

# Esther 6

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[ 0 : 00 ] I don't know if you have problems to sleep. Many of us have certain periods in our lives where we have these difficulties to sleep.

! But here we see in this story of the book of Esther, chapter 6, how the king was not able to sleep. We don't know the reason.

It's not like Daniel, a dream, or something which was bothering him. It's like often happens to us. We don't know why, but we can't sleep. But of course, in that time, there was not the same sort of entertainment you can have when you are sleepless.

But there was also entertainment for a king, at least. There was no night television or internet to watch with a computer, but you could, of course, have anything.

[ 1 : 01 ] He had to drink and to eat. He had a whole RM, even dancing girls, if he wanted. But we don't know why he had chosen, in the first verse of Esther, chapter 6, to bring the book of memorable deeds, the chronicles.

And they were read. They were read to the king. Maybe it's because he wanted something flattering to him, something about the praises of what he has done.

Or maybe because it was so boring. It was the easiest way to sleep, you know? To hear all these deeds, you know? About battles and all the chronicles about the empire and everything that happened, probably during his reign.

But this chapter, like the whole book of Esther, is full of things which are surprising.

Because it happens that in that very moment, what it was read to him during the night was about Mordecai.

[ 2 : 26 ] This Jew who was like Esther living in the Persian Empire. But they are not like the Jews living in the empire of Daniel's time.

The story of the book of Daniel, as you know, is the book of how faith dares to confess, you know? That God is Lord.

But when you think about Mordecai and Esther, they don't confess anything. They are part of the empire. They are completely taken over and serving fully, you know?

The interest of the king. In a way, they are similar to us. What is true of us is that we hate to be different.

We would like to be like anyone else. It's not that we are happy living under the empire and their values.

[ 3 : 28 ] But we try to adapt to them, to live like them. Even when we want to see Esther like a hero, no?

There are some things in the book which really are difficult to understand from a hero, no? In the key moment in the chapter before when Mordecai really asked her, you have to take a stance to speak for your people, no?

The problem is that they didn't know what was her people. And she knew that if she reveals the hidden secret of her identity, she was in trouble.

So you see that when Mordecai asked her to speak for her people, she's not so ready to do it. She's hesitant, reluctant to do it.

She doesn't accept easily the idea. Of course, we remember the words. If I perish, I will perish, no? But this is after a conversation, really, when she's not ready to do it, no?

[ 4 : 48 ] In a way, you can understand these words differently. You can understand these words as saying, well, if it has to happen, que sera, sera, no? You cannot do anything about it, no?

You have to say it. But the way she dealt with it, as you know, is that she would speak to the king, but in a progressive way.

Not just one moment asking him to save her people, but with delays, no? And after the first banquet you see in the chapter 5, no?

We don't know why, but maybe she didn't dare to say anything, or she thought it was better to wait for the next time. Another banquet, another opportunity to speak for her people.

And in this chapter 6 is a turnover. The whole thing changes. But as you can realize, it's not because of Esther. It's not because of her heroic deeds, no?

[ 6 : 03 ] She dares to speak for her people. No, it was in the way things happen very often in our lives. A sleepless night, something is red, and the king thinks, what happens with Mordecai?

He has heard a plot against the king, and he revealed that to the king. And the Persian kings were known, like any other king, to reward those who betray others, who had the confidence to reveal things against them, no?

As you know, a king lives alone, isolated. You need information. You need the intelligence service to bring the knowledge things were happening.

But in a strange way, Mordecai didn't get anything. He revealed the plot to the king. He saved his life. But he didn't have a reward.

Sometimes in life, we experience these things, no? What you expect normally, you don't get it.

What you think you are going to have, does not happen.

[ 7 : 28 ] And that was the case with Mordecai. Mordecai was, in a way, not happy with that.

And particularly Haman, the third person of our story, he was the man in position. And Mordecai thought that he was his enemy.

So he was bitter because Haman didn't have enough respect for him. Didn't realize how important was him.

And Haman also was very much against Mordecai because he didn't realize that he was the important person after the king.

So we see the conflict between these two men, like so often happens in politics, no? People who are the whole time, no? Having things against each other.

[ 8 : 33 ] But it happens that in that moment, Haman is in this good position that he can manage to finish his enemy.

He has so much hate for Mordecai that he asks and has these plans to build this stake, this gallows, no?

To kill him. And his family, when he came back from the banquet, encouraged him. They say, yeah, you are the great man, no?

And you have to finish with your enemy. You have to be strong and to show him who is in power.

So that night, maybe, they were building the stake and that was the reason he couldn't sleep.

We don't know. But Haman came early in the morning and it was not usual. And in the second verse, when we found that it was written how Mordecai had told about this plot, the king says, what honor of distinction has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?

[ 9 : 50 ] And the king's young men who attended him say nothing has been done for him. And the king says, who is in the court? He heard something. Someone was there.

It was Haman. Had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to speak to the king about having Mordecai hung on the gallows. So the king was not aware yet.

He was going to ask him to be able to execute him. Probably on a stake, a terrible death, no? That was in his mind.

And in this story of Esther, what is interesting is that you know what is in the minds of the people, no? You realize what they are thinking to do, but what happens is something else, no?

It's like very often in life, no? We have our own thoughts, our plans, our ideas, no? But things don't work the same way we think, no?

[ 10 : 59 ] Haman was before the king, and the king's young men told him, he's there, standing in the court, and the king said, let him come. So Haman came, and the king said, in verse number eight, what should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?

And Haman said to himself, whom would be the king he would be delighted to honor? more than me. He's like ourselves, so full of himself, that he cannot even imagine the king can be thinking about someone else, no?

We are so immersed, no? In our own lives, really wanting, needing the praise, the favor, to be well thought of, everyone, no?

That we cannot even have in our own minds someone else in our place, no? In that way, we can judge too easily Haman, because he's very much like us, constantly struggling with his own mind. At the same time, of course, Haman is an evil man, no? He's someone hating, no? The Jews, and hating Mordecai.

[12:25] In the Christian tradition, he has been seen also as someone portraying like the devil, no? The evil one, no? Who is really trying to finish God's people.

So these people are like representing more than themselves. Esther and Mordecai are part of God's people, and Haman are the ones who are against God's people, the ones who want to finish God's people.

But you see in this chapter that this great turnover comes not from any of them, but from the one who is the king above the king, the one who is not mentioned in the whole book.

As some of you know, there is not one single verse in the whole book of Esther with the name of God. Nothing is said about him.

This is why I think it's a book so close to us, to our present situation. We are in a part of the world where religion is not any more important.

[13:40] To speak about God is only a way of cursing. You don't have anything to do with what is God in the past and what has been religion.

This is why it's so good for us to read Esther with these eyes in our secular society. Because the one who is behind the curtains doesn't want to stay out of the screen.

he is really on the script but it's hidden. It's unseen. It's invisible. And his hand is everywhere in the book of Esther.

But like in our present life, we don't see him. We cannot show God to the people. Look at him. It's an unseen, invisible hand working behind the action.

And this is the first lesson we have from our test. That God works in an invisible way. It's true that Christians, we are hungry for miracles.

[14:53] Supernatural signs. Clear ways of seeing God. But God's will has been very often like in Esther's time.

not to work in a spectacular way by signs and wonders, but taking the sleep to the skin, letting him be a book be read, remembering Mordecai, bringing the chance and the opportunity that Haman comes at the moment.

And of course this great conversation between the king and Haman has this twist.

He doesn't know about whom is the king speaking. He thinks it's about himself. But of course the king is thinking about Mordecai.

So you get two different minds and thinking at the same time. And you get the tension of the story. This masterful story, you know?

[16:02] It's a bit like Alfred Hitchcock films. The most well-known book about Hitchcock is a book of conversations between a French film director, François Trifaut, and Hitchcock.

They could not speak English like myself. He had troubles to express himself. So they have an interpreter, a translator, who was bringing the questions. But he had many good questions.

He knew very well Hitchcock films. And Alfred Hitchcock explained that the tension in his films comes because you know more than the characters. You see the two persons sitting there, but you know that there is a bomb, something threatening, behind it.

But the characters don't know it. You know more than the people who are in the story. And this is the way he gets this feeling, this curious interest we have about the story, about what is going to happen.

And this is really what the Bible brings us with the book of Esther. You know what is happening behind, in their minds, but you don't know what is going to happen.

[17:15] 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, and on whose head a royal crown is set.

And let the robes and their 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 lift 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.

So what he expresses, what he reveals, is what is in his heart. And what Haman wants, is not power, he's the second man in the empire, he doesn't want money, he has the treasures of the empire for him, administration, he wants the praise, he wants to be well thought of, to be admired by the people.

It's very often like that with idols. You have some big, great idols in our society, money, sex, power, but there are like a hidden under idolatry of other things you can get with them.

People want money for different reasons. People want power for different reasons. So you can see that they live for the money or for sex or for power but you don't realize really what is behind them, what is the motives behind them.

[ 19 : 08 ] Certainly Haman showed us that he wanted that power and that position because he needed the attention of the people. And we are so hungry of that.

When we are children and even teenagers constantly hungering for the attention of other people. And we spend the whole life like that.

When we come to work, when we come to relationships, we really need to catch the attention of the people. We want to be well thought of.

We want to be praised. And secondly, we have this lesson here, a warning. Be careful if you time. We despise him.

We ignore him. In this very moment, like in these two days in the story of Esther, the first chapters are about nine, it's a long period of time.

[ 20 : 11 ] And then you have just two days when this happens in chapter five and six. But this is the whole turnover of the story. In just that moment, everything comes to a different conclusion.

The rest of the chapters of the book is just because of what happens in that moment. so there is a moment in history, in God's plan and purpose, when everything is changed.

After 30 years, reaching upon this earth, God, who became a man, Jesus Christ, he was brought to that cross, to that suffering.

and that humiliation, that disgrace, that same, was the fall of Satan and the evil one.

The New Testament says that in that cross, all the evil plot from the beginning, from the devil, was finally brought down.

[ 21 : 29 ] because that sign of disgrace was his victory. Why? Because of the unseen, invisible hand of God.

No one could see around that cross that God was doing something apart from punishing Christ as an evil one.

But God was working through that cross, for our salvation. And in this glory, we can see something of the future of the Son, Jesus Christ, seated at the right hand of God, receiving every praise and honor, and for a whole eternity, a whole crowd, from every nation, language, drive, all sort of people will only praise the man, the king has his delight.

Because there is nothing God does that is not for the delight in his beloved son. God, from the very beginning, in this plan of salvation, the idea was that the one who was going to sacrifice himself on that cross will be praised forever.

And the delight of God to fulfill his plan, to give us what we ask, to expect everything from him, we know that we can expect it because of God's son.

[ 23 : 17 ] When we pray, like now, in his name, we know that it's God's delight, the king's delight, to do anything, anything, really, for the sake of that man.

His beloved son, Jesus Christ, so here, we are asked also to believe, to believe in that man, who is going to be the center of the universe, who is God himself, shown to us, made human, like us, but getting the praise and the honor we always want.

So we have to die ourselves, we have to let any expectation, dream, any plan apart because and for the sake of him.

And that's what I would like to ask you to share with me in this prayer, to ask him that we would forget all these dreams and plans we have for ourselves, to be finally free of this hunger to get the attention, the praise, to be so well thought of, and to think of someone else.

praise, because we are not going to reign, we are not going to be the king, we are not going to get the praises to someone else. Maybe for some people this is bad news, but this is the truth.

[ 25 : 11 ] The truth is someone else who is going to be praised. And if we don't do it now, think about this warning about Haman.

it can be too late. It will be a day when if we have not bowed our knees before him, we will fall like Haman fell.  
Let us pray. Let us talk to the Lord about it.