It's Time! Pt. 2

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Date: 01 February 2026

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Turn with me, if you would, to Esther.

We're going to be in chapter 4 tonight. But chapter 3 and 4, though it's in two parts, really, is one sermon. And so let's just remind ourselves of what we looked at last week in chapter 3.
There are four headings to chapter 3 and 4. So this sermon that's entitled, It's Time, we'll see that in chapter 4, that it's time to go forward with what the Lord would have Esther to do.
We've looked at two of these in chapter 3. The other two we'll look at tonight in chapter 4. By way of review from last week, we saw first a courageous commitment to stand. A courageous commitment to stand.
We saw Haman's promotion. Haman is elevated. And then we saw Mordecai's defiance. Mordecai refuses to bow before Haman, which infuriates Haman.
[1:19] And so the question in verse 4 of chapter 3 is, When they spoke to him day after day, and he would not listen, they told Haman in order to see whether Mordecai's words would stand.

So Mordecai physically won't bow. The question is, will his refusal to bow be allowed to stand? And that defiance leads to Haman's anger.
And that led us to a second heading, which was a sinister strategy to destroy. This strategy that Haman came up with, a decree was made, and a date was set, and his desire was to completely annihilate the Jewish people.
He goes to the king, and he says, there is a people in your empire who have different laws, who do not do as everybody else does. And the idea is he's trying to get the king to think that they are a threat to him.
And so, as seems to often be the case with Hashuares, he doesn't seem to be real concerned with finding out facts and details. He just goes with what is brought to him, which doesn't get him off the hook for his decisions at all.
[2:35] But the phrase we've used a few times through this book is that his advisors had more enthusiasm than they had wisdom. And that's a downfall for him and for everybody else.

So the decree is made, and the date is set. And what's going to happen by way of decree are that all of the Jews on this day coming up are to be put to death.
It's about a year out, and it's going to take, we know, just from the study of the empire, about 90 days for them to be able to go throughout the entire empire and give the word of this decree.
And so over the course of three months, the word is going to go out with the date, with the decree of what it is, and then for the next number of months, people wait to see what will happen.
That brings us to chapter 4 and our third heading. And we see thirdly, a righteous request to help.
[3:41] A righteous request to help. Chapter 4, When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went into the midst of the city.

And he cried out with a loud and bitter cry. In their culture, clothing would show what you're going through. So it would be customary to have clothes for mourning.
There would be a certain way that you would dress if you had lost a loved one. A certain way you would dress depending on the trial or the tragedy you were facing.
And so this is customary in verse 1. Mordecai tears his clothes, signifying death, and puts on sackcloth and ashes. And he goes around, and it says in verse 1, crying out with a loud and bitter cry.
Mordecai, this isn't just moping and sad. This is making very clear and obvious that he is terribly distressed.

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[4:50] He goes throughout the city. He is crying. He is weeping loudly. People would have seen him. People would have heard him. The grief of Mordecai is public.

Verse 2 says, He went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one was allowed to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth.
So he's going to go as far as he can go, letting as many people see what he's experiencing and going through as possible. The decree that has been made is hard to even put into words.
You have a king's decree for an entire group of people in the empire to be completely annihilated.
Verse 3 says, In every province, wherever the king's command and his decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and many of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.
The Jews all around the empire are in complete distress, as you might imagine. And the grief of Mordecai leads to this dilemma for Esther.
[6:07] Verse 4, When Esther's young women and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed. She sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them.

So word gets to Esther of what her cousin Mordecai is doing, and how much grief he is experiencing, and how he is wailing and crying bitterly, moving to and fro.
And there's a little bit of struggle to know exactly what is on Esther's mind here. I think certainly we can say she's concerned for her cousin, as word gets to her what he's doing, and maybe a little bit as well with her, of wanting to see if he would stop doing that, to stop creating attention of what's going on, because the decree has come from the king himself.
So what is she going to do? Well, she gets garments, and she sends them and says, tell Mordecai, get out of the sackcloth and ashes, and put these clothes on.
It's not that Mordecai needed a new wardrobe. The way he's dressing is on purpose. He's dressing in a certain way to show grief, and sadness, and despair, and loss.
[7:35] Verse 5, Then Esther called for Hathak, 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 it was.

It seems that what perhaps is going on, is word has gotten to Esther, of what your cousin is doing, and she thinks that this isn't good, to draw attention this way. Would you go and take him some clothes, and tell him, I asked him to stop doing that.
And when that doesn't happen, she says, I need to find out what is going on. Why is he doing this?
So she sends out Hathak. Hathak is this kind of obscure character.
He just kind of appears, and then he disappears. He's someone who was an attendant to Esther.
He is to help and to serve her, to help to meet the needs that she may have.
Verse 6, Hathak went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city, in front of the king's gate, and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay, into the king's treasuries, for the destruction of the Jews.
[8:50] Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree, issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther, and explain it to her, and command her to go to the king, and beg his favor, and plead with him on behalf of her people.

As is often the case in these narratives, there are parts of the story we just don't know. How much of this did she know about? How much did she understand?
How much had been communicated to her? How much was hidden from her? How much of it was just bypassing her? But in verse 8, it says he wants this decree to be given, that she can see it and have it explained to her.
Scholars think it may be an older, kind of old Persian language. Perhaps it's written in that she would need help in reading it or fully understanding it.
Scholars are a little bit unclear exactly what he has in mind. But what we do know, is he is trying to get her attention to say, it's time. It's time.
[10:01] He has been telling her, don't tell people who you are and where you're from. And now, clearly he's saying, those days are over. It's time. Something must be done.

Verse 9 says, Hathak went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. And Esther spoke to Hathak and commanded him to go to Mordecai and say, all the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law to be put to death.

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except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come into the king these 30 days.
Mordecai is relaying the message to Esther. It's time. We've got to do something about this decree. All of our people are going to be wiped out and killed and destroyed.
And she says, how can I do that? Even though she's the queen, you're not allowed into the king's presence unless he calls for you. If you go and see him and he holds out the golden scepter, that's a way, a royal way of welcoming you to come in.
[11:23] But if he doesn't do that, you can't come in. And he hasn't called for her. And what we don't even know until we read it right there is for some reason that we don't know it's been an entire month since the king has called for Esther.

Why is that? Was he upset with her? Was he tired of her? Was he just acting out as a king can act out and satisfy his every wish and whim and had just hadn't come back around to Esther?
Didn't want her conversation? Didn't want her presence? We don't know. What we do know is that the law of the land is if you go into the king without being invited, it is death.
And that would be a risky thing for Esther in the first place if everything was good. Much less this new information we're now told that it's been 30 days and the king's had nothing to do with her at all.
In other words, there's never a good time to go initiate this conversation with the king. It's never a good time. But of all the times, this is the worst possible time because it's been a month and he hasn't even given her the time of day.
[12:41] I'll just pause for a minute to point out the difference between this kind of earthly king and our heavenly king.

Psalm 23 says that we are invited to His table and our cup overflows. But the idea in Psalm 23 is that we belong to the Lord and we are always welcome in His presence and He never gets tired of us and He never wants to be away from us.
What a difference is our heavenly king than this earthly king. And I point that out because it's very possible that some of you even tonight may, if you're not careful, get this image and attribute to God the way that Ahasuerus is treating Esther.
As if God is tired of you. As if He has grown frustrated with you and no longer wants to be with you. Or you may feel like somehow that God has grown silent and it's been a long time since He's spoken to you how Esther felt with Ahasuerus.
Kind of just to remind you in our God we have a very different king than this. We have a king who has invited us to His table and has said that our presence is always welcome there and our cup overflows.
[14:25] Meaning, we never need to leave His presence. Be encouraged. that even if other people may want nothing to do with you and other people may grow tired of you and other people may frustrate you or be disappointed in you, in our God we have a king who loves us, who welcomes us.

I mean, one of the amazing realities of the Christian life for us is that we, because of the work of Christ, have direct access to the throne of grace. That the Lord desires us to commune with Him. Invites us to enjoy time in His presence as we read the Word and as we pray and as we worship as a congregation. It's just an amazing reality.
It would be one thing if our God, our heavenly King said, in grace and in mercy, He's going to allow you and invite you into His presence occasionally a few times a year.
That would be more than we could ever hope for. But that's not even how His mercy is. We are welcomed into His presence at all times.
[15:46] And by simply opening our Bibles and reading, the Lord speaks to us as Christians we have the Holy Spirit that indwells us and has sealed us which means everywhere I go the Lord is with me.

It's impossible for a believer to be away from the Lord. Incidentally, this is why as Christians we can't just sometimes try to be Christians and other times try to be like the world.
The Holy Spirit lives within you. Wherever you go, the presence of the Lord goes. That ought to impact the way that we live.
But it also ought to remind us of the nearness of our God. And it just is so striking to me as we look at the way that the king is treating Esther in chapter 4.

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How different our king is. Aren't you glad that our God loves us and welcomes us and desires to be in fellowship with us?
[17:08] Well, this righteous request to help which comes from Mordecai to Esther leads to a fourth element and that is there's a devoted decision to trust.

There's a devoted decision to trust. And I want you to make note of three things here. One, note the confidence in God's provision.
The confidence in God's provision. This comes from verses 12-14. And they told Mordecai what Esther had said. And then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther.
Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the Jews. Let's back up for a minute. Mordecai has told Esther it's time.
You need to go in front of the king and do something about this edict. And Esther says I can't. Anyone who does that would be put to death and it's even worse because he's not spoken to me in over a month.
[18:17] And he responds back, don't think that you're going to escape. This edict has been given.

All the Jews are going to be put to death and we found out who you are. Don't think you're going to escape. Verse 14, 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.
Now, as sometimes is the case, there's a struggle here in interpreting this. Scholars differ in looking at the original text here of exactly what Mordecai is saying.
There's a couple of different ways this can be interpreted. I want to take a minute and walk you through them and then I want you to see the point he's making. It may be understood to mean, as the ESV translates it here, that Mordecai is confident that if Esther doesn't do what he's asking her to do, that God will raise up a different deliverer somehow.
Now, if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise from the Jews from another place. So, if you don't do this, somebody else is going to come on the scene, and somebody else is going to be the deliverer, somebody else is going to lead the charge, somebody else is going to put their life on the line, and someone else will be the reason why God's people were spared, but as for you Esther, you and your father's house are going to perish.
[19:59] That may be what Mordecai has in mind here, and if that's what he's thinking, then he's likely thinking back simply to God's covenant with Abraham, how God is going to preserve his people, and so in that case, Mordecai is saying to Esther, I know this is risky, I know this could cost you your life, but if you don't do this, you're going to die anyway, and God's going to raise up somebody else, and you're going to miss out on the chance to have been used by God to do this.

That may be what he is saying. Or, there is another way to interpret this, that instead of it being a statement, some understand this to be a question in the original, which would make verse 14 sound more like this, if you keep silent at this time, will relief and deliverance rise from another place? maybe a question. You can't tell in the text. He may be saying, if you don't do this, someone else will.
Or, he may be saying, Esther, you're the queen. If you don't do this, is anybody else going to do this? If you don't do this, is there anybody else who can do this?
Could be a question. Will deliverance come from another place? Some that take it as a question, take that as the implied answer is no.
[21:31] If that's what he's saying, then it would sound like this, Esther, I know this is risky, but if you don't do this, you're going to die.

You and your father's house will perish, and is there anybody else around that could do this? You're the queen. There's no one else who could do this. But understand whichever way he meant that, and I think it's a little bit difficult to be too dogmatic on which interpretation you take, but whatever is on his mind, when he says that, whether you take it as an affirmation that God is going to raise up somebody else, or as a question, is there someone else who can do this, or as a denial of the question, there's no one else who can do this, whatever he's saying to her, he's saying to persuade her that it's time for her to do this.
He believes that she is God's provision for the people. It's a powerful part of the story.
because if you could say to Mordecai, why would you tell her to do that? Don't you know the king could put her to death?

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His answer seems to be God is going to provide through her. And if you romanticize the story and think, well, of course, because, you know, in the end, the good people win and all these kind of things, that's not real life, the Persian empire is pretty clear.
[23:21] We've already put some people to death. And we have an edict to put thousands to death. And before the story's over, we're going to put another guy to death. So, it's not like the threat of death is some empty thing.

This is a real threat. And yet, Mordecai is convinced in the provision of God that Esther is there for this reason.
Not only is there confidence in God's provision, let me show you a second thing about his decision here. There's an awareness of God's providence. There's an awareness of God's providence.
This is the most well-known part of the book of Esther. Verse 14, 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.
Now, think about everything that had to happen for Esther to become queen. When we started the book in chapter 1, there was a different queen.
[24:41] Her name was Vashti. And if you'll recall, the way that Esther becomes queen is through all kinds of sinful things.

Hasuerus acts out in his pride with this lengthy banquet. He acts out in his pride with a second seven-day banquet. He acts out in his pride by calling Vashti to come over, and Vashti refuses to do that.
And Hashti goes to his men and say, what should we do? And they say, we've got to get rid of her as queen. And so he does that. He goes off on this military campaign, fails, comes home, dejected, disheartened, frustrated, lonely.
He remembers what has happened. He says, I've got to get a new queen. They go through this year-long process of selecting these ladies, and they go through all these things for 12 months, and he selects her as queen.
I mean, the whole thing is just quite remarkable. Yet, this all is God's providential way of providing delivery for His people.
[25:59] And I say to you again as I've been repeating in these chapters, there's no miracle in chapter 4. No natural law is broken. No one is healed from their sickness.

No one is raised from the dead. No blind eyes are made to see. No one is walking on water. There's no miracles here. But Mordecai says, Esther, there's a reason why you're here.
There's a reason why you're in this place. It may be tempting to say, but how can God be providentially at work because the story of Esther contains quite a bit of sin.
Well, if I told you God was providentially at work in your life up until the point you sinned and then He no longer is your providential sovereign, what good is that? That wouldn't get you through 10 p.m.
tonight. This is the amazing grace of our God. This is the providential care of our good shepherd. Not that sin is a small thing or taken lightly by heaven, not at all.
[27:17] But that God in His providential care still uses sinners who don't always do the right thing to help minister and help rescue other people who don't always do the right thing because God loves His people.

Don't miss the heart of our King. The providential care of our God does not stop simply because you did the wrong thing one day.
Now our sin is a big deal. I don't want to ever say anything other than that. Our sin has consequences, so don't hear me in any way making light of our sin. The book of Romans deals with that.
Should we sin more that grace may abound? Should we take our sin lightly just because of grace? And the Bible's answer is what? God forbid. May it never be.
May we never see grace as something that we take for granted or hold loosely in that way. But even when your life's been a mess, even when you've done the wrong thing, and even when people you love have done the wrong thing, isn't it good to know even there you meet a God with providential care over His people?
[28:44] people. Those of you who are raising children, I think of this because parents want to teach their kids and love their kids and model for their kids and discipline their kids and instruct their

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kids.

We're going to do everything we can, but you know what? No matter what, our children are being raised by sinners. Would you agree with that? And before you feel too guilty, mom or dad, you got it from your parents because you were raised by sinners.
And so were your parents and so were theirs. This isn't to make light of our sin. God forbid we would ever do that. But isn't it good to know as a parent that even though you're doing your best, trying your best, you know more than anybody else does how completely inadequate at times you are as a mom or as a dad and even there, praise God, our God providentially is caring for His people.
We want to do the best that we can and be encouraged. Long before your kids belong to you, they belong to the Lord first.
And the Lord is using you, even weak you, even sinful you, even discouraged you, through His providence.
[30:15] He's using you. His arms are stronger than yours. He holds us together. God has a plan and a purpose for every person.

And you see the awareness of God's providence. There's a third thing I want to show you at this ending, and that is there's a surrender to God's protection.
A surrender to God's protection. Verse 15, Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, 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. If this were a movie, the music just changed. It's time.
It's time to stand up. It's time to rise up. It's time to speak up. And she may die for doing it. And she says, it's time.
[31:29] Before I do it, we're going to fast. You fast with your people, I'll fast with my ladies. And at the end of the verse, she says, then I will go to the king, and though it is against the law, if I perish, I perish.

It's not an idle threat, you know. The needy just has come down that we're going to kill and destroy all the Jews. Killing one Jew who came into the king's presence without being called for, that's no problem.
If we're going to kill thousands, we're not going to be afraid to kill one. She says, it's time. I'll go.
If I perish, I perish. And Mordecai went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him. chapter five gets really interesting because she's going to go do this.
And if you've never read this before, the question is, will she be able to get into the king's presence? And if she does, will he accept it? Will it cost her his life?
[32:50] What is she going to say? And it's great that in this climactic part of chapter four, she says, I'll do it if I die, I'll die. But then the next day rolls around and she's got to now go really do what she said she would do.

We'll pick that up next time, but let me just close with a few implications for us. Number one, courage arises from conviction.
Courage arises from conviction. There comes a time when you love the truth so much and you love what is right so much that you just have to say whatever happens, happens.
For Esther, she had to say, if I perish, I perish. For you, it may be, if I lose my job, I lose my job. You're burdened for someone to share the gospel and you don't want to lose their friendship, but you know, if you share the gospel one more time, they may have nothing to do with you, and it's not that you want that friendship to end, but you love them so much, you just say, I can't wait, I've got to tell the truth to them, and whatever it means, it means.
Whatever it costs me, it costs. Courage arises from conviction. Believe what is right, and do what is right.
[34:19] Courage will follow. If you really believe in what's right, and you're really willing to do what's right, courage will arise from your convictions.

A second implication I want you to see from chapter 4 is that one person really can make a difference. One person really can make a difference.
Who's the one person who made a difference in chapter 4? What's your answer? That's strong. That's a confident group.

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Mordecai? Esther? How about the Hathic guy? What happened to him? Where'd he go? Hathic, as he's cast in the movie, he's just this kind of weird guy who comes and goes, and where'd Hathic go? But if not for Hathic, Mordecai's not talking to Esther. We're sitting here talking about is Mordecai the guy? Is he the one person that made a difference?
[35:24] Or is it Esther? But what about this kind of strange cat, Hathic, who he's the go-between. If not for him, they can't talk to each other. Well, in God's providence, Hathic needs to do what he's supposed to do.

Mordecai has to have the courage of his convictions, and Esther's got to be willing to do it. So when I say one person makes a difference, that does not mean only one person makes a difference. That means all of us make a difference. See, this is the mistake that happens in churches so often. People sometimes sit back and say, well, who's the one person who's going to do this?
Or who's the one person that's going to lead this? Or who's the one person God's going to use? But the fact that God can use one person to make a difference does not mean the church only needs one person.
It means every single one person can make a difference. This is the beauty of the body of Christ. I mean, I say this often, but it bears repeating.
[36:31] Today, this morning, in Philippians 2, I'm doing the best I can to try to bring this incredible text to bear in our souls. And when that second service was over, I was spent.

I always go to the gym on Sunday afternoons. Did not go to the gym today. Couldn't get out of my chair. I was spent. And as I'm walking down the hallway, I'm just stunned by looking at how many children are in our church.
That's not a surprise to me. I know how many kids are here. I see them all the time. But it was just stunning to me to see there are 20,000 kids here on Sunday morning. Or so it feels.
And for every one of those classes, there's more than one teacher in there. And it's just classroom after classroom after classroom after classroom. And so many people that are doing their part.
And if you say that the church only needs one person to do the work, what one person are you picking? You can pick me if you want, but I didn't unlock the doors today.
[37:37] If whoever that is didn't do it, no one's getting in. And you can pick a preschool worker, but who's teaching our youth and our children and our adults?

The point is not that God only is looking to use one person. The point is that every single one person makes a difference in the kingdom. This is the amazing part of what it is to be a part of the body of Christ.
every single family who gives in our church makes a difference. Every single one. Whether you're our biggest giver or our smallest giver, somewhere in between, every single person who worships through giving, every one is making a difference.
Every one who is teaching our children is making a difference. difference. Every one who is serving our adults is making a difference. Every one who is using their gifts for the glory of Christ makes a difference.
Every single person makes a difference. When Mordecai says, you are here for such a time as this, I think we're on good grounds to say that the same God who superintended her life and when she was born and what was going on around her is the same God who has superintended your life today as well.
[39:11] Now, you may never be queen, and you may never stop a group of thousands of people from being put to death, but you are here today for no less of a divine purpose than she was in her day.

Because the same God who created her is the same God who created you, and from the beginning of time has been fulfilling His sovereign purpose through His people.
Don't ever underestimate what you can do. And you may say, I don't think I can be an Esther. Can you be a Hathik?
Can you be that guy? Nobody names their kid Hathik. If you're not reading Esther, you don't even know who the guy is.
He's the guy God used to carry the challenge from Mordecai Mordecai to Esther from Esther to the king. You don't have to be well known to be useful for the kingdom.
[40:23] You don't have to have people named after you to be useful for the kingdom. You don't have to have books written after you to be useful for the kingdom. Every person makes a difference.

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And then lastly, divine providence and human responsibility are beautifully and mysteriously linked together.
Divine providence and human responsibility are beautifully and mysteriously linked together. Did Haman make a real decision when he brought his proposal to the king?
Sure he did. Did the king make a real decision when he granted that all the people in the empire in this group Haman referred to be put to death?
Was that a real decision the king made? Sure it was. Did Mordecai really communicate to Esther it's time to go to the king and do this bold thing?
[41:33] He did. Did Esther have to make a real decision to be willing to do that? Did Esther have to really be willing to die?

You bet she did. And was this all the sovereign work and plan of God? Absolutely it was.
Well, how do you explain chapter 4? Is this human responsibility or is this divine providence? And my answer is they are beautifully and mysteriously linked together.
And you don't need to separate what the Bible has joined together. We see examples of this all over the Scripture.
Proverbs 16.9 Do you make real plans? Sure you do. Who is it that would danger steps?
[42:36] God does. Proverbs 21.31 The horse is prepared for battle, but victory belongs to the Lord. If you're going to battle, are you supposed to prepare your horse?

You better or you're going to die. So you prepare your horse, it means you're ready, you're armed, you're ready for battle. Now when you go to battle, is it up to you? No. Victory belongs to the Lord.
Well, why did you prepare your horse? Because that's what God's called us to do. That's the means by which God's sovereign ends will take place.
Nehemiah 4.9 I love this verse. We prayed to our God and we set a guard as a protection against them day and night.
Well, who's going to protect them? Is it the watchman or is it God? Nehemiah's answer is, let's pray to God. And could you get some guys out there with weapons to keep watch over us?
[43:42] We prayed to our God and we set a guard. Let me bring this into our life today. We trust God to number our days, but we lock our doors at night.

We trust God to care for us, but we make wise decisions with what he's entrusted to us. We trust God with our children, but we teach them and train them.
We believe that God is sovereign over our days, even the day that we die, but we pray for the work of God to take place.
I know for some people this is a real problem for them. For the Bible, it's not. And for me, it's no problem at all. I live my life just like Nehemiah as best I can. I pray to God and I set a guard.
I pray to God and I drive the speed limit. I pray to God and I go to the doctor. I pray to God and I turn the alarm on at night.
[44:53] I pray to God and I try to make wise financial decisions for my family. I pray to God and I try to share the gospel as I can. I prepare the horse, but victory belongs to the Lord.

See, the amazing part to me of Esther, I don't leave chapter 4 stunned simply by the courage of Mordecai and Esther, though it's worth noting.
I'm stunned at the providence of God who could use two very normal people to accomplish what he has sovereignly ordained to accomplish.
And I just want to be used by him. And you do too. So does our church.
Divine providence and human responsibility are beautifully and mysteriously linked together.
[46:06] So pray and set a guard. Prepare the horse and trust the Lord for victory.

Plan your ways, but it will be the Lord who establishes your steps. And if at the end of that you say, but I can't fully understand all that, it's okay.
You're not God. You don't have to. Just trust the one who has it all figured out. That's the story of Esther.
Our God will accomplish his purpose. Lord, your word for us is rich. It has been sweet for us today. We are thankful for our time of worship and a fellowship of singing of prayer and a time in the word. May you use your word that's been proclaimed today in classrooms and from this pulpit to strengthen us and to encourage us. Thank you for these dear people in Christ's name. Amen.
[47:19] Amen.

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