Esther’s Petition

Esther 6:1-7:10

Key Verse: 7:3 “Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request.”

When we started the book of Esther, I mentioned that we need to have the attitude of explorers who find treasures hidden behind the story in the Old Testament. The hidden treasure is Jesus Christ. The image and the foreshadow of Jesus Christ is hidden in every chapter and all the books of the Old Testament. All of the scriptures are written about Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus said in John 5:39, “*You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me*.” Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1:20, “*For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes” in Christ...*” He meant that Jesus Christ is the answer and the fulfillment of all of the OT. Jesus is like a golden string which ties all pearls to make a beautiful necklace. Therefore, we need the same attitude to study the book of Esther, especially chapters 6 & 7. Let’s see how we can find the image of Jesus from here.

First, God’s divine intervention. (1-5) When we read verses 1-5, nothing was done by accident or by chance. Why couldn’t the king sleep that night? He could have done many other things on this sleepless night. But suddenly he desired to read the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign. He found the great record of Mordecai who had saved his life from an assassination attempt. The king might have rewarded Mordecai later, then he might have forgotten him. But the king wanted to reward Mordecai right away. At that time an evil man, Haman, just entered the palace to ask the king about impaling Mordecai on a pole he had set up for him. (4) If Haman had arrived earlier before the king had found the record or if Haman had entered later after the king rewarded Mordecai, the story might be changed. Haman entered the palace at the right time when the king was looking for a way to honor Mordecai. All things were rightly juxtaposed and orchestrated as if they were conducted by a movie director. Here we learn that there is no coincidence in God’s people. All things are in God’s divine sovereignty and work for his good purpose. No matter how Haman tried to destroy Mordecai, he could not touch even a lay of his hair without God’s permission.

Christmas is coming up. We will study the story of the birth of Jesus soon. According to Luke’s gospel chapter 2, we learn how Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth Galilee. Mary could have delivered the baby Jesus in Nazareth. But Jesus should be born in Bethlehem, the town of David. This is because God promised that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, the town of David. In order to fulfill God’s prophecies about the birthplace of the Messiah, God used Caesar Augustus, the Roman Emperor, who had issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. At that time Israel was one of the Roman’s colonies. Joseph and Mary had to go down to Bethlehem to register because Joseph was the descendant of King David. In this way, God used the Roman Emperor to send Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem so that Jesus could be born in the town of David as the prophets had prophesied.

On June 9th 2019, I had a cardiac arrest. God saved my life out of a 1 % chance of survival. My cardiac doctor said that it was a miracle. When I got cardiac arrest, I was at the right place, the right time, with the right people. Around 7 pm every Sunday evening I usually played soccer. I would not be home. On days without playing soccer, I spent time searching the internet or stayed by myself. But that night, I was in the living room with all of my family members. I was found by my son right away, received CPR from my wife right away, and an ambulance arrived in a few minutes. All things were done quickly as if all things were planned. People may say that it might be a coincidence or luck. But I don’t think so. There is no coincidence in God’s people. I believe that in all things God worked for the good of those who love him. I believe that all things were done by God’s grace and his great love for me. We must see the story of Mordecai with the same lens. All the occasions were done not by accident, but by God’s divine intervention. God woke up the king in the middle of night. God gave a desire to the king to read the record. God encouraged the king to give a reward to Mordecai. And Haman came to the palace at the right time when the king wanted to reward Mordecai. We find God’s divine intervention behind this story. Therefore, we must trust in God who works for the good of those who love him. He will be with us and help us in the time of our need. He will protect us from all dangers and harm. Amen!

When Jesus predicted his death and resurrection to his disciples again and again, Peter did not believe it. Rather he rebuked Jesus. He denied Jesus three times out of fear. When Jesus was crucified by the hands of his enemies, Peter ran away from him. He thought that his life as Jesus’ disciples failed. He thought that the story of Jesus finished with his death on the cross. But he was wrong! Jesus rose again from the dead! The Risen Jesus visited Peter and forgave him. Jesus reinstated Peter, commanded him to feed his sheep and to go out to preach the good news to the whole world. Peter came to realize that all things were done by God’s divine plan for world salvation. Later he testified about Jesus before 3,000, “*This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.*” (Ac 2:23-24) I don’t mean that all things in all human lives are done by God. God gave each of us a freewill and the freedom of choice as our gift. Nevertheless, God often intervenes in special occasions, especially in his chosen people, for his good purpose.

Second, the man the king delights to honor. (6-14) In these verses we see Haman’s ironic dilemma. When the king asked Haman how to honor the man the king delighted, Haman answered with maximum degree, thinking that he should be the man the king delighted to honor. He was deluded by narcissism. Haman answered this in verses 7-9, “***So he answered the king, “For the man the king delights to honor, have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king’s most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, “This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor.***” I think Haman added more than enough for himself, thinking that he would be honored as he had said. But he did not know that the man the king delighted to honor was Mordecai, his worst adversary. How did the king answer? “***Go at 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 gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended.***” (10) So ***Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horse-back through the city streets, proclaiming before him, “This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor***!” (11) King David said in Psalm 23:. “*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows...”* God prepared a table for Mordecai in the presence of Haman, the adversary of Mordecai. God raised the cup of victory before the eyes of Haman. This is the same picture of how God honors us when we finish our life on this earth. Are you the man or the woman our King Jesus delights to honor? God honors us as the king Xerxes honored Mordecai. God will robe us and lead us on horse-back through the holy city of the golden streets. The angels will proclaim, “This is what is done for the man or the woman the king delights to honor.” Amen! At that time God will prepare the table for us and raise the cup of glory before the eyes of our enemies. This blessing comes when we please our King Jesus and honor him with all our hearts, souls, and strength.

Third, Esther’s plea and Haman’s death (7:1-10) When Esther invited the king and Haman to her banquet, Haman was so happy. He bragged about her invitation to his wife and friends. But he did not know that her invitation was a trap for him. Leaving humiliation and grief behind, Haman went to the banquet which Esther had prepared. As they were drinking wine on the second day, the king again asked, “***Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted***.” (2) What was Esther’s answer? Look at verse 3. “***Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request..***.” Esther’s petition was to save her life, and her request was to save her people. Then she explained about Haman’s evil scheme to destroy her and her people. (4) When the king asked who the man was who would do such evil things, Esther answered, “***An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!***” (6)

It was not easy for Esther to tell all the truth about Haman’s evil plan before the king and Haman. The king might not have listened to Esther’s story because Haman was the king’s right hand man. But she did it by faith. As she said before, “*If I perish, I perish.*” She risked her life to save her family and her people. Yesterday I heard news from the Voice of the Martyrs about a 16-year-old girl MaLaiWan, who was kicked out by her father because of her faith in Jesus. Her father persecuted her, but she did not give up her faith. She prayed and prayed for her father until he was converted into Christianity. This is not only her story, but also the story of missionary Esther Lee and Grace Park who kept their faith with the spirit of “*If I perish, I perish*.” Last week we learned how to contend for our faith in this unbelieving and perverse generation through the study of Jude. Faith is not kept for free or by nature, but through struggling with Esther’s courage and wisdom. Our enemy is Satan whose weapon is fear. Satan plants fear in our heart not to tell the truth, but to compromise. But God did not give us the spirit of fear, but the spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline. (2 Ti 1:7) May God help us to overcome fear so that we may contend for our faith which was entrusted to us as Esther did. Amen!

Finally, the king’s fury brought Haman’s execution. Haman was impaled on the pole which he had made for Mordecai. (9,10) He dug his own grave. Proverbs 26:27 says, “*Whoever digs a pit will fall into it; if someone rolls a stone, it will roll back on them*.” Ps 37:1-3 continues, “*Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong; for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away. Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell In the land and enjoy safe pasture*.” Amen!