

Esther 5:1–14 — Courage, Restraint, and a Plot of Pride

Esther's Courageous Approach (Esther 5:1–2)

On the third day of fasting and prayer, **Esther put on her royal garments** and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, directly in view of King Ahasuerus. He was seated on his royal throne, facing the entrance. When the king saw Esther standing there, **she found favor in his eyes**. He held out to her the golden scepter—an invitation to approach without penalty. Esther stepped forward and touched the top of the scepter (Esther 5:1–2).

Insight:

This was a pivotal moment. Esther put her life on the line by walking into the king's presence uninvited. But after seeking God through fasting (and likely prayer), she moved forward in faith—and **God went before her**.

"When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." —
Proverbs 16:7

Application:

There are moments in life where the call to obedience outweighs the fear of consequence. Like Esther, we are called to **step forward in faith**, trusting God with the results. *Sometimes, courage means simply showing up and letting God do the rest.*

A Strategic Invitation (Esther 5:3–8)

The king asked her, "What do you want, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom!" (v. 3). Esther didn't immediately ask for the Jews' deliverance. Instead, she replied with a calm, calculated invitation: "If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to a banquet I have prepared" (v. 4).

At the banquet, the king asked again: "What is your petition? Even up to half the kingdom—it will be done." Esther replied with grace and restraint: "If I have found favor in your sight, come again tomorrow to another banquet, and there I will make my request" (vv. 6–8).

Esther shows **discernment** and **timing**. She doesn't rush. Her delay isn't indecision—it's *divine patience*. The second banquet would allow time for God's hand to continue stirring the events. In fact, **God was preparing the king for a sleepless night** that would change everything (see Esther 6).

Application:

Sometimes the right action requires **waiting for the right time**. *It takes wisdom to know when to speak and when to hold back (Ecclesiastes 3:7)*. Like Esther, we must rely not just on courage but on **Spirit-led timing**.

Haman's Pride and Pettiness (Esther 5:9–13)

Haman left the banquet **thrilled**, full of self-importance. He boasted about being the exclusive guest of the queen. But as he passed the king's gate, he saw **Mordecai still refusing to bow**, and his joy turned to **rage** (v. 9).

Though he restrained himself for the moment, he couldn't let it go. At home, he gathered his wife Zeresh and his friends, boasting of his riches, his many sons, his promotions, and the exclusive favor shown by Esther (vv. 10–12). But then he added, "**Yet all of this means nothing to me as long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate**" (v. 13).

Here we see a classic example of **pride unmasked**. Haman had everything—but it wasn't enough. One man's refusal to flatter him robbed him of joy. Pride never has enough. *It feeds on attention, and when it's not fed, it turns to hatred.*

Application:

We often think we'll be content if we achieve a certain status or recognition—but if **our joy depends on the approval of others**, we will always be disappointed. *True joy is rooted in Christ, not in the praise of men (Galatians 1:10).*

The Gallows of Vengeance (Esther 5:14)

Seeing Haman's frustration, his wife and friends offered a wicked suggestion: "Build a gallows seventy-five feet high and hang Mordecai on it! Then go joyfully with the king to the banquet." The idea pleased Haman, and he ordered the gallows to be built (v. 14).

Historical Note:

A "gallows" here likely refers to a large **sharpened stake**, used by Persians for **impalement**, not hanging. The exaggerated height (50 cubits = 75 feet) was symbolic—it wasn't just execution, it was intended as **public humiliation** and **revenge**.

Application:

Bitterness always builds its own gallows. Haman was driven not by justice, but by **personal offense and pride**. *When we nurture resentment, it doesn't just harm others—it destroys us from within.*

"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." — **Proverbs 16:18**

Personal Reflection:

1. Are you willing to risk everything for God's purposes?

Esther stepped into the king's court, risking death. *Have you ever stepped out in faith, unsure of the outcome, but trusting God's hand?*

2. Do you know when to speak and when to wait?

Esther shows us the wisdom of **waiting on God's timing**. Not every open door should be rushed through—*sometimes, God is still setting the stage.*

3. Is your joy dependent on recognition—or rooted in the Lord?

Haman had everything externally, but no joy internally. *Let your satisfaction come from knowing who you are in Christ—not how others treat you.*

4. What “gallows” are being built in your heart?

Bitterness, if unchecked, will build something dark in your soul. *Let God tear down those gallows before they rise too high.*

Closing Word:

Esther moved with **humility**, **grace**, and **wisdom**, guided by fasting and faith. Haman moved with **pride**, **ego**, and **hatred**, driven by his need for applause. One was being positioned for a miracle; the other was walking blindly into judgment.

“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” — Luke 14:11