

**THE BIG IDEA:** Our greatest failure is fighting the God who always succeeds.

### The Take-Off

If you're an animal lover like me, hopefully you could chuckle at that video of animal fails. It was a fun way to wet your appetite for what we'll be talking about today, but I'll need you to wait until the end for me to tie it together. We're halfway through one of the more intriguing books in the Bible, and instead of trying to catch you up, let me just encourage you to go to our website and spend some time watching the videos of the previous 5 weeks.

If you've got a QR reader app, you can just scan the QR code on your note sheet and it'll take you to the series page. We left off at the end of chapter 5, and at that point, Esther has thrown a banquet for Xerxes and Haman so she can ask the king to spare her life, and before she made the big ask, she asked them to come back the next day for another banquet.

That's where we're going to pick it up, and so this morning we'll be looking at Esther 6 and specifically at 2 themes that we find there, and then I want us to spend some time responding to it.

First up, let's see the sovereignty of God.

### 1. The sovereignty of God

- a. God's sovereignty is one of those things that we all talk about, have heard of, but don't always understand
- b. It's one of those things that makes you do the slow nod even though you don't know what you're agreeing to
- c. So, before we even look at it, let's at least come up with a decent definition of it
  - a. "sovereign" means "possessing supreme or ultimate power"
  - b. so, sovereignty could simply mean "in total control"
  - c. lots of dads like to claim sovereignty over the remote, yes?
  - d. the sovereignty of God means that he is in total control
- d. Is the sovereignty of God in the Bible?
  - a. that's a fair question, because it sounds like it would be, but let's make sure
  - b. 1 Chronicles 29:11-12 // pretty good description of a sovereign God
  - c. Psalm 115:3 // a sovereign God does what he pleases
- e. What if God abuses his power? He can't.
  - a. Psalm 119:68 // he is good and only does good
  - b. Matthew, mark and Luke all record that Jesus said "no one is good except God"
  - c. we would abuse sovereign power, but not God
  - d. he is the only one who can be trusted with it!
- f. So, the sovereignty of God means that he alone is in control, has always been in control and has never once stepped aside for a coffee break and allowed things to get out of control
- g. Right now, a lot of us may be facing situations that seem to be out of control, and they are - they're out of OUR control but can never be out of GOD'S control
- h. So, don't feel like you've missed the "good Christian" class if you still get a bit frazzled over situations - you know, like "really good Christians always say God's sovereign and then never freak out about stuff"
- i. That's crazy and far from truth
- j. The reality, though, is that we rarely see God's sovereignty moving forward. This is a truth that requires faith now, but is easily seen looking back at where we've been.
- k. Let me show you what I mean by looking at Esther.
- l. We've said that we have the benefit of reading this story looking back, but that Esther, Xerxes, Vashti, Mordecai and Haman had to live it.
- m. What is obvious to us now wasn't so obvious to them then.
- n. We read the story and say, "Wow! God put Esther in the castle as queen to save the Jews."
- o. But Esther was sitting in the castle thinking, "How did I get here? What am I supposed to do here?"
- p. It's like those red dots on mall directories. God's sovereignty doesn't just show us where we are, but how we got to where we are.
- q. Here in Esther 6, what does God's sovereignty look like? What are some examples of it? I found at least 3:
  - a. verse 1
    - i. the king couldn't sleep
    - ii. just happens to be THIS night, the night between Esther's banquets for him and Haman

- iii. I'm not necessarily saying that insomnia is evidence of God's sovereignty, but if you're a healthy sleeper and you suddenly find yourself awake, there could be a reason
- iv. there certainly was in this instance
- b. verse 2
  - i. on THIS night, THIS section about Mordecai stopping an assassination is read
  - ii. this is in a book containing - at that point - 12 years worth of history
- c. verse 4
  - i. just as they finish reading, Haman enters
  - ii. it is PERFECT timing for what happens next
- r. As we move forward in Esther, we'll see more and more examples of the sovereignty of God
- s. But for now, let's move onto our second theme in Esther 6

## 2. The pride of man

- a. Of course this was going to be a bad theme, right, because Haman is in the house!
- b. He's a shark, and his theme song is Jaws
- c. Haman's going to ask the king to have Mordecai killed on the gallows that Haman built (overnight!!)
- d. And just as he walks in, Xerxes hits him with this question: "I want to honor someone. What should I do?"
- e. Haman's next thought reveals the second theme:
  - a. verse 6 // Haman's pretty sure the king wants to honor him
  - b. as real as the sovereignty of God is, so is the pride of man
- f. Before we throw Haman under the bus, can we just challenge ourselves a bit here?
- g. When the subject of showing honor comes up and OUR OWN NAME is the first one that pops in our heads, we've got a problem with pride, don't we?
- h. So, pride isn't just a Haman struggle; it's a human struggle.
- i. So let's talk through some of the effects of pride; what pride does in us and to us...
  - a. It blinds us // Proverbs 30:12
    - i. they can't see their own filth
    - ii. This is why everything I'm saying now sounds just like what everyone else needs to hear!
  - b. It makes our lives the standard // Luke 18:11,14
  - c. It intoxicates us // Romans 12:3
  - d. It sets God against us // James 4:6
  - e. It leaves no room for God // Psalm 10:4
  - f. It divides us // 1 Timothy 6:4
  - g. It deceives us // Jeremiah 49:16 (why you still think this is about the people around you!)
  - h. It causes us to overvalue ourselves and undervalue others
    - i. we see this in Haman's answer, don't we
    - ii. everything he suggested was because he thought HE deserved it
    - iii. he never would have seen Mordecai in that light

## 3. Our greatest failure

- a. So here we are, with 2 themes that cannot co-exist
- b. God is always in control, and we want to be; his sovereignty against our pride
- c. The good news is that we have time to learn an important lesson before it's too late
- d. Haman didn't, his advisors didn't, and his wife didn't
- e. Look at verse 12
  - a. Haman has had to honor Mordecai - a very public humiliation for his
  - b. he rushes home and explains what had happened, and notice the response in verse 13: "Since Mordecai is a Jew, you can't stand against him!"
  - c. can't you picture Haman wondering why they didn't tell him that before (Esther 5:13-14)
  - d. but in one chapter, the sovereignty of God has turned the tables
- f. They learned our Big Idea a little too late to do anything about it: **Our greatest failure is fighting the God who always succeeds.**
- g. Pride sees God's power, but won't bow. Humility bows, and sees God's power.

### The Landing

So how do we land a message like this?

We've got to give ourselves some time to bow our pride to God's sovereignty.

For some, it means repentance before our pride seals our fate like Haman's did.

For others, it means submitting our lives into the hands of God and trusting him to lead us.

Listen to Psalm 2:1-6 // do you hear the power of a sovereign God in those words?

Our Big Idea says that **"our greatest failure is fighting the God who always succeeds."**

Our culture has made failure fun - we watched a video of animal fails before the message and you can find tons of funny fails on the internet.

But this failure is life - and eternity - threatening.

**Our greatest failure is fighting the God who always succeeds.**

But if we'll lay down pride and put ourselves on the right side of that power, then the reverse of that becomes true as well: **"Our greatest success is uniting with the God who never fails."**

Let's take some time to do that now.