

Grace Guide – Esther 6 & 7 Excerpt from Ray Stedman: *Haman's Last Supper*

Centuries after this supper (as seen in Esther 7), another supper was held in a private banqueting room upstairs in a building in Jerusalem. A similar occasion occurs. Three forces are represented there: Here are eleven disciples who do not know what is going on. Their hearts are troubled. They are concerned and perplexed. They are full of questions. They are ignorant and unknowing. Here is Jesus Christ, their Lord, their master, the perfect Son of man, in-dwelt by the Father, filled with the Spirit, aware of everything, fully awake to the danger of the hour and moving to avert the world's greatest disaster. And here, also, is Judas, the traitor, intent only on fulfilling his own desires, ready to destroy everything if by hypocrisy and pretense he can get what he wants, unconcerned for the terrible results that will follow his deed because he is intent only upon the fulfillment of his own desire, his own will. That supper, too, ended with a man hanging upon a tree, skewered to a gallows.

"Well," you say, "it wasn't Judas, it was Jesus." No, you are wrong, for in the record of the Scriptures we read that Judas went out and hanged himself just as in Esther, Haman, for all practical purposes, hangs himself. And wherever there is cross in Scripture it is always for one purpose only, to put an evil man to death. That is what it will do in your life. And that is what the cross of Jesus was. It was an instrument on which an evil man met death!

Does that shock you? One of the most amazing sentences in all Scripture is that word from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians where he says, "He who knew no sin was made sin for us," (2 Corinthians 5:21). That is, on the cross, Jesus became Haman. Jesus was made selfish, cruel, grasping, proud, cunning, slimy, and evil. And the only answer that God has to that is to nail it to a cross. Put it to death! And that is the end of Haman. That is what the Bible says took place on the cross of our Lord Jesus; he **became** sin, and God put him to death. *(It is important to note that Jesus did not just borrow our sins as some have taught. He took ownership of our sins and was punished for them.)*

Now what is true of a timeless event becomes part of our experience when we reenact it in our own lives. This is why the cross of Jesus Christ, with all its possibilities of salvation and deliverance, can be an utterly useless thing as far as you are concerned if it finds no translation into your own experience. When we believe, and act (that is what belief is, acting on the principles set forth in that cross), then it becomes true in our experience. This is what we have in Chapter 7. The action of this chapter is a picture of the only way a Christian can find real victory over the self within (the flesh).

There are three steps: **First of all we have, the revelation of evil:** Read Esther 7:1-6a

This is the moment in your life when, in a flash of insight, you see yourself as you really are. Do you remember those moments of truth that have come when you suddenly catch a glimpse of the way you look to others and you are horrified by what you see? You see in a flash that the problem that has been distressing you is not in others, but is within you. God permits some circumstance to open your eyes and you see that some evil attitude which you have been treating like a friend, defending, protecting, building little fences about, making excuses for, you now see in its true light. And you are horrified by what you find.

You discover that it is not others' thoughtlessness that is the problem -- it is your selfishness. It is not their malice, as you have been accusing them of -- it is your lovelessness. They are simply reacting to what you are doing to them. You don't like their reactions but now you see that the problem is really you. It is not others' coldness that bothers you -- the real trouble is your own self-pity that makes people avoid you because you are so unpleasant to be with. It is not others' weakness as you have imagined, but it is your relentless nagging that drives people to react the way they do. It is not their fickleness -- it is your jealousy. So there comes from the Spirit of God these tremendous, helpful moments of insight when we see ourselves. What a shattering time it is! Haman, the friend, is revealed as Haman, the traitor, the enemy, the double-dealing foe! And when we see this it is almost always followed by a **conflict within**: Read Esther 7:7

Why does the king leave now that he knows whom the real enemy is? Now that he knows the whole evil plot why doesn't he simply shout, "Off with his head," like the queen in Alice in Wonderland? But now, he rises and goes off into the garden alone. You can see him pacing up and down, struggling with himself. He is angry at Haman, quite properly so, and Haman knows this bodes no good for him. But the king is uncertain what to do, for after all, Haman is the prime minister. He has deeply entrenched himself in the affairs of the kingdom and the king knows that if he does anything to Haman it will upset the whole kingdom. It is a radical step to execute a prime minister. It must necessarily involve a great deal of distress throughout the kingdom and change the whole pattern of life of that empire.

How do you feel when you finally see yourself in the wrong, perhaps after years of justifying and excusing yourself, and suddenly you see that the principle you have been living by has been the problem? How do you feel? You know that if you admit it and renounce it, it will mean a deep and radical adjustment on your part. Perhaps a deep-seated habit of life must be eradicated and a whole life needs to be changed. What do you do then? Aren't you tempted to compromise? Don't you struggle with yourself and feel a strong urge to smooth it over if you can and go on, perhaps improve conditions a bit and try harder to control yourself? You are tempted to compromise. Well, that is the trouble there.

When the rich young ruler came to the Lord Jesus, in a few sentences the Lord revealed that young man's heart and showed him how his love for what money could give him possessed and owned his life. Then Jesus said to him, "Go and sell all that thou hast and give to the poor and come and follow me," (Matthew 19:21). We read that he went away sorrowfully, filled with a struggle, not willing yet to call that thing the enemy that it was, and cut it off sharply and completely. And the Lord, looking after him, was grieved because he loved him.

There is only one way out. The only possible escape from Haman's tyranny, the only real deliverance, is to **pronounce the sentence of death:** Read Esther 7:8-10

What a picture! When the king returns from the garden, he sees Haman half fallen on the queen's couch, clawing at her, cravenly pleading for mercy, down on his knees, seeking to move the queen if he can. The sight of it revolts and disgusts the king. Sarcastically he says, "Why, is he even trying to attack her in my very presence?" And at that moment a courtier reminds him, "You know sir, there are the gallows in the house of Haman which he built for Mordecai, the man who saved your life." Thus, reminded of Haman's true character and conscious of the evil plot against his friend, the king pronounces Haman's doom, "Hang him on it."

"Hang it on it..." -- that is the sentence that brings victory. No other way will work. It needs to be said every time Haman arises, for while we are here in the body we are never delivered from the attempts of the flesh to influence us. When jealousy burns within you, hang it on that tree! When self-pity comes moaning along and tempts you to feel sorry for yourself, hang it on the tree. Put it in the place of death. When self-will rises up and says, "I am going to have my way, I don't care what," hang it! When resentment flames because you have been ignored or mistreated, hang it. When a critical spirit whispers to you to destroy a reputation or harm someone, hang it. Put it to death.

Question: How do we appropriate this truth into our life? (Hint- It's by faith. The exact same faith we used to first trust in Christ as our Savior, we now use to accept/receive Christ's death to sin on our behalf. Look at Romans 6:10. Who is the one who is dead to sin? And you are "IN" Him. What's true of Him is now true of you. Thanks be to God!