

Bible Study - April 22, 2020

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[0 : 0 0] Good evening. Welcome to our Wednesday night Bible study. Tonight we're going to try to do something very difficult. We're going to try and do 10 chapters of the Bible in one night.

Now for those of you who come on Wednesday night, you're going to say, that's not possible. He doesn't even do one or a half a chapter at a night. But we're going to look at the book of Esther. Now as you turn into the book of Esther, the easiest way to find it is open up to the very middle of your Bible.

You'll find the book of Psalms. Then go to the left or towards the front and you'll see the book of Job. The next book to the left is Esther. Or you could just look in the table of contents because I told you last week, every Bible has a table of contents.

As you're finding the book, let me tell you just a little bit about Esther. Esther is actually the Persian name for the woman that is the hero of this story. This is actually like a Persian fairy tale.

So we're going to do more of a story tonight and a little less of that theological exploration. But there's theology in here for certain. Esther is one of those unusual books because it's one of only two books in the Bible that does not mention God, which is an interesting thought.

[1 : 1 0] And we'll have to give some consideration to that. Esther itself, being a Persian name, means the star or the morning star. So Esther was the star of this particular book of the Bible.

Let's get right into it and see how we make out. All right. In chapter verse one, it says, This is what happened during the time of Xerxes. The Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush.

King Xerxes actually was a historical figure that ruled at the time the largest empire in the world. He ruled from what we would call Turkey all the way to India and down into Egypt.

A large empire, a powerful empire. And in the midst of that, we have the Jewish people. Now, the Jewish people were taken into captivity by the Babylonians, but the Persians had conquered the Babylonians.

And the Persians had a different philosophy about leadership than the Babylonians. The Babylonians took the best minds, the brightest people, the people that were most capable in their entire empire and brought them to their capital city, and then mixed all the other people together so that they wouldn't have very much regional or ethnic identity, so to speak.

[2 : 3 3] The Persians basically thought, We don't really care. Just be loyal to the king. We don't care too much what you do. So, actually, at this time, a lot of the Jewish people have gone back to Palestine.

Not all of them, but a number of them have. Under Nehemiah and Ezra, returned to Palestine. But Palestine was kind of a backwoods. And so a number of the Jews stayed in Persia, and in fact live in Persia even to this day, in a country we know a little more familiarly as Iran.

By the way, another quick note about the Persians. We often think of the Romans as conquering the world. They never conquered Persia. So if you look at a map, you'll always see Persia is still there competing, and still there today, for good or for bad.

At that time, in verse 2, King Xerxes reigned from his royal throne in the citadel of Susa. The citadel is like a castle city.

And in the third year of his reign, he gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials, military leaders of Persia and Media, the princes and nobles of the provinces were present.

[3 : 44] So he had a big party for all the leaders in his entire country. Verse 4, For a full 180 days, about half a year, he displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendor and glory of his majesty.

When these days were over, the king gave a banquet, lasting seven days in the enclosed garden of the king's palace, for all the people, from the least to the greatest, who were in the city of Susa.

So now he's expanded this 100-day, half-day, half-year banquet for all the leaders, to a seven-day, one-week banquet celebration for all the people that live in the city where he lives, from the greatest to the least.

So a little different group of people that are gathered there. The garden had hangs of white and blue linen, fastened with cords of white linen and purple materials in silver rings on the marble pillars.

There were couches of gold and silver on the mosaic pavement, of porphyry, marble, and mother-of-pearl, and other costly stones. So beautiful banquet setting.

[4 : 54] Blue and white were often associated with nobility and leadership. Purple was always associated with them. Just picture the fanciest banquet you can imagine.

Wine was served in goblets of gold, each one different from the other, and the royal wine was abundant in keeping with the king's liberalities. So they were all drinking a lot.

By the king's command, each guest was allowed to drink with no restrictions, for the king instructed all the wine stewards to serve each man what he wished. Drink as much as you want.

Have you ever done that? Have you ever been to a banquet where you just keep drinking, you don't know how much you're drinking? Not a good situation. I've been to something like that. Queen Veshti, his queen, also gave a banquet for the women in the royal palaces of King Xerxes.

On the seventh day, when King Xerxes was in high spirits from wine, high spirits, meaning he was a bit on the drunk side, he commanded the seven eunuchs who serve him, Muhuman, Biztha, Habona, Bigtha, Agbatha, Zathar, and Carcas.

[6 : 09] These are men who have given up the company of women to serve in the king's presence to take care of the women, including his queen. You can look it up and figure out what that means to be a eunuch, if you don't know.

To bring before him Queen Veshti, wearing her royal crown in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was lovely to look at. So the king ordered his wife to come and do a little dance, a little beauty contest for everybody.

But when the attendants delivered the king's command, Queen Veshti refused to come. Now, we're not really sure exactly what was expected of this.

Somehow, it was considered by Veshti to be, at the very least, insulting, maybe demeaning, maybe just simply, totally and completely socially inappropriate.

All we know is she was insulted, truly insulted. And so she just wouldn't come. So the king became furious and burned with anger.

[7 : 15] Let's remember, we've got two elements that create this problem. First is, he's drunk. Not a good thing to make decisions, or especially demands on your spouse when you've had too much to drink. It's really not so good to get drunk anyway, so the Bible will tell you that.

Number two, he's got all his friends and all the people around him. So now we have pride, we have embarrassment, we have anger, we have frustration, we have humiliation, all built into this one situation.

And so the king becomes angry. Since it was customary for the king to consult experts in matters of law and justice, he spoke with the wise men who understood the times and were closest to the king.

Kishina, Shethar, Admetha, Tarshish, Muriz, Marcina, and Memukim, the seven nobles of Persia and Media who had special access to the king and were highest in the kingdom.

He did make one good move. He asked some smart people what to do. It's going to turn out their advice is very self-serving, but it's best to ask before you make quick decisions, especially if you've been drinking too much and you've got high emotions.

[8 : 31] When we have high emotions, and especially if we add something that confuses our minds, not a good time to make decisions. So he asked his friends, according to the law, what must be done to Queen Veshti?

He asked. She has not obeyed the command of King Xerxes that the eunuchs have taken to her. We've got to do something about this because I gave her a command and she didn't obey.

In verse 16, then Mnuchin replied, in the presence of the king and the nobles, Queen Veshti has done wrong, not only against the king, but also against all the nobles and the peoples of all the provinces of King Xerxes.

So not only has she embarrassed the king, not only has she disobeyed the king, but she has, in some way, he's saying, created a problem for everybody.

Verse 17, For the queen's conduct will become known to all the women, and so they will despise their husbands and say, King Xerxes commanded Queen Veshti to be brought before him, but she would not come.

[9 : 35] This very day, the Persian immediate women of nobility who have heard about the queen's conduct will respond to all the king's nobles in the same way. There will be no end of the disrespect and discord.

So you follow what his concern is. He's not really even concerned about the king's embarrassment or about whether the king's decrees will be followed. How is this going to play out for me in my house with my wife?

Now, to be fair, I don't know that Queen Veshti ever thought about what the implications of this would be for the entire empire.

I don't know if she realized that her decision would somehow affect everybody, every man and woman living in the entire empire.

And that as a decision that she was making individually, this was something that was going to have an impact on the entire empire's full of women.

[10 : 37] Oftentimes we make decisions and we don't consider the consequences. Some of those consequences might be good. And I'll be honest with you, in some ways I'm proud of Queen Veshti. I think what she did was a good thing.

But even if it's something that we're proud of, we need to recognize that it has an impact, an implication on others. Whenever we make a decision for the church, I always ask, what will the implications of this be going forward?

If we say yes now, what are we saying yes to tomorrow? If we say no now, what are we saying no to tomorrow? What are the unintended consequences of the decisions we make?

And particularly what are the negative unintended consequences? We have a lot of that going on in our culture right now. People want decisions to be made and they want them to be made quickly.

But we need to talk to smart people. We need to discern what's going on and what are we going to do so that we can come out of this exile we've been in in a safe way.

[11 : 41] All the passages we're looking at in this Bible study series are passages from the exile. This story is about Persia. And while it's written for the Jewish people, it's written about the Jewish people when they were in a situation where they found themselves in exile.

Right now, it feels like the church is in exile. It feels like you're in exile. I feel like I'm in exile. We can't do what we've been doing. We can't meet as we used to meet.

And we want decisions to be made. And we want them to be made quickly. We need to talk to people and make sure that the decisions we make don't have unintended negative consequences.

So let's see what happened. In verse 19, Therefore, if it pleases the king, let him issue a royal decree. Let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media, which cannot be repealed.

You see, once you make a rule in this kingdom, you can't bring it back. Now that's tough, isn't it? That Veshti is never again to enter the presence of King Xerxes. Also let the king give her royal position to someone else who is better than she.

[12 : 49] Then when the king's edict is proclaimed throughout all the vast realm, all the women will respect their husbands from the least to the greatest. It's all about, you know, a marriage is a union of equality.

It says that we're supposed to love our wives as Christ loved the church. And a woman is supposed to submit to their husband as the church would submit to Christ.

It's a partnership. One is not supposed to be giving unreasonable and ridiculous commands, like Queen Veshti was asked to come and do a little dance. And the other is supposed to show respect and honor for their partner, both ways, both ways.

And unless we have that, we don't have a partnership. We don't have a helpmate, as the book of Genesis describes it. We have an inappropriate relationship. And in this case, it ended the relationship between Veshti and King Xerxes because it's saying you'll never see her again.

I don't know if it was worth it for either one of them. Maybe. I don't know. I'm not either one of them, but it's a very hard thing. The king and his nobles were pleased with this advice.

[14 : 09] So the king did as Mamucin proposed. He sent dispatches to all the kingdom, to each province in its own script and to each people in their own language, proclaiming that every man should be ruler over his own household, using his native tongue.

I really don't have the time to go into the relationship in the Bible between men and women too much, but this has raised the question. So let's talk about it for a moment.

In the Bible, the position of equality was really one of difference of responsibility. So take the relationship between Abraham and Sarah. Abraham was in charge of everything that had to do with the actions between other nations and other peoples and business and things of that nature.

Sarah was in charge of the household. And while we would say, oh, well, one is better than the other, it was really just simply different. So Abraham told Sarah what she was supposed to do when they went to the kingdom of Egypt, even to the point of saying, pretend you're my sister and not my wife.

That's kind of a little weird, different story, different time. But Sarah did as Abraham asked, because this was the area that he worked with.

[15 : 26] Sarah, on the other hand, had a different point where she was raising a child and a stepchild, Abraham's other son. And she didn't like what was going on between her son and the stepson.

And so she told Abraham she wanted the mother and the other child expelled from their community. Abraham didn't want to do this. In fact, I don't know if it was the right thing to do, but God told Abraham to listen to Sarah.

She was in charge of the household. It's understanding that each of us, men and women, but also as people, come to a relationship offering what we do best.

And where the other person is better, we should actually give submission, if you will, to their expertise and their ability, their gifting, if you will, from God.

And where the one is better, we should do the same thing. So the relationship between husband and wife, the relationship between friends, the relationship with Christians, all of us together, what we need to be looking for is what can the other one offer that makes us more complete, makes us better.

[16 : 35] Completes ourselves, not competing. That's part of the problem we have with relationships. We think it's about competing. Who's more important? Who's better? Who gets to say what?

This was not healthy, what the king did, because he disrespected Vashti. But let's move on because the story is not about Vashti. That's just the setup for the story.

All right. And in some ways, this is also a story about God's providence. God watches over his people and engages in things in some ways behind the scenes. And maybe it was part of God's plan for Vashti to no longer be in the position of acting like the queen so that another woman could become queen because that's what God needed.

Now, we don't know that Vashti died. She wasn't executed or anything. She just no longer was in relationship with her husband because the disrespect they had for each other, or let me say it the other way, the respect they had for each other had been broken.

And I'll tell you one thing. When respect is broken in a relationship, it's really, really hard to keep the relationship. Chapter 2.

[17 : 50] When King Xerxes' fury had subsided, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what he had decreed about her. In other words, he realized he didn't have a queen. Kind of an interesting thing.

Think about the unintended consequences. Then the king's personal attendance proposed, let a search be made for beautiful young virgins for the king. Let the king appoint commissioners in every province of his realm and bring all these beautiful young women into the harem at the citadel of Susa.

Let them be placed under the care of Haggai, the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women, and let beauty treatments be given them. Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.

This advice appealed to the king and he followed it. Let's have a beauty contest. Just basically. It was in the citadel of Susa, a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin named Mordecai, son of Jair, son of Shimei, the son of Kish, who had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, among those taken captive with Jehoiachin, king of Judah.

So he's been around a little while. Mordecai has been around since the exile began, which is quite a ways back, decades back. Mordecai had a cousin named Hadesha, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother.

[19 : 15] So he raised this, this basically niece of his, Hadesha. Okay. This young woman, who was also known as Esther, okay, had a lovely figure and was beautiful.

Hadesha means myrtle. Okay. And instead, Esther means star. So she's going to go from being myrtle, a kind of common plant that we use for ground cover, to being the star.

You'll never go from rags to riches. But she did. So it's a Cinderella story. It's the first Cinderella story. Okay. Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died.

So he raised her as his own child. When the king's order and edict had been proclaimed, many young women were brought to the citadel of Susa and put under the care of Haggai.

Esther also was taken to the king's palace and entrusted to Haggai, who had charge of the harem. So Esther was one of the women. We think there were probably about 400 or so that were taken to be part of this harem for this beauty contest.

[20 : 23] This is like the original bachelor story. It's kind of a weird thing, but you see all the stories come back around again. Verse nine, it says, she pleased him. She pleased Haggai and won his favor.

Immediately, he provided her with beauty treatments and special food. He assigned to her seven female attendants and selected from the king's palace and moved her and her attendants in the best place in the harem.

So Haggai likes her. You know, it never hurts to be friends with people who can influence our lives. That's just the truth. And in this case, it happens to be this guy, Haggai.

Now, what did he do? Well, he gave her the beauty treatments everybody got, but he gave her special food. So now she's going to look and appear healthier. Food makes a lot of difference. We're struggling now with what do we eat?

In some cases, people are eating better than they used to when they went out all the time. But in some cases, they don't have enough money to buy the food or maybe the food isn't as available.

[21 : 25] Food can make a difference in our nutrition. He gives her the best food and then he gives her these attendants. Now, the attendants don't sound like very much, but not only does she have people attending to her, but they're the people that come from the king's palace so they know what the king likes.

That gives her a very big inside edge. She's being taught by these people what she needs to know to please the king.

So they've kind of made an easy path for her to find her way to the top. Fixed the contest, so to speak.

Verse 10, it says, Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so. Now, this isn't like in our culture, which is a fairly open culture, where saying we're a Christian is a matter of, oh, we might be embarrassed or people might treat us a little different or something like that.

I know when I say I'm a pastor, oftentimes people react to me different than if I was just somebody else doing something different. And this is a situation where revealing what your national identity is could actually, and we'll see this later, could actually lead to your death.

[22 : 42] There are times in the early Christian church when revealing that you were a Christian could mean that you would end up being executed. Pastor Lisa talked about the sign of the fish they used to make so that people would know they were a Christian, but no one else would know what that symbol meant.

There are times when we may reveal, or excuse me, we might conceal who and what we are a little bit because it will be to a better advantage in the long run.

If we're doing it because we're afraid to show who and what we are and who we serve and who our God is, that's a different story. Many people became martyrs and died because they were willing to stand up for and say who their faith was.

And that includes even people in our modern day era. But that doesn't mean that it's always best to say exactly who we are at all times in every way.

I had a woman who used to cut my hair. Don't get my hair cut now, but there's a different woman that does it now. Anyways, at first, she didn't know who I was. And that allowed us to develop a repertoire to where she liked me as a client.

[23 : 57] Then after a little while, she came to understand who I was because you can't stop being who you are very much. And eventually, we talked about who I was. That gave me the opportunity to talk to her about God.

She hadn't gone to church in years and there were reasons for it in her own personal family. But she wanted to talk to somebody about God and she needed somebody to talk to about her own life and family.

I was able to do it. So sometimes there's a place to reveal and there's a place to conceal. In this case, it's better, according to Mordecai, to conceal for a little while.

In verse 11, every day, she walked back and forth near the courtyard of the harem to find out he walked back and forth. Let me start over again.

Verse 11, every day, he walked back and forth near the courtyard of the harem to find out how Esther was and what was happening to her. So Mordecai kept checking on her. Before a young woman's turn came to go to see King Xerxes, she had to complete 12 months of beauty treatments prescribed for the women, six months with oil and myrrh and six months with perfumes and cosmetics.

[25 : 08] That's a lot of preparation an entire year, which also means, by the way, that King Xerxes is now gone without having a wife for quite some time. And this is how, that was because he made a decision that was foolish.

You see, unintended consequences. Got to be careful about those. And this is how she would go to the king. Anything the young woman wanted, she was given to take with her from the harem to the king's palace.

Verse 14, In the evening, she would go there and in the morning return to another part of the harem to the care of Shehegez, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the concubines.

She would not return to the king unless he was pleased with her and summoned her by name. A concubine was a young woman, excuse me, but this is the PG part, that was available to the king for physical pleasure.

Let's just leave it at that. They weren't a wife and they didn't have any rights. A queen had rights. That's why Vashadai wasn't executed. Queens had rights and authorities that a simple concubine wouldn't have.

[26 : 17] So these women had a one in about 400 chance of being the one selected to either be the wife of the king, the queen of the nation, or to end up being someone without a family, without much of a life.

That's not very good odds, but that's what happened. We don't really get the idea they had a choice, but maybe they did. When the term came for Esther, the young woman Mordecai had adopted her, the daughter of his uncle, Abahel, to go to the king, she asked for nothing other than what Haggai, the king's eunuch, who was in charge of the harem, suggested.

Smart enough. Haggai, what do you think? Ask the people who've been there before who know what they're doing. And Esther won the favor of everyone who saw her. It's always helpful to be a likable person, a person people like.

Some people seem to be abrasive on purpose. Esther was the kind of person everybody liked. She was charming. Beautiful and charming.

What a combination. In verse 16, she was taken to King Xerxes in the royal residence in the tenth month, the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

[27 : 33] The king was attracted to Esther more than any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins. So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Veshti.

And the king gave a great banquet, Esther's banquet, for all his nobles and officials. He proclaimed a holiday throughout the provinces and distributed gifts with royal liberality.

So, big party. Esther's won the contest. Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful. Good things. When the virgins were assembled a second time, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate.

In verse 20, but Esther had kept secret her family background and nationality, just as Mordecai had told her to do, for she continued to follow Mordecai's instructions as she had done when he was bringing her up.

We will do what our parents have raised us to do for the rest of our lives. It's a whole other sermon, but it's true. During that time, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate.

[28 : 37] Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway became angry and conspired to assassinate King Xerxes. So, two of his secret service agents are going to try and kill him.

But Mordecai, in verse 22, found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were impaled on poles.

All this was recorded in the book of the Annals in the presence of the king. Okay, we're in chapter 3. We've got some ground to cover. After these events, King Xerxes honored Haman, son of Hamedita, the Agite, elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than all the other nobles.

So, we're in different location, different scene. Haman is now being honored by the king. All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him.

We don't know why he was honored. We just know he was. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor. Now, it's important to note, it doesn't say because of his faith.

[29 : 49] It doesn't say that this is like Daniel or someone like that who didn't want to diminish his faith or something of that nature. It just appears that Mordecai doesn't respect Haman, maybe because he's Agagite, they were enemies of the Jews or maybe he just didn't like them or maybe he just was too proud himself.

We don't know. We don't know. Mordecai is making a decision that could or would affect other people.

But he's doing it for reasons that he doesn't share. In verse 3, the royal officials at the king's gate asked Mordecai, why do you disobey the king's command? See, this is not Haman's command, it's the king's command.

Day after day, they spoke to him, but he refused to comply. Therefore, they told Haman about it to see whether Mordecai's behavior would be tolerated, for he had told them he was a Jew. Right now, we have people who are following the government rules and we have people that aren't.

We're doing all these things on the internet because we're trying to stay connected to our church, but we haven't opened our doors. Some have. At this point in time, we're not doing it because it's not healthy.

[31 : 05] We're not going about and saying, we'll do whatever we want. Nobody can tell us what to do. We're trying to keep the safety of our people in mind. At the same point in time, at some position along this journey, there will be a time where things will have to change and change back to where the church can meet.

Someone said, what if the church stays closed until January? I said, I don't think the church will be okay with staying closed until January. So this is a balance. People can only rule if there's somebody that will listen to their rule and people can only be ruled if they're willing to allow the person in charge to rule.

So that's what's going on here and right now, Mordecai doesn't respect Haman. When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged.

Okay, so it's not just that it's being disrespected. It's not even just that he's disobeying the king. He's just personally angry.

A lot of pride in this book. A lot of concern about self-aggrandizement. In verse 6, yet having learned who Mordecai's people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai and stemmed, Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.

[32 : 27] So, again, unintended consequences. Mordecai thinks his actions will just affect him, but now they're going to affect everybody related to him, the entire people of Israel and the empire.

That's a lot of people because Mordecai didn't want to bow down to Haman. Now, maybe he had a reason that was good, but we don't have it shared in this book. Unintended consequences of one person's decision.

And why did Haman do that? Well, because Haman's a very small and sad little man. In the twelfth year of King Xerxes, in the first month, the month of Nisan, the purr, that is the lot, was cast in the presence of Haman to select a day and month, and the lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Edar.

This is like rolling the dice. They actually used bones. And how they landed determined what the decision was. So they were trying to decide when are they going to carry out this revenge that Haman wants against the Jewish people.

And they picked the twelve-month, the month of Adar, which is similar to our month of March. Then Haman said to the King Xerxes, There's a certain people dispersed among the peoples of all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate.

[33 : 46] Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's law. It is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. There's a group of people.

It doesn't say how many. It doesn't say this affects tens of thousands of people, or maybe hundreds of thousands of people. He just says there's some people, a group of people. Some problem people.

In verse 9, he says, If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents of silver to the king's administrators for the royal treasury. So, he's going to give some money to the king if he can kill the Jews.

Now again, he only has one person, Mordecai, who refused to bow down, but he's going to kill an entire people for that. And quite honestly, if Haman had decided just to kill Mordecai, we don't know what the consequences in the long run would have been in this book.

But at this point in time, things have changed and taken on much larger concern because of the decisions of one person, Mordecai, and then one person, Haman.

[34 : 54] So now we're going to get the consequences of one person who happens to be the king. In verse 10, he says, so the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman, son of Hamedta, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.

Okay, so a signet ring was, you'd push that into the wax. It was a unique ring that was kind of like more than a charge card.

It gave orders and it gave authority from the king. Only the king had that ring. No one else could wear that ring. That would be treason. Okay, so it was a unique ring and he gave it to Haman.

So when Haman made a decree, he was now making it in the name of the king. And he said to him, in verse 11, keep the money, the king said to Haman, and do with the people as you please.

Okay, I don't need your money, but I don't need any people who are in rebellion either. Now remember, all the rules, once they're made, can't be taken back. Then on the 13th day of the first month, the royal secretaries were summoned.

[36 : 00] They wrote out in the script of each province and in the language of each people, all Haman's orders to the king, satraps, the governors, the various provinces, the nobles, the various peoples.

They were written in the name of King Xerxes himself and sealed with his own ring by Haman, who's got the ring. Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jews, young and old, women and children, on a single day, the 13th day of the 12th month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.

A couple things just came out in that. First of all, this is the first month. They're going to have almost a year to prepare this. The Jews are going to have almost a year to anticipate the horror of this.

And the second thing is, why would they do this? Because they get to get all the stuff the Jews own and take it. Some people think that's the reason why the Nazis persecuted the Jews, simply to get their stuff.

It's really sad that sometimes people will hurt other people just over money. Really. Just over things and stuff and possessions.

[37 : 11] to plunder somebody else's stuff. Means we value them less than things. And nothing should be valued less than a person.

Certainly not things. Verse 14, a copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as a law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so they'd be ready for that day.

The couriers went out, spurred on by the king's command and the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink but the city of Susa was bewildered.

The people were like, what? Why are we killing the Jews? I don't get it. What did they do wrong? Because the Jewish people weren't doing anything wrong right then. And these two people sat down to have a drink.

Seems like they always want to sit down to have a drink. And it does seem like this king is the smartest king which by the way he also went to war with Greece and lost right around the same time. Whole different story, different issue but he wasn't in some ways the smartest of kings.

[38 : 17] Chapter 4, we've got a ways to go. When Mordecai learned of all that had been done he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes and went out into the city wailing loudly and bitterly. But he went only as far as the king's gate because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter into it.

In the king's palace everybody had to be dressed as if everything was wonderful. We only have good things. It's called the CEO complex. Never tell the boss anything wrong because you have the danger of having a backlash that could get you executed or fired in this case executed.

Right? So in the palace everything has to be good and happy. There's no problems here. Everything's fine. We need people and especially people in power.

We need people that can speak to them and can tell them the truth even when they don't want to hear it. Anyways, in every province in verse 3 to which the edict and order of the king came there was mourning among the Jews with fasting weeping and wailing many lay in sackcloth and ashes which was a sign of mourning saying I am worth nothing everything I own doesn't matter and it's a turning to God in prayer even though they don't mention God and they don't talk about prayer it's a sign of committing ourselves simply to God saying nothing we own is going to help us.

In verse 4 when Esther's eunuchs and female tenants came and told her about Mordecai she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth but he would not accept them.

[39 : 53] He couldn't come into the palace in that sackcloth and ashes so she sent him clothes but he wouldn't wear them. Then Esther summoned Hathak one of the king's eunuchs assigned to a tender and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why.

She can't go out of the palace he can't come in. He could have come in if he was dressed right. So Hathak went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate that's where business is conducted.

Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation which had been published in Susa to show to Esther and explain it to her and he told him to instruct her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead him for her people.

It's helpful to have people in high places right? Hathak went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai all the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches a king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives.

But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king. So first of all King Xerxes hasn't seen his wife for thirty days that's not healthy alright? But second of all if she goes into his presence without his invitation unless he extends the gold scepter she's put to death.

[41 : 33] So that's a pretty big risk. Mordecai wants her to go and talk to the king which makes sense she has the king's ear but she doesn't because they don't have that kind of relationship really.

In verse 12 when Esther's words were reported to Mordecai he sent back this answer don't think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape.

For if you remain silent at this time relief and deliverance for the Jews will rise from another place but you and your father's family will perish and who knows that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this wonderful little passage.

Okay first of all it says God is going to have his way and he will deliver his people he will deliver us from this coronavirus he will deliver the church the gates of hell will not prevail against the church God's will will be done the question is what will we be doing in that will will we do our part or not if we do our part then we have a place in the kingdom of heaven right we're talking about kingdom living in our sermons we have a place in the kingdom of heaven if we do what God wants and needs done if not God will have his way anyways it's not as if it all depends on us because God will raise somebody else up if Moses didn't do what he was supposed to God would have raised up someone else if David didn't do what he was supposed to God would have raised up somebody else if Peter didn't do what he was supposed to God would have raised up somebody else if Pastor Tom doesn't do what he's supposed to

God will raise up somebody else but for the person who refuses God God is life when we reject God and what God needs we reject life who knows if you weren't born for a time such as this to do something that God needs done and that can happen every and any day okay verse 15 Esther sent this reply to Mordecai go and gather together all the Jews who are in Susa and fast for me do not eat or drink for three days night or day three days and then interesting three days in the tomb three days in the belly of the whale three is a very powerful number and fasting is a way of showing to God that we're willing to give up anything to call upon God most of us don't fast much but we should I and my attendants will fast as you do she's not asking others to do what she won't when this is done I will go to the king even though it is against the law and if I perish

[44 : 21] I perish she's willing to die so Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions in chapter five on the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace in front of the king's hall the king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall facing the entrance when he saw Queen Esther standing in the court he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand so Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter so now we don't know if she was actually standing in the entrance way because maybe that was okay that she could walk past the door but coming in was a problem but anyways he did extend the gold scepter so now she has permission to come in then the king asked what is it Queen Esther what is your request even up to half the kingdom it will be given to you no king will give away half the kingdom that's just a rhetorical statement they make verse four if it pleases the king replied Esther let the king together with

Haman come today to a banquet I have prepared for him oh wait a minute let me step back a minute you know husbands and wives own everything 50-50 so she's queen maybe she already owns half the well different story different different time right I want to have a banquet for you and Haman so the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared as we're drinking wine the king asked again asked Esther now what is your petition it will be given to you and what is your request even up to half the kingdom it will be granted Esther replied my petition and my request is this if the king regards me with favor and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them that I will answer the king's question so two banquets she's going to have them come to she's stalling because she's afraid or is she simply going through the process we don't know Haman in verse nine Haman went out that day in happy and in high spirits but then he saw

Mordecai at the king's gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence he was filled with rage against Mordecai nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home he was going to do anything right then and there he's happy but he's angry calling together his friends and Zeresh his wife Haman boasted them about his vast wealth his many sons all the ways the king had honored him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and the officials you know bragging pride I mean I'm the greatest I am the greatest now it's true he is all these things but pride goes before falls what the Bible says and he's headed for a big fall and that's not all Haman added I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to a banquet she gave and she has invited me along with the king tomorrow I'm the chosen one but all this gives me no dissatisfaction as long as I see that Jew

Mordecai sitting at the king's gate what do we need to be happy he has everything he has all the wealth he could imagine all the power he has all the accolades if at this point in time Haman could just find satisfaction his whole thing would melt away and he would go on with probably a very happy life the only thing that gives us total satisfaction the peace which passes all understanding is the presence of God in our lives and everything else all the possessions all the glory it's never enough it's like what Ecclesiastes says is striving after the wind we never feel satisfaction in our soul only God can give that through the power of his Holy Spirit within us without it we're never satisfied there's always one more thing and that's all he had is one thing this little issue with Mordecai but he made it the whole issue and it's going to bring his destruction in verse 14 his wife Suresh and all his friends said to him have a pole set up reaching to the height of 50 cubits and ask the king in the morning to have

Mordecai impaled on it then go with the king to the banquet and enjoy yourself this suggested delighted Haman and he had the pole set up I'm gonna kill Mordecai and he feels good about that and we feel good about killing anyone revenge is mine saith the Lord those who live in revenge never ever are satisfied never are content so long as you're raging so long as you're holding a grudge against anyone they have the victory and you have the loss because honestly when we hold a grudge the one that hurts is us not the other person no matter who we are even if we're second in command of the kingdom chapter 6 that night the king could not sleep so he ordered the book of the chronicles the record of his reign to be brought in and read to him interesting that's a particular night he can't sleep God causes him not to be able to sleep and so he wakes up and he reads a book okay it was found recorded there that

[49 : 42] Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes just happens to turn that part of the story of the chronicles you know reading history that could put you to sleep I get it what honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this the king asked nothing has been done for him his attendants answered oh that's right he saved the king didn't he the king said who is in the court Hamad had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about impaling Mordecai on the pole he had set up for him his attendants this is a great this is a funny chapter his attendants answered Hamad is standing in the court bring him in the king ordered when Hamad entered the king asked him what should be done for the man the king delights to honor now he knows he's thinking Mordecai but Hamad thought to himself who is there the king would rather honor than me so verse 7 he said for the man that the king delights to honor have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden and one with royal crest placed on his head in other words have him dressed up and act be like the king wow not only is he he's not satisfied with being second in the kingdom he wants to actually take the seat of the king never satisfied striving after the win never good enough never enough never enough then let the robe and the horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes let them robe the man the king delights to honor and heed him on a horse through the city streets proclaiming before him this is what is done for the man the king delights to honor go once the king commanded

Haman get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew who sits at the king's gates do not neglect anything you have recommended so Haman got the robe and the horse he robed Mordecai and led him on the horse back through the city gates proclaiming before him this is what he has done for the man the king delights to honor that's gotta hurt afterward Mordecai returned to the king's gate but Haman rushed home with his head covered in grief and told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him you see how everything turned so quickly so quickly we think that things are permanent and things are going to be the way they are forever and then all of a sudden we had a virus but it could have been something else we think we're on top of the world and then all of a sudden we're on the bottom we think that that somebody's a loser and all of a sudden they're a winner fascinating how things change so quickly now remember what his advisors and wife had told him before set up a pole to impale

Mordecai well now they say his advisors and his wife said to him since Mordecai for whom your downfall has started is a Jewish origin you cannot stand against him you will surely come to ruin you can't win against the Jews God's on their side now you know they could have told him that you're a long time before that and saved him all this grief and saved everybody else grief but they were afraid of Haman and so they they held their tongue and now it's leading to not only his destruction but it will lead to theirs remember the CEO complex somebody needs to tell people even people like Haman you're not correct you're not right they should have told him this the first time and instead they didn't while they were still talking with him the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esper had Esther had prepared oh yeah the second banquet chapter 7 so the king and Haman went to the queen

Esther's banquet and as they were drinking wine on the second day the king asked again Queen Esther what is your petition it will be given to you what is your request even up to half the kingdom it will be granted then Queen Esther answered if I have found favor with you your majesty and it pleases you grant me my life that's my petition and spare my people that's my request so all I want is to live and my people to live now remember no one knows she's a Jew for I and my people have been sold to be destroyed killed and annihilated if we had merely been sold as male and female slaves I would have kept quiet because no such distress would justify disturbing the king Wow if all we had was economic ruin I wouldn't say anything but they want to kill us too Kings I don't know what that means in our current situation verse 5 King Xerxes asked Queen Esther who is he where is he the man who has dared to do such a thing this picture this scene Esther said an adversary and an enemy this vile Haman that guy sitting next to you then Haman was terrified before the king and queen the king got up in a rage left his wine and went out into the palace garden now he's just going oh my gosh I've been played for the fool this this this guy I trusted and I gave all this stuff to and I honored in every way he wants to kill my queen and her people and in so doing so he wants to kill hundreds of thousands of people I had no idea how much Haman played me so he did the right thing this time he thought instead of answering immediately he went into the garden when you're ready to blow don't with couples I'll say it's like taking a time out there's a point at which you get into an argument with someone and it gets so rage filled or so filled with energy even that we're about to say something what I call the nuclear button say something about our our spouse that we know will hurt them deeply forever I call it the nuclear option that's the thing we don't ever want to see or do take a time out just tell them I'll be back in a little while you could tell them you're gonna be back or I'll say they freak out more I'll be back in a little bit I just need to cool down we need to cool down we need to let our anger subside and then make the right decision Xerxes made some really wrong decisions because he was drunk because he wasn't thinking because he let friends influence him now he's going to take a moment to think about it even though he's angry he's furious Haman realizing that the king had already decided his fate stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life now he's going to ask the Jewish Queen Esther to save him verse 8 just as a king returned from palace garden to the banquet hall Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclined and we don't know if he was getting down on his hands and knees and begging somebody said an angel pushed him all we know is it doesn't look this way to the king the king exclaimed will he even bless the king while she is with me in the house so he thinks that Hammond's trying to you know what as soon as the word left the king's mouth they covered Hammond's face then

Habona one of the eunuchs attending the king said oh by the way I happen to notice a pole reaching up to 50 cubits stands in Hammond's house this is like a hundred and some odd feet in the air he has set it up for Mordecai who spoke up to help the king he was going to use it to execute that guy that you know helped you and saved your life that's how bad this guy is the king said impale him on it so they impaled Hammond on the pole he had set up for Mordecai and then the king's fury subsided wow there are people just waiting to take somebody down especially people they feel has done someone wrong they're just waiting this all could be worked out if people would put their pride aside for a little bit and talk to each other and consider the unintended consequences we got ground to cover so I'm going to keep going chapter eight that same day king Xerxes gave Queen Esther the estate of Hammond the enemy of the Jews so now she's got everything she's got all this money that Hammond used to have which was a lot and Mordecai came into the presence of the king for Esther had told him how he was related to her so now he's sitting at the king's court the king took off his signet ring which he had reclaimed from Hammond you know the one that gives him the power to do whatever he wants and presented it to Mordecai and Esther appointed him over Hammond's estate Mordecai is also gone from he wasn't poor but now he's gone to being incredibly powerful and wealthy

[58 : 51] Esther again pleaded and by the way Mordecai and all of this wasn't pleading for his life he was pleading for the life of the entire Jewish nation he made a mistake or maybe he didn't we're not sure how that works but but he made a decision that led to the that could have led to the destruction of the whole people of Israel so now he's had to make some decisions that will hopefully lead to a better place in verse three Esther again pleaded with the king falling at his feet and weeping she begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman the Agagite which he had devised against the Jews then the king extended this gold scepter to Esther and she arose and stood before him so she had risked her life again by going to the king if it pleases the king she's charming and she's beautiful so he's if it pleases the king she said and if he regards me with favor and thinks it is the right thing to do and if he is pleased with me let an order be written over ruling the dispatches that Haman the son of

Hamathathah the Agagite devised and wrote to destroy the Jews in all the king's provinces for how can I bear to see disaster fall on my people how can I bear to see the destruction of my family okay King Xerxes in verse seven replied to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew because Haman has attacked the Jews I have given his estate to Esther and they have impaled him on a pole he set up now write another decree in the king's name in behalf of the Jews as seems best to you and seal it with the king's signet ring for no document written in the king's name and sealed with his ring can be revoked including the one that says that the Jews can be attacked so go ahead write something to fix this Mordecai at once the royal secretaries were summoned on the 23rd day of the third month the month of Sivan this is now three months in the 12th month is when all this will happen they wrote out Mordecai's orders to the Jews and to the satraps governors and nobles 127 provinces stretching from India to Kush the orders were written in the script of each province and the language of each people and also to the Jews in their own script and language Mordecai wrote in the name of King Xerxes sealed the dispatches with the king's signet ring and sent them by mounted couriers who rode fast horses especially bread for the king the king's edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves to destroy kill and annihilate the armed men of any nationality or province who might attack them and their women and children and to plunder the property of their enemies the day appointed for the Jews to do this in all the provinces of the king Xerxes was a 13th day of the 12th month the month of Adar a copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves of their enemies the couriers riding the royal horses went out spurred on by the king's command and the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa so this statement says that the Jews can defend themselves basically all right and it's going to happen at the exact same time now what happens is is all of a sudden the authority and power of the king shifts sides so it's not just that the Jews can defend themselves it's that the enemies of the Jews go from being being favored by the king's officials and soldiers and everything else to being on the bad side of that and the Jews did have their enemies we all have our enemies who are waiting to hurt them and plunder them when

Mordecai left the king's presence in verse 15 he was wearing royal garments of blue and white a large crown of gold and a purple robe and fine linen he's dressed like a king and the city of Susa had a joyous celebration for the Jews it was a time of happiness and joy gladness and honor in every province and every city to which the edict of the king came there was joy and gladness among the Jews with feasting and celebrating and many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them many people became Jews because they were afraid of what might happen if they were on the wrong side of this situation I could spend probably an entire bible study talking about how christianity came to the world behind the armies of europe now some people will call that bad many people became jews and became followers of god because of the physical fear they had the world behind the world behind the people of god it's an interesting question just to ponder how much does authority and power help to promote the christian faith something to think about on the 13th it's not a modern concept that we're real comfortable with but it's been a concept for hundreds of years we can look at how islam conquered the middle east by the sword and changed the religion from christianity to islam and christianity changed the world of and the religions of south america and north america and africa and parts of asia on the armies of europe on the 13th day of the 12th month the month of addar this is chapter 9 by the way the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out on this day the enemies of the jews had hoped to overpower them but now the tables were turned and the jews got the upper hand over those who hated them the jews assembled in their cities in all the provinces of king xerxes to attack them determined to destroy them no one could stand against them because the people of all the other nationalities were afraid of them so they didn't have any they the jews had allies but their enemies didn't all the nobles of the prophets the satraps the governors the kings of ministers to help the jews because fear of mordecai had seized them mordecai's now got the king's signet and he's dressed like a king so they're going to do what he says and they're going to help the jews that that shifts the power a lot mordecai was prominent in the palace his reputation spread throughout the province and he became more and more powerful does it matter to have power in the government for the advantage of god's purposes wow we're in a democracy and i would say to you right now neither the democratic party or the republican party have a hold on being christian some ways democrats are more christian some ways republicans are but we do want people who believe in god we do want people who who believe in our principles and our values because they're supposed to represent us and if christianity really is important to us we want to vote what we believe the jews struck down all their enemies with the sword killing and destroying them and they did what they had pleased to those who hated them as a lot of people died that's not really a great thing in the citadel of susa the jews killed and destroyed 500 men they also killed peshidatha the elfin ashpatha puerasa a bunch of other people whose names i can't pronounce they were the ten sons of hammond son of hamedatha the enemy of the jews so they took out hammond's sons because you know

the sons are just waiting for revenge and that's probably what they're thinking but they did not lay their hands on the plunder now that's a fascinating thing they didn't want their actions to be seen done for monetary gain because money if that becomes the end result can make our motives look very dark and very suspect the number of those killed in the citadel of susa was reported to the king that same day the king said to queen esther the jews have killed and destroyed 500 men and 10 sons of hammond in the citadel of susa what they have done and the rest of the what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces now what is your petition it will be given you what is your request it will be granted so he's letting esther do what she wants if it pleases the king esther answered give the jews in susa permission to carry out the stace edict tomorrow also and let hammond hammond's 10 sons be impaled on poles wow tough stuff one more day of this so the king commanded this be done an edict was issued in susa they impaled the 10 sons of hammond the jews and susa came together on the 14th day of the month of adder and they put to death and susa 300 men but they did not lay their hands on the plunder i'm sorry this is getting to be quite pg maybe not the best for young children they didn't lay hands on the plunder this isn't about money this isn't so that people can get money it's about protecting themselves meanwhile the remainder of the jews verse 16 who were in the king's provinces also assembled to protect themselves and get relief from their enemies they killed 75 000 of them but did not lay their hands on the plunder so this is a lot of people died 75 000 now the jewish people would have been the hundreds of thousands but 75 000 is a lot of people a lot of people that's how many enemies the jews had sometimes when it feels like people are out to get you it might be true because there are some people that are for whatever reason looking to bring destruction on us satan has his his demons and his agents in this world i need to move on i got to get this done this happened on the 13th day of the month of adder and on the 14th day they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy 14th day would probably be a sabbath day right two sevens then the jews and susa however the jews and susa however had assembled on the 13th and 14th and then on the 15th day they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy so there's an extra day this is why rural jews those living in villages observed the 14th of the month of adder as a day of joy and feasting a day for giving presents to each other so this is purim it's a holiday it's kind of like christmas in a way a celebration of life and and mordecai recorded these events and he sent letters to all the jews throughout the provinces of king xerxes near and far verse 21 to have them celebrate annually the 14th and 15th days of the month of adder as the time when the jews got relief from their enemies and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration he wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor like christmas we give gifts to each other but we also give gifts to the poor it's a celebration of the fact that they have been saved and they see their salvation is coming from god so the jews agreed to continue the celebration they had been gone doing what mordecai had written to them for ham and son of hamadath of the agagite the enemy of all the jews had plotted against the jews to destroy them and had cast the pur remember the lot

that is the lot for their ruin and destruction but when the plot came to the king's attention he issued written orders that the evil scheme ham and had devised against the jews should come back onto his own head and that he and his son should be impaled on poles therefore these days were called purim the word pure the lot okay so it's like dice them it's kind of weird but anyways because of everything in this letter and because of what they had seen and what had happened to them for the jews took it on themselves to establish the custom that they and their descendants and all who joined them should without fail observe the two days every year in a way prescribed at the time appointed these days should be remembered and observed in every generation by every family and in every province in every city and these days of purim should never fail to be celebrated by the jews nor should the memory of these days day out among their descendants and why because they're really celebrating god's province god's ability and willingness to provide a way to bring us salvation which he still does today god still is holding us and caring for us i'm going to read fast because i've only got a few minutes queen esther daughter of abahal along with mordecai the jew wrote with full authority to confirm the second letter concerning purim and mordecai sent letters to all the jews in the 127 provinces of xerxes kingdom words of goodwill and assurance to establish these days of purim at their designated times as mordecai the jew and queen esther had decreed for them and as they had established for themselves and the descendants in regard to the times and fasting and lamentation esther's decree confirmed these regulations about purim and it was written down in the records and so the queen made the decision now 10th chapter fortunately is a little short one 10 chapters why don't you note that 10 chapters king xerxes imposed tribute throughout the empire to its distant stores and all acts of power and might together with a full account of the greatness of mordecai whom the king had promoted are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of media and persia mordecai the jew was second in rank to king xerxes kind of like joseph remember that story in egypt second in rank to king xerxes preeminent among the jews and held in high esteem by his many fellow jews because he worked for the good of his people and spoke up for the welfare of all the jews so a lot of people in this story made decisions that had unintended consequences but god throughout it all intended it for good and we can make decisions to help turn the thing that we do wrong around so king xerxes fixed the problem he created mordecai fixed the problem that he created and god in his providence made a way for all of this to occur hammond on the other hand refused and and chose instead to stay on the wrong path instead of repenting and turning around and it led to his destruction story of esther it's kind of a fairy tale in the jewish bible in a way i'm not saying it's not real i'm saying it's like like um cinderella so let's pray shall we dear god we know that sometimes we feel like our lives are out of control sometimes we feel as if the world is going on and we have nothing to say or do about it sometimes we feel that brokenness is winning and evil has the upper hand but we know lord that your providence is still in force that you hold this whole world in the palm of your

[74 : 53] hand and that what you want and your will will come to pass the gates of hell will not prevail against the church your people will not go down to destruction and if we turn to you even the decisions we make in haste or because we're we're distracted or because we have the wrong ideas even those decisions you can turn our hearts around and we can prevent the unintended consequences help us to be wise help us to seek good counsel help us to be open to what you want to share with us and your revelation and power in our lives and free us from this virus that we might live again to honor you because for this day we were created lord show us what it is you want us to do today and forever and we pray this all in jesus name we said to pray our father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever amen it's good to see you all tonight well i don't see you but you see me maybe i'll see some of you on facebook may god bless you and be with you and hold you in the palm of his hand this day and forever go in peace amen so

Thank you.