

Insomnia

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[0 : 0 0] find your way on over to the book of Esther. And we're going to start in Esther chapter nine was where, or sorry, Esther chapter five is where our reading will begin for today.

Esther chapter five. And the reading will begin at verse number nine and go down through, say again. Oh yeah. Five, nine right there. You got it right there. Yeah. Did I say that?

Oh, don't listen to me. Verse number, verse number nine down through chapter six and verse number one. And Haman went out that day, joyful and glad of heart. But when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate that he neither rose nor trembled before him, he was filled with wrath against Mordecai.

Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home. And he sent and brought his friends and his wife Zeresh. And Haman recounted to them the splendor of his riches, the number of his sons, all the promotions with which the king had honored him and how he had advanced him above the officials and the servants of the king. Then Haman said, even Queen Esther, let no one but me come with the king to the feast she prepared. And tomorrow also am I invited by her together with the king. Yet all this is worth nothing to me. So long as I see Mordecai, the Jew sitting at the king's gate. Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, let a gallows 50 cubits high be made. And in the morning, tell the king to have Mordecai hanged upon it. Then go joyfully with the king to the feast.

This idea pleased Haman and he had the gallows made. On that night, the king could not sleep and he gave orders to bring the books of memorable deeds, the chronicles, and they are read before the king.

[2 : 0 5] Thanks, Josie. Father, we are so grateful for the privilege of gathering together for worship. Thank you for giving us a place to be together this morning and for providing for our needs there.

Thank you for giving us these songs that have pointed us back to your word. Thank you for the reminder of your splendor and your glory and your holiness. And we confess that you are worthy of all of our praise and that you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are holy, holy, holy, that you are Lord God Almighty. And that one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and this will all be to the glory of you. Father, we are grateful to have your word. We're grateful to have your word in our language. We can read it and understand it and make sense of it. You're so kind and good. And so would you please help us as we continue in this time of worship to give our attention to the preaching of your word. Holy Spirit, would you please do wonders among us in our hearts and in this place? Would you please stir up fresh faith? Would you please remind us of who we are? Would you please point us back to our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, and cause us to grow both as worshipers and as hearers of your word and as doers of your word and as proclaimers of this gospel? We ask all of this in the name of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks. Amen.

Life is hard. But we know from Romans chapter 8 that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

For those who are called according to his purpose. And so when you experience a medical emergency or an unexpected broken relationship or a disintegrating marriage or when you lose your job or your savings account or your car or your reputation, you look around for a miracle. Some evidence that God is still working.

Some proof that God has not lost control of your circumstances. You want to be reminded through some miraculous event that God is still working all things together for good.

[5 : 03] But our God is not constrained by miracles as we understand them. He works through everyday, ordinary events. And he is weaving together the circumstances of your life so perfectly that it makes a single miraculous event look ordinary. This is what we learn in Esther chapter 6.

But first, just a little bit of context. In chapter 2, a Jewish woman named Esther is taken and brought into the king's harem. And in chapter 3, a wicked man named Haman orders the murder, destruction, annihilation, and plundering of every Jew in the empire. And in chapter 4 and 5, at Mordecai's urging, Queen Esther agrees to help her people. She goes to the king uninvited, and she's not dead. It does seem like she has a plan, and yet she has not made a lot of progress on this plan.

And it is still unclear if this plan is even going to work. Esther is a bit like a doctor in the ER performing a procedure on a patient. The physician may be very confident. The care plan may be appropriate. The patient may still be alive, but time is running out, and everyone knows it. And we're just not sure if this emergency procedure will be successful.

There's an old saying. They said to me, smile. Things could be worse. Can you relate to that?

Me too. Me too. At the end of chapter 5, things get worse. Haman plans to kill cousin Mordecai.

[7 : 24] Not in 11 months with the rest of the Jews. He intends to kill cousin Mordecai the next morning. Tomorrow morning. If Haman has his way, Mordecai will be dead before Queen Esther's second banquet.

Nothing short of a miracle can save Mordecai. Or so we think. Nothing short of a miracle. And we are short on miracles here in the book of Esther.

But listen, a miracle is too ordinary for the kind of work that God always does. I can't wait to show you. Kids, do you know the word insomnia?

All right. Very good. Very good. Insomnia is when you go to bed and you can't sleep. This is called insomnia. You toss and you turn and you stay awake all night and you're not able to get good rest.

Some of your parents have insomnia because you are giving them stress. And some of your parents have insomnia sometimes because maybe they ate something too late before they went to bed.

[8 : 33] This is what happens. And sometimes we just have life, right? Like life is hard. And sometimes you don't know why you stay awake. So here's the question, kids. What do you do when you have insomnia?

When you can't fall asleep? What is your remedy for that? What? No takers? Yes, Josie. I already know the answer. You go.

You read. Yes. You pick up a book and you read something. Any other takers on what you do? Some people perhaps will get up and have a glass of milk or something like that.

I don't know if that helps. I know that's what my grandfather did from time to time. Yes. You might turn on an audio book. You might turn on some music or something like that.

All of these are good ideas. Now, the king of Persia certainly has options for dealing with his insomnia. He has a harem full of beautiful women.

[9 : 35] He could get a midnight snack. He could invite a counselor to come and talk with him about philosophy. That would put me to sleep. But on this night, on this night, the king orders a reading from the book of memorable deeds.

Now, there's a bit of humor that's tucked in here. The king orders a reading from the book of his life in order to help fall asleep.

I mean, come on. That's funny, right? Chapter 6, verse 1. On that night, the king could not sleep.

And he gave orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, the chronicles of his life. And they were read before the king. And it was found written how Mordecai had told about Big Thana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who guarded the threshold, who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

Remember? Not to bless him, not to commission him, to kill him. They sought to kill him. And the king said, verse 3, what honor or distinction has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?

[10 : 55] And the king's young men who attended him said, nothing has been done for him.

why is failing to honor Mordecai such a big deal? Because the king wants to stay alive.

and there are threats on his life. And so what do you do when someone demonstrates loyalty to you? You reward that loyalty publicly so that other people will say, oh, this is what happens if you remain loyal to the king, this could happen to you.

That could happen to me. I want to be loyal to the king. That's why this is a big deal. King Ahasuerus has missed an opportunity to encourage the people of Persia to be loyal to him by honoring Mordecai and saying, this is what could happen to you if you remain loyal to me.

As always, as always, King Ahasuerus needs help making the decision. Verse 4.

[12 : 16] And the king said, who is in the court? Now, Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to speak to the king about having Mordecai hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

And the king's young men told him, Haman is there standing in the court. And the king said, let him come in.

Now, we can't say this for sure, but it seems as though the king's insomnia must have lasted all night. Because now, Haman is there and we presume that this is probably now the morning.

Haman is waiting in the court for permission to approach the king. Don't miss this. He is waiting in the court for permission to approach.

He's doing what Esther should have done the day before, but did not. He's waiting for permission. As Haman approaches the king, both of these men must have been thinking the same thing.

[13 : 34] This is remarkably convenient. The king is thinking that because he's about to ask his most trusted advisor this pressing question.

what should I do to honor Mordecai? And Haman, because he's been invited to appear before the king before any other pressing business of the day can trouble the king's mind.

Haman wants permission to publicly execute Mordecai and the king wants counsel for how to publicly honor Mordecai.

If there is a more ironically comic scene in all of scripture, I am not aware of it. Verse 6. So Haman, I just love this opening.

So Haman came in and the king said to him, what should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?

[14 : 51] And Haman said to himself, whom would the king delight to honor more than me?

Haman said to himself, who would the king delight to honor more than me? And Haman said to the king, for the man whom the king delights to honor, let royal robes be brought which the king has worn and the horse that the king has ridden on and on whose head a royal crown is set and let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble officials.

Let them dress the man whom the king delights to honor and let them lead him on the horse through the square of the city proclaiming before him, thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.

Now, just a couple notes. You can pull on these threads later. How does the author of the book of Esther know what is happening in Haman's heart?

Hmm. Pull on that thread later. Second thing, notice, notice that Haman doesn't even bother with anything like, if it pleased the king.

[16 : 33] Right? Like, that would be a customary way to open your address to the king. It's like a lawyer saying, your honor, if it pleased the king. He just blurts it out.

And then notice in verses 7 through 9, very similar to the way this happens in chapter 5 and verse 1 when Esther is approaching the king. Notice the words, the king or royal, how many times they are repeated in verses 7 through 9.

Haman is obsessed to be recognized as significant and somehow connected to the king. You can see it in the words that he says.

Six times we have that phrase, the man whom the king delights to honor. It's like Haman takes a sip of really good coffee and it's those words and those words are just rolling around inside of him.

The man whom the king delights to honor. Who would the king delight to honor more than me? Since Haman is already the second in authority, he can't really ask for a promotion or he would be the king.

[17 : 52] He's already wearing the king's signet ring. king. So he figures, let's just complete the look. I'd like to also wear the king's robe and I'd like to sit on one of the king's horses and I would like to be paraded through the city and let everybody know this is what happens to the one whom the king delights to honor.

Now I find this a little complicated to illustrate but let me just try to demonstrate what Haman is doing here. He's trying to demonstrate his connection to the king.

He wants to look as close to the king as he possibly can and he wants everybody to know how kingly he is. Think about if your favorite artist were to call you up to the stage and give you a hat that was being worn during the concert.

Or think about getting an autographed jersey of your favorite player who just won the Super Bowl MVP.

It's not just a jersey. It's the jersey that was worn during the Super Bowl MVP and it's autographed and it's mine. You could only get this by close connection to that person.

[19 : 27] Haman wants to demonstrate just how close he is to the king. Now I think there's a little bit of humor here too. Did you notice this? Haman states that it should be the king's most noble official who leads this parade.

who is the king's most noble official? Haman is. How is he not choking on his own words? He is setting himself up isn't he?

Verse number 10. Then the king said to Haman hurry take the robes and the horse as you have said and do so to Mordecai the Jew.

To who? Mordecai the Jew Haman? Did I stutter?

Hurry go. He's the one who sits at the king's gate. And I love this.

[20 : 37] This is like the twist of the knife. Leave out nothing that you have mentioned. All of it Haman. I want you to do all of it for Mordecai the Jew and don't you leave out anything that you have mentioned.

So Haman took the robes and the horse and he dressed Mordecai. What an awkward uncomfortable scene this must have been.

He dressed Mordecai and he led him through the square of the city proclaiming before him thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor eight words that must have become very hard to say as he said them all day leading Mordecai on the king's horse in the king's robe through the city.

then Mordecai returned to the king's gate but Haman hurried to his house mourning and with his head covered Lord and Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him and then his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him if Mordecai before whom you have begun to fall is of the Jewish people you will not overcome him but will surely fall before him now don't miss this the last time we saw Mordecai what is he wearing sackcloth and ashes and he is mourning his way through the city because of the king's edict the decree of death he's crying chapter 4 verse 1 a loud and bitter cry but now

Mordecai is wearing the king's robe and sitting on the king's horse and he is paraded all day through the city the same city that he was just crying a bitter cry in but this time Haman the king's most noble official is shouting all day as they parade through the city this is what happens to the one whom the king delights to honor honoring Mordecai is crushing humiliation for Haman no wonder he hurries home mourning and with his head covered this reminds me of like you will see sometimes when someone is being taken into court and they'll try to kind of pull up a jacket over their head you know so that you can't see their face they don't want to be caught on camera he is mourning and he is deeply humiliated and shamed and then for Haman things did get worse just a few hours earlier his wife and these friends give him the idea to murder

[24 : 03] Mordecai on the 75 foot post it was their idea Haman didn't have the idea they gave him the idea to do this chapter 5 verse 13 and 14 and they knew then that he was Mordecai the Jew chapter 5 verse 13 this was not news to them but now these same counselors announce that Haman's terrible horrible no good very bad day is only the beginning of his downfall but before Haman can even process their prediction look what happens in verse 14 while they were yet talking with him the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried third time this word hurried is used in this text hurried to bring Haman to the feast that Esther has prepared

Haman is skilled at manipulating the king and even though he still seems to have control over the destiny of the entire population of Jews across the empire the author wants us to notice that Haman is not in control of his own life while his wife and wise men are still talking to him the king's eunuchs arrive and they rush Haman to the second banquet prepared by Esther in her territory on her terms by her initiative Haman is not in control before chapter 6 Haman is rising and Mordecai!

and Mordecai is in mortal danger now Haman is doomed according to the prediction of his own wife and counselors if you went and did this to a Jew you were going to kill a Jew what is wrong with you Haman Haman is doomed and Mordecai has been exalted who is responsible for this stunning reversal whose plan is being carried out here well consider how these ordinary circumstances have been weaved together how do Haman's wife and wise men certainly know friends of the

Jews how do they have the insight to predict his downfall through a Jew why does Haman assume that the king wishes to honor him why doesn't the king tell Haman it's actually Mordecai this is not that complicated right why doesn't the king say hey Haman good morning it's good to see you I was listening to the chronicle last night and I got to this part in the chronicle where you remember that guy Mordecai he's one of the officials he sits at the gate it turns out five years ago he he exposed a plot to assassinate me I know I know right me Haman but it turns out we never properly honored him for that so I was thinking we should do something for Mordecai what would you suggest why didn't the king do that what are the chances that just as the king realizes that he forgot to honor

Mordecai Haman is eager to talk about his plan to execute Mordecai why does the king seek counsel at all for a decision that seems awfully simple which scribe which scribe recorded Mordecai's heroics in the chronicle and didn't raise his hand you know and say hey I was just noticing here that this happened today as I'm recording it in the chronicle may it please the king I was wondering if we're going to do something to honor Mordecai today which scribe failed to do that how does no one notice this for five years how does a Persian king known for generosity fail to reward a trusted public official who saved his life why didn't the reading of the chronicle put the king to sleep why did the king choose a reading at all when he had other options for dealing with his insomnia we know that king

[29 : 37] Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel had insomnia because of dreams and we know that king Darius had insomnia because he was anxious about Daniel in the lion's den but this gets to the real question why did king Ahasuerus have insomnia that night as the 75 foot stake was being built for Mordecai what kept him awake maybe the question is not what maybe the question is who and the answer is God think about this if Esther appears before the king and gives her request immediately or if the story turns after the second banquet then Esther and the king become the cause of this reversal in the book of

Esther they are the cause they are the players they are the ones whose plan is being executed whose plan is being executed here who is the active one pulling together all of these circumstances to ensure that this all lines up just the way that it would need to line up by beginning this reversal in the book of Esther while the king is sleepless in Susa the author reinforces this fact no human in the story no human in the story not queen Esther not the second most powerful person in the story not even the king himself is in control and when you consider this long chain of events that leads to this unimaginable reversal isn't it true that a miracle is too ordinary for the work that

God did I don't know about you but when I can see what God is doing when I can see what God is doing trusting seems easier when I can understand how God is working then I can be patient at least for the short term maybe you say well if God would just show me how he will get us through this medical diagnosis or if I could understand how this betrayal this shame this outcome this loss this stress is somehow going to be turned into some good in my life if I could just understand it then maybe I could muster a mustard seed of faith friend you may never understand what

God is doing you may never understand what God is doing and you may never understand why he is doing what he is doing you may never understand how it is that God works all things for his glory and the good of his people but I promise you this a day is coming when you will be glad for every moment that you chose to trust God and to take one more step of faith because as we read in Romans chapter 9 whoever believes in him will not be put to shame how can you be so sure how can you be so sure that God is working all things for his glory and my good you know what I would like

I would like a miracle right now I'd like a miracle right now how can you say that sometimes a miracle is too ordinary for the work that God does because the multi-year!

[34 : 17] chain of events that comes together in Esther chapter 6 is just a shadow it's a shadow of a more wonderful story with a much more intricate chain of events that takes centuries not just five years to come together in the earliest chapters of the Bible God makes a promise God promises to provide one who will crush the serpent's head and many potential heroes are born and we kind of root for them you know as you read through the Old Testament we root through the we root for these heroes to be the one and yet every single one fails to live up to God's standard and every single one fails to be the promised one and then for 400 years

God is silent but at just the right time God sends his only son into the womb of a virgin and shortly after his birth the king tries to kill him but his family escapes to Egypt and the promised one grows up in Nazareth and at the age of 30 he gathers a small band of followers to himself begins to travel from town to town preaching healing casting out demons three years later Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey what a wild day that was and the people are there and they are excited blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord they understand this is the Messiah this is the one he's going to free us from Rome this is our guy and then in a single night one follower betrays him a second denies ever even knowing him

Jesus is captured and condemned to death and unlike the story of Mordecai where a death sentence leads to this parade of exaltation for Jesus this parade of exaltation leads to a death sentence hours later the serpent crusher is hanging dead on a cross but by dying Jesus destroyed the one who has the power of death and in the greatest reversal of all the greatest twist the world has ever known on the first day of the week early in the morning Jesus is alive and hear this this is what happens to the one whom God delights to honor God has highly exalted him and given him the name that is above every name so that at the name of

Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord friend a miracle is simply too ordinary a word for the work that God did consider the chain of events that led you here consider the circumstances that had to be arranged so that you would hear this sermon on this day from this text of scripture it could have been another text there are plenty of them but here you are confronted by this fresh knowledge that God really does arrange every circumstance of every life fresh knowledge that God has arranged every moment of your life to bring you right here right now to this decision will you trust in

God's deliverer Jesus as your only hope of salvation for the sins for the judgment that your sins deserve brothers and sisters consider the chain of events that led to your faith in Jesus just think about that one moment think of the people that God used think of the circumstances that God arranged so that you would hear and respond to the gospel praise him praise him for what he has done consider the chain of events that brought you to this city to your spouse to your decision to choose this school and not that school to the career that you have now to this church now make no mistake every circumstance has not been positive like Esther some things have happened to you that you would not choose like

[39 : 52] Mordecai you may have been passed over for a promotion or two along the way and like the Jews you may have experienced hardship adversity betrayal and abuse from a variety of sources Esther 6 reminds us that a miracle is too ordinary for this kind of work that God does his care and protection most often comes through the unfolding circumstances of everyday life and sometimes through events as seemingly insignificant as a night of insomnia where are you struggling to see what God is doing where are you waiting for God to show up are you waiting patiently or are you beginning to be concerned that God may be late is there an area of your life where God is not meeting your expectations where things aren't working out according to your plan oh dear friend be careful what you ask for who could have put together this plan in

Esther chapter six are you tempted to think that God is somehow unfair or unkind when you trust that God works through every single detail not just miracles you will live differently why why will we live differently when we believe that God is working through every single detail because if God is always at work for his glory and your good then the details of your life have greater meaning than you can fathom the details of your life have greater significance than you could ever hope for the circumstances of your life have greater importance than you can imagine and God is working all of them weaving them together for his glory and your good so here is your invitation to stop only looking for God's intervention in a momentous miracle and instead learn to appreciate his work in every circumstance of your life this is what it means to walk by faith let's pray

Father we are grateful for your word and for your kindness we're grateful for the plan of salvation humbled humbled to have the opportunity just to present such a short little snippet of your plan of redemption throughout time would you please take your word and use it for good in our lives this morning some need to be drawn to faith for the very first time some need to hit rock bottom in their faith and realize that there is something there that as they have deconstructed down to the studs and they feel like there's nothing left they are yet still on the rock you are our refuge you are their refuge would you remind them of that today some of us need to be reminded to see your good works in everyday ordinary circumstances circumstances we want to be more prayerful people about these circumstances in our life and we want to be more thankful people as we see you working out all of these things for your glory and our good would you please

Holy Spirit do the kind of work in our hearts that needs to be done as we take a few moments and prepare to celebrate the Lord's Supper Father we confess our sin to you because we remember that if we confess our sin you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness thank you for the precious blood of our Savior the Lamb of God without spot without blemish we're grateful to be those who have been redeemed by the Lamb and those who have the great privilege of celebrating now and off into eternity all of the things that you do for our glory for your glory and our good we ask this Father in Jesus name

Amen■