

Empathy for the Wicked – Haman

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MAIN VERSES

[Esther 6:7](#) · [Matthew 18:20](#) · [Daniel 4](#) · [Genesis 1:26](#) · [Mark 1:15](#)

So, I know Purim has passed. But we can still kind of be in the season of Purim, right? A couple people are in it. All right, awesome. So this week, I'm kind of excited for us to dive into the story of a villain that has become well-known and as a result has actually been mocked openly and publicly for the past thousands of years. And this series that we've been journeying through is called empathy for the wicked, not sympathy for the wicked. We're not here to journey through the villains of the Bible in order to feel sorry for them. We're here to examine what the biblical authors were trying to tell us through illustrating the stories of these wicked people.

So just like Cain, just like Jezebel, Herodias, Nebuchadnezzar, even Samson in there at one point, we can still have a capacity to understand why these people chose to make the decisions that they did in their life. Why these people chose the path. Why these people chose to become what they are known as, wicked. And the point—and why I believe it's important—is for us to take time and examine what the biblical authors are trying to tell us about them, because it's so easy to look at other people and say, "That's a wicked person, and that's a sinner, and he's an evildoer"—and look at him falling, and look at how they're evil. It's so easy for us to look at others and slap this generic label—villain, against God and others—but the reality is sometimes we see villains that are greater than the ones of the Bible in the mirror every morning, and we choose to look away and not acknowledge it. And if we can take a look at the examples in Scripture of these people who have this legacy, maybe, maybe we can learn how not to fall into the same traps.

The Story of Haman

How bad do you have to be to have someone make cookies of your ears every year? How bad do you have to be that every single time someone says your name, everybody screams, "Boo! Haman!" I mean, what kind of—what did you do? We talk about Cain, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod the Great. He's a bad guy. Haman. What did he have?

So with that said, we turn to the book of Esther, where we find the story of Esther and Mordecai, two Judeans that chose to stay in Persia after the Jews were allowed to go back to Judea and even given permission to go back and build their own temple. They both ended up, midway through the story, having pagan names. And they seem completely assimilated into a pagan culture. I read a fascinating dissertation from a scholar that was making the point that if the book of Esther was not in the Bible, you would consider it secular literature. I mean, there's just nothing on the surface there. And I found that just so fascinating.

Not only that, but if we can be honest, we have a story about a young lady who enters a contest of a sexual nature that she wins to become the queen, and because of such things, she's able to save her entire people. The book itself is absent of any mention of God, but for some reason, we still see God very clearly throughout the book.

God's Hidden Action

Despite how far away Esther found herself, despite being named after a pagan goddess, despite the choices that she was seemingly forced to make in a contest with the king, despite all of this, God was still with her. Despite how far you find yourself, despite how far you feel someone else may be, God can still act and use them. God can still act and use you. And that's a message that was actually inspired by a good friend of mine, Matt Knapper. And we're having a conversation this week, and that's so inspirational. This is a story that reminds us to stop short of judging other followers, to stop short at looking at others and say, "No, no, no, God could never use them. They're too far away." That's the attitude that actually makes someone far from God.

And also in the story of Esther, we find this kind of puzzling, enigmatic character, a very dark character, known as Haman. He was an Amalekite. And so just as I've done throughout the series, I want to paint a picture and I want us to use our imagination. So can we imagine for a moment being inside the story of Esther, a fly on the wall? Can you imagine Haman standing outside the palace walls, anxious to speak with the king, walking down the exterior alleyways?

Haman's Grievance

Mordecai, the Jew, had deliberately disobeyed an order from the king to give him honor. "I'm Haman," he thinks to himself. "I'm only second to the king. The national decree is to kneel before me. The national decree is to salute me when I come before you. But Mordecai has disobeyed. It's not like he was asking him to worship him like a god. He wasn't a god. He was an elite royal vizier. Give him tribute. Give me tribute," he thinks to himself.

He would give the same tribute to generals or the king himself in the palace, but not him. No, no matter. 75-foot gallows. 75-foot gallows he had built in his estate. Poles sharpened at the top, perfect for tossing Mordecai's body on and impaling him. Imagine Haman's appetite for Mordecai's death just dancing in his mind. He enters the palace to get the official death warrant from the king himself.

Walking through the large corridors, gold shimmering, somehow majestic, as if the candles went out in the palace, the paint itself would illuminate the hallways. Standing in the court, the chill of the air hitting his cheeks. Imagine his anger warming himself with thoughts of hate and vengeance for this Jew, Mordecai. "Who is he, this Judean, who doesn't show respect for anyone, claiming to be some divine person in a greater people, yet enslaved by the Babylonians, then ruled by the Persians, oh, but they have their land back. They wish to return. They have a temple to build to worship their god, and the king actually allows it, but no, no. Mordecai chooses not to leave. He stays here. He stays here among me. He remains more of a Persian than a Jew."

Imagine Haman sitting there, warming himself with this anger. "There's not room for both of us in Shushan. No matter. I'll rid myself of this Judean." His racing heart comes to a calm. "Yes, I will do what my people should have done so long ago." Haman thinking to himself, "I am an agagite of the royal line of the Amalekites. My people have been at war with these Judeans since times of old. They take, they consume, they invade. We are the protector of the nations. And here, now, they're spreading through Persia. Who of my people have ascended the royal ranks of the elite royal house of the king?"

Imagine him standing there warming himself, talking this over with himself. "The king will see you now," a royal escort speaks with such clarity and depth. Haman makes his way up the staircase, following the shadows. He comes to a door. The king's private chambers bring him in. The voice of authority yells, "The door is open." The room is just with such decor. No writer could fill pages with the description. Unspeakable. "Haman, perfect," the king exclaimed. "Perfect, Haman," thought Haman. "I suppose it is, your majesty. Perfect."

The King's Question

Haman, preparing to make his pitch about impaling this treacherous Jew named Mordecai. He takes a breath. He prepares his monologue to get the king's permission. The king interrupts. The king looks at Haman. "I need your counsel on something. Haman, I need your counsel on

something, and it's something big—Haman, something grand, something important, something close to my heart."

"Of course, your majesty. I serve you with all of my being." "Tell me, Haman, my royal servant. What should be done for the man that the King delights to honor?"

Haman, a bit shocked. This was not how I was expecting this conversation to go. Whom would the king wish to honor? Well, I am the greatest in authority beside the king. I hold the signet ring. I am the one that notified him of the people who betray his own laws, these traitors, these terrorists to his great nation. I am the one who saw the opportunity to help his kingdom thrive. Destroying the people I was born to fight is just a perk. For such a time as this, for such a time as this, that he had been placed in a position of power, to see Mordecai, to realize the scheme of the people of Judea within the gates of Persia. For such a time as this, he finds himself able to actually stand up and do something. Not just stand idle, but to actually be a part of making Persia a better place, making Persia great for such a time as this, Haman thinks to himself. The king must be speaking of me.

Esther chapter 6 verse 7. "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor, proclaiming before him. This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor." Thinking to himself this whole time, just a little acknowledgement would be nice. Mordecai would see me then. Let's see how prideful he is when I am proclaimed with authority that I already have. Picturing Mordecai's face looking up at him on the horse. He'll have to salute me then. He'll have to salute me like everyone else then. With a crown on the horse, with the robe wrapped around me, my back will stand up straight. And I won't even nod, I will glare down at him. He will have no choice but to give me honor then. To salute me as his superior.

Shaking his head, wait, wait, wait. Mordecai won't be able to give me honor. He will be dead. He will be riding on the gallows. Haman confused at the complete array of emotions and thoughts and fantasies he found himself engulfed in. That's right, I'm here to ask the king if I can kill Mordecai. On the 75-foot spike I built in my backyard.

Haman begins to speak. "Your Majesty." The king overpowers his effort. "Haman, go at once," the king commanded. "Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested to Mordecai the Jew."

Who sits at the king's gate do not neglect anything you have recommended. Haman, just dumbfounded. Come again, Haman. You are my prize. I say, don't make me doubt my confidence in you by forcing me to repeat myself. Haman, just stunned, trying to make sense of

what he thought he heard, as he was blinking, just at once—"Your Majesty"—bowing before the king, slowly backing away from his presence.

The next morning was a complete blur, as if he was dispelled from his own body, watching himself, unable to do anything. This is the one that the king wishes to honor. This is what is done for the man that the king delights to honor. He hears his own voice proclaiming these words, walking in front of the king's prized royal stallion, guiding it through the streets, people standing in awe, people bowing, people saluting. But not Haman, no. Haman was simply a servant today. The salutes, the bows, paying homage, the acknowledgement. The power belonged to the rider of the stallion—the stallion that bears the crown with hand-crafted detail throughout so many generations of the royal family. The man is robed in the king's very own robe, a status that could never be matched. The man named Mordecai, Mordecai the Jew, rode on the stallion. This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor. Honor him! Salute him! Acknowledge him! As he walks through the streets.

The Shame Descends

Haman finally snaps out of it when he finds himself handing the royal stallion back over to the guards at the royal stables. He's not even remembering dropping Mordecai off at the gates and handing over the robe to the servants. So emotionally empty. Every ounce drained from him. "What a failure you are," he thought to himself. "You have failed. You had one mission. What a mockery you've made of yourself and your family. What an embarrassment you are to your family, your legacy, your children. The whole world sees you, but they don't acknowledge you." Haman can't shut the voices off in his head. He runs home to his wife, covering his head in shame. He doesn't want to be seen. All he wants is to turn it off. All he wants is to shut the door and never come back out again.

He rushes inside. He falls into the arms of his wife, explaining everything that had happened. His children gathering around. "What's wrong with Dad?" "Turn it off." His wife nudges him. "Hey, Haman, you have the queen's banquet tonight, remember?" He falls to his knees. Just no energy. "Haman, you must go. You need to get ready. Put some oil on your hair. We can talk about this later. You need to go to the queen's banquet tonight. It's an honor. The queen, Queen Esther, has invited you to dine with the king and her. You must get ready to go. What an honor. You can't refuse." Get up and get dressed. Haman slowly drags himself up, goes to his chambers, changes, puts oil in his hair, and walks out the door to attend the banquet of Esther.

The Ironic Ending

Now we know how the story goes from here on. He attends the banquet and another banquet, and so on and so forth. And the story ends with Esther exposing Haman's plan to kill all of the Judeans, including herself—to murder every Jew in Shushan. And ironically, just like so many other elements in the book of Esther, Haman is sent to be impaled on the same gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.

All he had to do was stay in his lane. Stay in your lane. When you jump in someone else's lane, you may find yourself hit by a car that you didn't need to be hit by. Stay in your lane.

The Anagram Experiment

Before we continue, I want to break your focus, and I would like for you to look directly at me. I want everybody to take a deep breath in. Hold it. One, two, three. Exhale. There we go. Okay, so we're going to do a grouping experiment involving anagrams. And an anagram is a word or a phrase that can be made by rearranging the letters from another word. So everybody understand. An example would be if you take the word "iceman" and you rearrange the letters, you can also make the anagram of "cinema." Everybody with me? We're good? You ready? Awesome.

Okay, so I'm going to show you a few words here, and I want you to attempt to form a different word with them. Does everybody understand? One more time. Fantastic. Okay, the first word—and these are going to be very easy. Don't overthink it, and we're just going to slide right through them, okay? So the first word is "whirl." Go ahead and raise your hand if you figured out an anagram for the word. Katie Russell in the back. Nice. Okay, whirl. Five, four, three, two. It's okay if you don't get it, just move on to the next. Slapstick. If you can get this word, go ahead and raise your hand if you have an anagram. We have a few people. Very good. Jason. Max. Nice. Slapstick. You have to use all of the letters. Okay. Now we're going to go to the last word here. Five, four, three, two. Cinerama. If you can rearrange the letters here to make another word—cinerama. Five, four, three, two. A couple people. Nice. Two, one. Fantastic.

The Setup

Okay, okay. So here's what I need you to know. Here's what I need you to know. This was a setup. This was a setup. Okay? In 2007, there was a psychology professor by the name of Dr. Cherise Nixon that started her class out with handing half of her students a piece of paper that had three words that she wanted them to turn into anagrams. And those three words were "tab," "lemon," and "cinerama." Now, "tab"—what words can you make out of the same letters of

"tab"? "Bat." Very good. Smart. This is great. "Lemon." What words can you make from "lemon"? "Melon." This is great, okay? So you can imagine half the class is reading this list and they're raising their hands. Right? They're making these words real quick. They're making the connections. It's not too difficult.

The other side of the class, without knowing that there are two different lists, were handed three words: "Whirl," "slapstick," and "cinerama." Can you imagine the one side of the class—okay guys, we're going to do the first word on your list. Go for it. And half the class shoots their hands up immediately. And the other class is like, "Whirl? What are you, whirl what? And how are these people...oh, what?" Okay, guys, it's just an easy one. We'll just go to the next one. If you can't get it, just move on. It's okay. You know, when a teacher says that in that tone, it's like a pity, like you're adorable and you poor thing. So you just move on to slapstick. "Okay, this will be easier. I can do it." Look over. Everybody has their hands up but you and like some more people around you. I'm stupid. I can't do it. And so they come to the last word, cinerama.

Now, what majority of the class do you think threw their hands up and could make another word out of the same letters of cinerama? Half the class. The side of the class that had the easy list. The side of the class that had "whirl" and "slapstick"—they had already made the subconscious decision to give up. So it's a setup, because every person in this room that raised their hands with these words, I talked to before the message and asked them to raise their hands up. Did anybody become slightly frustrated just a little bit with seeing someone throw their hands up real quick? Just a couple people, okay? What about when you got to the second word? You got this one. I got this one. And you see all these people in the back throwing their hands up. I'm over here like, good job in the back. And he's like, who? How many of you near the end of the second word in your mind told yourself just give up? Yes.

This was my result of this. What is an anagram for "cinerama"? "American." American. This is an experiment that proves and also induces something called learned helplessness. Anyone ever heard of learned helplessness before? Fascinating. Learned helplessness is a fascinating social phenomenon, something that young children actually with diseases—specifically type 1 diabetes—there have been studies shown for that, or children with disabilities—actually are prone to. The idea is that you instinctively, as a human being, measure your abilities, your success, and your failures in contrast to the people around you. So everybody who couldn't get the words and became slightly frustrated, it was frustrating you because other people in the room were getting the word right. Why can't I get it right? What do they have that I don't? Apparently I'm a failure in contrast to them. Apparently I'm not smart enough to do this in contrast to them. So we go to the second example. Confirmation. I don't need to be here doing this experiment. So when

we come to the third word, guess what? You have convinced yourself that you cannot do the third word, even though it's a perfectly kosher example and good example to make other anagrams from.

Learned Helplessness and Haman's Trap

When we begin to measure our abilities in contrast to the people around us, we begin to live a life of failure. Welcome to empathizing with Haman. You're there. Instead of focusing on his own life, instead of focusing on his own success, instead of focusing on the things that he could have been doing better, he was too busy focusing on Mordecai's success. Even worse, he contrasted his own life to Mordecai's success. He felt threatened by Mordecai's achievements, viewing his own life as a failure whenever Mordecai succeeded. That shame that he dumped on himself in the middle of Esther chapter 6, where he covered himself in so much shame, running home to his wife—that would have never happened if he was in his own lane, doing his own thing, recognizing that he had God-given talents too. No, he was too busy looking at someone else. Anyone ever been there? Yeah, come on. Yeah, very much so. Anyone ever had that one person, that one family member, that one coworker? Maybe it was someone you didn't even know personally. You just kind of watched from afar.

And every time they got recognized or acknowledged for something, every time they succeeded in something, you became a little agitated, a little angry, a little jealous, a little envious. As if you were losing because they were succeeding. I'm failing because they're succeeding. In order for me to feel like a success in my life, I need to be as good as them, even though I'm not them. The attitude is actually one of the most widespread in our Western culture because, as Professor Nixon notes, we are prone to learned helplessness. We are prone to it throughout our life, and we do it without even realizing it.

It's fascinating because the opposite is also true. There's a reversal of prone helplessness and it's called learned mastery or learned optimism. In other words, the students on the side of the classroom who have all the easy stuff, they're prone to focus harder and get the answers quicker because they know that they're surrounded with smarter people. We as humans are so messed up. We truly are. So messed up.

Learned Helplessness and Mastery

That's why military brotherhood is so bonding. You talk about going into a fight, right? Think about the Revolutionary War—that banner imagery, the guy playing the drums and the banner

as the signal, this is what we stand for. Move forward. School pride is linked to higher academics. You're in football, you got to do that dang huddle where y'all grunt and stuff. Why? Why? Learned optimism. It will produce something more. It's fascinating.

That's why prayer, bonding, fellowship seems to impact the community of faith so much. See, prayer, there's a spiritual impact and there's a spiritual weight and empowerment that comes with communal prayer. Absolutely. There's also a relational factor that is God-given. It comes with someone acknowledging you and your needs. When you open up and allow yourself to be vulnerable to someone else, a level of empathy is reached that is encouraging. Learned optimism actually takes place. It doesn't discount the spiritual weight of everything that's happening in prayer. It complements it. It complements it.

There's a relational factor that comes when someone acknowledges you and holds your hand and is praying for you.

Prayer, Bonding, and the Impact of Fellowship

We have to stop going into other people's lanes for the wrong reasons and start realizing when others come into our lanes for the right ones. And I know I've mentioned this before, but in Matthew chapter 18, Yeshua mentions where two or more gathered in my name, I will be present. I will be in their midst. He's going to be there, right? And I know when we were kids, we all kind of huddled together, three of us. Okay, we're in your name. And you start looking around, right? Here, he's standing here. And we never really see him standing there, but he says he's there, right?

Now the context of this verse has been misunderstood for thousands of years. The context of the verse in [Matthew 18](#) is actually confronting someone who is threatening the sacredness of holy communion fellowship. It's a confrontational verse. It's there to give you encouragement. But it doesn't stop there. The scope of this verse and what Yeshua says doesn't stop there. Just as God's presence is made up of a community of love towards the Son manifest through the seer, so too is that community of love extended to us in our everyday lives. In other words, when a community comes together, when two or more are gathered together to express the love and the mercy and the joy of Yeshua's Spirit within them, among one another, Yeshua is there in a very real way. He's expressed and shown through the hearts of every individual that's there.

Two or More Gathered

That's why I love the men's event we had recently. The deep conversations of community, of love, of loyalty sitting on that wooden porch. The intimate prayer we had as a community that Sunday morning. The joy of sitting around a table eating a steak that was way too big. Brotherhood. Fruit of the Spirit manifest. Yeshua. A community of love. A community filled with the Spirit and the fruit of Yeshua.

When you choose to pray over or for someone, you are not only invoking a spiritual atmosphere that comes with the weight and the power of the divine, you manifest a sense of learned optimism in that person's life. It is a real God-given tool that many of us use and take advantage of without ever even realizing it. And many of us fall into the inverted trap of learned helplessness, where we feel as if we can never truly excel in our spiritual life, never excel in our vocation to become an image bearer of God that we were destined to be, never excel or even try to overcome the seemingly huge hurdles in our lives that separate us from an intimate relationship with God, never truly stand with the strength and the boldness it takes to become the father we feel we need to be, the mother we feel we need to be, the brother or sister we need to be, the person that God called us to be.

Stop Limiting Yourself

Stop limiting yourself and your God-given abilities and your God-given talents and your God-given gifts. Stop limiting what God has given to you because you're too busy looking at everyone else in the room and seeing who's raising their hand up.

In the classroom experiment, the students broke down when she went around the class. What did you think? I was frustrated. I was angry. Because you thought they had the same list you did. What was Heyman's other failure? Anyone catch it? I tried to emphasize it in the story that we told.

When a movie begins with the words "based on a true story," everyone's seen a movie that begins "based on a true story." Do we automatically assume, like as if by default, that every line of dialogue that the character speaks, every word spoken, every bit of clothing that they're wearing, the score and the music that's playing—do we believe that all of that actually took place at the actual event? Do we think the actual event was actually cut into a perfect beginning and middle and conclusion and end? No, of course not. That would be stupid, right? That would be silly, if I can be honest.

You know movies like Braveheart or Hacksaw Ridge? I mean, they take a lot of artistic license with facts and shaping characters. Go see Titanic. That was an old movie in the 90s. I mean,

that was not what happened. But they smudge over the details to make it entertaining, to make it what you kind of want it to be, and then the grander picture is still relatively close, right?

Your Own Story

If only you were that savvy to recognize those things. When it came to looking at your own story, your own story in your head, if only you were that savvy to look at the things that you tell yourself or the things that other people have told you or the things that have been impressed on your life or what your story is supposed to be. If only we were that savvy to recognize that maybe this isn't quite what it's supposed to be.

We seem to be trapped inside of our own heads. As we continue to grow, our beliefs and our understandings about the world are limited to whatever perspective we allow to be focused on. We sometimes mistake the story that has been impressed upon us as the actual truth for our lives.

Anybody ever know that they haven't realized they got a blind spot? Has anyone done that experiment in your life? Everyone knows they have a blind spot. Have you ever stuck your thumb out and like just close your left eye and start moving your thumb over there and then the top of your thumb disappears? Like, have you guys ever seen that? You have a blind spot in your eye. And you open your eye, and it's gone. And you close your eye again, you can see your thumb disappear, but it's not just like a black, it's as if your imagination is just kind of polishing up over here for what it thinks it needs to be.

Our Blind Spots

I found that fascinating because all too often we take the things that have been impressed upon us, and we use that as our cover story, just like our brain covers up the blind spot, takes in all the data. We adapt the stories given to us as molds for our own lives, many times without ever realizing it.

Most of the time, it's actual scripts handed to us by others when we were younger, when we were children. We tend to carry around as human beings the psychological legacy of our parents into our adult years. Many times, these are good things. Your parents feed you what life is supposed to look like, what your life is supposed to become. Very good things. And many times, they're not. How many times have we seen the unfulfilled goals and regrets passed down to us as a template for our own stories? Anybody?

Haman was an Agagite.

Haman's Family Legacy

He was an Amalekite. So his family's legacy in the Bible goes all the way back to the time of the Exodus, even before. When Israel left Egypt, the Amalekites, according to the biblical narrative, were the ancient terrorists of the time. They were people that attacked Israel. They attacked the weakest and the rear, the women and the children, the elderly. They were always seeking to crush, kill, and destroy this people of Israel. They continued to fight against Israel as their enemy throughout Joshua and the biblical narrative. It's actually a commandment in the Torah: Wipe out Amalek. Like, get rid of him. Never seemed to happen. This was Haman's family. This was his lineage. Imagine that.

Imagine, okay, so I set up all that like childhood, getting scripts from your parents, getting unfulfilled desires and goals from parents handed down to them, which we do. I always want to be an astronaut. Guess what? Ben has a rocket ship on his wall. You can do it, buddy. It happens. We do it. It is what it is.

Imagine Haman being a child, just like you were, just like everyone else was. Imagine his uncle telling him stories about their people. Maybe some conflated stories about them being victorious over Israel way back in the days. And we have Israel's side of the story in the Bible, but who knows what their side of the story was.

Haman's Script

How Israel was an evil people. How Israel killed their husbands, killed their children, killed their wives. How Haman, one day, you will be divinely appointed to face the Judeans as is your legacy—the remnant of Israel. One day you might be put in a position, you might be the one chosen to fulfill our tribe's destiny against them.

That was Haman's story. He was given the script for the movie at a young age. Imagine Haman standing there, given the chance to finally play the movie. At this moment in history, Haman stands with the power to defeat this people; the power to make a change, the power to do the right thing according to his story. Imagine him standing there for such a time as this, for Haman to fulfill his legacy according to his own people.

Many Stories Handed Down

Many of us live our lives playing out the stories handed down to us—maybe from our families, maybe by our politics, maybe by our friends, our influences, maybe even by our churches and communities at a young age that we were raised in—instead of the story that God has written for us, instead of the mission that we have been given.

A story where every human being ultimately finds complete joy, complete shalom and peace in God's kingdom. Instead, a story where we find our power being instilled with a spirit that gives life. And not simply our own life, but us being instilled with a spirit that overflows out of our life and enters into the lives of others. How about a story where we allow God to work through us to take up the vocation of the kingdom of heaven manifest on earth? How about the story where we give self-sacrificially to the world around us just like Yeshua taught? And instead of it being a labor, instead of it being a task, we find it to be a source of joy in a very inverted way, just like his kingdom is when it manifests on this world. It sparks contentment. It sparks happiness that is indescribable.

Nebuchadnezzar's Warning

You don't realize Haman could have been the next Nebuchadnezzar. He had power. He had wealth. He had rule. He had influence. He could have been the next tree of life, giving the life-giving power of God. If you don't know what I'm referring to, I believe it's Daniel chapter 4 where Nebuchadnezzar is given a dream where he's the tree of life. He's it. The animals are eaten. It's all in him and everything. He's given food, given shelter. Everything's good. God has enabled him to do something great and represent his kingdom in the world, and it gets chopped down.

And what's Daniel say to Nebuchadnezzar? He says, "Repent. You can do this. God can use you. Repent. Quit acting like a beast and act like an image bearer that rules over the beast." In the very next line, Nebuchadnezzar walks out thinking, "Oh, look at how great my kingdom is that I built and the power I have, and now I'm ruling over the world." And what happens? He turns into a beast. Literally, he turns into a werewolf feather-looking thing. He turns into the things that are ruled over according to Genesis.

The Image Bearer He Could Have Been

Haman could have been the image bearer that rose above his story that was handed to him. That rose above his pursuits of the flesh. That rose above his helplessness. He could have been a vessel for God's glory. Instead, he was trapped by the story of his own family. He was trapped

by his own learned helplessness, too busy looking at everyone else instead of where he was going or where he could have gone.

Where Are You Today?

Maybe you're sitting here today and you are completely consumed with empathy for Haman, empathy for the wicked. I don't know. I do know that your empathy for Haman doesn't have to be your story. It does not.

There is a greater calling that was given to humans, to mankind in [Genesis 1](#), and it was one that Yeshua walked out and he just had two words. He said, "Follow me. Do like this." This is what an image-bearer looks like. This is what someone who emits the reign and the rulership of God's kingdom looks like. And it doesn't look like what the world says. It looks like what God intended.

Worship team, you guys can come up. We can conclude. The gospel was centered around one thing. Mark opens with this. The kingdom of God coming to earth. God's reign being tangible here and now. If you were given the spirit of Yeshua, the same spirit that raised him from the dead, then shouldn't the world around you be impacted by you just like it was by Yeshua? That's the story that we're supposed to have.

So I invite you, during the time of worship, you can stand with me. We conclude services the same way that we come into services with worship and praise. And I ask, where are you at today? Maybe you're a little bit of Haman, maybe you're not. Maybe you're a lot of Haman, I don't know. But now would be a good time to reflect on that.

Prayer and Closing

If you need prayer, as always, we have a prayer team off to the side. I invite you to take advantage of the learned optimism and the power of prayer and what it offers.

Alvina Malcano, our Father, our King. Father, we thank you for this time together. We thank you for this opportunity to come before you as a community, as a fellowship, as a fellowship that stands for your kingdom. Father, we thank you for your spirit that resides within us. We ask, Father, that others would see that spirit outside of us in everything that we do. In Yeshua's name we pray. Amen. Shalom.

I'm Matthew Vander Els, and I hope you enjoyed this message. Founded in Truth exists to cultivate a fellowship of image bearers that live the redeemed life only Yeshua can give. If this

ministry has been a blessing to you, we would love to hear from you. Send us an email through the contact form on our website and tell us how God has used this ministry to edify your faith and relationship with Him. If you'd like to see more messages like this one, subscribe to our YouTube channel by clicking [here](#). If you'd like to donate to this ministry and be a part of what God is doing through it, you can donate through our online giving portal [here](#). We thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to next time. Shalom.

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