

ESTHER

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Esther chapter 5 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Now keep in mind that Haman, the second in command in Persia is upset because as he was elevated to this position by King Ahasuerus, not everyone in the kingdom was bowing down to him. Well, that is not exactly true, there was only one who refused to bow the knee to him and that was Mordecai the Jew. He was not going to worship anyone except the Lord and especially not this wicked man named Haman.

As you can imagine, that made Haman furious and he brings this plan to destroy not only Mordecai but all the Jews in the kingdom of Persia to the King. And keep in mind that this was a huge kingdom and the Jews were spread out throughout it. And King Ahasuerus goes along with this evil plan, not thinking a nation was going to be wiped out, the Jews!

When Mordecai hears of this plan, that was posted for all to see as the King made this decree, he brings word to his cousin who is now the Queen, Esther. And at first she is reluctant to do anything about it; she felt that her life was on the line if she approached the King without being summoned by him.

And Mordecai got these words back to her, “**. . . ‘Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?’**” Esther 4:13-14. In other words, you, being a Jew will not escape this and who knows if God has placed you in this position for such a time as this!

As Queen Esther hears what Mordecai had to say she gets these words back to Mordecai, “**‘Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!’**” Esther 4:16.

Now please understand that Esther was not just giving up, saying, “Que sera, sera, whatever will be will be . . .” She was not giving up, she was placing her life in the hands of God. In other words, what we see Esther saying and what should be the passion of our heart is this. “If I perish, I perish. If I go down, I go down. If it’s such a time for this that I exist, I’m going to go for it.” You see, what are you afraid of? Are you afraid that someone won’t like you? Are you afraid that someone might make fun of you? What are you afraid of? Esther got her priorities and her perspective right, if God is for us who can truly be against us! And folk’s, they are going to make fun of us anyway. They won’t like us no matter what we do. So don’t negate the work because friendship with the world is enmity with God, so let’s serve Him wholeheartedly no matter the cost for, “**. . . Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?’**” Esther 4:14.

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Esther chapter 5, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as Queen Esther is going to go before her husband, King Ahasuerus.

ESTHER 5

VERSES 1-5

1. Now we may miss this, but Esther stepping out before the King took courage, she had to be willing to step out in faith trusting that the Lord had prepared her for such a time as this! Faith is not a passive word, it is an active word, it is seen in the way we live out our lives. It is as James tells us in James 2:17, **“Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”** And thus, we see Esther put into practice that which she believed in her heart, it was time to act!

2. Now as the King sees her, he was once again struck by her beauty and called her to come into his presence. How lucky was she? There is no luck, I do not believe in luck, but I do believe in the faithfulness and power of God. You see, we must also be aware that God is in total control, working out His plan through the various people and not through luck! It is as Proverbs 21:1 says, **“The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.”** Make no mistake about it, every leader, every king, is playing out the plan of God and some are working with the Lord and others are trying to work against Him, but in the end, God's plans and purposes will be fulfilled!

3. As the King sees his Queen he tells her that she can have anything that she wants, up to half of his kingdom. What does that mean? This expression, “**It shall be given to you - up to half my kingdom**” was just a form of hyperbole or an exaggeration, but the point being made is that whatever she requested, whatever she desired, would be given to her.

4. Can you imagine that, up to half the kingdom, anything she wanted and what does she do, she requests a banquet with Haman being the guest! Now some commentators believe that Esther got cold feet, she kind of side-stepped the Kings question. It showed a lack of faith on her part. I disagree with that. She has just spent 3 days fasting and praying, and I believe that God was directing her in what to say and what to do. All she wants to have is a banquet to be thrown for the King, for Haman, and for herself. And the King obliges her request. And as we will see, in the end, Haman’s wickedness will be exposed. This was the plan of God!

VERSES 6-8

1. So here we are at this first banquet and the King asks Esther once again what she wants and once again she requests another banquet with Haman. Why did she do that? Why is she waiting so long? I believe that Esther is waiting for the right time and the right place to tell the King of her request. Remember what Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 3:1, “**To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven.**” You see, there is a right time for this to take place and I believe that Esther understood this and is waiting upon God to show her that time!

2. We too must understand that God has a plan, He has a purpose for when and why He does things, He does not just do them haphazardly or chaotically! Remember when Peter and John saw the man who had been lame since birth in Acts chapter 3! They passed by this man who begged at the Temple many times and I am sure that Jesus even saw this man and yet he was not healed. But now there was something different and in Acts 3:1-10 we are told; **“Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, ‘Look at us.’ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. Then Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’ And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them - walking, leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”**

Did you see that? On this day, it was the day that God had planned for this man to be healed, Peter has the gift of faith, the gift of healings working in him and through him and by the power of God this man is healed! Folk's, let's not try to work when we think it is time, but as God leads us may we step forward because the power has been given to us but we must also wait for the permission from God to step forward as Peter did there in Acts chapter 3! I believe that is what we see here with Esther, she sees the hand of God upon this situation and yet, she is waiting for the God given time to step forward with her request!

Spurgeon picks up on this as he tells us, "Some of us are very unaccountable, but on that woman's unaccountable silence far more was hanging than appears at first sight. Doubtless she longed to bring out her secret, but the words came not. God was in it; it was not the right time to speak, and therefore she was led to put off her disclosure. I dare say she regretted it, and wondered when she should be able to come to the point, but the Lord knew best." You see, I don't believe that Esther lacked the courage to bring forth this request; I believe it was all timing, the timing of God and she was waiting upon the Lord to show her when to speak forth this request!

VERSE 9a

1. Haman was thrilled at the direction his life was going. He has already had one meeting with the King and his Queen and he must have felt that they liked him very much, for they wanted to have dinner with him once again. And what is happening with Haman is that his ego, his pride is being built up and remember what Proverbs 16:18 says, “**Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.**” That is what we see happening here with Haman and that is what happens with many today, pride brings them down and they come crashing hard to the ground. Interestingly enough, the Greeks also have a proverb. It goes something like this: “Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad.” Yes, Haman was on top of the world as he left the banquet, he was on top of the world until . . .

VERSE 9b-c

1. Isn't it amazing how one minute we can be on top of the world, walking on water, and then the next minute full of wrath and anger. Haman was euphoric about the good fortune that had come upon his life *UNTIL* he sees Mordecai, and that just makes him angry that this Jew refused to bow before a man like him. You see, pride is about to bring him down and he will come crashing to the ground.

In Psalm 7:14-16 we are told, **“Behold, the wicked brings forth iniquity; Yes, he conceives trouble and brings forth falsehood. He made a pit and dug it out, And has fallen into the ditch which he made. His trouble shall return upon his own head, And his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown.”** God is not mocked and what you sow you will reap and Haman will find that out! And what we have seen here is that the wicked develop their plans to destroy the godly and in the end God turns the tables and they are caught in their own traps. The Lord said in Deuteronomy 32:35, **“Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in due time; For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them.”** The thing we need to remember as Christians is that we are God’s children, and you don’t mess around with His children and get away with it! Haman is going to find that out as He is messing with the Jews, God’s chosen people!

VERSES 10-13

1. So as Haman leaves this first banquet and heads home, he calls for his friends and wife to gather around him so he can boast about all that he has in this life. You see, Haman had everything and when you think you have everything guess what you will do about it? You will boast about it and that is what he is doing, he is boasting to his family and friends of all his greatness and the honor that the King and Queen have shone him and only him. And with all that he had, it still wasn’t enough because every day he saw that Jew, Mordecai, who refused to give him the honor he deserved.

You know what, even if Mordecai bowed before him there would still be something that would make him mad, make him angry, eat at him. Why is that? Because God has placed that God shaped void in each of our hearts and the only satisfaction, the only joy is when it is filled with Him and not possessions, honor or anything else! It is as Clarke wrote, “The soul was made for God, and nothing but God can fill it and make it happy.”

2. Now, look at the world and you will see that the world is filled with people that are never satisfied with what they have. Most Americans live better than the average person in this world and yet they are not satisfied! How do I know that? Look at what we do. We are on all kinds of medication to keep us from being depressed; I guess all that money, all those possessions, all that we have can really get you down! Look at what we do. We are not satisfied with what we have so we covet others possessions, others spouses, other things that others have and yet, we still are not satisfied! And even when we win, when we get what we want, it is not enough. Each time we conquer another mountain it still is not enough for us. You see, like I have said, they are trying to fill that void in their hearts with things that will never fully satisfy, and they will be longing for more. Only Christ can and will satisfy; only He can fill that void in your heart. As Psalm 17:15 says, “**As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.**”

You see, David is contrasting himself with the wicked who sought after material possessions, and David sought the Lord. He was looking forward to the day when he would awake in His likeness because he knew that it was the Lord who will satisfy and has brought us true satisfaction, true joy in our lives that cannot change because the Lord changes not!

Remember what John said in I John 3:2-3. We read, **“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”**

If you are lacking that joy in your life, you need Jesus and notice that John doesn't say that one day we will be children of God; we are already children of God, being adopted into the family of God by the new birth, by receiving Jesus as our Lord and Savior! If you have done that you are a child of God, end of story. It is not something that you can lose because it is a work of God based upon His faithfulness and not ours. It is a gift we receive by faith and that gift can't be taken away.

But God is still molding and shaping our lives down here so that one day we will fit in up there – it is a lifelong process that will be completed when we go to be with Jesus. Paul made that point in Philippians 3:20-21 when he said, **“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”**

We are a work in progress. I think Stott rightly wrote, “What we are does not now appear to the world; what we shall be does not yet appear to us.”

Paul, in I Corinthians 13:12 makes this interesting point. He says, **“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”** In the ancient world mirrors were made out of polished metal and thus, the image was not clear, it was distorted. Paul is telling us that we can’t see Jesus clearly now, but one day, face-to-face, we shall see Him perfectly clear! Here is the point. To the extent you see Jesus now, you will be like Him but one day, as you see Him, His sinless nature will flow from your life as you go to be with Him. These bodies of flesh will be changed!

People today have lost the hope of Christ’s return but folks, we need to keep that before us at all times because it helps us to walk in a worthy manner, in purity knowing He can return at any moment, any day! Paul said it this way in Titus 2:11-15, **“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.”** Thus, live every day as if He is coming back because our only hope is in Him and not this world!

And think about it. We see this with Haman, we see it with people that don’t have the Lord; they just can’t get no *SATISFACTION* apart from the Lord. May we not lose that perspective, may we have our eyes upon Him and be satisfied in the things that He has given to us!

VERSE 14

1. With friends like these how can you go wrong? And even his wife is in on this with the suggestion on what Haman should do with this thorn in his flesh, Mordecai! These people are ruthless. Now when they speak of hanging Mordecai on these gallows that they will make, it doesn't mean that they are going to hang him. No, it is far worse than that!

They tell Haman to impale Mordecai on a 75 foot stake that he has erected in his backyard. Now the stake may not be that long, but the place they are placing him on is and the idea is all will be able to see when Mordecai is impaled by this stake! Clarke picks up on this as he tells us, "A pointed stake is set upright in the ground, and the culprit is taken, placed on the sharp point, and then pulled down by his legs till the stake that went in at the fundament passes up through the body and comes out through the neck. A most dreadful species of punishment, in which revenge and cruelty may glut the utmost of their malice. The culprit lives a considerable time in excruciating agonies." Not a pretty picture, but that is what they suggested and that is how much Haman wanted Mordecai dead and not just put to death, but tortured! And not just tortured, but to be put on display for all to see what he has done, the power that Haman had and the lack of power that Mordecai had!

2. Now, after he has completed this evil deed, after he finishes that, he can go to the banquet and enjoy himself. Talk about your cold, your hard heart. You murder this man and then you go and eat as nothing has happened. In fact, you feel good about it! And as Haman is given these instructions, he once again is feeling good and all he has to do is get the Kings permission to carry out his plan. That should not be too hard, he is second in command after all and the King and Queen like him. After all, he was the only one they invited to their feast and not just one feast but two!

ESTHER 6

VERSES 1-3

1. Notice what is taking place here. The King goes to bed and is tossing and turning, he just can't sleep. Nothing unusual about that, he was the King and he probably had many sleepless nights. But there is something different this night and I believe the King had a God induced insomnia. Why would God do that? Because God wanted the King to review some history of the kingdom, but how does he do it?

Well, as you read this you have to love what the King does to make himself sleepy, he gets the history books out and has them read to him. And he must have thought to himself, "If this doesn't put me to sleep, nothing will!"

2. Of these events, J. Vernon McGee tells us,

The fact that the king could not sleep seems to be a very small thing, but God uses small things. Also, I am of the opinion that the king had many sleepless nights. As Shakespeare said, “Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.” There were nights when I am sure the king felt that his life was in jeopardy. But this night that the king could not sleep was the most eventful night in the history of the empire because it is the turning point in the Book of Esther.

Have you noticed that God uses the little things to carry out His program? Years before in Egypt God brought together a woman’s heart and a baby’s cry when Pharaoh’s daughter found the baby Moses in the Nile River. By this He changed the destiny of the nation. A supposedly unimportant thing occurred at the palace of Shushan—the king could not sleep. So he commanded his servants to bring the uninteresting records of the kingdom to him. They were read before the king. Evidently the reading of these records was conducive to sleep. They were the king’s sleeping pill. The fatal hour had come, and now we are going to see the hand of God begin to move.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru The Bible Vol. II, p. 568

Yes God will use the small, the seemingly insignificant things to work out His plans and His purposes. May we not miss what God is doing because we don’t see it as important or big!

3. So the King has his servants go and get the history books out so they could read it to him and put him to sleep. Now think about this for a minute. They had many books of history and yet, out of the volumes of books that could have been read, they turn to the incident with Mordecai uncovering the assassination plot against the King. What a stroke of luck? No, it is the hand of God working and may we never forget that!

And as the King hears of this story, instead of falling asleep, this story brings back those memories of this incident. And as he is listening he could not remember what was done for Mordecai for doing that good deed, for saving his life! And as the servants search he finds out that they forgot to do anything. And again, this is all the hand of God working out His plan to save His people from destruction.

4. Listen to this true story regarding the providence of God or the divine intervention of God in this situation. We are told,

The citizens of Feldkirch, Austria, didn't know what to do. Napoleon's massive army was preparing to attack. Soldiers had been spotted on the heights above the little town, which was situated on the Austrian border. A council of citizens was hastily summoned to decide whether they should try to defend themselves or display the white flag of surrender. It happened to be Easter Sunday, and the people had gathered in the local church.

The pastor rose and said, “Friends, we have been counting on our own strength, and apparently that has failed. As this is the day of our Lord’s resurrection, let us just ring the bells, have our services as usual, and leave the matter in His hands. We know only our weakness, and not the power of God to defend us.” The council accepted his plan and the church bells rang. The enemy, hearing the sudden peal, concluded that the Austrian army had arrived during the night to defend the town. Before the service ended, the enemy broke camp and left.

- Source Unknown

There is nothing that happens by chance and sometimes it is the simplest of things, like the ringing of bells that sends the enemy fleeing. May we not negate the power of God, the providence of God in our lives! May we learn to trust in Him each and every day and even in the small things that happen in our lives, He is there working things out!

5. Now this is going on in the Kings chamber but God is also orchestrating things outside and let’s read on and see what God is doing to fulfill His plan, His purposes!

VERSES 4-5

1. As the day was breaking forth, Haman got up very early to get an early start so that he could be the first to meet with the King and put forth his request to have Mordecai put to death. And I am sure there was some excitement knowing that this thorn in his flesh was going to be removed and removed very quickly once he told the King.

Now as Haman reaches the court, the King wanted to know if anyone is out there, and talk about your coincidence, Haman is in the court. For Christians, there is no such thing as bad luck or good luck, there is no such thing as a coincidence, only the hand of God! In Psalm 33:13-15 we read, **“The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks On all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.”**

And in Isaiah 40:28 we are told, **“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.”** You see, God is in control, He has a plan and we might not always see it, but in the end, He does as He pleases and fulfills the things He desires! Here we see the King call for Haman to come in and I think Haman felt good about that, why shouldn't he!

2. And so, as you look at this you can clearly see that all these circumstances, in the life of King Ahasuerus and Haman, reveal the providence of God! Yes, God is in control, He is watching and although these people are not saved, they are out of the will of God in a sense, God is directing them, He is leading them and they don't even realize it. This was not accident; it was the hand of God!

3. Now as you look at your own life and you see bad things happen, you see good things happen, can you see that the hand of God is working? David Guzik explains it like this,

This becomes difficult, of course, when *bad* things happen to us. It is easy to see God's management of all things when we see good things happen. But what about the bad? Even then, we must trust God's total plan, realizing that *all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose* (Romans 8:28). We understand that Paul says *all things work together*; any one event, taken in isolation may seem to make no sense, but when we see all things working together we then see the ultimate wisdom of God's plan.

- David Guzek

VERSE 6

1. Don't tell me that God doesn't have a sense of humor. Look at what is taking place now. The King asks Haman, "**What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?**" And this egotistical Haman thought the King was talking about him. And think about it, he called Haman in. He is second in command. Who else could he be talking about! But again, that is a man who sees himself being bigger than he should and thus, talk about Pride! As Proverbs 16:18 says, "**Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.**" That is what is going to happen to Haman and he will not be able to blame anyone but himself for what will happen. What he was trying to sow, he will certainly reap!

VERSES 7-9

1. Haman has no idea the King is referring to Mordecai, the man he hates and wants to kill. Thus, because Haman thinks the King is talking about him, he just opens his heart and spills out all the things that would make him feel happy. He let's the King know all the things that would feed his ego. He loved that kind of honor, and he fed on that kind of honor. With all the pomp and circumstance that he was telling the King that he wanted, he would be like a King, but . . .

VERSE 10

1. I wish we had a picture of Haman's face when the King said that Mordecai is the one who was to be honored. Can you imagine how fast the color must have drained from this mans face when the King said, **“. . . ‘Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king's gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken.’”** Esther 6:10.

I bet Haman just wanted to find a place to hide and get sick. Now he is the one who has to honor Mordecai instead of Mordecai honoring him. Now he has to bow before him instead of Mordecai being put to death on the gallows! And as sick and angry as he must have felt inside, he could not let his emotions be seen before the King. So he just has them bottled up inside of him, eating away at him, knowing that he was going to have to bow before this man.

And think about it, was there anything else that the King could have asked that would have been more distasteful, more displeasing, and more repulsive than this? I don't think so! He was going to have to put the royal garments on Mordecai, put him on the King's horses and then lead him through the streets proclaiming that this is the man that the King delights to honor and not Haman!

2. Remember before how Mordecai let the King know about the assassination plot on his life and that Mordecai was not rewarded at that time. Many would see that as unfair and that is because they are not trusting in the Lord and they are looking at the present instead of how God is going to use that situation. And we might not always understand, but can we trust the Lord? I hope so. Look at how Mordecai is going to be rewarded and how the tables are turning on the one who was going to wipe out the Jews, Haman! The providence of God!

VERSE 11

1. Now think about this for a minute. Haman wanted to hang Mordecai on the gallows and not lead him through the streets in honor. He was set to put Mordecai to death, he had the gallows built and now he is leading this man who refused to bow before him so that others would bow before Mordecai! I can't imagine how hard that must have been for Haman to do. And I am sure as they were going around town, that Haman is thinking this should have been for him and this Jew should have been put to death!

VERSE 12

1. As we have read this verse I want you to take notice of both responses of these men. After a day of honor, Mordecai heads home, back to his daily routine. He was a humble man who did not allow the honor to go to his head. He did not continue to parade himself around wanting people to bow to him. Many today get a taste of honor and they hunger for more and more of it. We don't see that here with Mordecai. And that humble spirit we see in the life of Mordecai should also be the heart of a Christian. As James 4:10 says, **“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”**

Let me share with you a story of a humble man, not because he promoted himself that he was a humble man, but he lived it. He did not look to draw attention to himself. We are told,

A truly humble man is hard to find, yet God delights to honor such selfless people. Booker T. Washington, the renowned black educator, was an outstanding example of this truth. Shortly after he took over the presidency of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, he was walking in an exclusive section of town when he was stopped by a wealthy white woman. Not knowing the famous Mr. Washington by sight, she asked if he would like to earn a few dollars by chopping wood for her. Because he had no pressing business at the moment, Professor Washington smiled, rolled up his sleeves, and proceeded to do the humble chore she had requested. When he was finished, he carried the logs into the house and stacked them by the fireplace. A little girl recognized him and later revealed his identity to the lady.

The next morning the embarrassed woman went to see Mr. Washington in his office at the Institute and apologized profusely. “It’s perfectly all right, Madam,” he replied. “Occasionally I enjoy a little manual labor. Besides, it’s always a delight to do something for a friend.” She shook his hand warmly and assured him that his meek and gracious attitude had endeared him and his work to her heart. Not long afterward she showed her admiration by persuading some wealthy acquaintances to join her in donating thousands of dollars to the Tuskegee Institute.

- Our Daily Bread

May we have the heart of Jesus and walk in humility as we live out our faith. May people see that we are serving the Lord but not for all the accolade, the attention, the honor and-so-on. We serve the Lord out of love for Him because He first loved us and continues to love us and that will never end.

2. Now here with Haman we see a completely different picture. He had a completely different response to the situation. He is sick to his stomach over what has happened. He wanted the glory, he wanted the honor, he felt he deserved it. And now, if they had these things in his day, I’m sure he would have been sucking down bottles of Maalox and taking Pepcid pills to ease the pain in his stomach.

You see, pride will bring you down as we are seeing here with Haman. It can have devastating consequences as this story shows us. We are told,

In the summer of 1986, two ships collided in the Black Sea off the coast of Russia. Hundreds of passengers died as they were hurled into the icy waters below. News of the disaster was further darkened when an investigation revealed the cause of the accident. It wasn't a technology problem like radar malfunction - or even thick fog. The cause was human stubbornness. Each captain was aware of the other ship's presence nearby. Both could have steered clear, but according to news reports, neither captain wanted to give way to the other. Each was too proud to yield first. By the time they came to their senses, it was too late.

- Closer Walk, December, 1991

Do you see how destructive pride can be? It is as Moody rightly said, "Be humble or you'll stumble." Haman is about to have a very big stumble, a fall and he is not going to be able to get up!

VERSES 13-14

1. His wife, his wise men, these are the same ones that told Haman to kill Mordecai, but now they realize that God's hand is upon Mordecai and the Jews, and there is nothing anyone can do to stop Him. Instead of Mordecai being put to death, Haman will. Nice friends but they truly understood that you can't fight against God or the people of God and win! And thus, you might say that the ones that encouraged Haman to build the gallows for Mordecai have now jumped off the band wagon and they have done this very quickly once that band wagon got a flat tire. They saw the tide quickly turning against Haman.

2. Remember what I said before. God is working on many different levels here, in many different people's lives to bring His plans to pass. And so, as all of this is going on, the Kings Eunuch's come by to pick up Haman for the banquet he is to attend. And this is where we will pick up our story next week as we conclude the book of Esther.

3. As I close this evening let me leave you with this story showing us the will of God. We are told,

As the golfer approached the first tee, a hazardous hole with a green surrounded by water, he debated if he should use his new golf ball. Deciding that the hole was too treacherous, he pulled out an old ball and placed it on the tee. Just then he heard a voice from above say loudly: "*Use the new ball!*" Frightened, he replaced the old ball with the new one and approached the tee.

Now the voice from above shouted: “*Take a practice swing*” With this, the golfer stepped backward and took a swing. Feeling more confident, he approached the tee when the voice again rang out: “*Use the old ball!*”

The will of God, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.

- Source Unknown

Make no mistake about it, God is in control and even as we look at things and see that it is a mess, God is still on the throne and His plans and purposes will be fulfilled just as we are going to see in Esther next time!