

The God Who Is Already At Work

THE HIDDEN HAND OF GOD #3 - Pastor Gary Combs - Mother's Day - May 10, 2026 – Esther 5:1-6:13

ILL: Think about waiting on a job offer, medical results, or the birth of a child. You can't rush it.

APP: Some of you are frustrated with God's timing right now. You've prayed. You've waited. Nothing has changed. But Esther reminds us: God is never late. He is always right on time. So don't rush ahead of God. Trust His timing, even when you don't understand it.

Text: Esther 5:9-14 (ESV)

2. By overruling the sinful schemes of man.

EXP: (5:9-14) Haman is plotting, boasting, building gallows, completely unaware that every step he takes is leading to his own downfall. He is acting freely, yet God is already overruling his plans.

"Haman went out that day joyful" (9) (חַמָּן, *sāmēah*) - joyful, merry, glad

"He was filled with wrath" (9) (חַמָּן, *hēmā*) - heat, rage, wrath. This one person stole all his joy.

"Haman restrained himself" (10) (קָבַץ, *'āpāq*) - to hold, be strong, restrain, hold back

"Haman recounted to them the splendor" (11) (כָּבוֹד, *kābôd*) - glory, honor. He honored himself.

"Yet all this is worth nothing" (13) (שָׁוְיָ, *šāvā*) - worth. Human pride and

"Gallows fifty cubits high" (14) (הַלְּאָה, *tālā*) - to put to death by hanging; 50 cubits is 75'. This is more likely the Persian practice of impalement as the NLT translates it:

Esther 5:14 (NLT) Set up a sharpened pole that stands seventy-five feet tall, and in the morning ask the king to impale Mordecai on it.

ARG: Joseph told his brothers that what they meant for evil, God overruled for good.

Genesis 50:20 (ESV) As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Peter's Pentecost sermon is the greatest example: Showing how God overruled the evil schemes of Judas, the Jewish leaders, and Pilate to bring about His salvation through Jesus.

Acts 2:23 (NLT) But God knew what would happen, and his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and killed him.

APP: Isaiah prophesied, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (Isa. 54:17). Take heart: No scheme can succeed outside of God's permission. Even what others mean for evil, God is able to turn for your good and His glory. That doesn't make evil good, but it does mean evil never has the final word.

Text: Esther 6:1-5 (ESV)

3. By sovereignly directing the hearts of kings.

EXP: (6:1-5) A sleepless night... a random reading... a forgotten act remembered... and the exact person walks in at the perfect time. None of this is coincidence. God is disturbing the king's sleep and directing his heart.

"Could not sleep" (6:1) (נָדַד, *nāḏaḏ*) - to retreat, flee, depart. Sleep was fleeing from him.

"Book of memorable deeds" (1) (סֵפֶר זִכָּרוֹן, *zikārôn*) - memorial, reminder. Like counting sheep?

"What honor?" (3) (יָקָר, *yāqār*) - price, value, honor The king realized he had done nothing for Mordecai.

"Haman had just entered" (4) - Oh the irony of this sentence. The king can't sleep so he reads about Mordecai, Haman can't sleep because he is so excited to hang Mordecai.

ARG: God directs the hearts of kings like directing a stream of water.

Proverbs 21:1 (ESV) The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.

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ILL: According to a Christian Post report, Iranian believers are refusing offers to leave the country, instead using this time of war to share the Gospel. Even as pressure and persecution have increased, reports show that many Iranians are becoming more spiritually open than ever before. In fact, some ministries describe Iran as having one of the fastest-growing underground Christian movements in the world, with many people searching for hope in the middle of crisis. <https://www.christianpost.com/news/iranian-christians-using-time-of-war-to-share-the-gospel.html>

APP: Kings and presidents and ayatollahs may think they are controlling the story, but God is still directing hearts. If God can direct the heart of a king, He can handle your boss, your situation, your future. So instead of living in anxiety over people in authority, rest in the God who rules over them.

Text: Esther 6:6-13 (ESV)

4. By humbling the proud and exalting the lowly.

EXP: (6:6-13) Haman walks in thinking he's about to be honored... and walks out humiliated. Mordecai, who was overlooked, is suddenly exalted. In a moment, everything is reversed.

“What should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?” (6) (וַיִּצְדַּק, *ḥāḇēḥ*) - to delight in, take pleasure in. Haman said in a previous chapter that there was a people who disobey the king. Now, the king says there is a man (ambiguous) who deserves honor. See the irony?

“Royal robes ... the horse that the king has ridden ... a royal crown” (8) (מַלְכוּת, *malḵūt*) - royalty, royal power. Haman thinks he is getting all this and he is hoping to continue to elevate himself.

“Do so to Mordecai” (10) (עָשָׂה, *ʿāśā*) - to do, work, make, produce

“Haman ...mourning and with his head covered” (12) (אָבַל, *ʾāḇēl*) - mourning; for the dead. Here is the continuation of this great reversal: Mordecai was mourning but now Haman mourns and covers his head.

“You will not overcome him but will surely fall before him.” (13) - His wife and friends are seeing a bad omen. “In the ancient Near East, dramatic reversals would be interpreted as messages or omens from the gods indicating favor or judgment.” — John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*

ARG: Human pride makes us enemies of God, but to the humble He gives grace.

1 Peter 5:5-6 (ESV) ... “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you

APP: Pride puts us on a collision course with God. But humility places you under His grace. So don't fight for fame and recognition, trust God to lift you up in His time.

CONCLUSION: Today, we've seen that God is already at work... ordering events, overruling evil, directing rulers, and humbling the proud. But the greatest display of this was not in Esther... it was at the cross.

At the cross, it looked like evil was winning. Men plotted. Judas betrayed. Leaders conspired. Rome executed. But behind it all, God was at work.

What looked like defeat was actually victory. What looked like the end was actually salvation. God overruled the greatest evil ever committed, the crucifixion of His Son, to accomplish the greatest good ever given, our redemption.

And just like in Esther, there was a great reversal: Jesus was humbled so that we could be exalted.

So here's the question: Will you trust the God who is already at work, even when you cannot see His hand?

Because the same God who was working in Esther... and working at the cross... is working in your life right now!

Let's pray.