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<p><i>Esther - Wisdom is Greater than Zeal</i></p> <p>•</p> <p><i>FOUNDED IN TRUTH</i></p>	<p>Main Verses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proverbs 26:4• Proverbs 26:5• Esther 1:12• Esther 3:1• Esther 4:14• Esther 5:2• Esther 7:3• Esther 7:10• Esther 9:1• Esther 9:22 <p>Watch on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2IbSaikcJE</p> <p>Message Given: Mar 24th, 2024</p> <p>Podcast:</p> <p>https://foundedintruth.podbean.com/e/esther-wisdom-is-greater-than-zeal-%e2%80%a2-founded-in-truth/</p> <p>Teaching Length: 42 Minutes 22 Seconds</p> <p>Email us Questions & Comments: info@foundedintruth.com</p> <p>Was this teaching a blessing?</p> <p>DONATE</p>
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Good to go. All right. Shabbat Shalom, everybody. And happy Purim. And well, you could have bet money on what the topic would be today. Probably would have got it. I'm going to speak about the story of Esther and why it is so important and what lessons the anonymous author wanted to portray through writing such a unique type of story in the scriptures. But first... Let's start off with a word of wisdom from the book of Proverbs. Proverbs chapter 26, starting in verse 4. And it says, That is good wisdom. Amen? I mean, if someone's going to be foolish... and try to come at you in conflict, try to rail you down. Listen, recognize the scenario. Recognize that maybe this conflict is not worth investing real estate in your mind, in your heart. Just move on. Be the bigger person, right? It's wisdom. Thus saith the Lord, the word of God. The next verse, verse 5 says, Let's see. Answer a fool according to their folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes. So this is wisdom. Because when you're in a conflict and someone's being foolish and being overzealous and just trying to rail you, you need to stop that. You

need to respond. You need to brick wall them. You need to defeat the argument. Answer a fool according to his folly, or else he'll think he's right all the time. Someone has to stand up to him. Someone has to show him how he's wrong. It's wisdom, right? Yes. Yes. I love it when the Bible is so black and white. This is the beauty of the Bible. And the beauty is that it's not an instruction manual. It's not a divine checklist that the more checks you check off, the more righteous you are. In actuality, it's a library of texts that were carefully put together to tell a story that promotes cultivating wisdom so that you can be a world changer. The word is meant to be meditated on, not simply referenced. Meditation, wisdom. How do you actually participate in the world while being an ambassador of God's kingdom? And so the question comes, which is it? Is it verse 4 or is it verse 5? Do you answer a fool as the Bible says, or do you not answer a fool as the Bible says? Which one do we choose? And so when we come to the book of Esther... We realize it's, the book of Esther, it's a story that takes place in ancient Persia after the Babylonian exile. I remember when the Babylonians took over Judea, they took the Judeans, the ones that were still alive, they took them captive and they led them back to Babylon where they lived in exile from their land. But Babylon was conquered by Persia and some of the Jews returned to Judea. try to rebuild Jerusalem, rebuild the temple. But many, many Jews remained in exile. They had homes, they had lives, they had families. It's easier. And in this story, I mean, that's the setup, but in this story, we are introduced to two Jews that remained in Persia, Mordecai and his niece Hadassah, who were living in a very secular, very pagan, very corrupt system. Very much so. Esther, the story, I believe, was circulated to bring a sense of hope to the Jews that remained in exile. The point of the story of Esther and how it's crafted and the story that it tells, it encourages, hey, while you're out in the world, while you're out in a society that really is against everything your faith stands for, learn to navigate it so you can actually make an impact. Because how do we navigate such a thing? And the story of Esther is brilliant. It's engaging. There are twists. There are turns. Lots of irony. Ambiguity. And the word I think that was trying to come to my mind, comedy. It's a comedy. The story of Esther is meant to be a farce comedy, specifically. And when you read it, we'll see some examples. It's like, did that really just happen? And then you turn the page, and it's like, A six-story tall stake to impale somebody? Seriously? What? Just really awesome, but almost like that's the story. It keeps you engaged. What you think is going to happen next doesn't. And it's here to address the problem that plagues many of us. How do we actually navigate the world around us? How do we navigate this culture, this society that we find ourselves in? How do we navigate it and become... productive in maintaining our commitment to serve God, our commitment to be holy, and our main level of faith that we have. And you know, sometimes in all of our holy zeal, we like to yield the sword of truth without the hands of empathy and grace, of course. You look up in a secular society and you're committed to a holy kingdom, but behold, someone in the world is doing something wrong or they're living a sinful lifestyle or they're making bad decisions or or maybe they just pulled out in front of you, and you tell them about God and what God is going to do to them if they don't repent. Or maybe you're looking for an opportunity to show your passionate dedication toward God. So when the right circumstances present themselves, you rise up to defend God against those people out in the world. And that sword even gets sharper on the Internet and social media. We don't know nothing about that. The zeal to live out new creation right now, which is what we're called to do. Live as if we were back in the garden and view everybody as they partake on their journey back to the garden, whether they realize it or not. But the reality is we still have to go outside. And while living out the kingdom ethic impacts the world, it's still the world outside right now. It's still very secular. Which is not a bad

thing necessarily. It just means there's a lot of things that aren't religious. But other things are unethical and moral and unjust. And if we are called to be holy, how do we live in an unholy world without compromising our faith? I wish the Bible was an instruction manual and we could just turn to page 400 in precept number 36 and there it has the answer, black and white. It's not that simple. And that's the key theme of the book of Esther. The story starts with a drunken festival that the king is hosting, and he has all of his pals there, and he has everyone there. And he sends out seven eunuchs to go and escort his wife to come before him. He's like, hey, babe, hadn't seen you in a while. I got all my buddies here. Come over here and show off how pretty you are in front of my friends. Her name was Vashti, and Vashti refused. Yeah. Now, the king in the story, who is a bumbling idiot the entire story, he gets angry. She didn't do as I say. Roar. And here's what takes place in Esther 1, verse 12. But when the attendants delivered the king's command, Queen Vashti refused to come. Then the king became furious and burned with anger. Since it was customary for the king to consult experts in matters of the law and justice, he spoke with the wise men who understood the times. He actually went and got seven of the most elite lawyers in Persia, and they gathered around.

This is a man who was so insecure in who he is that when his wife did not come when she was called, in his mind an injustice had been committed. So he calls together the elite lawyers to try to decide how do we serve justice in for this unspeakable transgression. So Vashti was banished, divorced, exiled. And then the king declares that he needs a new queen.

So now every beautiful virgin in the entire Persian empire must be herded into the king's harem. This is one of those times when you're reading the story and you're like, what? All of all of them, like the city of of them. Trains, planes, and automobiles to the kings. I don't know how they all fit. Not only that, but you keep reading and each of them must take a year away from their family and friends, a year to dedicate themselves to preparing themselves for a contest in which one of them will have a night in the royal bedroom. And based off that, the king is going to choose his new queen. We'll call it a beauty contest. Every virgin in Persia must come, prepare for a year, and participate in a beauty contest with the king. It's not a kid's book. Surprise. So Mordecai and his niece Hadassah, they get the decree, right? And so Mordecai says, listen, got to cover your name up. Change your name. We don't want them to know you're Jewish because the Judeans were, of course, the minorities, which means that most people probably didn't like them, right, in the culture. So let's hide your identity. We're going to change your name to Ishtar, right? That's a popular name in Babylon, Esther, as we say it. And so Esther gets in the taxi or whatever, and Esther goes to the royal harem, and out of the entire empire, Esther ends up winning the beauty contest with the king. Has anyone ever realized how scandalous the story of Esther is? It makes you uncomfortable. Daughters, who do you want to dress up as? Esther! Esther! A lot of people have been critical of the book of Esther because of how scandalous. Martin Luther, he said, I wish it wasn't even in the Bible.

I don't think it should be. Take it out. Cut it out. Martin Luther did not like it at all. Lots of people did not like this book. So Esther wins the contest, held conveniently and hosted conveniently by the king himself, and she becomes queen. And there's a huge banquet, and it's just crazy. This is how the story just explodes, starts. And around when this was going on, Mordecai, her uncle, was at the king's gate and he overheard two of the king's guards planning to assassinate the king. Oh no, what do we do? What's going to happen next? Well, Mordecai tells Queen Esther now, and she strategically reports it to the king, and she gives credit to Mordecai. You saved the king's life. His name is Mordecai. He's a good man.

Mordecai. Remember his name, king. And after the investigation... The two guards were impaled on poles. They were executed for wanting to kill the king, and Mordecai saves the

day, and everybody goes, yay, he's the hero, right? I wonder if the king is going to honor Mordecai. Do you believe Mordecai deserves to be honored? Yeah? Yeah, I think so. If he saved the president's life, I mean, a pizza, something, right? And so, lucky for us, we turn the very next verse. Turn the page, and this is what the very next verse says in Esther 3, verse 1. It states, After these events, King Xerxes honored. Here we go. Our boy's going to get honored.

Here we go. Mordecai's going to get what he deserves. He deserves to be lifted up. He deserves to be honored. He saved the king's life. Yes. Next verse. He honored. After these events, King Xerxes honored Haman, son of Hamadathah, the Agagite. Oh, we're doing that. Okay. Okay. The king elevated him, giving him a seat of honor higher than all of the other nobles. Sometimes we take the story for granted when we grow up with it, but imagine it's your first time reading it. The king, what? Who is this guy? And why is Mordecai not being honored? All right, save the life and king honors this nobody. Here we go, verse 2. Mordecai refused. No. It appears Mordecai is upset. Maybe he's upset because an injustice has occurred. I mean, you saved the king's life. Not even a gift card to Starbucks was given to you. to say thank you. Esther, are you sure you told the king that it was me? Are you sure? Yes, I did. Following these events, the king elevates a completely new out of the blue character in the story of Canaanite descent, the ancient people that were enemies of Israel. And this man named Haman in the story, he gets elevated up top under the king. And then the king decrees that this big bad Haman, no one knows very loud and high, it's great. The king decrees that everybody needs to show him honor, give him a salute. That's bowing down. Give him a salute. Huh. And Mordecai refuses the king's order. I'm not going to bow to you. Nope. How dare you? This is how the Hebrew version of Esther reads. The Greek version has an extra verse in there that says that he didn't bow down to him because out of reverence for God. I bow to no man but God. So that's a neat thing in the Greek. But in the Hebrew, it just seems like he's upset, which is kind of neat, right? Hebrew version does not grant that grace of making Mordecai look like a righteous guy in this verse. So Haman is the bad guy, and he's so insecure of who he is that he gets so upset that he goes to the bumbling king, and he gets him to sign into law on a certain day that all the Jews are going to die now because one guy didn't give him a salute. You see, when you turn the page, you're like, what? This is so absurd. So over the top. Such a disproportionate response. And so this law says that all the patriots of the kingdom, the patriotic Persians, on this day of the calendar, you can kill all the Jews and take their stuff if you want. So again, remember how I mentioned that this is kind of like a farce comedy the way it's read? It's filled with explosive details, right? And even comedic exaggerations. Here's an example in verse 13 after this decree goes out. And the letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces to annihilate and kill and destroy all of the Jews, both young and old, women and children. What? So you're going to annihilate them, and then you're going to kill them, and then you're going to destroy them. Everybody good? It's just, it's, what? And now there's panic. And now Esther's character really comes in to focus. See, with Esther, we have a young girl who is forced into a tumultuous situation, a year of training to try to impress the king, And when it's her turn, she has the opportunity to take whatever she wanted with her one night for the king, but she declined. She was not greedy or selfish or wanted. She said, whatever the head eunuch, whatever he says, he recommends I'll take with me. Upon hearing the plot to assassinate the king, she reacts with an appropriate measure to save his life. But she also is intentional about leaving Mordecai's name with the king to give him credit, which later gets Mordecai honored in the story. Finally, Mordecai pushes her to go before the king uninvited to plead for him to reverse this law that he put into play. So she goes before the king uninvited, believing she's likely going to die. And in this

scene, the king now does something unexpected. Remember, we have already had this type of scenario in the story, remember? It was a little bit different because before there was a queen in that had a meeting with the king that she was invited to, but she refused and was banished. And now we have a queen that is about to have a meeting with the king, but she was not invited. Will she get banished or killed? Certainly, right? But the king does not kill her. He smiles at her, lifts his scepter towards her. And then, I mean, she just walks in, hadn't even said anything yet. I'll give you half of my empire, just way over the top, right? Okay, she's pretty, I guess. What do we do with this story? What is going on? So as her request, she invites the king to a banquet, something that occurs a lot in the story of Esther. Remember, the story starts off with two banquets of the king, and then later we have two banquets of Esther, and we have two banquets of the Jews in chapter 9, two days next to each other. Yeah, Vashti had a banquet, Esther's enthronement banquet, and I think a banquet possibly or a feast for Mordecai as well. Lots of parties in Esther. And so Esther invites the king and Haman to several banquets as part of her strategy in the story until finally she positions herself to be close to the king and place Haman in a position where he's vulnerable. And she tells the king about Haman's plot, and then Haman is impaled on a stake that is as tall as a six-story building. I give this summary to point out the four characters in the story, four main characters for this point, one of the themes that Esther is trying to tell us. Vashti, the first queen. Mordecai, the faithful and zealous Jew. Esther, the discerning yet timid Jewess. And of course, Haman, the insecure agagite. Four characters that all responded to situations in the story, scenarios or surprises differently. See, sometimes, how many of us are passionate? Cup one, two, three, right? Some of us are Maybe you love passionately the people that we have close to us. Some of us maybe fight passionately, right? Usually they go together, right? Some of us love the idea, just the grip of holding the sword. And sometimes we justify how we react in situations. Has anyone ever overreacted? Yes, Lord. And you just don't even want to bring it up because it's so cringe when you think about it? Sometimes we justify how we react to situations. Many times when someone wants to control us, we feel that, we buck, or maybe demand something of us. Sometimes we get a little peeved. Sometimes we're angry at someone, so we react with our emotions, which are sometimes big emotions, as we call it, Ben and Evie and I. Sometimes we're weak in our confidence within our faith. that anything secular or foreign threatens our very Christian identity. It makes us uncomfortable. So we react in such an in proportionate level of zeal so that everyone knows where I stand, that I believe in God and I believe in the Bible and I'm not like them over there. Have we ever acted disproportionately or overreacted to a situation? Yeah, lots of times. Maybe a knee-jerk reaction. We didn't think it through before we said that thing that we wish we could take back. And when we overreact, does it ever end well? Generally, it's kind of like, yeah. Did it affect only you when you overreacted? Think of a conflict. Did it affect only you? Sometimes our actions don't just affect us, do they? They affect our families. They affect our community. They affect our friends. They affect our churches, our schools, our government, our nation. Every action has some form of consequence that it's justified against. And it's something two, three characters here had to learn the hard way. See, Haman reacts disproportionately to Mordecai. Let's face it. He didn't give him honor. He didn't salute him. So he built an impalement stake six stories tall to impale this man. He didn't know who this is. And he went and got the king to sign into law and agree to kill all the Jews because the guy didn't bow down to him, salute him. Overreaction. And this sets off a chain of events that not only get him killed on the very impalement stake that he built for Haman, but it also affects other people. All of his sons were killed. All of his friends and supporters were killed. All because he

overreacted to someone not saluting him. Vashti. She was called to the king's presence. Her reaction was a refusal. It was a knee jerk, rash. There's not even a faux apology letter. You know, that's how we handle it in the South. I'm so sorry and apologies, but I'm not going to be able to make it because my stomach hurts or whatever. Get my kids, whatever. Not even, sorry, dear, I'm tied up. Not even a letter. Just his servant saying she refused. And she gave you a royal hand gesture too, sir. I mean, I don't know. She was banished. But because of her actions... There are now no more virgins in Persia. All of those girls were rounded up into trains, planes, and automobiles, brought to the king's palace to be secluded for a year. And even after that year, if they didn't make queen, I don't think they can go home. They're in the harem. They're now permanently a sex object. Because of her unwillingness to appropriately respond or to respond wisely, an entire generation was sent to the king's harem with this as their fate. Mordecai, a good man, knows how to navigate the city. He knows how to navigate the culture, the people. He's in, he's out, hangs around the king's gates. He's that close in familiarity. Has good ethics, good morals, cares about people. He heard the guards talking about how they were going to kill the king, so he wisely handled it. He didn't just call him out. No, he went through, make sure it was handled wisely. But when the king makes a law to salute a new official, Mordecai, Like Vashti, acts disproportionate to the situation. Just like Vashti, he refuses. No dialogue given, same type of pattern. No reasoning. The guards have to make up a reason. Oh, it's because he's a Jew. But Mordecai never says anything. And as a direct result of Mordecai's actions, and some would say, and rightly so, you can't be held responsible for how other people act and react. He can't be held responsible for the reactions of Haman, And it's true. But the way Esther is written is it's not trying to tell you what's right or wrong here, black and white, just and unjust. It's actually kind of making fun of it with the type of literature it is, how explosive it is. Because the law in Persia is absolute farce in and of itself, right? The king makes laws for things that don't matter, and he makes laws for whatever people tell him to. And then he makes a law that says he can't undo laws forever. And now he has to make another law that someone's trying to speak into his ear to make to overset and offset the other law. The whole system's corrupt. So it's not about like law and what's right and wrong in the system of government. No, no. And that's the point. In the real world with real people and real conflict and real situations with real horrors and trauma and sadness and real idiotic kings, in the real world, it's not black and white. And we can say it is, but that's what Esther is telling us. We can say it's black and white, but you won't succeed or survive if that's your worldview about everything, especially other people. What took place because Haman disproportionately reacted, sorry, Mordecai disproportionately reacted to Haman is it endangered all of his people. All of his people must die now. And it's not about making the right call or who's responsible. It's about having wisdom of what's going to take place if I act a certain way. Who cares if it's your responsibility or not your responsibility? Use wisdom. you can still control it. Esther, this young girl, through no fault of her own, is thrown into the very grown-up situation that she's in, has to endure separation from her friends or family to compete for the king's favor, all because of another person's action. This young woman is left with the mop to clean up everyone else's mess, but she's humble. She does not show her pride like the feather of a peacock like Vashti and Mordecai did. She's strategic in how she tells the king of the assassination attempt. She's strategic in how she went about handling the Haman situation. She does not just run into the king's court screaming truth, which she could do. And you would say, it's true. Haman's plotting to kill us all, king. But that's not an appropriate reaction in the formal setting of the king and the culture, is it? Even if she's telling the truth, it won't protect you from the consequences of delivering it. And the

kicker is those expectations are relative to the culture that they lived in. So Esther chooses in one regard to show the priority of her request by breaking one protocol and coming into the king's court uninvited. But also she has an understanding to be wise. So instead of calling Haman out right there, she invites the king and Haman to several banquets until again she's in that position where she can throw Haman under the bus. Mordecai ends up being elevated all the way up to the top. She's queen, everybody's happy, her people are saved, evil is vanquished, and there's the story. Mahatma Gandhi was a revolutionary under British colonization of India. The colonial rule of India was filled with injustice and violence by definition. And Gandhi knew what was right, at least in this regard. This was not right. They shouldn't be here siphoning the resources off our country back to their empire and oppressing us. And he could have reacted. He could have joined the underground resistance and freedom fighters that would plot different ways in guerrilla warfare to attack the British soldiers, maybe hide some bombs there, do drive-bys, murdering soldiers at night. He could have reacted that way. But would that have worked? No, they'd just shoot him. Done. Forgotten about. Sometimes the response to conflict that we want to give, sometimes the response that we feel is justified isn't. Or even if it is, it's not going to bring forth the solution that's needed. So Gandhi instead thought of a better way of getting rid of the British Empire. Instead of killing them, the better way was to annoy them. Nonviolent resistance, which would get the world's attention and leverage political pressure back on the British. And it was smart and it was wise. Can you imagine Joseph going into Egypt telling them that all of their gods are false and their pharaoh is just some dude like everyone else and how they need to repent because God's going to fry them? No, that wouldn't have ended well for him at all. He was an Egyptian. He became an Egyptian. He became part of their culture. He was able to navigate the culture as a member of it, but that doesn't mean that his obedience to God was sacrificed. When the incident of Potiphar's wife happened, Joseph understood where the line was. Obviously, obviously there's a line here. I'm not going to do it. But he was able to navigate culture up to that point. And from that point, he was placed in prison, which is how he gained favor from Pharaoh and became the ruler of Egypt in the end, by navigating with wisdom. Joseph's journey was successful due to his humility, his empathy, his grace and wisdom. He embraced the parts of secular culture that allowed him to navigate it with wisdom. And other parts, he rejected. And the wisdom, the wisdom comes in knowing when to draw the line in the sand and when to not. Because the goal of a soldier of Christ is, And an image-bearer of God is not to seclude yourself behind walls and fences away from the world that you're called to reach. The wisdom comes in knowing when to draw the line in the sand and when to not. And so, which is it? Which is it? Do we answer a fool according to his folly, or do we not answer a fool according to his folly? That's the hard homework of the Bible, because it's not always black and white when you need to take the sword of truth out and decapitate somebody with it and when you need to keep it sheathed to navigate something more wisely. And that's exactly what I believe God has called us to do, and I believe that's exactly what the book of Esther is encouraging. Think before you react. Think of everyone else. Think of the reputation of the family members of God around you. Think of yourself. What consequences are going to come in the way I react or handle this situation? And it may not even be a consequence that impacts you, but it'll impact someone. Choose wisely. Next time that you want to react rashly, consider your goals. What is it that you want to happen? What needs to happen? Acting rashly is selfish and inconsiderate. By definition, did not consider. What's your goal? What isn't your goal? And before you react, take those into account. Take those into account. And happy Purim. So please stand. Please stand as we conclude services

as worship. If you need prayer for anything today, guys, we have a prayer team on either side of the stage during the last worship set that we have. So we invite you to come up for prayer, or if you need to pray for someone else, please take advantage of that. We're about to kick off our Purim celebration, so prepare yourself, which is going to be awesome. And yeah, do we have a worship? Oh, I wasn't sure. It's a festival day, right? So maybe the banquet and the festival is out there. Alvina Mulcano, our Father, our King Father, we thank you for this opportunity to come back to your word and the heart of your word and to realize that it is constantly speaking new life into us on a daily basis. That your spirit would continue to work within us to allow us to stop, to consider, to use wisdom and discernment. When we react, when we respond to situations, especially those of conflict, that we would remember that we don't simply represent ourselves, but we represent others and remember what our goal is of whatever conflict we're in and what is the wisest way to get there. We thank you, Father, for the celebration and this reminder. In the name of Yeshua, we pray. Amen. Sing Shema with us. Shema Yisrael Adonai Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. Blessed is the name of his glorious kingdom for all eternity. May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance toward you and give you his peace. In the name of our Sar Shalom Yeshua HaMashiach. Shabbat Shalom family. Now I need everybody to sit down because I have a couple of announcements. You make yours and I'll make mine. Okay, as we get ready to transition into our Purim celebration, we just have... A small request. So we want to make sure that all things go smoothly and stay organized with the food line and that everybody gets to partake. So we ask that all children eight and under please be supervised as they go through the line. So again, if you have lovely children ages eight or under, please make sure that you are with them from start to finish through the line so that all those well and we can party party and have a good time. Thank you so much. I have one more thing. One more thing. So some of you may know, but some of you may not, that today is the Gonzalez family's last official day as worship leader of Founded in Truth Fellowship. The Lord is leading them out into an amazing adventure. They're going to be on the road for pretty much a lot, most of the time. Right. So you will see them probably incrementally throughout the year at times, and definitely at Sukkot. But I wanted to express some deep gratitude to Jay. And I think the whole fellowship needs to be involved in that. So thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you for your love, for your friendship, for your leadership. It has been a beautiful ride these last few years and grateful, grateful to the Father for how he has done that and just wanted to honor you in that way this morning. So you guys be sure to love on them a little extra. They may be with us in congregation, maybe one more. No? Okay, this is your last chance. Make the most. So yeah, just wanted to say thank you and blessings. And it's going to be awesome. Christy is going to keep bringing it like she always does. And I'm so, so proud of you guys. And it's just been an amazing, amazing journey. And thank you all for worshiping as a body and keep pressing in, keep pressing in. Don't stop. So love you guys. All right. So one last thing I just want to put into the bug in the ear because obviously great, great. Great. I will say it's a loss. It's not a complete loss. He's not dying. But we are going to be in need of expanding our worship team over the course of the next little while. So that's falling to me, and I'm grateful for the opportunity and the blessing and the honor that it is. If you have a gift, very specific gifts I'm looking for, Gift in playing worship keys a gift in playing acoustic guitar That's where I want to start. I need you and I want to talk to you. So that's my general announcement There's a love for that and a desire for that and you've been given a gift for that and you know who you are because I'm speaking to you and you already know who you are Find me. Okay,

and we'll begin talking. So now go find your children and Be orderly in how you find them. And do we have any other words that need to be spoken before we go out? Can I just pray over the food? Or Matt, am I good to go? Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for this season. We thank you for this celebration. We ask that you would continue to be honored as we celebrate together. I thank you for the nourishment of the food that has been prepared. And we thank you for hearts that are full.

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