

MUSTARD SEED MONTHLY DEVOTIONAL

# OCTOBER



A PUBLICATION OF MUSTARD SEED MEDIA



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# Mustard Seed Monthly Devotional

*October 2026*

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*First edition*

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# Introduction

I want to start with a question that has taken me years to learn how to answer.

Where was God when nothing was going right?

Now, don't go theological on me right now please, we just want honest answers. LOL. The kind you arrive at not in a library but in a season where the evidence for God's involvement in your situation is, at best, invisible, and the evidence for His absence is everywhere you look.

I have had those seasons. The period where the doors were closing faster than they were opening, where the thing I had believed God for seemed to be going the opposite direction, where the people I had trusted were making decisions that looked, from the inside, like the systematic dismantling of everything I had worked toward. I prayed. I fasted. I did what I knew to do. And for a significant stretch of time, heaven was quiet and the situation was loud.

It was only later, looking back, that I began to see it. The rejection that redirected me. The delay that was actually protection. The closed door that was not God saying no but God saying not yet, because something further down the corridor needed to be in place first. The person who I thought was blocking my path who was actually, without knowing it, being used to position me for something they would never have chosen to give me willingly.

I could not see any of it while it was happening. I only saw it in reverse.

That is what the book of Esther is about.

Esther is one of the most extraordinary books of the Bible for one specific reason: God's name does not appear in it. Not once. In ten chapters of a story involving a genocide plot, a palace intrigue, a providential queen, a sleepless king, and a reversal of staggering proportions, the author never once writes the name of God. He is the most prominent character in the entire book and

His name is nowhere on the page.

And yet He is on every page. In the timing of the king's insomnia. In the specific page of the chronicle that was read aloud that night. In the favour Esther found in the eyes of every person she encountered. In the lot that Haman cast, which landed on a date that gave God eleven months to arrange a reversal. In the gallows that Haman built for Mordecai and that Haman was hanged on instead. In the identity of a Jewish orphan girl who just happened to be in the right palace at the right moment when her people needed someone on the inside.

He did not sign His name to any of it. He did not need to. His fingerprints were everywhere.

This October, we are spending thirty-one days inside the book of Esther, as a training in the kind of seeing that faith requires. Because the world most of us live in looks more like the book of Esther than it looks like the book of Acts. It is not usually filled with parted seas and audible divine voices and angels rolling stones away from tombs. It is usually filled with ordinary events: a sleepless night, a cancelled appointment, a chance meeting, a door that closed, a favour that came from a direction you never expected. And the question is whether you have eyes to see the invisible God behind the visible events.

By the end of this month, I want you to be able to look at your own life the way we are about to look at Esther's, not just at the dramatic moments but at the ordinary ones, and see the hand that was writing every page, even the pages where His name does not appear.

He is the visible hand of an invincible God. And He has been on every page of your story too.

Welcome to October.

Tayo Alofun

Mustard Seed Devotional |October 2026

# October 1: The God Whose Name Is Missing

*“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?” — Esther 4:14 (NIV)*

**T**here are books in the Bible that announce God from the first sentence. Genesis: In the beginning, God. John: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. Psalm 23: The Lord is my shepherd. You cannot miss Him. His name is the headline, the framework, the constant refrain. And then there is Esther, ten chapters of extraordinary divine activity in which the author never once writes the name of God. Not in passing. Not as a reference. Not even in the prayers and fasting that Esther calls for. The most active character in the story has no named credit on any page of it.

Biblical scholars have wrestled with this for centuries. Some have suggested it was deliberate concealment for political reasons, that the book was written for circulation in a Persian context where an obviously Jewish religious text might have been dangerous. Others have suggested it was a theological statement in itself, a book intentionally written to mirror how God most often works in the real world: present everywhere, named nowhere, recognisable only to those with eyes trained enough to see Him.

I think it is both. And I think it is one of the most important books in the

canon precisely because of this absence, because it reflects the experience that most believers live in most of the time. Not the dramatic, unmistakable, voice-from-heaven variety of divine encounter, though those happen. The quiet, behind-the-scenes, you would not know it was God unless you were looking for variety. The kind that fills ordinary weeks and ordinary decisions and ordinary reversals of fortune and ordinary sleepless nights.

Consider what God does in Esther without ever announcing Himself. He orchestrates a domestic dispute in a palace to create a vacancy on a throne He intends to fill with a Jewish orphan. He arranges for that orphan to find favour with every person she encounters, from the servant who oversees her preparation to the king who chooses her above all others. He allows a genocide plot to be signed into law and then spends eleven months arranging a reversal that leaves the architect of the plot hanging on the gallows he built for someone else. He gives a king insomnia on exactly the right night, and ensures that the exact page of the royal chronicle recording an unrewarded act of loyalty is the page that is read aloud that sleepless night.

He does all of this without a single miracle that breaks the laws of nature, without a single angelic appearance, without a single audible divine voice. Every event is, on its surface, entirely explicable by natural means. The insomnia could have a dozen natural explanations. The lot could have fallen on a different month by chance. The king could have fallen in love with a different woman. The page of the chronicle could have been any of a thousand other pages. Every single event in the book of Esther is individually deniable as an act of God. Taken together, they are undeniable.

This is what the book is teaching us to see. Not dramatic impossibilities but the quiet, cumulative, unmistakable weight of a thousand individually ordinary events all moving in the same direction. The direction of deliverance. The direction of His purposes. The direction that only makes sense if Someone is steering.

Today, before we go any further into Esther's story, look at your own. Think of one season in your life where you could not see God's hand while you were in it, but looking back, the movement of events was unmistakably coordinated. One period where the timing, the people, the reversals, and the outcomes

made far more sense in reverse than they did in the moment. That season was the book of Esther, written in your specific life. God's name was probably missing from it too. His hand was not.

**Prayer**

*Father, train my eyes to see you in the chapters where your name does not appear. Teach me to recognise your fingerprints on the ordinary events that I have been reading as coincidence. Show me the hand that was writing every page. I want to read my life the way the book of Esther is meant to be read. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 2: Providence in Ordinary Events

*“But when the attendants delivered the king’s command, Queen Vashti refused to come. Then the king became furious and burned with anger.”*

— Esther 1:12 (NIV)

**T**he book of Esther begins with a party. A very long party. King Ahasuerus of Persia hosted a banquet that lasted a hundred and eighty days, a six-month display of the wealth and glory of his empire, followed by a seven-day feast for all the people of Susa. The details are precise: gold and silver couches on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl, and costly stones. Wine in golden goblets. A different design for each one. Royal wine flowing in abundance, as befitting a king. This was excess on a scale that is almost impossible to imagine, and it is the opening scene of the most carefully providential story in scripture.

Why does it matter? Because God placed the hinge of an entire people’s survival on the outcome of a royal dinner party.

On the seventh day, the king was merry with wine and commanded that Queen Vashti be brought before him wearing her royal crown, to show the peoples and the princes her beauty. She was beautiful, and he wanted to display her. It was an act of entitled vanity by a man drunk on his own wealth and wine. Queen Vashti refused to come. The text does not tell us why. Perhaps she found the command degrading. Perhaps she had her own gathering of women and would not leave it. Perhaps she simply had enough dignity to say no to a humiliating public display.

Whatever her reason, the refusal set in motion a chain of events that would culminate in the survival of an entire people. The king's advisors persuaded him that Vashti's refusal was a threat to the authority of every husband in the empire, that if word spread that the queen had defied the king, women throughout the provinces would despise their husbands. Vashti was deposed. A search was begun for a new queen. And into that vacancy, created by a man's vanity and a woman's dignity, stepped a Jewish orphan who had no reason to be in any palace in the Persian Empire.

Think about the ordinary events in your own story that turned out to be hinges. The cancelled meeting that led to the conversation that changed your direction. The redundancy that felt like disaster and turned out to be reassignment. The relationship that ended badly and whose ending created space for the one that was actually meant for you. The door that closed in your face by someone acting out of selfishness or carelessness or pride who had no idea they were serving a purpose they would never have chosen to serve.

The ordinary events of our lives are not interruptions to God's plan. They are the plan. God does not only work through burning bushes and parted seas. He works through the vanity of a Persian king and the dignity of a woman whose name means excellence. He works through the small decisions that people make for entirely human reasons, and He weaves them into a tapestry that, seen from the right distance, is unmistakably His.

Today, look at what has felt most ordinary in your life this week. The small events, the minor frustrations, the unremarkable decisions of the people around you. Ask God to show you whether any of them are the first scene of a chapter of providence you have not yet been able to read. He is more present in the ordinary than we typically give Him credit for. He was in chapter one of Esther before anyone had met Esther.

### **Prayer**

*Father, train me to see your providence in the ordinary. The parties, the refusals, the small decisions of people around me who are acting for entirely human reasons but serving a purpose they cannot see. I have been waiting for the dramatic before I will call something your work. Teach me to recognise you in the mundane. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 3: Closed Doors as Providence

*“Esther had not made known her kindred or her people, as Mordecai had commanded her, for Esther obeyed Mordecai just as when she was brought up by him.” — Esther 2:20 (ESV)*

**E**sther entered the palace with a secret she had been instructed to keep. She was Jewish, the ward of her older cousin Mordecai, raised by him after the death of her parents. And on Mordecai’s explicit instruction, she did not reveal her nationality or her people to anyone in the palace. Not to the king’s servant who oversaw her preparation. Not to the women around her. Not to the king himself when he chose her above all others and placed the royal crown on her head. She became queen of the most powerful empire in the known world, and the most important fact about her identity was sealed behind a closed door.

This seems, on the surface, like a precaution. A wise piece of self-protection in a foreign court where being Jewish could have meant danger. But read the story to its end and you see what the closed door was actually for. When Haman’s decree of genocide went out, when the plot to destroy every Jewish person in the empire was signed with the king’s ring, the one person positioned to save them was someone the king did not know was Jewish. The secret was not a liability. It was the loaded gun that the entire story had been pointing at from the beginning.

Some of the things God has not yet released you to reveal are not withheld because He is withholding. They are sealed because the moment for their full

expression has not yet arrived. The gift you have not yet found a platform for. The calling that has not yet been confirmed publicly. The word you received but have not yet seen come to pass. The door that has been firmly, frustratingly closed. It is possible that the thing you have been asking God to open is being kept closed precisely because its opening, at the right moment, is going to matter more than you can currently imagine.

Mordecai did not know, when he gave Esther that instruction, that he was setting up the critical hinge of the entire rescue operation. He was being prudent. God was being strategic. The two things looked identical from the outside. They produced entirely different results.

Today, surrender the closed doors in your life to a different frame. Not: God has forgotten this. Not: I must have missed something. But: this may be the sealed card in a strategy I cannot yet read. Ask God to give you the peace to carry what He has not yet released, and the wisdom to recognise the moment when He does.

**Prayer**

*Father, I release the closed doors of my life into your hands. What you have sealed, I will not force open. What you are withholding, I trust you are preserving. Give me the patience to wait for the right moment, and the eyes to recognise it when it comes. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 4: Favour Without Explanation

*“When the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his own daughter, to go in to the king, she asked for nothing except what Hegai the king’s eunuch, who had charge of the women, advised. Now Esther was winning favor in the eyes of all who saw her.” — Esther 2:15 (ESV)*

**T**here are some things you cannot manufacture. When Esther came to the king’s palace, the text makes a striking observation: she won favour in the eyes of all who saw her. Not just the king. Not just the officials. Everyone. Hegai, the king’s eunuch who oversaw the women’s preparation, gave her the best place in the harem, provided seven chosen young women as her attendants, and gave her special food rations ahead of schedule. The king saw her and chose her above all the other women. Every person she encountered seemed to be predisposed toward her before she had done anything to earn it.

This is the texture of divine favour. It does not ask for explanation. It does not wait for credentials. It operates ahead of performance and beyond what merit would naturally produce. Esther found favour not because she campaigned for it, not because she lobbied for it, not because she understood the palace politics well enough to engineer it. She found it because God was positioning someone, and favour was the mechanism He used to get her into place.

We tend to reduce favour to either luck or to the result of networking and self-

promotion. And while wisdom and relational investment certainly matter, the favour that is doing something in a person's life is often recognisable precisely because it exceeds what those natural explanations can account for. The door that opened faster than it should have. The person who helped without being asked. The yes that came before the full pitch was complete. These are the fingerprints of a God who is positioning someone.

The danger is that we attribute to ourselves what is actually God's sovereign arrangement on our behalf. Esther could have walked out of the palace selection process believing she had won on her own merits. She was beautiful. She was poised. She was wise in what she asked for. All of that was true. But the favour that moved through her circumstances was bigger than any of those things. It was the favour of a God who needed a Jewish queen in a Persian palace, and who had been arranging one since before Esther was born.

Today, think about the open doors in your life that exceeded what you could have earned or engineered. Do not just be grateful for the outcome. Be grateful for the God who was doing something through it that had nothing to do with your performance and everything to do with His plan.

**Prayer**

*Father, I thank you for the favour I did not earn and could not manufacture. I receive it not as the reward of my own effort but as the signature of your purpose on my life. Use every open door to position me exactly where you need me. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 5: The Weight of a Moment

*“For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” — Esther 4:14 (NIV)*

**M**ordecai’s question to Esther is one of the most well-known lines in the scripture. But it lands differently when you read it in context.

Haman’s decree had gone out. A date had been set for the destruction of every Jewish person in the Persian Empire. The decree was irrevocable under Persian law; even the king could not undo what he had signed. Mordecai was in sackcloth and ashes at the palace gate, weeping publicly, which was how Esther learned that something was catastrophically wrong. When she discovered what Haman had done, she sent a message back to Mordecai explaining the obvious danger: to go before the king without being summoned was a capital offence, unless the king extended his golden sceptre. She had not been summoned in thirty days.

Mordecai’s response is not comforting in the way we might expect. He does not reassure her that it will all be fine. He does not promise her that God will protect her if she steps forward. He says something more demanding and more honest: do not think that you will escape this simply because you are in the palace. If you stay silent, deliverance will come from somewhere else. But perhaps, Mordecai suggests, the reason you are here, the reason all of this

happened to you, the reason a Jewish orphan girl became queen of Persia, is for this exact moment.

The word perhaps is worth sitting with. Mordecai does not claim to know God's purpose with certainty. He is not giving her a prophecy. He is giving her a framework for interpreting what she has been through in light of what she is being asked to do. The accumulation of unlikely events that brought her to this palace, this position, this moment, makes it at least possible that this moment is why she is here.

We each have versions of this question. The path that brought you to where you are today, the unlikely sequence of events, the doors that opened and the ones that closed, the people who came into your life and the ones who left it, is entirely possible that all of it was preparation for a moment that has not yet arrived. Or for a moment that is arriving right now. The question is whether you are willing to step into it.

Today, ask God to help you see your current position not as coincidence but as appointment. What is the moment your story has been preparing you for? What are you being trusted with right now that requires you to be exactly who and where you are?

**Prayer**

*Father, help me see my life as preparation, not accident. I bring the position I am in before you, knowing you placed me here. Give me the courage to step into the moment this season has been building toward. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 6: When Pride Writes the Script

*“And when Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage to him, Haman was filled with fury.” — Esther 3:5 (ESV)*

**H**aman is one of the most instructive villains in scripture, not because of his evil but because of his ordinariness.

He had everything. He was the prime minister of the most powerful empire in the known world, elevated by the king above all the other princes and officials. The king had commanded that all the royal servants at the king’s gate should bow down and pay homage to Haman whenever he passed. Every single one of them did. Every one, that is, except a Jewish man named Mordecai who sat quietly at the gate and refused.

The text does not record a confrontation between them. No dramatic argument. No public altercation. Haman simply noticed that Mordecai did not bow, and Haman was filled with fury. The text then adds one of the most chilling lines in the story: having learned that Mordecai was Jewish, Haman did not simply want to punish Mordecai. He wanted to destroy all the Jews in the whole empire. One man’s refusal to bow became the basis for a genocide plan.

This is what unchecked pride does. It cannot absorb the normal friction of human life. It cannot tolerate the existence of a single person who does not perform the honour it believes it is owed. And so it escalates. What began as one man’s dignity became, in the architecture of Haman’s wounded pride, a national security threat. The response was wildly disproportionate to the

offence, and that disproportionality is the mark of pride doing the reasoning.

We have all encountered people like Haman. Their reaction to a perceived slight is so far beyond what the situation warranted that it becomes disorienting. What is worth noticing, when that happens, is that the excessive reaction is rarely actually about you. It is about something in them that your refusal to perform what they expect has exposed. Mordecai did not create Haman's pride. He simply revealed what was already there.

Today, notice where pride, whether in yourself or in someone whose actions are affecting you, is writing a script larger than the actual situation. Pride always overreaches. And in the book of Esther, it is Haman's overreach that becomes the very mechanism of his undoing.

**Prayer**

*Father, guard my heart from the pride that turns small offences into large retaliation. Where I have been wounded by someone's overreach, give me clarity to see what is really happening. And where pride has been writing my own script, humble me before it writes me out of the story. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 7: The Lot That God Controlled

*“In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, they cast lots) before Haman day after day; and they cast it month after month till the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.” — Esther 3:7 (ESV)*

**H**aman wanted to pick the best day to destroy the Jewish people, so he cast lots.

This was common practice in the ancient world. The Pur, from which the festival of Purim takes its name, was essentially a form of divination, a way of discerning the most auspicious timing for an action. Haman cast it in the first month of the year and let it fall. The lot landed on the twelfth month. Adar. Which means that from the moment the lot fell, there were eleven months between Haman’s plan and its execution.

Haman saw this as the perfect timing. He would announce the decree immediately, sign it into irrevocable law, and then have nearly a year for the empire to prepare for the systematic destruction of every Jewish person within its borders. What he did not see, what he could not see, was that the eleven months were not his to use. They belonged to God. They were eleven months for a reversal. Eleven months for a queen to find her courage. Eleven months for a sleepless king to be reminded of an unrewarded debt. Eleven months for the entire architecture of Haman’s plan to be turned inside out.

Proverbs 16:33 says: The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord. Haman cast the lot. God decided where it landed. The eleven months

Haman thought he had secured for destruction were the eleven months God had secured for salvation.

This is one of the most stunning details in a story full of stunning details. The very mechanism Haman used to time his attack became the gift that gave God's people time to be rescued. The tool of the enemy served the purposes of the Lord. What the adversary meant as timing for catastrophe, God used as a runway for deliverance.

Today, look at something in your life that feels like it is on Haman's timeline, moving toward a bad outcome with the calendar pages turning. Consider: perhaps the same months that look like delay to you are actually God's preparation runway. The lot that landed on the twelfth month was not Haman's victory. It was God's gift.

**Prayer**

*Father, what looks like your enemy's timing is actually yours. I release the calendar to you. The months that I have feared, the approaching deadlines, the ticking clocks, I trust that you have already decided where the lot lands. Nothing is on Haman's schedule. Everything is on yours. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 8: The Decree That Could Not Be Undone

*“Letters were sent by couriers to all the king’s provinces with instruction to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods” — Esther 3:13 (ESV)*

**T**he decree was irrevocable.

This is the detail that makes the book of Esther’s resolution so extraordinary. Persian law did not permit a royal decree to be revoked, not even by the king himself. The king could issue a new decree, but he could not unmake the old one. When Haman persuaded Ahasuerus to sign the edict ordering the destruction of all Jews in the empire, that edict carried the seal of the king’s ring. It had the force of law. It could not be undone.

This is the kind of situation that produces hopelessness. Not just a bad circumstance but a legally established bad circumstance, one that has been signed and sealed and sent out by couriers to every corner of the empire. The Jewish people were not facing a rumour or a threat. They were facing a signed, dated, irrevocable royal order. Mordecai was weeping in sackcloth not because things looked bad but because things were, in any natural reading of the situation, impossible.

And yet the story does not end there. God did not revoke the decree. He could

not, not within the legal framework of the Persian Empire, and He did not choose to override it by supernatural means. Instead, He inspired Esther and Mordecai to request a second decree, one that gave the Jewish people the legal right to defend themselves against anyone who attacked them. The impossible situation was not undone. It was outmaneuvered.

There are situations in life that feel like irrevocable decrees. Medical reports that cannot be taken back. Contracts that have been signed. Words that have been spoken publicly. Damage that has been done and cannot simply be reversed. The book of Esther does not promise that God will undo what has been done. It shows a God who outmaneuvers the done thing, who works within the constraints of reality to engineer a new reality that the enemy never considered possible.

Today, bring to God the thing that feels irrevocable. Do not ask Him only to undo it. Ask Him to show you the counter-decree, the way through that does not require what was done to be undone, but that makes it irrelevant.

**Prayer**

*Father, I bring you the things in my life that feel sealed and signed and beyond reversal. I know you cannot be outmaneuvered by any decree. Show me the counter-decree. Make a way through the situation that I cannot see. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 9: Sackcloth at the Gate

*“When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and he cried out with a loud and bitter cry.” — Esther 4:1 (ESV)*

**B**efore the rescue comes the grief. Mordecai did not respond to Haman’s decree with composure. He did not receive the news with spiritual stoicism and immediately pivot to strategy. He tore his clothes, covered himself in sackcloth and ashes, and walked into the middle of the city crying out loudly and bitterly. The text uses the word bitter deliberately. This was not a controlled expression of concern. This was raw, public, uninhibited lamentation.

We live in a spiritual culture that has sometimes made grief feel like a failure of faith. As though a person who truly trusted God would not weep at the gate. As though sackcloth is evidence of doubt rather than evidence of an honest reckoning with reality. But Mordecai was one of the heroes of this story, and Mordecai put on sackcloth. He did not skip the grief to get to the faith. He brought both.

The Psalms are full of this honest grief. Lament is not the opposite of faith. It is, in many cases, the truest expression of faith, the refusal to pretend that everything is fine when everything is not fine, held within the frame of a God who is still in control. Mordecai wept loudly because the situation warranted loud weeping. He was not wrong to feel it. He was not wrong to show it.

The rescue that Esther arranged did not happen because Mordecai sup-

pressed his grief and kept it together. It happened because Mordecai's grief reached Esther through the servant she sent, because his weeping at the gate was visible enough that the news traveled to the queen, because the urgency of the lamentation communicated the urgency of the moment. In this story, the grief was actually a necessary part of the rescue.

Today, give yourself permission to mourn what genuinely warrants mourning. You do not have to perform strength you do not have. Sackcloth at the gate is not a failure of faith. Sometimes it is the thing that starts the rescue.

**Prayer**

*Father, I come to you with my grief, not my composed version of it but the real one. I trust you enough to weep before you. Receive my honest sorrow, and when it is time, turn my mourning into the beginning of what comes next. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 10: When the Messenger Arrives

*“Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why.” — Esther 4:5 (ESV)*

**E**sther did not know what was happening. She heard that Mordecai was at the gate in sackcloth, and she sent him clothes, but he would not receive them. So she sent a messenger to find out what this was about.

This small, practical detail matters. Esther did not have the full picture. She was inside the palace walls, insulated from what was unfolding outside them. The information she needed to act had to be carried to her by someone who moved between the two worlds, inside and outside, protected and exposed. Hathach became the carrier of the intelligence that would eventually set the rescue in motion.

There are moments in our lives when the thing that is happening to us is connected to something much larger that we cannot see from where we stand. We are inside the palace, so to speak, and the crisis is outside. We feel that something is wrong but we do not have the full picture. In those moments, the question is whether we will send for the information, whether we will ask for what we need to know, whether we will allow the messenger to cross between the worlds and bring us what we need to act.

Esther could have decided that Mordecai’s sackcloth was his private sorrow and none of her business. She was queen. She had her own concerns. But

she sent Hathach. She asked the question. She wanted to know. That small decision, to send for information rather than remain comfortable in ignorance, was one of the turning points of the entire story.

God uses messengers. He uses the conversation that finds you at the right moment, the word that someone carries to you from a direction you did not expect, the piece of information that reframes everything. The question is whether you are paying attention, and whether you are willing to send for what you do not yet know.

Today, is there a question you have been avoiding? A piece of information you have been too comfortable not to seek? Esther sent Hathach. Sometimes the rescue begins with the willingness to ask.

**Prayer**

*Father, make me a person who asks the right questions at the right time. Do not let me stay comfortable in ignorance when you have information that changes everything. Send me the messenger I need, and give me the wisdom to receive what they carry. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 11: The Risk She Did Not Have to Take

*“Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.” — Esther 4:16 (ESV)*

“**I** f I perish, I perish.”

It is easy to read those words as bravery and move on. But sit with them for a moment. Esther was not being dramatic. She was being accurate. The law was real. The risk was real. Approaching the king without a summons carried the penalty of death, and Esther had not been summoned in thirty days. She had no guarantee of the golden sceptre. She had no prophecy telling her she would survive. She had Mordecai’s framework, that perhaps she had come for such a time as this, and she had the fast of three days she was asking her people to pray through with her. And she had a decision to make.

Notice what she did not do. She did not wait for a sign. She did not ask for a vision confirming the outcome. She did not demand a promise of her personal safety before she stepped forward. She made a decision in the presence of genuine uncertainty, which is the actual shape of most of the courageous decisions faith ever produces.

There is a version of faith that waits for absolute certainty before moving. That wants the outcome guaranteed before the risk is taken. That needs the

sceptre extended before it walks through the door. Esther's faith was not that version. Her faith was: I believe that God has positioned me here for this moment. I cannot see what will happen when I walk in. I am going to walk in anyway.

The people God most uses in scripture are rarely the ones who received advance assurance of the outcome. They are the ones who stepped into the unknown because obedience and purpose demanded it. Noah did not know if the flood was coming. Abraham did not know where he was going. Esther did not know if she was walking out of that throne room alive.

Today, what is the decision that is waiting for you, the one you have been postponing because you cannot see the outcome? Perhaps the waiting is not wisdom. Perhaps it is the opposite of Esther's words. If I perish, I perish is the language of someone who has decided that the purpose is worth the risk. What would you do if you decided the same?

### **Prayer**

*Father, give me the courage to step into what you are asking without a guaranteed outcome. I release the need to see the end before I take the first step. Where you are calling me forward, let me say: if I perish, I perish. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 12: Three Days of Fasting

*“Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as I do this.” — Esther 4:16 (ESV)*

**B**efore Esther went to the king, she called a fast. Three days. No food, no water. Her own attendants joined her. The Jewish community in Susa joined. A collective act of spiritual alignment, of emptying themselves before the moment that required everything. God’s name is not mentioned in this instruction, just as it is not mentioned anywhere in the book. But everyone who reads it understands exactly who the fast was directed toward.

Fasting in the Bible is rarely about the absence of food. It is about the undivided attention that the absence of food creates. It is the body’s way of saying: there is something happening that is more important than my appetite right now. It is the posture of someone who has emptied their hands of the normal things in order to hold on to the one thing that matters. Esther was not fasting to earn God’s intervention. She was fasting to position herself, and her people, at the edge of total dependence.

Three days before the most consequential moment of her life, Esther did not prepare by reviewing her strategy. She did not rehearse her speech. She fasted. She created a three-day gap between the decision and the action, a gap filled not with more planning but with consecration. And then, from that place of three days of hollow dependence, she walked into the throne room.

We tend to prepare for important moments by doing more. More research. More preparation. More practice. And those things have their place. But Esther's model suggests that there is a kind of preparation that looks like nothing on the outside, that looks like withdrawal and silence and emptiness, that is actually the deepest form of readiness.

Today, if you are facing a moment that requires more than you naturally have, consider that the preparation God may be asking of you is not more activity. It may be three days of fasting and prayer, of emptying yourself until the only thing left is dependence on the One who has been writing this story all along.

**Prayer**

*Father, I want to learn to fast. Not as a religious exercise but as an act of alignment, a way of saying that this moment matters more than my normal rhythms. Teach me the preparation that looks like emptiness. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 13: The Extended Sceptre

*“When the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won favor in his sight, and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand.” — Esther 5:2 (ESV)*

He walked in. And he held out the sceptre. The text does not dramatise this moment. It does not describe Esther’s fear as she stepped through the doorway. It does not detail the king’s expression as he noticed the movement in the court. It simply says she came to the inner court, the king saw her, she found favour in his sight, and the golden sceptre was extended. Three days of fasting. A decision made in the presence of uncertainty. And then: the sceptre.

But what follows is equally instructive. The king’s first question was not: why have you come without being summoned? His first question was: what is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to half the kingdom. The tone is not judicial. It is generous. It is almost as though, in the moment she walked in, the king was already disposed to give her whatever she asked.

This is the texture of divine favour again. Esther walked into a situation where the legal outcome should have been death. Instead, she was welcomed, offered abundance, and invited to ask for anything up to half the kingdom. The favour preceded her request. It was already in the room waiting for her.

Notice also what Esther asked for first. Not the deliverance of her people. A dinner. She asked the king and Haman to come to a banquet she had prepared.

Commentators have speculated about this for centuries. Was she building relational capital? Was she waiting for the right moment? Was she still unsure? Whatever her reason, there is wisdom in the timing, in not rushing the most important ask before the relational ground was fully prepared.

Today, consider the thing you are about to ask for. Have you walked in? Have you taken the first step in the presence of uncertainty? The sceptre is extended to those who come. And perhaps the first ask is not the final one. Sometimes the dinner comes before the rescue.

**Prayer**

*Father, I thank you that favour precedes the request. Give me the courage to walk in, and the wisdom to trust your timing for what I ask when I get there. You are already in the room. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 14: Haman's Happiest Day

*“And Haman went out that day joyful and glad of heart. But when Haman saw Mordecai in the king’s gate, that he neither rose nor trembled before him, he was filled with wrath against Mordecai.” — Esther 5:9 (ESV)*

**O**n the day that would ultimately lead to his destruction, Haman was having the best day of his life.

He had been invited to a private banquet with the king and queen. He alone, out of all the officials in the empire. He went out that day, the text says, joyful and glad of heart. He hurried home to boast to his wife and friends about what had happened. He told them about the glory of his riches, the number of his sons, the promotions the king had given him. And then he added: and Queen Esther invited no one to the banquet she prepared but me and the king. He was at the top of his world.

But on his way home from this greatest of days, he passed Mordecai at the king’s gate, and Mordecai did not stand or tremble before him. The text says Haman was filled with wrath. One man’s refusal to perform deference poisoned the entire experience. All the glory, all the riches, all the royal access: none of it satisfied because the one person who would not bow was still not bowing.

His wife and friends gave him the obvious advice: build a gallows fifty cubits high and ask the king tomorrow to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then you will be able to go to the banquet with the king in a cheerful mood. Haman loved the idea. The gallows were built that night.

The tragedy of Haman's happiest day is visible only from outside it. He was celebrating in the evening, and by the next morning, everything that had made him celebrate would be the instruments of his undoing. The banquet invitation he had bragged about would be the setting where Esther revealed his plot. The gallows he had built in triumph would be the place he died. His happiest day was the last chapter of his story, and he did not know it.

Today, do not be shaken by the enemy's apparent good days. The instruments of their triumph can become, in God's hands, the instruments of their undoing. Haman was building gallows for Mordecai on the night that Mordecai was about to be honoured by the king. The stories were running simultaneously. They just had different endings.

**Prayer**

*Father, I release the pressure to keep score day by day. What looks like the enemy's victory in this moment may be the setup for their undoing. Give me the long view. You are writing the last chapter, not me. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 15: The King Who Could Not Sleep

*“On that night the king could not sleep. And he gave orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, the chronicles, and they were read before the king.” — Esther 6:1 (ESV)*

One of the most important events in the entire book of Esther happened because a man could not sleep.

The night before the banquet where Esther would finally reveal Haman’s plot, the king of Persia lay awake. The text gives no reason for the insomnia. It simply states it as a fact: that night the king could not sleep. So he called for his servants to bring the royal chronicles and read them to him. Out of all the things they could have read, from a record that must have contained thousands of entries covering decades of imperial history, they read the account of how Mordecai had reported an assassination plot against the king and saved his life.

And then the king asked the question that changed everything: what honour and distinction has been bestowed on Mordecai for this? His servants answered: nothing has been done for him. It was at that exact moment that Haman arrived in the outer court to ask for permission to hang Mordecai on the gallows he had built. The king summoned him in, asked him what should be done for the man the king delights to honour, and Haman, assuming he was the man the king wanted to honour, described the most lavish public

celebration he could imagine. And then the king told him to do all of that for Mordecai the Jew.

This sequence is so precisely timed that it reads like a divine orchestration, because it is. The insomnia. The chronicles. The exact entry. The question about unrewarded loyalty. Haman arriving at that specific moment. All of it converging in the span of a single sleepless night. No angel announced any of it. No prophet directed it. A king could not sleep, and the trajectory of the entire story shifted.

God uses the smallest, most ordinary things to engineer the largest reversals. A sleepless night. A page of a book. A question the king happened to ask. None of these are dramatic. All of them are coordinated. The invisible hand was more active in that sleepless hour than in any dramatic miracle could have made it appear.

Today, consider the sleepless nights you have written off as inconvenience. The insomnia that felt like your body betraying you. The restless hours. Some of them may have been God-arranged interruptions to the normal order of things, preparing you, prompting you, or moving something on your behalf while you thought nothing was happening.

**Prayer**

*Father, you do not need dramatic interventions to change my story. A sleepless night, a turned page, a question at the right moment. Move in the small things. I trust that you are equally present in the ordinary details as you are in the extraordinary ones. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 16: Leading the Man You Hate

*“So Haman took the robe and the horse, and he led Mordecai through the square of the city, proclaiming before him: Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.” — Esther 6:11 (ESV)*

**I** magine what that walk felt like.

Haman, the prime minister of Persia, the man who had built a gallows specifically to hang Mordecai, the man who had designed an edict to destroy every Jewish person in the empire, was walking through the city square leading a horse. On the horse sat Mordecai, dressed in the king’s robe, wearing the king’s crown. And Haman was shouting for everyone to hear: thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honour.

There is a particular kind of reversal that God arranges, one that does not just rescue the innocent but requires the persecutor to become the instrument of their honour. It is not enough that Mordecai is honoured. Haman specifically is the one leading the horse. The man whose pride could not tolerate a single act of non-deference is now publicly performing the most deferential possible act on behalf of the man he despised.

The Psalms describe this pattern: the pit that the wicked dig, they themselves fall into. The stone that they roll, it returns upon them. Esther is one of the most complete biblical narratives of this principle in action. The gallows Haman built for Mordecai became his own execution site. The honour Haman designed for himself became the honour Mordecai received from Haman’s own hands. Everything Haman arranged against Mordecai was turned back

on Haman.

This is not revenge. This is justice as a by-product of divine orchestration. God was not primarily punishing Haman. He was saving His people. Haman's undoing was a consequence of the same providential movement that was saving Mordecai, not a separate act of divine vengeance but the natural result of a plan that was never Haman's to control.

Today, release the situation you have been watching, the one where the person acting against you seems to be winning. The walk through the city square has not happened yet. But in God's economy, those who build gallows sometimes end up leading the horses.

**Prayer**

*Father, I release into your hands the situations where it looks like the wrong person is winning. I do not need to arrange the reversal. You are writing the story, and you know how to use even the enemy's preparations for your purposes. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 17: Esther Speaks

*“Then Queen Esther answered, ‘If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted me for my wish, and my people for my request.’” — Esther 7:3 (ESV)*

**T**here is a moment in every rescue where someone has to say the thing. Esther had been in the palace for years. She had kept her secret through a season of preparation, through the politics of the court, through her elevation to queen. She had kept it through the issuance of Haman’s decree. She had kept it through the first banquet. And now, at the second banquet, with the king leaning toward her, asking again what she wanted, up to half the kingdom, she finally said it.

Notice the construction of her request. She does not open with the political problem. She opens with her own life: let my life be granted me for my wish. She is making it personal before she makes it national. She is bringing the king into a human story before she reveals the scale of the threat. If I have found favour in your sight is the relational anchor. My life is the personal stake. Then: and my people for my request.

This is the moment the entire story has been building toward. Not just the rescue of the Jewish people but the revelation of who Esther is. The secret that Mordecai had told her to keep for years was the very secret whose disclosure, at this moment, made the rescue possible. The hidden identity was not a permanent concealment. It was a delayed disclosure, kept until the moment when its revelation would carry maximum weight.

There are truths about yourself, gifts you carry, callings you have been given, that are not yet public. The timing of their disclosure is not yours to force. Esther did not reveal her identity when she first arrived at the palace. She did not reveal it when she became queen. She revealed it at the second banquet, in the presence of the one person who had the power to act on it, when the situation had created the urgency that her disclosure needed in order to be taken seriously.

Today, consider what you have been carrying in silence that God may be preparing to bring forward at the right moment. Not everything that is not yet public is meant to remain hidden. Some things are kept until the season makes their disclosure the turning point of the story.

**Prayer**

*Father, the things I carry in silence I release to your timing. What you have sealed, you will reveal. What you have hidden, you will bring forward at the moment it changes everything. I trust the when. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 18: The Enemy Identified

*“And Esther said, ‘A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!’ Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.” — Esther 7:6 (ESV)*

**W**hen the king asked who had dared to presume to do this, Esther’s answer was not diplomatic.

She had been careful. She had been patient. She had fasted for three days before going in. She had hosted two banquets before making her request. She had built the relational architecture of the moment with extraordinary precision. And then, when the king asked who the enemy was, she simply pointed across the table and said his name.

There is something about this directness that is worth noticing. Esther had spent most of the story in the mode of strategic patience, waiting for the right moment, measuring her words, timing her requests. But when the question came and the answer was called for, she did not equivocate. She did not soften the accusation. A foe and enemy, she said, this wicked Haman. And Haman was terrified.

There is a kind of clarity that comes after sustained prayer and fasting, after three days of consecration and two nights of careful preparation. It is the clarity that knows when the moment for subtlety is over and the moment for plain speech has arrived. Esther did not name Haman out of anger or impulsiveness. She named him because the moment required naming, and she had done everything necessary to arrive at the moment ready.

We sometimes mistake prolonged caution for permanent caution. We treat

the patience that is appropriate in the season of preparation as though it must extend into the moment of action. But wisdom knows when to be quiet and when to speak. Esther's entire journey through the story was preparation for the clarity of a single direct sentence: this wicked Haman.

Today, consider whether you are in a season of preparation or a season of plain speech. Not everything requires prolonged subtlety. Some moments require you to look across the table at what is threatening your life and name it clearly. Pray for the discernment to know which season you are in.

**Prayer**

*Father, give me the wisdom to know when to be patient and when to be plain. Give me the courage to name what needs to be named, at the right moment, with the clarity that only comes from sustained time with you. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 19: The Gallows He Built

*“So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king was abated.” — Esther 7:10 (ESV)*

**H**aman died on his own gallows. He had built them himself, fifty cubits high, intended as a very public and very permanent statement about the fate of the man who had refused to bow to him. He had been so pleased with the plan that he went to the palace early the next morning to get the king's permission, arriving just in time to be conscripted into publicly honouring Mordecai instead. And then, when Esther's revelation came and the king went into the garden to collect himself, Haman threw himself on Esther's couch to plead for his life. The king returned to find Haman apparently assaulting the queen in the king's own house. That sealed it. One of the servants noted that the gallows Haman had built for Mordecai were still standing, fifty cubits high. The king gave one word: hang him on it.

The instrument of the enemy's plan became the instrument of the enemy's end. This is a pattern that runs deeper than Esther. It runs through the entire biblical narrative. The Egyptians drowned in the same sea they had used to kill Hebrew babies. David killed Goliath with Goliath's own sword. Jesus was crucified on a cross that became the instrument of the resurrection that reversed death itself. God has a consistent pattern of taking the weapons raised against His people and turning them back on the ones who raised them.

This does not mean that every situation in which we are being threatened will

resolve in this precise way. Esther is a story of one specific and extraordinary providence, not a general promise about every specific threat. What it does reveal is the character of the God who is at work in all of our stories. He is not neutral. He is not disinterested. He is a God who has a consistent pattern of letting the enemy's own strategies become the mechanisms of their undoing.

The gallows were fifty cubits high. That is approximately twenty-three metres. Haman built them that high because he wanted everyone in Susa to see what happened to the man who refused to bow to him. He wanted it to be a public statement. It became one. Just not the statement he had intended.

Today, do not be alarmed by the size of what is being raised against you. Sometimes the height of the gallows only tells you how visible the reversal is going to be.

**Prayer**

*Father, I trust your pattern. The weapon raised against me may become the instrument of its own destruction. I release it. I am not responsible for the reversal. You are. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 20: The Ring That Changed Hands

*“The king took off his signet ring, which he had taken back from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai.” — Esther 8:2 (ESV)*

**T**he same ring that sealed the decree of genocide was now on Mordecai’s finger.

The signet ring was not just a piece of jewellery. It was the instrument of imperial authority. When the king’s ring sealed a document, that document became law. Haman had used the ring to seal the edict that ordered the destruction of every Jewish person in the Persian Empire. Now, the king had taken the ring back from Haman and placed it in the hand of a Jewish man who had been sitting in sackcloth and ashes just days before.

This transfer of the ring is one of the most quietly dramatic moments in the story. It signals more than Mordecai’s promotion. It signals the reversal of everything the ring had been used to authorise. The ring that had sealed death was now in the hands of the man it had been aimed at, and it would be used to seal life.

There is a biblical theology of inheritance embedded in this moment. What the enemy builds, God redistributes. The wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous. The ring of authority does not belong permanently to the one who uses it to oppress. It passes. God has a pattern of transferring the tools of oppression into the hands of those who were oppressed by them, not for the sake of revenge but for the sake of restoration and mission.

Mordecai did not go looking for the ring. He did not campaign for Haman’s

position. He was sitting at the gate in sackcloth when the entire chain of events began. The ring found him because God was transferring authority, not because Mordecai had lobbied for it.

Today, release the striving. The thing God has for you does not require you to take it from someone. When the season of transfer arrives, it comes by the hand of the king. Ask God for the patience to remain faithful at the gate, in whatever sackcloth the current season requires, until the ring is placed where it belongs.

**Prayer**

*Father, I release the striving. What you have for me I will not have to fight for in the way I have been fighting. When the season arrives, it comes by your hand. Keep me faithful at the gate. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 21: The Second Decree

*“The king allowed the Jews who were in every city to gather and defend their lives, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, children and women included, and to plunder their goods,” — Esther 8:11 (ESV)*

**T**he first decree could not be revoked. So God wrote a second one. This actually demonstrates something profound about how divine providence actually works in a world that has real laws, real consequences, and real limitations on what can be undone. The edict Haman had written, signed with the king’s ring, distributed throughout the empire, ordering the destruction of every Jewish person, remained in force. Persian law did not permit its revocation. God did not suspend Persian law to fix the problem.

Instead, He inspired Esther and Mordecai to write a second decree, one that granted the Jewish people throughout the empire the legal right to assemble, defend themselves, and respond in kind to anyone who attacked them. The first decree still existed. The second decree fundamentally changed the situation. Not by undoing the first but by providing something the first had no answer to.

This is how God often works in situations that cannot simply be reversed. He does not always undo the bad thing that was done. He writes a second decree. He provides a response that changes the situation’s meaning and trajectory, even while the original damage remains a fact. The illness remains, but the

grace for it is new every morning. The loss remains, but the provision that comes through it is unexpected. The mistake remains, but the redemption that God works through it is real.

We sometimes get stuck waiting for God to revoke the first decree, to undo the bad thing entirely before we will believe that the situation has changed. But God is in the business of second decrees. Of new mercies. Of the thing that does not erase the past but transforms what the past means for the future.

Today, if you have been waiting for God to undo something that cannot be undone, consider asking Him instead for the second decree. The provision that addresses the situation as it actually is. The grace that meets the consequence where it lives.

**Prayer**

*Father, I have been waiting for you to revoke the first decree. Today I ask instead for the second one. Meet me in the situation as it is, not as I wish it had been. Write a new word over the old one. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 22: Mourning Turned to Dancing

*“And in every province and in every city, wherever the king’s command and his edict reached, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews, for fear of the Jews had fallen on them.” — Esther 8:17 (ESV)*

**T**he same empire that had been the source of the Jews’ deepest dread became the stage for their greatest celebration.

When the second decree went out, the same network of couriers that had carried the first edict of destruction now carried the edict of permission and protection. The same roads, the same horses, the same imperial infrastructure. But the message was entirely different. And in every province where the first message had produced mourning and fasting and weeping, the second message produced gladness and joy and feasting.

The text says that many people from other nationalities became Jews during this period, because the fear of the Jews had fallen on them. This is remarkable. The very people who had been targeted for extinction were now being joined by the people around them. The turnaround was so complete, so evidently orchestrated, that it drew people toward the community that God had been protecting.

Psalms 30:11 describes this movement: you have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness. The Psalmist is describing a personal experience, but Esther is showing us

the same pattern at the national scale. God did not erase the eleven months of dread that the Jewish people had lived through after Haman's decree. He transformed what those months had been for by ending them in a celebration that would be commemorated in the festival of Purim for generations.

The mourning in Esther is real. The sackcloth at the gate is real. The fear in every province is real. And the dancing at the end is also real. Both are true. The mourning does not invalidate the dancing, and the dancing does not retroactively erase the mourning. Both are part of one story that God was writing from the beginning.

Today, if you are in the mourning portion of your story, hold on to this: the dancing is not a denial of the mourning. It is what the mourning was making room for. The sackcloth eventually comes off.

**Prayer**

*Father, I hold on to your track record. What begins in sackcloth can end in dancing. I do not know how far I am from the dancing, but I trust that you are moving the story forward. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 23: The Day the Enemy Expected

*“Now in the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king’s command and edict were about to be carried out, on the very day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, the reverse occurred: the Jews gained mastery over those who hated them.” — Esther 9:1 (ESV)*

**T**he thirteenth of Adar arrived. The day Haman had selected with his lot. The day every enemy of the Jewish people had been anticipating for eleven months.

And the reverse occurred.

Those three words are the hinge of the entire book. The day designed for destruction became the day of victory. The date the enemy had selected, the date that had seemed so certain on the calendar, the date around which eleven months of anticipation and preparation had been organized, turned out to be the day everything went the other direction.

The text is careful about how this happened. The Jewish people defended themselves. They did not wait for supernatural deliverance. They were not rescued by an angel or a miraculous event. They fought. But they fought under the protection of a legal decree that had been written by their own people, in the palace of an empire that had originally sanctioned their destruction, because a Jewish queen had done something terrifying at great personal risk, and a Jewish servant had sat at the gate in sackcloth until the rescue arrived.

This is the shape of most of God’s reversals. Not suspension of natural law

but the convergence of ordinary courage, strategic positioning, divine timing, and the legal authority that had been rerouted through a series of unlikely events. The Jewish people fought on the thirteenth of Adar. But the victory had been arranged years before, in a palace selection, a sleepless night, a banquet that was really an appointment.

Today, the day the enemy expected may be approaching on your calendar. The deadline, the medical appointment, the situation that has been gaining momentum toward a bad outcome. Bring to God the specific date you are dreading. The reverse occurred is not just history. It is the character of the God who controls the calendar.

**Prayer**

*Father, I bring you the dates I am dreading. The day the enemy is preparing for in my situation. I believe that the reverse can occur. Rewrite the expected outcome. You are Lord of the calendar. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 24: The Name of Purim

*“Therefore they called these days Purim, after the term Pur. Therefore, because of all that was written in this letter... the Jews firmly obligated themselves and their offspring and all who joined them, that without fail they would keep these two days.” — Esther 9:26-27 (ESV)*

**T**hey named the festival after the thing that was supposed to kill them. Purim comes from the word Pur, the lot that Haman cast to choose the most auspicious date for the destruction of the Jewish people. The lot that, in his mind, was the divination tool that secured his timing. The lot that God used to give His people eleven months of runway for rescue. The Jewish people could have named the festival after Esther. They could have named it after Mordecai. They could have named it after the month of their victory.

They named it after Haman’s weapon.

This is remarkable because every time the festival of Purim is celebrated, it is a reminder that the instrument of the enemy’s plan became the name of the victory celebration. They did not erase the lot from the story. They memorialised it. They refused to let the community forget that the very mechanism Haman used to engineer their destruction was the mechanism that God used to set the stage for their salvation.

We are often tempted to clean up the memory of our hardest seasons, to present the testimony without the detail of what we came through, to speak only of the victory and not the lot that was cast, the decrees that went out,

the months of dread that preceded the reversal. But the name Purim suggests that there is value in keeping the instrument of the enemy in the story, not to glorify the enemy but to demonstrate that God's sovereignty extends even to the tools that were pointed against us.

Today, think about the thing in your testimony that you have been tempted to leave out. The specific trial. The particular season of dread. Consider whether it belongs in the name of your celebration, because it reveals most clearly what God actually did.

**Prayer**

*Father, help me hold my testimony with honesty. The weapon that was meant to destroy me, the specific instrument that I have been tempted to leave out of the story, let it be part of the name of what you did. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 25: What Mordecai Wrote Down

*“And Mordecai recorded these things and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus... to obligate them to keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day every year.”*

— Esther 9:20–21 (ESV)

**M**ordecai wrote it down. He did not assume that the community would remember. He did not trust that the story would pass on its own through telling. He wrote down what had happened, sent it to all the Jews in all the provinces, and established the observance so that the memory would be kept intentionally, year after year, for every generation that would come after.

There is a ministry of documentation in the story of God’s people. The psalms were written down. The prophets recorded what they heard. The gospels were committed to writing because the eyewitnesses understood that testimony without a record was testimony at the mercy of time and distance. Mordecai understood that the people who had lived through the event would eventually die, and what they had seen needed to outlast them.

This has a personal dimension as well. The moments when God moved unmistakably in your life, the seasons whose reversal was so clearly providential that you knew it could not be coincidence, deserve to be written down. Not just remembered but recorded. Because the memory that lives only in your mind will fade with your mind. The testimony that you write can be read by people who were not there.

There is also a discipline in the act of writing it down. It forces you to articulate what you saw and what it meant, to give language to the experience, to find the words for what God did. This is not a small thing. Many people have had profound encounters with God's providence that they have never been able to share because they have never taken the time to find the words for them.

Today, consider what you need to write down. The season of rescue. The reversal that defied explanation. The prayer that was answered in a way you still do not fully understand. Write it. Mordecai wrote his, and generations have been reading it ever since.

**Prayer**

*Father, give me the discipline to write down what you have done. I do not want the testimony to fade with the feeling. Help me find words for the invisible hand. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 26: Esther Confirms

*“Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew gave full written authority, confirming this second letter about Purim.” — Esther 9:29 (ESV)*

**E**ven after everything, Esther added her authority to the record. Mordecai had sent the first letter. Esther and Mordecai together sent the second. The queen whose identity had been concealed for years, the woman who had spoken her name and her people into the most dangerous moment of her life, now put her name in writing as the authority behind the observance that would commemorate the rescue. The secret was not just revealed in one room for one purpose. It became part of the permanent record of her people's history.

There is a moment in every story of divine rescue where the one who was hidden becomes the one who is named. Where the person who carried their identity in secret becomes the person whose name is attached to the victory. Esther went from a woman with a concealed identity in a foreign palace to the named co-author of an edict that established a lasting observance for her entire people.

This arc is deeply personal. Many of us are still in the season of concealment, carrying an identity, a calling, a gift, or a truth about who we are that has not yet been fully public. The concealment serves a purpose in its season. But the story of Esther does not end with concealment. It ends with her name on the letter. The hidden thing, in God's timing, becomes the declared thing.

Notice that when the time came for her name to go on the document, there was no ceremony or announcement. She simply added her authority to what was already being established. The revelation of identity was not a performance. It was a natural consequence of the work she had been doing.

Today, if you are in the season of carrying something in silence, hold on to Esther's arc. The concealment is not the destination. The name on the letter is where you are headed.

**Prayer**

*Father, I trust the arc. What I carry in silence right now has a moment where my name goes on the letter. I release the timing to you. When the season of concealment is over, let the declaration be natural and clear. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 27: Mordecai's Seat

*“For Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Ahasuerus, and he was great among the Jews and popular with the multitude of his brothers, for he sought the welfare of his people and spoke peace to all his people.” — Esther 10:3 (ESV)*

**T**he man who had been weeping at the gate in sackcloth was now the second most powerful man in the Persian Empire.

The last chapter of Esther is only three verses. It is brief almost to the point of being understated. The king's greatness is recorded. Mordecai's promotion is confirmed. His reputation among his own people is mentioned. And then the book ends. No dramatic scene of triumph. No long accounting of how the new order was celebrated. Just the simple statement of where everyone ended up.

Mordecai at the gate in chapter one had refused to bow to Haman. He had been sitting in the place of duty and dignity when the whole empire was commanded to perform deference to a man who did not deserve it. He had held his position in the face of social pressure, personal danger, and eventually the news that his refusal had contributed to a plan to destroy his people. He had put on sackcloth and gone back to the gate. He had stayed in place.

The book does not romanticise his faithfulness. It does not tell us that he was unafraid. It tells us that he was faithful in the place he was given, and that in that faithfulness, across years and a crisis that threatened to consume everything, God was positioning him for something that Mordecai could not

have seen from the gate.

The book of Esther ends with the most important person in it sitting in a seat he did not seek, having arrived there through faithfulness in the most ordinary and unglamorous of places: the gate. The same gate where he had sat for years. The same gate where he had wept in sackcloth. The same gate where he had sent messages to a queen and received them back.

Today, be faithful at the gate. Whatever the ordinary, unglamorous, assigned place you have been given right now, it may be the very location from which God is positioning you for what comes next.

**Prayer**

*Father, make me faithful at the gate. Not the throne, not the platform, not the position I can see ahead of me, but the place I have been given right now. Let me be found faithful in the small place so you can trust me with the larger one. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 28: The Story Behind Your Story

*“He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.” — Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV)*

**W**e are inside our own stories in a way that makes them very difficult to read.

The characters in the book of Esther did not know they were in the book of Esther. Esther did not know that her selection as queen was the opening move of a rescue that would save her people. Mordecai did not know that his refusal to bow to Haman was the first domino in a sequence that would end with Haman on the gallows. Haman did not know that the lot he cast was giving his enemy eleven months to outmaneuver him. Each of them was responding to the immediate situation in front of them, making decisions based on the information they had, without the perspective that comes from reading the whole story.

This is the condition of all human life inside of time. We are in the story. God is above it. He sees the whole arc while we are still living one chapter. This is why faith in His providence is not a denial of the uncertainty we feel. It is the decision to trust the Author while we are still in the middle of a chapter that has not yet resolved.

The Ecclesiastes verse above captures something important: God has set eternity in the human heart, which means we have a longing for the whole story, for the arc, for the meaning of what we are going through. But no one

can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. Not from within the story. The longing for perspective is built in. The ability to have complete perspective while still inside time is not.

This is not a reason for despair. It is a reason for trust. The same God who was writing the book of Esther from outside the story of every character in it is writing your story from outside your experience of it. He sees the chapter you are in as part of an arc you cannot yet see. He knows how the lot lands. He knows which night the king will be unable to sleep. He knows who is at the gate.

Today, give yourself permission to not have the full perspective. You are inside the story. Trust the Author.

**Prayer**

*Father, I do not need to see the whole arc. I trust the Author who does. Where I am confused about the chapter I am in, give me the peace of knowing that you see it from beginning to end, and that you are making it beautiful in its time. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 29: Looking Back to See Forward

*“Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning.”*

— Isaiah 46:9–10 (ESV)

**T**he best training for trusting God’s providence in the future is reviewing His providence in the past.

This is why Isaiah invites Israel to remember. Not just to be grateful for what has already happened but to use it as evidence for what is still coming. The God who declared the end from the beginning in the past situations of your life is the same God who is at work in the present situation. The track record is the training ground for faith.

Think back through your life with the lens we have spent this month developing. The lens of the book of Esther. Look at the seasons that were most confusing while you were in them. The doors that closed. The relationships that ended. The plans that did not work out. The seasons where God’s name seemed conspicuously absent from what was happening. And then look at what those seasons produced. What was being positioned. What was being protected. What was being prepared.

Most people, when they look back with enough distance and honesty, can identify at least one season that they now understand differently than they did when they were in it. One period where the invisible hand was doing something they could not see at the time. One set of circumstances that, in retrospect, was clearly coordinated toward an outcome that would not have been possible

without all of those specific details falling into place.

That season is your personal book of Esther. That is the chapter of your story where God's name was missing from the events but His fingerprints were on every page. And the God who wrote that chapter is the same God who is writing the chapter you are in right now.

Today, take time to trace the providential arc of your own past. Not to live there but to be equipped by it. The God who moved then has not changed. The invisible hand that was at work in your history is at work in your present.

**Prayer**

*Father, as I look back at the chapters of my life, help me to see your hand in the places where I thought you were absent. Build my faith for the present by showing me the past. You declared the end from the beginning then. You are doing the same now. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 30: The People Who Were Haman's Instruments

*“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.”*  
— Genesis 50:20 (ESV)

Joseph said this to his brothers, but it reads like commentary on the entire book of Esther.

The people who have functioned as Haman in your story, the ones who opposed you, the ones who used their position or their influence against you, the ones who built figurative gallows with your name on them, were not outside God's providence. They were inside it. Not because God approved of what they did, but because God is sovereign over what they did. His purpose moves through human intentions, including hostile ones, like water through a landscape that was not designed for it.

This is one of the hardest truths in the theology of providence. It is easy to thank God for the Esthers, the people who showed up at the right moment with courage and favour and positioned themselves to help. It is significantly harder to acknowledge that the Hamans were also part of the story that brought you where you are. That the opposition, the blocked path, the person who said no when you needed yes, may have been the mechanism by which you were redirected toward something better than what you were chasing.

Joseph was explicit about this. You meant evil. God meant good. Both

statements are simultaneously true. His brothers intended harm. God intended redemption. The same events carry both intentions, and it is only from the vantage point of the other side of the story that the redemptive meaning becomes visible. Inside the pit, there is only the evil intention. From Egypt, looking back at the journey, there is also the good one.

The people who have functioned as Haman in your story are not owed gratitude for their hostility. But the God who worked through them is owed worship. There is a difference between forgiving the instrument and honouring the Author who used it.

Today, name one person whose opposition redirected you. You do not need to call them good. But acknowledge the God who was sovereign over even their bad intentions.

**Prayer**

*Father, I release the Hamans of my story to you. What they meant for evil, you have been using for good. I do not understand how you work through the intentions of those who meant to harm me, but I trust that you do. Receive my worship for the providence I did not choose. In Jesus' name, amen.*

## October 31: He Was on Every Page

*“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” — Romans 8:38–39 (ESV)*

**W**e end the month where we began: with a God whose name is missing from the pages but whose hand is on every one of them. The book of Esther does not end with a sermon about what it all meant. It ends with a king’s greatness being recorded, a man’s promotion being confirmed, and the Jewish people celebrating a festival that would remember what God had done without ever naming Him in the celebration. The book closes the same way it opened: without the name of God. But anyone who has read all ten chapters cannot doubt that He was the main character.

This is the invitation of the entire month. To read your life the same way. Not to look only for the dramatic moments where God’s presence is undeniable, the burning bushes and the parted seas and the audible voices, but to look for the cumulative, quiet, behind-the-scenes pattern of a God who is working in the events that are most easily attributed to coincidence, human choice, and natural cause and effect.

You have had Esther moments. The right person arriving at the right time. The door that closed and the one that opened. The sleepless night that changed something. The unexpected favour that made no sense on paper. The reversal that came when you had stopped expecting one. The situation that looked

irrevocable and turned out not to be. These were not coincidences. They were the fingerprints of the same God who was running the book of Esther from the first line to the last.

Romans 8 gives us the name that Esther withholds. Nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. The love that was operating in Esther's story without a name is the love that Paul names in Romans. They are the same love. The same sovereignty. The same invisible, invincible, everywhere-present hand.

He was on every page of Esther. He has been on every page of your story. He is on this page too. Welcome to November. You are still in good hands.

**Prayer**

*Father, as this month closes, I declare that you have been on every page of my story. The visible and the invisible chapters. The ones where your name appeared and the ones where it did not. I have not been alone. I have not been forgotten. I have not been outside your view. Thank you for the visible hand of an invincible God. In Jesus' name, amen.*

