

Season 3, Episode 6: Mordecai's Rise (Chapters 5&6)

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Sarah: This podcast is sponsored by 10ofthose.com. 10ofthose.com hand pick the best Christian books that point to Jesus and sell them at discounted prices. I've been really enjoying God's grace in your suffering by David Powlinson this month. It's a book that weaves together scripture and personal stories and the words of classic hymn. How firm a foundation and in it, Palatine brings such an experienced councilors touch to helping us to see God at work and our own particular suffering, and also discovering how God's grace is deeper than we could ever imagine. I'd really recommend grabbing hold of it. Why not? Head to 10ofthose.com after this episode.

Felicity: Hello, everyone. Welcome to Two sisters and the cup of Tea. My name is Felicity and I live in America and this is my sister Sarah and she lives in the UK.

Sarah: Hi, everyone.

Felicity: Hi, Sarah. Good to see you. Now, Sarah was just about to tell me about her biscuit of choice, but she thought it was so good that she had to wait until everyone was listening to hear what this biscuit is. I mean, I've got high expectations. Sarah, can you guess? Not a Jammy Dodger, is it? Jammy Dodger?

Sarah: Oh, it is, but what kind? I made it.

Felicity: Made it?

Sarah: I made them on the bake off. They were making them the other day, but I made it.

Felicity: Wow, Sarah, I'm impressed. I see that you haven't actually taken a bite yet. Is it actually nice?

Sarah: I've already had one today. That's why I was kind of, like, pacing myself through the evening. But they're very good. They're very good. And it feels like I can't quite believe I'm sitting here in front of a homemade biscuit as well, because we have moved out this week and it feels like have to do that just in one of those weeks. I'm like, I just need to do something creative. So the biscuits happened in the midst of quite a lot of chaos, but homemade Jammy Dodger, I love that biscuit.

Felicity: Making would be a sort of creative therapy for you. I feel like biscuit making would just be a stress Adder. For me, it wasn't that therapy making.

Sarah: It was quite a stressful afternoon.

Felicity: Oh, yes, this is good, actually. I've had a delivery of British items from this. You can get this online store called British Corner Shop and they just load you up with all things British today. It's a surprising biscuit. I'm not even sure it qualifies as a biscuit. It's called a Cadbury's Double Delight and I feel like it's a player in the Jaffa cake tea cake kind of world. It's like a double cakey biscuity chocolatey thing. It's pretty good. It's probably just a bit spongy to be called the biscuit, to be honest. So false advertising, I feel, because on this website, it was in the biscuits category, so I just thought, well, I'll just go for it. I'm not sure.

Sarah: Yeah. Anyway, so we're kind of halfway through Besta already, which is kind of crazy. How are you doing with it? How is it impacting you?

Felicity: I am so enjoying soaking in a narrative that convinces me again and again that God is in charge. And I feel like, oh, there are various ups and downs in my life at the moment, and I feel like this has been a good stabling kind of presence in a way. That sounds kind of weird, isn't it, in the Bible? But I think as we've been digging into it, god's sovereignty has just become more and more evident to me as I look at my own life. I think that thing of God's fingerprints being all over it, even when his name isn't mentioned, that's really hit home with me, I think. And I'm seeing that more in my life than I think I was before. How about you?

Sarah: Yeah, I think it's funny because I think it's not the same as having, like, 50 verses that I can't come back to. I think I've struggled with it in that sense that I've not had those kind of verses to bring to mind from it. But the way that it's impacting how I'm thinking

through big picture, small picture things has been really helpful. And, as you say, just like remembering God's fingerprints over so many different parts every part of life, and how that's playing out, particularly when it's with the move. Yeah, that's been good. It's been good. And I think the constant of just chatting with you has also been great.

Felicity: Yeah, we were talking about that when we're earlier this morning. I think that the reality that being in the word regularly with someone else. I feel like we harp on about this a lot at the moment, about grabbing someone to listen along with you and read along with you, but it comes from us really enjoying it. So we should probably get on with that, shouldn't we?

Sarah: Okay, let's crack on. You're going to read chapters five and six for us.

Felicity: On the third day, Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace in front of the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter. Then the king asked, what is it, queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given to you, if it pleases the king, replied Esther, let the king, together with Haman, come to Dave to a banquet I have prepared for him. Bring Hayman at once, the king said, so that we may do what Esther asks. So the king and Hayman went to the banquet Esther had prepared. As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, now what is your petition? It will be given to you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted, Esther replied. My petition and my request is this if the king regards me with favor, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition to fulfill my request, let the king and Hayman come tomorrow to the banquet. I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king's question. Haman went out that day happy and in high spirits. But when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with rage against Mordecai. Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home, calling together his friends and Zeresh. His wife Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honored him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials. And that's not all, Haman added. I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave, and she's invited me along with the king tomorrow. But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that June Mordecai sitting at the king's gate, his wife Zareth and all his friends said to him, have a pole set up, reaching to the height of 50 cubits, and asked the king in the morning to have Mordecai impaled on it. Then go with the king to the banquet and enjoy yourself. This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the pole set up. That night the king could not sleep, so he ordered the book of the Chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. It was found recorded there that Mordecai had exposed big thunder and territory to the king's officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Zeresh. What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this? The king asked. Nothing has been done for him, his attendant answered. The king said, who is in the court now? Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about impaling Mordecai and the pole he has set up for him. His attendants answered. Haman is standing in the court. Bring him in, the king ordered. When Haman entered, the king asked him what should be done for the man the king delights to honor. Now Haman thought to himself, who is there that the king would rather honor than me? So he answered the king, for the man the king delights to honor. Let them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him this is what is done for the man the king delights to honor. Go at once. The king commanded Haman get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai, the Jew who sits at the king's gate. Do not neglect anything you've recommended. So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him. This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor. Afterwards, Mordecai returned to the king's gate, but Haman rushed home with his head covered in grief and told Zeresh, his wife and all his friends, everything that happened to

him. His advisors and his wife Zara said to him, since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him. You will surely come to ruin. While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried Hayman away to the banquet Esther had prepared.

Sarah: Thank you, Christine. There's a lot going on these chapters, aren't there? Again, is it worth just reminding ourselves of where we got to so far? We've got this really serious situation for God's people, haven't we, where their destruction is imminent and they're under threat, and so is God's salvation plan. And the last thing that happened is Esther requested all of God's people in the city of Caesar to fast and pray for three days in preparation for her to approach the king. So we've got all of God's people in this place praying and depending on the Lord, and then all that follows is as a result of that yeah, exactly.

Felicity: Of God answering prayer. So God is evidently active, and he has been all throughout the book, but I love that we've had that fasting and praying, and so we're kind of like it's like a flag, isn't it? Like, Watch out, this is what God is doing. And wonderfully. He, in verse two, was pleased with her and held out the golden scepter, because if he hadn't, then death, essentially. That's what it, isn't it? So Esther is of risking her life as she stands there at the door to the throne room.

Sarah: And it is kind of extraordinary, isn't it? Because it's not in keeping with his character to be bothered, really, is it, kings, he is being gracious here in allowing her to enter, allowing her to petition a request. And he's listening as well.

Felicity: Yeah, surprisingly. And I feel like as you read it, you're like, oh, he's listening. And then he says yes to the banquet, and then he says, oh. And he keeps on saying, I'll give you whatever you want, Esther. Don't you think, as you hear that, you're like, are you going to ask Esther? Are you going to ask it? Why are you talking about banquets? Ask the big question.

Sarah: It is clever, though, isn't it? It is a clever thing, because she's kind of like is she luring him in or she's kind of training him to keep saying yes to her request, isn't she?

Felicity: Yeah, I thought that was it, because he says, let us verse five so that we may do what Esther says. And it's kind of like, well, if you're in the practice of doing what Esther says, maybe you'll save this enormous crowd of people who are in desperate peril.

Sarah: Yeah, it's an interesting way, isn't it? It's just an interesting way. She's asking. Okay, so we've got that kind of situation on, and then we've got the backdrop. We've got Hayman and Mordecai, haven't we? And we've got just Hayman's anger. He's kind of disdain his what's going on there in his heart that he's just so cross, isn't he?

Felicity: I know. Isn't it interesting? I thought it was really interesting because he goes out verse nine, happy and in high spirits. But as soon as he sees Mordecai and what is it about Mordecai? The thing that the narrator always draws our attention to is that Mordecai doesn't honor Hayman. Like, he doesn't stand up when he approaches. He's not the one who's worshipping, is he? So I wonder whether that all helps us see Hayman's pride. The thing about pride is you want to be elevated, don't you? And Mordecai is not playing the elevation game. Like, he's just not into it. He's like, I'm just doing my thing. I'm not bothered, and Hayman cannot handle it.

Sarah: And I think that's the interesting thing in this chapter, isn't it? We do get Hayman and Mordecai kind of contrasted together, don't when we get the kind of proud Hayman in boasting and puffing himself up in every way that he can, to the extent he's even erecting this massive high pole to kill Mordecai on his knee as he wants to be elevated himself and do that. But we've also got this humble Mordecai who just doesn't make a fuss. I don't know. How would you describe Mordecai in this scene?

Felicity: Well, I think it's almost significant that we don't actually hear from him. He's not pushing himself forwards. The only reason, as we hit verse chapter six, that he's actually being honored and recognized is because by chance, as in God's, fingerprints all over his deeds have been read off, and then all the talking is done by Hayman Still, and Mordecai is just the recipient. He's very humble and very kind of deprecating of himself. I would say that he hasn't reminded anyone about what he did.

Sarah: No, that was just Gus Providence, wasn't it, that the king couldn't sleep? And that night, which book did he happen to open? But it was the book that told about when Mordecai foiled the plot against the king. That's just so exciting, I think those.

Felicity: Little details and see, actually, that's just.

Sarah: Completely the Lord at work. It's no big miracle going on. There's no, like, parting of the Red Sea. There's no I don't know. It's not dramatic. It's a really ordinary thing. King couldn't sleep, but it just happened to be that night and that page. And that page exactly saying it's the.

Felicity: Pivot of the book.

Sarah: It's the whole thing in motion, doesn't it?

Felicity: Yeah, and that's what I was going to say. It's worth pointing out that structurally in the book, these two chapters are kind of the pivot by which the whole plot turns, isn't it? And we're going to get into the realm of the great reversal and the reversals that we're going to see as we go on through Esther. It's kind of like everything that we've seen so far is basically going to be turned on its head as we see God work out his purposes.

Sarah: Yeah, there's so much here, though, isn't it? I think where do we go? Where do you go? To drivers? To their heart. What does it look like to kind of pick up something from this chapter, twisty and things, do it for ourselves?

Felicity: Well, I do think that as we see Hayman's pride and get a real insight into how pride works here, chapter six. When he wants to be king, really, doesn't he aspires to be the most powerful, most lorded person in the whole nation, that kind of desire which has made him want to impale Mordecai on this giant pulse, and everyone can see that Hayman is the best. I think that element of pride, as you were saying, then, contrasting with Mordecai, and actually, as we begin to see the reversal in place, coming into play, as Mordecai gets honored, we're beginning to see that pride is not the means by which we are raised up and actually humility. And as we think about that, we're then beginning to think on the Lord Jesus, aren't we? Do you want to take us a bit further into that kind of thought?

Sarah: Yeah, I guess it's helpful, wasn't it, hearing Nano last week, just thinking about how we view all of scripture in light of Christ, but also how scripture interprets itself as well. So in Proverbs, you've got quite a few verses, like, for example, Proverbs, chapter 16, verse 18, pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. And you kind of see Hayman live out this proverb, don't you see him live out these words before your eyes in this scene? And you've also got James, chapter four, haven't you, that we were dwelling on a lot last season. God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. And you see the grace you see the grace towards Mordecai's humility here. And I guess that prompts us to see the shadow of the Lord Jesus, doesn't it, in his humility? And I think my mind has just really turned to Philippines as I've been dwelling on this chapter, and maybe that's just because I've been dwelling on Philippines a bit in the last couple of weeks anyway as well. But I thought of actually Jesus leaving his heavenly throne room, that he was thoroughly deserving to be there in every way. He had all power, control and glory, and he left the Heights and went to the depth of the cross where he was actually lifted up on a wooden cross for us and for all the pride in our hearts. Does that make sense? Kind of going in that direction with that?

Felicity: I think that's right. And like Mana was saying on our last episode, that there are lots of different little kind of shadows that help us see Jesus, see an even better Jesus in that, don't we? Even as we see Mordecai robed as a king, it kind of reminds us of Jesus as he's raised up. And as we see Haman beginning to approach his downfall, we begin to see, actually, that it's the Jesus way, the God way, that is the way in which things are going to work out. And I think it means that we go into our next chapter. The rest of the narrative expectant that God's way is going to triumph, that the Jesus'way is the way. So I think from my heart, that is a really helpful deepening of that conviction that it is through the way of the cross. It is through humility rather than pride, it is through choosing to follow God's way rather than any other that I'm going to be okay. Because ultimately Mordecai is going to be okay, esther is going to be okay.

Sarah: But we don't know that here, though, do we, under that edict? And we absolutely don't know that at this point. So we're starting to see it all kind of slot into place. And we've

got the wonderful hindsight, haven't we? We can look back and go, yes, of course it's going to be okay for them. And also, as Nano was pointing us to last week, we've got the better mediator. So Esther is mediating in this situation, and we can look forward and go, we know we've got the better and perfect mediator. But actually, in that moment, more baroness don't know that it's going to be okay.

Felicity: Yeah, that's true. That's true. I was jumping a bit far ahead. That's the thing about dealing with a narrative, isn't it? That you know the whole story swirling around in your head. But you're right at this point. And I love that last bit just before we pray. That last thing. Since Mordecai says Zara, she seems to have suddenly seen the light before. Whom you down for is of Jewish origin. He is of God, therefore you cannot stand against him. I love that. I love that.

Sarah: And I love that. Yeah. It's unbelievers proclaiming. That truth we need to hear, don't we, as readers? The narrator is reminding us of God is totally in control of the situation, but he's using an unbeliever and someone who is hostile to God's people. Because she's aligned herself with Hayman all the way through.

Felicity: Yeah, she suggested the poll.

Sarah: Yeah.

Felicity: I know. Exactly.

Sarah: She's the one who's saying you can't win, like it's a no win situation here.

Felicity: Yeah.

Sarah: Anyway, do you want to pray for us to stay as we close?

Felicity: Yeah. Father God, thank you so much that we know you to be in charge, that we know you to be sovereign. And as we see this narrative play out. We're all the more convinced that the way of Mordecai. The way of Jesus. Not the way of Haman. Is the way we pray that you'd convince us more and more of that and help us to live out our lives in light of the fact that you are our God and that you are in charge. You are in control. Your glory. Amen. Whistles stop as ever. Rich. I know these chapters are rich, and it's the pivot point. I just really encourage everyone to just start.

Sarah: Isn't it just the start?

Felicity: Welling, absolutely. We would love it as well if you were able to write a review of the podcast to Spread the love, spread the word about this and get more people in the world together. That would be a wonderful thing. It's such an encouragement to us as well, when we hear what you're saying. Anything else we need to say?

Sarah: So no, other than just go and grab that jamming dodger recipe from Great British Bake Off. Great.

Felicity: Well, you inspired me. I should do that. All right. Until next time. Bye, sir. Bye.

Sarah: Thanks so much for listening. This podcast is sponsored by Tenorzos.com.