

Joy in the City

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[0:00] Turn with me again in your Bibles to the Old Testament book of Esther in chapter 8. What is it that brings you joy?

A lot of presents.

Maybe it's a win for the team that you play for, or for your favorite team. Maybe for some it's a good book and a cup of coffee curled up by a fire somewhere.

Maybe for some it's the satisfaction of looking out at your freshly mowed, well manicured lawn, and the joy of a task completed.

Maybe it's an A on a test that you studied very hard for. Maybe for some it's a pay raise. Maybe it's the birth of a child. Maybe for some it's a night out without the kids.

[1:09] What is it that brings you joy, that makes you happy, that thrills your heart? More than all of these things, there's something that should bring us joy. More than all of these things combined even.

Our Savior said, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God. Over one sinner who repents. What is it that brings the angels joy? The salvation of lost and dying sinners.

What is it that should bring us joy? The same thing. And I hope it does bring you joy. And you take the joy over one sinner who is saved.

One sinner who repents. And multiply it. Time and time again. Until you have all of God's people. All the people that He saved. From the beginning of time until Christ comes again.

From all places. And what should our joy be at contemplating this plan of God's salvation? To save a people for Himself. To preserve His people. To watch over them. To keep them.

[2:10] You see, in the day of Esther, the fate of God's people was in the balance. It was uncertain from their perspective. They were about to be destroyed. And here in Esther chapter 8, we read of their deliverance.

If the threats had been carried out. The complete annihilation of God's people. It would have meant no more people of God. It would have meant no Messiah. And so there could be no people of God. But if God were to preserve His people. You can imagine it would be a day of great rejoicing. A day of praise. A day of thanksgiving. Even as we have given thanks in our singing tonight.

And so it was for the people of God in the days of Esther. But how do we get to that point? That's not until the very end of chapter 8. The rejoicing that comes because of God's preserving His people.

When we last left off, some things had been resolved. Haman was dead. He's off the scene. Finally, the enemy of God's people has been destroyed. Good. So we're home free now, right? Well, no.

[3:12] Not at all. Because although Haman is dead, his decree to destroy the Jews is very much alive. It's not dead. It's a decree that's not going away. And so though the queen herself had escaped with her life, her people's lives were still in great danger.

And so that's where we pick up tonight in this striking, this timeless, this instructive story of Esther that's contained for us here in the Old Testament.

We want to see four things that move the story along tonight. A reward, a request, a reply, and a result. The reward is for Esther and Mordecai.

They're rewarded for exposing Haman and for their faithfulness to the king. And then there's another request made by Esther to the king. And then there's the reply of the king. And then there's the result, what comes of all of it.

So we begin in the first couple of verses with the reward that's given to Esther and to Mordecai.

Now Haman's been executed. He's hanging on the gallows for all to see, even still, probably now, the same day as when Xerxes rewards his queen.

[4:22] And in Persia, it was the practice that when a traitor was killed, all of his property, his estate, reverted to the state. It went back to the king.

And he could do with it as he pleased. And so Xerxes finds himself in possession of Haman's property. And so he rewards his queen with it. You've exposed Haman for the traitor he is. You've been mistreated by Haman. And so in Xerxes' mind, she was deserving of a reward. And so here's the estate. I'll give it to my queen. And Esther is rewarded for what she has done, for what she has gone through.

And in the meantime, she decides finally to tell the king about her relationship to Mordecai. Everything now is out in the open. It hasn't been to this point. The king didn't know which people had decreed to destroy.

He didn't know Esther was a Jew. He didn't know Esther and Mordecai were related. But now he knows. Now he knows. Now that he knows that Esther and Mordecai are cousins, he understands that Esther's people are his people.

[5:20] And so it's the Jews that he's decreed to destroy. He understands that they're related. He understands probably as well that Mordecai has been her advisor, her confidant. Her confidant.

He understands these things now. It's all in the open. And so now he summons Mordecai. Mordecai comes into his presence. And there's going to be a reward for him as well. And this time it's not just going to be parading him through the streets on a horse with some royal robes that last just for a moment.

Here is some lasting reward. And boy, if Haman were in the grave yet, he'd be turning over in it. Because the signet ring of the king, which he once possessed, his position is second in power in the land, is now given to his arch enemy.

It's given to Mordecai. It's given to the Jew. The one that he hated. Now, Mordecai is still, or Haman is still hanging on the gallows.

But can you imagine his rage if he were to know that his position, second in the land, only to the king, is being given to this Mordecai.

[6:25] And so Mordecai is rewarded as well. And Esther, for her part, already lives in a royal palace. Doesn't have much need for the estate of a wealthy man.

And so she gives it to Haman for him to manage. He's now the manager of her new estate. And now you can imagine that if Haman were alive, his blood would really be boiling. The man that he hates the most is going to live in his house.

He's going to have all of his things. They're all Haman's. They're all Mordecai's now. Haman's demise and Mordecai's ascent continue.

The reversal is just about complete now. And Haman has learned that, as Solomon said, evil men will bow down in the presence of the good and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

And he's been humbled before the gates of the man named Mordecai. And we see that what the psalmist wrote in Psalm 39, verse 6 is true. Man is a mere phantom.

[7:28] As he goes to and fro, he bustles about, but only in vain. He heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it. Isn't that what Haman had done? Heaped up wealth for himself.

He had a huge sum of money to give to the king just to kill off the Jews. And then no doubt still a great estate left for himself after that money was given away. He was a wealthy man, a powerful man.

But he had stored up wealth for himself, not knowing who would get it. And did all of his wealth do him any good as he hung there on the gallows?

Did all of his wealth do him any good as he stood before his creator and had to give an account of all of his actions? The fact that he was an enemy of God's people. Did it do him any good?

Not even a little bit. He couldn't take any of it with him. And it availed nothing. And the day of judgment. And neither will your accumulation of money and stuff, toys, all that the world has to offer.

[8:31] You could get it all. And it will do you no good when you stand before your maker. What you have will be given away. Maybe passed down to the next generation, but you amass it not knowing what will come of it.

Just as Haman didn't know. And you'll be found in that day as empty as Haman was, standing before the king.

Far better to store up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Where's your treasure tonight? Where's your heart tonight? You'll find them in the same place. And if they're where Haman's were, then you'll find yourself sorely lacking when you come to stand before the judge of all the earth.

So make sure that you're storing up treasure in heaven, not wasting the time that God has given you on the earth. And here we're left to wonder for a moment, what might have happened if Esther and Mordecai hadn't sinned back at the very beginning in hiding their identity, in compromising with the world.

[9:48] You remember that Mordecai had instructed Esther, don't let anybody know who you are. Don't let them know you're a Jew. And for Esther especially, that meant a life of five years in the palace of total compromise.

Living essentially as a pagan. She couldn't give away who she was. And so she had to abandon all of her practices as a Jew. Maybe not so much for Mordecai because he wasn't under the constant observation in the palace.

But Esther had had to compromise herself and no doubt to some extent Mordecai as well. To hide their Jewishness from all around them. And we talked about that back when we saw it.

It's about the sin that it was to compromise with the world. But what we see here in chapter 8, and I'm indebted again to Ian Duguid. He's been a very helpful commentator as we've studied through the book of Esther for getting me even thinking in this direction.

But he points out that often our fears of what following the Lord will do. If I follow the Lord, it's going to mean trouble. People are going to hate me. People are going to look down their nose at me.

[10:50] And Esther and Mordecai no doubt had fears. What will come of us if we obey the Lord, if we follow Him, if we reveal who we are? And here we see in chapter 8 that those fears were really unfounded.

What happens when the king finds out that Esther is a Jew? Does he say, you can't be my queen any longer? Does he send her away? No. He keeps her there.

And what happens when he finds out Mordecai is a Jew? Does he banish him from the kingdom? Does he say, you don't even deserve a seat in the gate? No. He rewards him. He did it earlier. And now he gives him the job as the second most powerful man in the land.

It seems that Xerxes didn't have a problem with the Jews. He agreed to destroy them, but he didn't even know who they were when he agreed to it. Their fears, their desire to hide themselves, were unfounded.

And look where it landed them. It landed them in a whole load of trouble. A lot more than they would have had if they had just made known who they were in the first place. And so their fears were unfounded.

[11:52] We might have read in chapter 3 and verse 1, instead of the king promoting Haman, we might have read about Mordecai's promotion way back in chapter 3. Mordecai had just saved the king's life.

He had reported the plot to kill the king. And in the next verse, we read King Xerxes promoted, and we almost expect to read Mordecai's name there, because he's just done this great thing for the king.

But instead we read Haman's name. Things might have been very different if they had known from the beginning that Mordecai and Esther were related and that they were Jews. And so the consequences of their sin were far greater than what they would have faced, likely.

And now, here Esther stands, still facing those consequences. At this point in the story, the fate of her people is still very much unresolved.

They're still slated for destruction as a result, in some ways, of her and Mordecai's sin. And so she's going to have to make a request, but let's apply it to ourselves.

[12:57] We do sin out of fear. We're afraid of what someone might think of us if we take a stand and so we compromise with the world. Some of you kids sometimes are afraid of what mom and dad might think if they find out.

And so you compound the problem by lying about it. Covering it up because you fear what might have happened. And you see that it only leads to worse problems and more severe consequences. You think of Abraham. And he lies and says, this is my sister and not my wife. Because he thinks the king might kill him and take Sarah as his own wife.

And it gets him in more trouble than he would have been if he had just told the truth in the first place. Because he was afraid. And Ian Duguid puts it this way, it is certainly true that very often we are led into sin because we are afraid of dangers that will never materialize.

The sin we think will smooth our path. In fact, often complicates our lives in unforeseen ways and leads us into even greater difficulties than the ones we feared. And so may God give us grace to always do what's right.

[14:04] No matter what we think the consequences might be. No matter what we fear the consequences might be. May God make us bold to not compromise, to not give up what we know to be right, and to not be motivated by fear, but by the eye of God upon us.

May we not make the mistakes that Esther and Mordecai did earlier in the story, now coming back to Haunted. Well, there's the reward for Esther and Mordecai.

And that brings us to the request from Esther. Living with the consequences of her compromise, her people are still in danger, and so she has to make another request.

And the king hasn't said this time, he didn't say, what's your request? Tell me another one. Keep them coming. We'll see the king's generosity has been stretched about as far as he's willing to go. But she knows her people are in danger, and so she falls at his feet, pressing one more time, weeping, begging him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman the Agagite that he had devised against the Jews.

The king, perhaps wondering what this weeping queen is doing at his feet, extends the scepter again so she knows she's okay to be in his presence still. And she begs him now.

[15:19] And she defers to him. And we've seen her do this. If I've found favor in your sight, if it pleases the king. Usually she just says two things like that. Here she has four sayings like that in v. 5. If it pleases the king, and if he regards me with favor, and if he thinks it's the right thing to do.

I don't know that I'd be appealing to Xerxes' sense of right and wrong, because he hasn't had a very good one so far. But anyway, if it seems the right thing to do to you, king. And then, if he is pleased with me, if the king is pleased with me, that's the one thing she has going for.

He has been pleased with his king. He loves his queen. And he'll do just about anything for her. And that's what she presses. In Esther's actions, she are noble. For all of her faults, here she is bold. Here she does the right thing. The people of God's lives are at stake. And so, she makes a plea. A desperate plea. And Matthew Henry says, it was time to be earnest when the church of God lay at stake.

And it lay at stake, and so it was time for her to be earnest. And then he exhorts us. This is still Matthew Henry. Let none be so great as to be unwilling to stoop. None so merry as to be unwilling to weep when thereby they may do any service to God's church and people.

[16:34] We ought to be so willing, as Esther was here, to humble ourselves, to fall on our faces, to weep, to do whatever it takes that's within our power, but not contrary to God's Word, to see the extension and the preservation of God's kingdom in the world.

Esther was willing to throw herself at the feet of the king. And we've seen so clearly in this story that God, a sovereign God who does all things according to His plan, uses human means. He uses the pleadings of Esther.

And He will use us to preserve and to extend His kingdom. And so she makes a request, save my people. How can I bear, as an emotional people, how can I bear to see my people, my family destroyed?

Surely you, king, don't want to see your queen in such great distress. And then comes the reply from Xerxes. And the response is not terribly encouraging.

Our English translations don't carry some of the bite that seems to be here. The first word out of His mouth is look. It's a word that's translated behold sometimes.

[17:42] And sometimes English translations don't translate it and it's not here. But that's the first thing He says. Look. And the gist of verse 7 is I've done everything that I can to help you.

I've gone out of my way to help you. I hung Haman. I've given his estate to you. I've given you a great reward. And so, maybe you shouldn't be pushing your luck here, queen.

Look. And then the very next thing in verse 8, where He tells them to write a decree in the King's name on behalf of the Jews and so on. That's good and it obviously will prove very helpful to the people.

But, the first word in the verse is you. And in Hebrew, you don't need that pronoun. You don't need the you. It's included in the verb.

And so, when it is included, it's meant for emphasis. And usually, it wouldn't be the first word in the sentence. But here it is. It's the first word. That's the position of emphasis when it's not normally there.

[18:41] And you don't even need the word. And so, it's especially emphasized. And the King says, I've done everything I can. You, if you want to save the Jews, you go and do the rest.

You've got the signet ring. You go write a decree on behalf of the Jews and my name, fine, put my stamp on it. But just so you know, there's nothing I can do because once a decree has been written in my name with the seal upon it, then it can't be revoked.

And what he's saying here is, look, I know that Haman's decree isn't good for your people, but I can't do anything about it. I'm powerless here because it's the law of the land that a law can't be revoked when it's got my seal on it.

It's got my seal on it. I can't help you. Now, you've got the signet ring. Maybe the one chance you've got is if you go write a decree on behalf of the Jews. And so he says, look, I've done what I can to help you.

I've been kind. I've been gracious. I've shown mercy. You're going to have to do the rest. And so the response from the king isn't a terribly promising one for the Jews.

[19:46] And we continue to fail to be impressed with King Xerxes. At least I do. He's let us down at just about every point in the story and he lets us down again here.

He's proven himself unwilling to exert much thought or effort on his own without others advising him and doing the work for him. And here he proves himself the same. He's the king in the land.

If he wanted to change the irrevocable law thing, no doubt he could. He might be a little bit embarrassing for him. He might not be as well respected. But he's the king.

He can do whatever he wants. And here he sits back and hides behind the system of laws in Persia that was flawed from the beginning. And it seems that he hasn't learned anything from his previous mistakes.

And if you learn nothing else from King Xerxes, learn to learn from your mistakes. And to not make the same ones over and over again like he does. So that's his response.

[20:44] We're not terribly surprised at it. But then, the result of it. They've been told to go write a decree and so they don't waste any time. Mordecai gets after it right away.

It's about nine months until the day of destruction for the Jews. They've got nine months remaining until the day that Haman had decreed would be the day of their destruction. And Mordecai wants there to be plenty of time to tell everyone the new decree and time for them to prepare for that day. And so all the royal scribes are summoned to write the new decree and it's got to be written in all the languages. There's all these provinces. And so it's got to be understandable to all the people and especially to the Jews.

And so it's written in their language. And it's got to be sent out to all the people and to all the governors of the land so that when something happens on that day, they'll know what's supposed to happen. That it's okay for the Jews to defend themselves on that day.

So it's sent to the leaders, to all the provinces, to all the people in all the languages. They use their version of the Pony Express to send out the message. We had that way back early on in our country.

[21:46] It was the forerunner of the postal system. Well, here they take the best of the horses, the fastest ones from the royal stables, and the decree is sent out through the land as quickly as possible.

And if you go back and read in chapter 3, you'll see at times very similar and even identical language used when Haman was writing and dispersing his decree.

And what's happening here is Mordecai is being pictured as having all the power that Haman once had. Just another reminder that God has totally stood things on their head. That He's totally reversed the course of action.

That the one whom Haman hated now has all of his power. He's got the resources of the kingdom at His disposal. He's got the seal. He's got the signet ring to put His stamp of approval on the decrees.

He can write them now. What a difference just a day makes even in the kingdom. How the tables have turned against Haman and on behalf of the Jews. Well, what was contained in this new decree, this new edict that goes out with the king's name and seal upon it?

[22:55] The decree granted multiple rights to the Jews. The right to assemble. The right to gather themselves together. The word here is the Old Testament word for congregation.

The kahal. When they gathered together for the purpose of worship, just the word itself as the Jews read the decree should have twinned some consciences. Should have made some people think, we haven't been congregating.

We haven't been gathering together for worship. Maybe some of them had, but folks like Esther and Mordecai it seems had not been. Just the very use of the word there should have reminded them of what they should be doing.

But this isn't the right to assemble for worship here. This is the right to assemble for the right to defend themselves. To stand for their lives. They knew their lives were at stake and so now they have the right to defend themselves.

To protect themselves from the coming onslaught. And you'll notice the decree is worded almost the same as Haman's decree. They have the right to destroy, kill, and annihilate any force from any people or province who are hostile towards them including their women and children.

[24:06] It's the same way the other decree was written. There was a right to attack the Jews to destroy, kill, and annihilate and to kill their women and children. And now the decree is flipped on its head and the Israelites have the right to destroy those who come against them including their women and children.

The way it's put in the NIV makes it sound like it's the Israelites women and children that are under attack. It seems fairly clear that the opposite is the case though that is true that the Israelites are given the right to destroy those who come against them including the women and the children.

The decrees are parallel. What's to be done to the Jews they may do to their attackers. The right to plunder their goods and take the property of those who attack them. And the time for this to take place is on one day and of course it's the day when the Jews are to be attacked.

The day of Haman's decree. And so it's essentially a decree of self-defense. If when they're attacked they defend themselves they won't be accused of insurrection or stirring up a civil war. And since the decree of Haman couldn't be taken back Mordecai's decree did about the only thing they could possibly do. It allowed for the survival of the Jews by way of self-defense. It wasn't a blanket decree for the Jews to just go out and kill anyone they wanted to whenever they wanted to.

[25:35] Only those who attacked them could they kill and only on the day in which they were attacked. And so it sent out nine months in advance plenty of time to prepare for vengeance on the enemies of God's people.

Now some people have had issues with the book of Esther because of this portion where the slaughter of women and children is decreed and where there's rejoicing over such a decree as there is at the end of the chapter.

But it can't be viewed however as injustice from God. You remember that Haman was an Amalekite. The sworn enemies of God's people a people that God had decreed must be destroyed wiped off the face of the earth and if Haman was one then his descendants were Amalekites as well.

Part of those who were slated for destruction. God had promised that they or commanded that they must be destroyed. And you remember that when the people of Israel went into the promised land what were they to do?

They were to destroy everyone and everything in their path. Entire cities entire people women and children included. And so it is for all who are enemies of God's people.

[26:51] They will face destruction. They will face punishment. Now in this day and age the church has not been called to go out and to attack our enemies to destroy them to take away their lives but God does still judge and destroy all those who are enemies of his people all those who do not believe in him and who do not obey him.

We're no longer in a theocracy like Israel was their different days and the justices made clear especially in eternity but God still does judge and destroy and that should trouble anyone here tonight who is disobeying God anyone here tonight who is an enemy of God's people who would rather not ever darken the doors of the church again anyone here tonight who is not trusting the

Lord for their salvation it should be a fearful thing to you you might have a long life on this earth or your life could be cut very short on this earth from our perspective it doesn't matter when you come to the day of judgment you'll be destroyed you'll be tormented forever and there will be no mercy in that day it doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman or a boy or a girl God will destroy his enemies his justice didn't go away just because we don't live in

Old Testament times any longer now there's a way for you to avoid that judgment we'll hear of it in just a moment when we get to the end of the chapter but as long as you're in rebellion against God you're facing his justice his wrath and it will certainly come but now there is rejoicing and rightly so because a decree has been issued that will allow for the deliverance of God's people Mordecai has finished his business there in the king's palace and so he leaves now dressed in royal garments not just a temporary thing but now he owns the office itself that deserves the garments so he leaves the presence of the king and we find again of course that Solomon is right when he says in Proverbs 29 verse 2 when the righteous thrive the people rejoice when the wicked rule the people groan and as long as wicked Haman was in power there was a lot of groaning going on in the land of Persia especially for the Jews we read about it right after the decree what was it for the Jews it was mourning fasting weeping wailing sackcloth ashes as long as a wicked man was in power the people mourned they groaned but now when the righteous thrive now that Mordecai is in power and there's a decree that counteracts Haman there's light gladness joy and honor for the Jews there's feasting there's a joyous celebration there's rejoicing and as that word spreads as that decree makes its way by way of the pony express all the outlying provinces all 127 with them joy and happiness follow it wherever the decree comes that the people of God have been preserved or will be preserved rejoicing They aren't going to be annihilated there will be salvation the future coming of the Messiah is not in jeopardy God will and has preserved his people and so rejoice they did and here again we saw this was the fasting there was no mention of prayer when they fasted and here there's no mention again of God's name that they gave thanks to God but there is mention of rejoicing and we hope that there were some at least who very clearly saw the hand of God working and gave thanks to him but we must seeing the hand of God working in the salvation and the preservation of his people rejoice and give thanks to him what appropriate song we've sung tonight giving thanks to God for all that he's done for us we must praise him for his his general plan of salvation that he chose to save a people at all people say it's not fair when people are killed and destroyed and suffer eternal punishment it's not fair that any of us don't have to face that is the truth we're getting what we don't deserve when God shows us mercy and so we rejoice that the line of the Messiah was preserved in Esther's day so that the people who once were headed for judgment and punishment have now been turned around by the grace of God and are now destined for glory we rejoice that God poured out his justice his wrath on his son in the place of his people so that his people can escape the punishment they deserve again

[31:50] Ian Duguid says quoting from Isaiah he was bruised for our transgressions wounded for our iniquities dishonored for our glory and plunged into darkness that we who were rebellious sinners might see the light this is the grand reversal to which all the reversals in Esther's story point isn't that true sinners headed towards destruction deserving destruction and judgment turned and set on the path to life and glory by the glorious salvation of God to plan to bring a messiah which he did and so he praise God that he's chosen to save a people at all but we don't just praise him that there's a plan of salvation we praise him that he's brought that plan to us that he's chosen to save people like you and like me rejoice tonight at your own salvation if you know what it is to trust the savior tonight rejoice that he's chosen you that you are part of his plan that you are one of his children if not for the grace of God

I would still be destined for destruction like all of God's enemies but no he's chosen me and so Duguid says let us daily celebrate our deliverance with unshakable and glorious joy is your joy unshakable because your salvation is and so your joy should be as well but then we also praise God that he saves others it's what we long for it's what we seek with all our hearts it's why we preach the gospel here it's why we long to see the gospel sent to the ends of the earth because we want to see people saved starting right here in these pews we want people to be saved we want you to come to know the Lord to come to trust in this Messiah to have a grand reversal yourself and then you can rejoice in your salvation and we will rejoice and the angels in heaven will rejoice when you come to know this glorious Lord and Savior here oh rejoicing indeed they were right to celebrate and to rejoice because God had decreed the deliverance of his people a marvelous

reversal indeed a people headed for certain doom now slated for salvation light joy gladness and honor indeed are ours and it should affect the way we live every day things aren't going your way you discouraged facing great trials sickness maybe just a bad day at work or a frustrating day with the kids what did we read this morning from Habakkuk though the fig tree does not blossom things aren't going well there's no fruit on the vine the olive crop has failed there's no food coming out of the fields there's no sheep or cattle in the stall things not well at all what's the answer yet will I rejoice in the

Lord I will be joyful in God my Savior now all else is crumbling around me where does Habakkuk tell us to find our joy in God our Savior the one who saved us it's cause for rejoicing at every point in our lives it must affect the way we live from day to day it must affect the way that we worship every time we walk through these doors we should be reminded afresh of the glorious gospel of Christ and the salvation that is ours because of what he's done that's why we preach the gospel so often here every Lord's day here because we want sinners to hear it and be saved and we want you to be reminded of it and to rejoice and to find great comfort and confidence in it to be reminded of what God has done throughout history in preserving his people and bringing us to this point that we might give him all glory and thanks and praise praise indeed rejoice tonight that God saves sinners that he preserves his people and if you're not rejoicing tonight because you're not saved you can be this salvation can be yours and we will rejoice with you notice the very last part of verse 17 and many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them obviously they couldn't become ethnic Jews they couldn't change their nationality but they professed themselves to be

Jews and apparently took up the ways and practices of the Jews some perhaps no doubt just to save their own skin to fly under the radar the Jews are rising to prominence in the land of Persia the second in command is a Jew the queen is a Jew the Jews have been decreed that they can protect themselves and so the Jews are rising so it might be a good time to join up and become a Jew no doubt there were some like that we'll become a Jew just because things are going well for the Jews in case things start going south for our people but perhaps there were some who were real converts remember how Haman's wife began to fear the God of the Jews and she saw her husband's demise coming maybe there were some like that that feared if we're not the people of God if we're not part of this people if we don't know this God we'll be destroyed and so maybe some came and genuinely trusted in the Lord and found their hope and salvation in Him the glorious thing is that you tonight you don't have to become a Jew you can't become a Jew but you can come and become one of God's people right here where you're sitting you can come and be saved you can put your trust in the

Savior that we've talked about you can learn what it is to embrace this glorious gospel of sins forgiven of judgment averted of confidence for now and for eternity that your sins are forgiven and that you belong to the Lord that you won't be destroyed that you won't face that judgment that will certainly come to all of God's enemies that can be yours tonight you can come and trust in the Savior and find salvation and that is cause for rejoicing we move from Haman trusting in his wealth and his riches down to the Jews trusting in their God for salvation if you trust in anything besides the Lord it will fail you and you'll find yourself wanting so come and trust in this glorious gospel this glorious God of the gospel we'll see

[38:19] Lord willing next time deliverance has been decreed but it hasn't actually been carried out so we're not quite home free yet for the Jews there's still the day of reckoning to come will the Jews be able to adequately defend themselves will they prevail against their people and all signs point to a good outcome but we'll have to wait and see for next time what remains for the people of God I want to conclude tonight by turning in our hymnals to hymn 400 although we should rejoice we should praise our God who is faithful our God who has saved us sometimes we need help we don't always rejoice as we should we don't always give thanks as we should and so in this hymn we pray that the fount of every blessing the source of every blessing would come and tune our hearts our hearts get out of tune sometimes it's like an instrument gets out of tune and it doesn't sound right anymore our hearts need to be tuned to sing God's praise because you all know that we don't rejoice as we should and so here we pray that

God the fount of every blessing would come and tune our hearts to sing his praise to help us to sing loudest praises for his great work of salvation that he's done we'll sing the three verses printed here and then a fourth verse as well from the overhead our father we pray that you would indeed tune

our hearts to sing your praise aright to rejoice at the salvation that you have worked for us through your son our savior the lord jesus christ we are a people unworthy undeserving!
of the mercy that you have shown to us and so we pray that you would make us a people who gladly proclaim the grace that you have shown to us we pray that you would make us unafraid to live for you we pray that you would keep us from compromise with the world that you would give us grace to walk always in your truth not fearing what consequences may come we thank you that you have indeed promised to preserve your people to keep us to the end to take us home to be with you we pray that you would give us grace to rest in that promise to find our hope and our confidence there that you are a God who is faithful who never changes a God who does all things well and we pray that you would come this night and save lost sinners in our midst we pray that you would give us greater cause for rejoicing that others have come and trusted in the Savior do a great work we pray that there might be rejoicing from the angels this night for some who have repented of their sins and trusted in the Savior do this work we pray in Jesus name Amen Amen