

Series: Living in Exile; Sermon: **The Gospel Pattern of Grand Reversal**
delivered by **Dr. Josh Moody**, senior pastor, on February 14, 2021

Bible text explored: Esther 7:1-10 (context, chapters 5–7)

¹So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. ²And on the second day, as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king again said to Esther, “What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.” ³Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted me for my wish, and my people for my request. ⁴For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have been silent, for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king.” ⁵Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who has dared to do this?” ⁶And Esther said, “A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!” Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

⁷ And the king arose in his wrath from the wine-drinking and went into the palace garden, but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm was determined against him by the king. ⁸And the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. And the king said, “Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?” As the word left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman’s face. ⁹ Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, “Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman's house, fifty cubits high.” And the king said, “Hang him on that.” ¹⁰So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated. [ESV]

Review and application:

1. In the Esther story (*Esther 5:1-9a*), why does Haman leave the first banquet Esther has prepared for him and the king “joyful and glad of heart”?

But what (*5:9b-14*) filled him with wrath?

What biblical pattern is this story highlighting? (See *Proverbs 29:23*.)

2. How does God, in his providence (*6:1-14*), lay the groundwork for reversal? How does Scripture describe God’s providential power? (See *Proverbs 21:1*.)

Drawing on Mark 8:22-38, Pastor Moody traced how the grand reversal pattern of divine love transcends human “valentine” love.

3. How, like the blind man, did the disciples initially not comprehend the pattern? For Jesus, how (*Mark 8:31*) would the reversal pattern play out?

For his disciples (*Mark 8:34-38*) what would it require?

4. How (*verses 1-6*, above) was Esther wise in how she . . .

. . . carefully referred to the huge price Haman had paid the king to approve his decree? (See *Esther 3:8-11*)

. . . directly quoted from Haman’s decree?

But how was she riskily courageous in identifying Haman as the adversary of both her and her people?

5. How (*verses 7-10*) did God's providence pave the way for Esther's accusation to be positively received?

How did the reversal turn out for Mordecai? . . . and how for Haman?

Although God's name is deliberately avoided in the book of Esther, in the Greek Septuagint the word used for the hanging or impaling of Haman is the same word later used for crucifying: a strong foreshadowing of the atonement.

6. German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." Is that really the grand reversal choice we must make? (See *Galatians 2:20*.)
7. If I'm trying to retain control of my life, I haven't grasped the nature of divine love. Do I understand that I must lose my life for his sake in order to save it? Have I made the choice that Jesus requires of every follower to be empowered to make a difference in our world?