

The God-given Solution > Esther 6:1-14

6:1-3 Lots of irony here at the start – so much so that we can only conclude that the Lord is at work through these “random” situations. Mordecai has never been properly honored, which would be a blemish on the king’s record.

6:4-11 At just the right time (so each of them think!), Haman enters the picture. He has come to ask the king to kill Mordecai, yet the king’s question changes the conversation topic: how should the king display his favor to somebody he wants to honor? Haman comes up with all kinds of elaborate ways, thinking that he will be the recipient of this gift. But, irony of ironies, Haman ends up having to honor Mordecai!

6:12-14 Haman returns home, complaining about the change in circumstances to his wife and friends. Yet, they seem to have turned against him, all but prophesying his downfall.

Context: The last two chapters have been rough for the people of God, but here we finally see a change. Haman’s wickedness will not ultimately stand, and with Esther’s second banquet on the horizon, there is hope after all.

Aim: The author wants us to see how God uses even seemingly small and simple coincidences to bring about His plans, and this is done in ways consistent with His character.

Gospel: Hope is found not in our own wisdom – not even our own ways to try and respond to evil. Instead, we need the Lord to work – and we praise Him that He has and does!

Applications: Sin leads to death and pride leads to ruin. Look to Christ for your significance, trust Him for your needs.

Here is how I will apply these truths: _____

Announcements

1. Some questions and encouragement: how are you spending your time these days? Especially for those of you who have a bit more free time due to cancelled events and commitments, either in the schools, or community, or even because of our reduced schedule right here at First Free. How are you using those free evenings? Or those extra hours here or there? Are you using them on something that will matter, something that will last beyond the 24-hour news cycle? Are you investing your time in people, in relationships, in the Scriptures, and in prayer? Brothers and sisters, one gift that we have been given out of all the changes we've seen this year is the gift of time: for some of you, you have more of it available. For others of us, we are just as busy as ever, but at least our schedules are a bit more flexible than they used to be. This is a gift that many folks yearned for – books and articles and news reports used to talk about how busy and on the go everyone was and how bad of a thing that was. Well now it's different. Ask yourself how you will use this time of changes to set new patterns, new priorities, and to make different choices that will endure beyond the shut-downs and cancellations. Pastor John Piper is well known for his short book "Don't Waste Your Cancer," relating to how he trusted the Lord and grew in faith even as he battled for health. Let me offer a similar challenge: Don't Waste Your Coronavirus. Redeem the time. Use it in ways that will matter.

Prayer

Lord, you have helped all who call on you to see that whatever good there is in honor and rejoicing, even better are You than your gifts. Blessing is not so much found in receiving good from You and in You, but instead in beholding Your glory and virtue; that it is an amazing thing to see Your work in a creature, speaking, acting, filling, shining through it; that nothing is truly good but You, and that we are only close to what is good when we are near to You. Being like You, therefore, is a glorious thing.

You are all the good we need in times of peace, and our only support in days of trouble. You are the One who provides all that we need – both in life and as we approach death. Help each one of us to see how good Your will is in all things, even when it conflicts with what we desire. Change us to feel Your presence even in trial, but also in plenty and in every part of our lives. Teach us to see that Your many gifts are only part of Your hands and fingers taking hold of each of us.

By Your grace, transform us so that we would give ourselves to You out of love, that all we have would be presented to You for Your service: all we own, our families, this church, ourselves – do with us as You will, so that you would be honored in each one of us.

If it is consistent with Your will – if it would display Your grace and make known Your glory, then we ask that you would give us blessing and comfort. Yet if Your will is otherwise, then strengthen each of us to trust in Your wisdom more than our own, Your vision more than ours. We trust You Lord. We worship You. We serve You. Amen.

(adapted from Bennett, "The Valley of Vision" *The All-Good*, p.10-11)