

Sermon Title: **The Trap of Rage**

Written: July 29, 2017

Preached: July 30, 2017 at Waterville FBC

Vessel: Russ LaFlamme

Scripture Reference: **Esther 5:9-14**Thesis: **Haman's rage led him to have gallows built in which to hang his adversary, yet it turned out to be his own undoing;**Purpose: **Today, we will learn the proper way to handle situations when we are responding to rage.**

Key Word: "God's Grace"

I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **Esther 5:9-14**

A) The Setting:

- 1) **In our continuing study of Esther, we ended before finding out what would happen to the Jews and to Esther.**
 - (a) I remind you that Esther was a beautiful young Jewish girl who was picked by the Persian King to be his queen; but, he knew nothing of her heritage.
 - (b) In many ways, the queens for this king were trophy wives.
 - (c) They were nothing more than beautiful women to be shown off so others would think how great you must be.
- 2) **I think it not surprising that this king did not know a lot about Esther, his Queen, other than she was beautiful and she pleased him.**
 - (a) After all he had a whole harem of women at his beck and call
 - (b) And Esther could go weeks without even seeing the king.
- 3) **Such was the case in this dilemma which arose out of a situation with Mordecai.**
 - (a) Mordecai was the man who raised Esther after her parents died.
 - (b) Mordecai was a relative of her parents; likely, either an uncle or cousin.
- 4) **We know that after Esther was chosen to live in the palace that he spent a lot of his time hanging around the king's gate,**
 - (a) Most likely, to keep an eye out for Esther.
 - (b) We learned that Mordecai had saved the King revealing a plot to assassinate him.
- 5) **And we also learned that he made a pretty powerful enemy in Haman, the Agagite who was the appointed Prime Minister to the King.**
 - (a) All because Mordecai refused to bow and pay homage as Haman passed by him at the gate.
 - (b) Which was the usual practice ordained by the king for one in the position of Prime Minister.
- 6) **Add to that fact that the Israelites and Agagites were enemies who had tangled many times in battle over the years.**
 - (a) Which led Haman to not only want to execute Mordecai, but all of the Jews in the entire empire.
 - (b) From his position of influence, Haman had convinced the King that the Hebrews were a threat to his kingdom
 - (c) And with the added incentive of a generous donation to the King's treasury Haman would have the Jews executed.
- 7) **Last week, we saw that Esther was reminded by Mordecai that perhaps she had been exalted into her present position "for such a time as this"**
 - (a) Mordecai was encouraging Esther to ask the king for help.
 - (b) Now while the original order of the king could not be changed, other orders could be put in place to lessen the impact of the original order.
- 8) **We all face times of rage caused by perceived injustice which can become a trap for us if we let them.**
 - (a) Whenever rage involves our own feelings of injustice it reveals our own insecurities.
 - (b) As we will see today, when it goes unchecked it will betray us and make us look petty.
- 9) **When we left off our study, Queen Esther had adorned her royal robes and stood in the entryway of the King's inner court.**
 - (a) Now remember that if anyone enters the King's part of the palace uninvited the sentence is death unless the king extends the golden scepter providing grace.

- (b) The king was pleased to see Queen Esther and extended the scepter which she moved forward and touch on the top as was the custom.
- 10) **Esther was probably trembling and he could see that she wanted something.**
- (a) Wanting to make her at ease, the King asked what it was that she wanted offering up to half his kingdom.
- (b) The King had just offered Esther a blank check allowing her to fill in the amount.
- (c) She invited the King along with Haman to come to dinner which she was preparing.
- (d) The King summon Haman to come to dinner being prepared by the Queen herself for just he and the King.
- 11) **While in good spirits at the dinner, the king again asked what she wanted again offering her a blank check.**
- (a) But she had not the courage to come out with her request just yet
- (b) So, Esther said that she would like the two of them to come to another dinner again tomorrow where she would reveal to him what it was that she wanted.
- 12) **This brings us to where we are in our scripture reading for today in Esther 5:9-14.**

B) *Sermon Prayer*

C) (The Hook)

- 1) **This study reveals the truth of Proverb 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."**
- (a) Have you ever experienced this in your life?
- (b) **A young pastor often boasted in public that all the time he needed¹ . . .**
- (i) to prepare his Sunday sermon was the few minutes it took him to walk to the church from the parsonage next door.
- (ii) After listen to his sermons for a few weeks the congregation bought a new parsonage . . . 5 miles away!
- 2) **Haman is rather full of his own self-importance.**
- (a) He had a job as a right-hand man to the King; plenty of money, a big family.
- (b) He had just come out of a dinner with the King and Queen feeling on top of the world...
- (c) And yet, he let the fact that Mordecai not paying homage eat at him all evening complaining to his wife and friends.
- 3) **So, then his wife tells Haman why should you let him get away with that!**
- (a) Build a gallows 75 feet high and hang him on it for all to see and be a warning of disrespecting you.
- (b) So, comforted with the thoughts of Mordecai's hanging, Haman is pleased with the idea.
- 4) **Haman's rage led him to have gallows built in which to hang his advisory . . .**
- (a) Yet, it will turn out to be his own undoing;
- (b) Today, we learn the proper way to handle situations when we are responding to rage.

TS: **Well, Haman had a plan; but God was way ahead of him; and it all starts with . . .**

II) Body: (Key Points)

A) Key Point #1: **The King Couldn't Sleep**

- 1) **Chapter 6 opens with the King having been unable to sleep that night.**
- (a) Running an empire is a heavy load and the King not being able to sleep seems like a little thing.
- (b) But have you ever noticed how God can take a seemingly unimportant little thing and use it for His purpose?
- 2) **When I can't sleep I like to put on a documentary.**
- (a) Something that is monotone is perfect.

¹ 1001 More Humorous Illustrations, Michael Hodgin, Zondervan, Grand Raids, Michigan, 1998, #741

- (b) Oh, it can be interesting; but if I know I have it recorded and can watch it if I fall asleep, then I don't mind just closing my eyes and listening.
- (c) The distraction from all the things racing through my mind is often just the sleeping pill I need to drift off into a good sleep.
- (d) Reading can sometimes help too.
- 3) **But our king did not have any documentaries to watch or listen to; so, what does he do?**
 - (a) It is early in the morning and he calls one of his servants to bring the annals of the kings and to read it to him.
 - (b) You see today we have cell phones and cameras recording every mundane event in our lives to be preserved forever in cyberspace clouds or what have you.
- 4) **When I was growing up we kept photo albums and diaries.**
 - (a) But back in these times a king would have a team or scribes to record all the important decisions and events of the day to preserve their records.
 - (b) Most of it was probably rather uninteresting and with the King's mind racing he asks to have the annals of the king to be read aloud.
 - (c) I bet it was rather monotone, rhythmic and boring . . . an almost perfect distraction for a brain that will not shut down for the night.
- 5) **So, the king is laying down on his bed listening to the annals being read aloud to him.**
 - (a) The reader is just reading along the events and rulings made from a few months ago.
 - (b) When he happens to recall the assassination plot to kill the king and how Mordecai alerted the king.
- 6) **The king opens his eyes and asks, "What honor or distinction has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?"**
 - (a) The king's servant replies, "**Nothing has been done for him.**" (Esther 6:3)
 - (b) So, the king asks "**Who is in the court?**" (Esther 6:4)
 - (c) And the King learns that Haman has just arrived and is standing in the court.

TS: **So, . . .**

B) Key Point #2: **The King Honors Mordecai**

- 1) **Haman has come in early to speak to the king about Mordecai's hanging.**
 - (a) So, the King says to let him come in.
 - (b) But before Haman can say anything the King asks him, "**What shall be done for the man the King wishes to honor?**" (Esther 6:6)
- 2) **Haman is so full of himself that he assumes that the king is talking about him.**
 - (a) After all, who would the King honor more than his Prime Minister?
 - (b) So, Haman says, "**...Let the royal robes be brought, which the king has worn, and a horse that the king has ridden, with a royal crown on its head. Let the robe and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble officials; let him robe the man whom the king wishes to honor, and let him conduct the man on horseback through the open square of the city, proclaiming before him: Thus shall it be done for the man whom the king wishes to honor.**" (Esther 6:7-9)
- 3) **The king instantly likes the idea and tells Haman, "Quickly, take the robes and the horse, as you have said, and do so to the Jew Mordecai who sits at the king's gate. Leave out nothing that you have mentioned."** (Esther 6:10)
 - (a) So, Haman's plot is turned against him and he has to do as the King commanded.
 - (b) After which, he covers his head in shame and goes home to tell his wife and friends.
 - (c) His wife and friends warned Haman that Mordecai will surely be his undoing.

TS: **So, this leads us to . . .**

- C) Key Point #3: **The King Grant's Esther's Requests**
- 1) **Esther 6:14** says, "**While they were still talking the king's eunuchs arrive and hurry Haman off to the banquet.**"
 - (a) This brings us to Esther, chapter 7 and the second banquet.
 - (b) Again, as they finish eating and are relaxing with wine, the king asks Esther, "**now what is your request that I may grant it to you?**" (**Esther 7:2**)
 - 2) **It is at this point that Esther reveals her true motives asking for the lives of her people and herself.**
 - (a) Then the king growing concerned asks Esther, "**Who is he and where is he, who has presumed to do this?**" (**Esther 7:5**)
 - (b) And Esther now answers, as I imagine, pointing and cries out, "**Our foe and enemy is this wicked Haman!**" (**Esther 7:6**)
 - (c) And she didn't mean wicked the same way we mean it when we say it here in Maine.
 - 3) **Now it is the king that gets up in raged and steps into the palace garden.**
 - (a) He is realizing for the first time how he has been duped by Haman to allow the annihilation of an entire race of people;
 - (b) Having no idea that the queen, herself was a Jew.
 - 4) **While the King had stepped out to process it all, Haman now kneels at the feet of the Queen who is reclining on the couch begging for his life.**
 - (a) The King then steps back into the room, sees what is going on and yells, "**Will you even assault in my presence within my house?**"
 - (b) Any hope for mercy was gone.
 - 5) **One of the King's eunuchs grabbed Haman.**
 - (a) Then he told the king that Haman had built a 75-foot gallows to hang Mordecai.
 - (b) You know what the king said, hang Haman on it?
 - 6) **Mordecai was promoted to Prime Minister**
 - (a) The king issues an order that the Jews were allowed to fight back against any who would try to execute them.
 - (b) There was obviously much anti-Semitism as many did try to kill the Jews throughout Persia, but the Jews prevailed.
 - (c) And every year, the Jews celebrate the feast of Purim to remember how God used Esther to delivering them and save them from annihilation.

TS: **So, what are the lessons for us to take with us today?**

III) Conclusion (Life Application)

- A) **Satan is always trying to exterminate God's people.**
 - 1) The Devil wanted to prevent the Messiah from coming through the chosen people.
 - 2) Since he could not prevent that; he still is working to prevent God's people from being effective.
- B) **The persecution that the Jews have experience throughout the centuries is still going on today.**
 - 1) Persecution is still happening today in many parts of the world.
 - 2) Persecution is growing even here in the United States and I believe that in just a few short years it will cost you to be a Christian.
 - 3) **Would you still gather for worship if your life was at risk?**
 - (a) If you are not sure how to answer that question, then perhaps you need to examine your faith and commitment to Christ.
 - (b) Jesus gave His life to ransom you from eternal Hell and offer eternal life.
 - 4) **Our commitment to Jesus should be as strong for now we belong to Him.**
 - (a) We have to keep it in perspective; our suffering in this life is nothing compared with the glory of the next life.
 - (b) Keep your eye on the goal.
- C) **Finally, our response to the rage of those who would harm us should be like Esther.**

- 1) First, pray for God's leading and wisdom in handling the situation.
 - 2) God has the situation in hand and can turn impossible situations around and against those who would harm you.
 - 3) **Rage is a trap as Haman found out.**
 - (a) Yes, we can try to defend ourselves;
 - (b) But ultimately, God is the answer.
 - 4) **Don't let your own insecurities allow you to worry about how someone else acts towards you.**
 - (a) You are important enough in God's eyes to die for.
 - (b) All that matters in the end is what God thinks?
 - 5) **Jesus said to pray for your enemies.**
 - (a) You will find that when you pray for someone whom you are mad at; God can change your heart on the matter.
 - (b) Jesus said in **Matthew 5:43-45**, "***You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'***"⁴⁴ ***But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,***⁴⁵ ***that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; ..."***
 - (c) This is the proper way to respond to rage.
- IV) Invitation: **Let us Pray!**