resolved at the end, right?

But it used to have a good ending to it. We most certainly have this eucatastrophe take place. And we're seeing it here in chapter number eight. As we go through chapter, we're looking at three things. First, we're going to see that the tables turn.

Haman went from a place of power. Now Mordecai is going to be in a place of power. God's people are going to be protected. Second, we're going to see by Esther a desperate plea for deliverance and how it's answered. She just lays it all out on the line for her people.

She risks her entire life for her people. We see a love that she has that ought to be found in all of us for one another, for our families, for the nations, for everyone. And then pervasive sorrow and fear will turn into joy and hope.

I hope it not only happens in this story, but I hope it happens in your life in here today. If you came in here today and you need the tables to turn, you need to know Jesus Christ, or maybe you came in here as a believer and you're living as if you live under the decree of death.

[8 : 09] You're living with sorrow and depression. I want to remind you of a truth that's even more as real as it is in the life of Esther. All right, let's pick up here in chapter number eight, verses one and two. On that day did the king of Xerxes give the house of Haman the Jew's enemy unto Esther the queen, and Mordecai came before the king.

For Esther had told what he was unto her, he said, we're cousins. And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and he gave it to Mordecai. And Esther sent Mordecai over the house of Haman.

So they take the ring, give it to Mordecai. Skip down to verse seven. Then the king of Xerxes said unto Esther the queen and the Mordecai, the Jew, behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him that is hanged upon the gallows, because he had laid his hand upon the Jews.

So immediately we see this reversal of power and possessions. Esther was given Haman's house. And that works out because he didn't need it anymore, right? Haman had died. I heard a comedian recently say how learning to spell, any of y'all play hangman in school where you're guessing what's spelling?

That is a horrific way to learn how to spell, right? Because you're like, I don't even know this guy, but if I get the word wrong, he's going to die, all right? Probably not the best way to teach your kids. It may scar them. They may need counseling if you teach them to spell that way.

[9 : 21] So this man hung upon his own gallows. And if you are a criminal, when you're a criminal, whatever they found, they get to take, right? And so because he was a criminal, the king gets to take all of his land and all of his possessions that he had fought so much to gain.

And then he gives it, he gives it to Esther. Now Mordecai receives this ring and the position. I told you he was as a prime minister. He got to put things in action. Now in a Persian nation where the country of Iran is today, a Jewish prime minister and a Jewish queen over a Gentile nation.

When the story started, they didn't even want to mention that they were Jewish at the beginning of the story. Now the queen and the prime minister are Jewish. They once have been afraid to admit their ethnicity and now they are the queen and prime minister.

And then look at Esther, in Esther 4.4 I read to you earlier. When that first letter went out and Mordecai got it, he was exceedingly grieved. And Esther came to him and said, you need to change clothes here.

She might have called him uncle. It was their cousin. But he was raising them. He says, you need to change clothes. It's so sad. And he would not change because he knew what was going to happen. He felt the weight of it.

[10 : 31] Kyle, you're going to like this. And here in Esther 8.15 it says, and Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white and with a great crown of gold and with a garment of fine linen and purple.

That's why the Kentucky Wildcats wear blue and white in college basketball. It's royalty. And then Kyle thought it may be the Baltimore Ravens with linen and purple. So here was this guy just a few chapters earlier dressed in such a depressed state.

And now when he walks out that day of the palace, he is decked out. He's got the nicest clothes on. He is representing royalty. God changed everything in the story with this unexpected plot twist here.

Haman, he was convinced that this decree that he had given, that he had sent out was irrevocable. He had the ring and he wrote it. Esther 3.10 says, and the king took his ring from his hand.

He gave it to Haman here. And then when he did that, the horses would go out. Horses prepared to go out all over the place. Probably familiar with the Pony Express that we'd had in America.

[11 : 31] Some of you maybe more than others. Probably if you read about it, right? None of us sent anything about the Pony Express. I read this week they only lost one shipment of letters in all of their time. They may be doing better than we're doing today, I think.

And so they went all over the place with this and they had a system in place. Go ride the horses so far, they get on another horse, but it was there to deliver it. He had made that letter, he had sent it and it went out everywhere and it couldn't be brought back.

And then not only that, he's receiving invitations. In Esther 5.9, when he received an invitation to the banquet, it says, Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart.

Haman is joyful and he has a glad heart at the same time that Mordecai is sad and depressed. He knew that Mordecai was weak and his people were outnumbered. But he never expected that the God of heaven would intervene on behalf of his people.

God had been already working to flip the script before Haman advised the plan. Here's something that just so happened. Before all this sets in motion, it just so happened that the king had called for a banquet.

[12 : 31] And it just so happened that Vashti was not willing to display herself at this banquet. Then it just so happened here that they got rid of her and that the king decides that he's going to get the word out that people can come in.

And it just so happened that Esther came in. It just so happened that Esther was born with this natural beauty. And God gave her favor there and she was chosen there. All these things had already been set into motion before Haman began to devise his plan.

And God continues to work behind the scenes as Haman devises mischief. Mordecai, just by chance, discovers this treasonous plot to kill the king. Esther just happened to be the queen at the right time here.

And then it just so happened that God is even working when Haman is sleeping. The king suffers, he can't sleep. And at night he calls in Mordecai and it just so happens that they read the part that would remind him about what Mordecai did.

It just so happened. Psalms 121 verse 4 says, Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. Our God does not sleep.

[13 : 34] He's working on behalf of his people. When you are in a situation, you say God isn't working, God isn't doing anything. Who are you to say that? Who are you to say that God is not working? Who are you to say that God is not acting upon your behalf?

God's already done something upon your behalf here. My sister-in-law, Stephanie Cofield, I saw her last week at the hospital with her dad. And in tears she said, I'm so grateful to be part of a church where there's people awake all hours of the night.

Our missionary friends around the world. Because I know people are praying for my dad. Brother Gary wanted to express his gratitude for you praying for him. So excited to know that he can share those requests and talk about it.

But even more so than a church family, we have a God that never slumbers and he never sleeps. And he's working there. The day after D-Day, as meaning the Japanese military was celebrating, when the general who had planned the attack, he was discouraged and he wrote in his journal, I fear all we have done is awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve here.

The attack on Pearl Harbor resulted in the exact reverse of what he had hoped for. Our God is not a sleeping giant. He is a living God who is working on behalf of his people. He's put incredible things.

[14 : 42] He's done incredible things in your life for you to even be in here today. You're not in here just by chance. He has done something there. So on the day that a rope was to be placed around Mordecai's neck, a ring was placed on his hand and he became royalty.

Isn't that amazing? I like how one person said it. Haman had climbed the ladder of success, but it was leaning against the wrong building. He had done all the things that he could earthly do and he thought for sure he had things established.

But what did he forget about? That we have a powerful and a loving God that undoes all the wickedness that he had planned. Joseph knows about that in the Bible, right? Back in Genesis 50, his brothers sell him into slavery.

And when he sees him, he says, what you meant for evil, God meant for good. But every believer in here, we know it as well. It's the great exchange. It's the greatest of all stories here. We needed righteousness to be acceptable to God, but we didn't have it.

And all we had was sin. And so there's a decree that went out. Romans 3.23 says, for all of sin, it comes short of the glory of God here. And you may say, I'm not associated with that group.

[15 : 47] 1 John 1.8 says, but if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Every one of us had this edict that had been sent out about us. Every one of us were living underneath the sentence of death.

And what does God do to answer the situation? And we know the answer is Jesus. Romans 1.16, for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, the good news of Christ. For it is the power of God and the salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

That's why we call it good news, because it was on the heels of the worst possible news. When it would have been described that all people were doomed, that all people were condemned already, there's another message that's going to come, because we have an enemy.

This is how Haman was described in Esther 8.3. He devises mischief against, it says, Put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite and his device that he has devised against the Jews.

He had devised mischief. He was the enemies against the Jew. You and I have an enemy in here as well. This morning in our life group, we were looking at the book of Job as we'll get ready to go through it as a church family here.

[16 : 53] But you know our enemy is roaming the world looking for who he will destroy. Job 1.6 and 7, Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord. Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou?

Then Satan answered the Lord and said, From going to and fro in the earth and from walking up and down in it, just roaming this earth looking for somebody to destroy. A hatred for all of mankind.

A hatred for anybody that would worship the God of heaven. He was full of pride. 1 Thessalonians 2.18, It says, Wherefore we shall come even unto him, even I, Paul. Once again, for Satan hindered us.

Just like Haman could devise plans. He could execute plans. He could hinder the work that was going on. He would not have final say. Haman couldn't stand that somebody would not bow down and worship him in his pride.

And Satan can't stand that we are going to worship the God and our Creator. And we have no time for him. We have no love, no allegiance to him or the things of this world. And because of that, we are hated and we are marked.

[17 : 53] So maybe you're here just today by chance. All of us should evaluate and sit here and ask ourselves, Are we living underneath this decree of death or a decree of life? After we know this, we should take action one way or another.

So now these desperate pleas that Esther are going to make. That's verses 3. Here we'll read 3 through 8. And Esther spake yet again before the king and fell down at his feet. And he besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman, Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews.

And the king held out the golden scepter towards Esther. So Esther rose and stood before the king and said, If it please the king and if I have found favor in his sight and the things seem right before the king and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hamathath, the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in the king's provinces.

For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come upon my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred? She is utterly desperate, willing to risk her life here to approach the king.

It had been some days before she went before the king there. And when she goes before him, she knows that he has the right to kill her. But he extends the scepter to her and he allows her to come in.

[19 : 07] She knew she was not just keeping, she couldn't just enjoy the palace. Her uncle told her in Esther 4.13, Then Mordecai commanded to answer the Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews.

For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall their enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place. But thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. Who knowest whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

The great passage that we hear often for such a time as if she had to act in faith on behalf of her people. She had to risk her life to go there and to make a plea because she knew that only God, that only God could work on the life of the king or nothing could happen.

She didn't waste any time rounding up the Jewish people to make an army. She says, Unless God works on our behalf and moves on the heart of king, we are utterly just miserable people. Last Thursday, Brother Jim here preached about faith, and he gave us a definition here that says, Unless God was, he must, our most desperate need can only be met by God.

We were challenged to think about it. Is there anything upon your heart that is so heavy that you say, Unless God acts, it's not going to be done? Or do you only have things in your life that can be handled by you?

[20 : 20] Esther wasn't in that position. She said, I can just sit here and just pretend like everything's going to be okay. I have 10 more months. I can enjoy the palace here. I don't have to worry about it. But she sensed an urgency, and she goes there.

She cries out to the king for her people. She comes from a long line of people that would do that in the Bible. Moses does the same. God looks down upon the people, and he sees them, and he sees that they're worshipping false gods.

Exodus 32, 7, The Lord said unto Moses, Go get thee down for thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt. Now have corrupted themselves. And he says, I will start afresh with you again.

I'll start over with you, and I'm going to wipe these people out. And Moses pleaded, and he petitions for God. And he says, I want you to be worshipped among all the nations. People are worshipping. We find in Nehemiah and Ezra, they wept, and they prayed, and they asked God to help the sinful people.

Daniel humbles himself, and he fasted and prayed, and he asked God to work. Centuries later, the apostles said he was willing to be accursed for Christ if God would save Israel in Romans 9. Every generation seems to have someone pleading for them, and every people has somebody pleading for them.

[21 : 26] But what about this generation, and what about your people, in the same manner that Esther would plead? Are there people in your life that you're going to the God of heaven, and you're pleading for, and you're asking God to work?

We know that he wants to save them. We know that God wants to work on their behalf. There's no doubt. He is not like the king in the story where we're not sure which way he's going to go, but are we interceding? It says in Isaiah 59, verse 16, And he saw that there was no man, this is God, and he wondered if there was no intercessor that would stand in the gap here.

I know there are people that I need to be asking God for. A good place for us to start is our Christmas list. You probably already have a list of people that you should be interceding for and asking God and taking ownership for and praying for.

This week I was at a funeral in Kentucky, and I was standing by my cousin Matthew. And Matthew's dad died a couple years before my dad did. And we're standing looking at the tombstones of our dads there.

And I was there praying. I said, I really want an opportunity to talk to Matthew about spiritual things. And Matthew looks totally different than me, big guy, bodybuilder. And he's there, and we're quiet. And he looks at me, and he says, Trent, I've just been thinking because of our family, we should really be concerned about our hearts.

[22 : 37] And I went, whoa, this is perfect, right? And so I start talking for a few minutes about our hearts. And then he says, yeah, we've got to keep our kids active. And I'm like, yeah, we've got to keep our kids active in Sunday school and reading the Bible.

And then he says, yeah, because of our genetics, we've really got to be worried about our heart. And I'm like, yeah, because of Adam and the sin nature, we're not talking about the same thing, are we? And he said, what are you talking about? I'm like, I'm a Baptist preacher.

I'm talking about your spiritual heart. That's what I'm thinking. He says, I'm talking about you need to exercise more, Trent. All right? So he's trying to proselytize for CrossFit, and I'm trying to talk about the cross here to him here. And so we're talking about it.

But you know what? In that moment, I realized that he needs me to be praying for him. That's one of my people. He might also be one of your people if you worked with him. And he's certainly one of my people. He's somebody that I'm supposed to be concerned for because I know there was a decree that went out, and he lives under it.

It's a decree of death, and that every man lives under it. But does he know that there's going to be a decree of life that is issued here? And so ask God to give you that list there of people here. No one can do anything for my people but God, and I must have them on my heart here.

[23 : 41] You know, it's not so much believing that prayer works that causes us to pray, but it's the realization that nothing without the king's power will make any difference. See, that's where we get to is when we just say, I could run around, and I could try to do everything that I know that I need to do, but if I was to be honest with myself, I would know that none of that is going to make any difference at the end of the day.

The Jewish people were so greatly outnumbered. Unless the king did something, they were going to be destroyed here. It was Esther's interceding at the throne that saved the people of Israel from slaughter.

She was asking nothing for herself except that the king save her people and deliver her from the heavy burden of her heart. That's what she went to. King, these people are upon my heart here.

Please do not let them be killed. And so a new decree will be written. Esther appeals before the king. It's a foreshadowing of Christ's appeal to God the Father, offering his life in the place of our own, rescuing us from sudden destruction.

So when the king sends out this decree, he can't send out another decree according to the Persian rule. He can't just say, I changed my mind, right? And this kind of makes sense, because you don't want kings going up and down. So when he sent it out, it was given.

[24 : 50] So he couldn't just go back and nullify it. And so he tells that to Esther and he says, well, I can't just take it back, but Mordecai now has the ring and he can write a new decree. And when he writes it, you can just see the parallel between the two.

And we'll look at it, the parallel between the two, which just shows us this incredible reversal that takes place. So it won't be canceled. In nine months, there's going to be a Holocaust on the people of Israel.

They were hated. Let me just give you a picture of how much they're hated. In nine months from now, when this decree happens and the day that is given, and they're allowed to kill the people of Israel, even though the king sends out another decree that says that they can defend themselves, which if you're a logical person, you would say, well, if the king sent a new letter saying that they can defend themselves, he probably isn't wanting us to kill them, right?

But there's so many people that 75,000 would-be murderers are killed. 800 men in Shushan, right there where Esther is, they will be killed.

They wanted to destroy the people, so much that even with this decree of life is given, that many people are killed. Chapter 8, verses 8 through 17, it compares with chapter 3, verse 10.

[25 : 59] In 310, the king gives Haman a ring, in 8-2, he gives Mordecai a ring. In 312, Haman summons the king's scribes, in 8-9, Mordecai summons the king's scribes. In 312, the letter is written and sealed, in 810, the letter is written and sealed with the same ring.

In 313, the Jews will be killed one day, in 811, the enemies will be killed one day. 314, Haman's decree is displayed as law. 813, Mordecai's decree is displayed as law.

315, couriers go out in haste. 814, the couriers go out in haste. 315, the city of Shushan, they're surprised and shocked and bewildered. 815, there is rejoicing in the streets.

411, Mordecai goes through the city crying. 611, Mordecai is led through the city and honor. 514, they advise Mordecai here and here.

They predict 613, they predict the Haman's ruin. I believe that God wants us to see a reversal. I believe He wants to see a parallel of how the tables have turned.

[26 : 57] Nobody thought it was possible. Nothing that anybody was doing was going to make it different. But by chance, the king couldn't sleep at night. And by chance, Esther came into such a time as this.

The God of heaven was working there. There should have been bloodshed. And on the day, there was going to be great celebration here. In the garden, we were in the same predicament as well.

God had provided a way for us. We were told that we were sinners. So all of you know, back in the garden, when Adam sins, that first decree goes out. And all of us are now under bondage and under sin here.

But what would never could be expected, 1 Peter 2, 24, He who has our own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live under righteousness, by whose stripes we are healed.

There was no other plan that would provide a way of escape for your sin. Your sin must be paid for. And the thoughts of our sin today should either bring great conviction, or they should bring great gratitude to you today.

[27 : 55] You either are living underneath that decree that says that you are to die for your sins, or you know that there's been a new decree that offers you life, and we should rejoice. 5, 7, 15 through 17, And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king, and this royal apparel.

Verse 16, The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor in every province and every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, and the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. I wish you had underlined that right there.

It says that they had a feast and a good day. What an understatement, right? Of what a good day is. And many of the people of the land became Jews, for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

A new decree was given here. They're no longer living underneath the sword that is over their head. I read a story, and I didn't take down all the notes, but a man with a sit, a man was known for flattering, and so the king brought him in, he set him at the table, and he had a sword above his head that was held there, just by one hair there.

And I don't know how to say the guy's name, but the sword was being held over him, and he had to eat his meal, knowing there was a sword above his head that was held there with only one hair. We no longer live that life anymore.

[29 : 01] There was a feast and there was a good day. When was the last time you had one of those? When was the last time that you had a good day here? I recently read that it says, in general, people aren't looking, aren't on a truth quest, they're on a happiness quest.

People aren't just coming here today, and they're not just coming into your life looking for truth, which we should be ready to share with them, but they're looking for happiness. They're looking for a good day. That's one of those things that people ride on a wooden board, and I don't understand why people want it so bad, but it says what?

Today is a good day to have a good day. So many people are just on search for a good day. They need to have a good day because it's been so long since they had one, but we know that truth and happiness are found together, that it's the truth that has set us free here, and that's what brings such a good day.

Christians should hasten to make this decree known. We should be like the Persian post. We should use every means possible to get it out. So when we look back there and we see all of our missionaries, we should see them as post-runners to all the nations, that they're taking this decree of life there.

Philip and Jim have both given updates of Thailand and India, and there was people that were living there under this decree of death, and now they know about the life that is found here for us. And we should not be living as if this is hanging over our heads anymore.

[30 : 14] Joy is found in believing the Word of God here. It should cause us to rejoice. And it says that in their excitement and all their happiness, that people begin to join them.

Even though they were outnumbered and they were in the minority, people looked and they said, God is on your side. Maybe what our evangelism is often missing is simply a smile. Just the fact that people are just living life with such joy, they would see that here.

Let me read one verse to you and see if it doesn't bring a smile today. See if it doesn't let you know that you're having a good day. 2 Corinthians 5, 21, For he hath made him to be sin for us. For God had made the Father and made Jesus to be sin for us, who knew sin, who knew no sin, that's Jesus, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

The gallows of our sin that we deserve to die on, Jesus went to. And so we're no longer people in sackcloth and ashes living with this over us. We were now people wearing that, clothed in his righteousness and his goodness here.

He said that Mordecai in Esther 4, 4, when she came to him, he would not receive it. He would not trade his sackcloth for the clothes of the king. He hadn't traded the edict of death for the edict of life.

[31 : 25] He hadn't traded his tears for sorrow yet. But then the tables were turned. And next week in the next chapter, we'll not only see that the tables have turned, but the tables are going to be spread.

And God does something for us incredible. So I just, that's a simple thought for us today out of this chapter here for you today. But if you come in here today and you live underneath that decree of death, you don't know where you stand before the king of this universe, universe, I call you and I challenge you today to let somebody take the word and show you how you can exchange your life for his.

That your sin would be paid for on the cross and his righteousness would be given to you. Because there's no reason to be living life underneath this decree of death. There's no reason to die there.

And just like they had 10 months, you don't know how many months you have. You don't know if there is months. There's coming a day where you will have to answer to the God of the universe and he is giving you that.

And I plead with you as Esther would plead with you is to put your faith in Jesus, is to trust Jesus with your life. So the way we do it around here is when the piano player plays, you have an opportunity to stand, go to the back of the auditorium.

[32 : 34] One of our deacons will be back there, him and his wife, and they will take you to another room and answer your questions for you. But there's another group of people in here and I dare believe the vast majority in here were Christians.

When's the last time you had a good day? When's the last time you lived your life just knowing that I don't live under this decree of death anymore? Have you ever felt it? Maybe the reason we don't rejoice is because we haven't felt that weight that was upon us.

It has been removed for so long that we forgot that it was once there and it used to be very real to us. And that if we would have lived and died and somebody wouldn't have brought that message to us, we would have lived and died and been eternally separated from God in a place not prepared for us, but a place prepared for Satan and the demons there.

We've been separated, but that's not the case. So let's have a feast. Let's have a good day. Let there be joy among us. Let people walk into this place and say, I want to join up with those people.

They seem to be happy about something there. All the other things in our life, and I'm so guilty of it. All those other truths in our lives that bring us down and that discourage us, none of them on the scales ought to outweigh the truth that we have here today.

[33 : 43] And God wants us to know it. He writes it all throughout the Bible. Time and time again, we're brought to this passage, either to a Passover or an Exodus or an Esther, and we're reminded, we do not deserve to be here.

We do not deserve this opportunity, but he gave it to us when he exchanged his life for ours and went to a tree. Let's rejoice in that. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. As you said, Amen.