It's Time!

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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. So we'll just continue in this.

We started Esther last Sunday morning to introduce it. And we'll be doing Esther on Sunday evenings. But we're not meeting tonight. And so we're going to continue just since we've just started it.
Esther chapter 3. Just a quick review from last Sunday morning, last Sunday night. In chapter 1, there is, in the third year of King Ahasuerus, there's this series of feasts that take place.
He has this big extravagant feast for 180 days as people are coming and going. And during that time, he is attempting to not only wow and impress the military leaders and political leaders, he is also drumming up support for a military campaign that he wants to do.
He leads the Medo-Persian Empire, most all of the known world. There's a small segment there in Greece that he wants to get to avenge that his father did not get.
[1:34] At the end of that 180-day feast, there's a second feast. It lasts for a week for all the people there in the area. And while that feast is going on, Queen Vashti is having a separate feast for the ladies.

At the end of this seven-day feast the king is having, he and the men there have been drinking for a week. You can imagine the kind of condition they are likely in by the end of that week.
And he sends out messengers to go get the queen from her separate feast, telling her to put on her royal headdress and come over to where he is.
He wants to show her off. And all kinds of sin and shameful things that would likely accompany what he has in mind there. And the queen says, no, I'm not going to do that.
As a result of her saying no, she is going to lose her place as the king's wife. She is going to lose her place as the queen.
[2:36] In fact, the next time she is referred to it, it's just as Vashti, no longer as Queen Vashti. And it's a reminder as we looked at last Sunday that when you do the right thing, it can still be costly.

In Queen Vashti's circumstances, she rightly says no to his request, and she suffers anyway. And she did nothing wrong at the first place to even invite it, but the sin and the drunkenness of the others, that problem finds her.
And it's a reminder for us that while we do want to do the right thing, and we want to make sure that we're not creating our own problems because of our sin, that sometimes the sin of other people, the remnants of that, can become a problem for us.
And when that happens, we have to be faithful, no matter what. It's not being faithful because it always makes life easy. It's not being faithful because if you are, there will never be any problems for you.
It's not being faithful because if you're just good enough and honest enough and resilient enough, then the problems will always skip over you. That's not the way the real world works.
[4:04] It is to say that we are to be found faithful simply no matter what. No matter what anybody else is doing, no matter what anybody else is saying in the case of Esther, no matter what somebody else's anger or sinfulness or rage may bring us, we are to be faithful no matter what.

And we meet in chapter 2, a very important change to the story.
Chapter 2 verse 19 tells us of Mordecai. Mordecai is Esther's cousin. Esther's parents have deceased. He has adopted her as his own as he is her older cousin.
He has raised her and he finds out, Mordecai does, while sitting at the gate that two of the king's eunuchs who guarded the threshold, here in verse 21, says they became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

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And this came to the knowledge of Mordecai and he told it to Queen Esther. And Esther told the king in the name of Mordecai. So after Queen Vashti loses her spot, King Ahasuerus has this year-long program where these ladies have been selected throughout the empire and they go through six months of training and work and purification and beautification and they do another six months of that.
[5:48] And out of the 400 ladies, Queen Esther is the one who is elevated to queen. We looked at that last week. And now at the end of chapter 2, Mordecai finds out there's a plot to kill the king.

Verse 23, When the affair was investigated and found to be so, the men were both hanged on the gallows, and it was recorded in the book of the Chronicles in the presence of the king.
That brings us to chapter 3. Chapter 3 and 4, we're going to look at, Lord willing, this Sunday morning, next Sunday night.
So we're going to look at chapter 3 today, chapter 4 next Sunday evening. But they really are a part of one story. If we had longer together, it would be one sermon.
But you don't want to stay here that long, so we're going to do it in two parts. And so, there are several headings throughout chapter 3 and 4 that I want you to write down to help you to follow the story.
[6:53] But let's start with this one. In chapter 3, verses 1 to 6, the first thing we see is a courageous commitment to stand. A courageous commitment to stand.

When we come to chapter 3, the first thing that greets us is Haman's promotion. Look at verse 1. After these things, King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the Agagite, the son of Hamadathah, and advanced him and set his throne above all the officials who were with him.
Now, at first glance, this is just a quick sentence of this man Haman who's been promoted, he's been elevated in his status. And it seems like just a very quick statement of that.
But there is something here that we need to peel back just a little bit to understand something significant that's just been revealed to us in chapter 3, verse 1.
Haman is referred to as Haman the Agagite. Now, that's going to immediately take our minds back to 1 Samuel 15, where we read about Agag.
[8:08] Agag was an Amalekite king captured by Saul. Saul was told to utterly destroy them. He did not do that. And so, Samuel has to come and deal with that.

But it actually goes back even further than Saul in 1 Samuel 15. It goes all the way back to Exodus 17.
Listen to this. Exodus 17, verse 14. Then the Lord said to Moses, write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.
And Moses built an altar and called the name of the Lord as my banner, saying, a hand upon the throne of the Lord. The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.
So this is in the day of Moses. Moses is roughly 1500 B.C. Saul is roughly 1000 B.C.
[9:17] So you have this conflict in Exodus 17, this battle between the Lord against Amalek, and 500 years later, you see that strengthened in the days of Saul.

Roughly 500 years after Saul, just a little bit more than that, are the events of Esther. So you've got Exodus, roughly 1500 B.C.
Saul, roughly 1000 B.C. And now Esther, just a little bit after 500 B.C. So over the course of 1000 years, you've had this conflict raging.
A little more than 500 years after Saul, in the book of Esther, we have met Mordecai, and it's told to us that Mordecai is a Benjamite of Saul's tribe, opposed by Haman, the Amalekite.
So if you take Exodus 17, 1 Samuel 15, and get that background, when you come to Esther 3, verse 1, and it says, Haman the Agagite, you know we are in for a conflict.
[10:42] Verse 2 says, All the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him.

So when you come into the presence of Haman, this man who's been elevated, you have been commanded by the king to bow down and pay homage to him. Then we read of Mordecai's defiance.
But Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage. See in verse 2. Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage.

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Now scholars will take a couple of different routes here as they interpret what exactly is going on. Let me just let you know a little bit of how this can be understood.
Some see the demand to bow down to Haman as a demand for worship. That this has been commanded, that Haman has taken this to a place of worship, and that he is commanding people to bow down to him and to give him worship.
[11:53] In fact, one scholar says, plainly, the main reason for Mordecai's disobedience was Haman's demand for worship, not simply respect. Others, who have studied that day and time, the language here, think that it does not reply to an act of worship.

One scholar writing, there is no religious reason why Mordecai would refuse to comply. Mordecai, some think that it's not a matter of a call for worship, but instead, has to do with him being a Jew who would never give honor to an Agagite or an Amalekite since God had condemned them way back to Exodus 17.
So the question is, when you come to the end of verse 2, Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage. What exactly is in his mind of why he refuses to do that? It's been commanded, he's supposed to do it, and some say he doesn't do it because Haman wants him to bow down as an act of worship.
Others say he won't do it because it would be to dishonor God to bow down to an Agagite. Is it an act of worship that he's refusing to do, or is it being faithful to God who has been at war with the Amalekites?
Those are the different possible things that could be going on in Mordecai's mind. I think what we can say for sure, depending on which way you take that, is clearly in Mordecai's mind, his motive is that to bow down to Haman would be to disrespect God.
[13:35] Whether or not it was seen as an act of worship to not do, or whether or not it was seen as a Jew to bow down to an Agagite that would be disrespectful to the Lord, either way, I think we can at least safely say his motive is he does not want to disrespect God.

Verse 3, The king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, Why do you transgress the king's command? You've been told to bow down.
Everybody else is bowing down to him. Why will you not bow down to Haman? Verse 4, And when they spoke to him day after day, and he would not listen to them.
So this is going on over and over again. Here comes Haman. Everybody bows down. Mordecai won't. The people say, Why are you doing this? Why are you refusing what you're supposed to do? Why are you disobeying? Why are you rebelling? Why won't you bow down day after day after day after day? This takes place. This conversation happens. It says that when they spoke to him day after day, and he would not listen to them, they told Haman in order to see whether Mordecai's words would stand, for he had told them that he was a Jew.
[14:58] So much interesting thing here in the language. You have a bit of a play on words. What Mordecai won't do is bow down in the presence of Haman.

He stands. And the question is, will Mordecai's words stand?
You see the play on words in our English translation there very clearly. Mordecai refuses to bow down.
Will his decision stand? Mordecai keeps standing and not bowing. Will that be allowed to stand? And they tell Haman to see what Mordecai is doing.
Is it going to be tolerated? To see it in our English translation here of exactly what is being said, it's just this.
[16:02] Will Mordecai standing be allowed to stand? Mordecai here, it says, is how to explain he is a Jew.

Back to verse 4. In order to see whether Mordecai's words would stand, for he had told them he was a Jew. He had instructed Esther to not tell people that.
Here Mordecai is forced to tell people that he is so they know why he refuses to bow down. And here, he's going to have to recite what happened in 1 Samuel 15 and in Exodus 17.
Here, it's a reminder as he has to tell them why he refuses to bow down, that not only is this about Haman, this is going back 500 years ago to Saul, 500 years before him to Moses.
This has been at least a thousand years that this tension has been there. Verse 5, when Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage to him, Haman was filled with fury.

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[17:23] There's another wordplay here in the English. The word for Haman and the word for rage are very similar. Haman was filled with fury.

Haman was filled with rage. But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone. So as they had made known to him the people of Mordecai, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.
What's happening here? Haman's been elevated by King Ahasuerus. The command is when you come in the presence of Haman, you're to bow down. Mordecai, the Jew, will not bow down in the presence of Haman.
The people press him on that. Why do you refuse to do this? Day after day after day, this discussion, why won't you do what the king commanded? And Mordecai has to tell them, Haman's an Agagite.
I'm not bowing down in front of an Agagite. And whether for him it's about a call for worship he'll refuse to give, or a call that would just be disrespectful to the Lord either way, his motive here is there is no way as a God-fearing Jewish person I'm going to bow down in the presence of an Agagite.
[18:49] Haman wants to deal with Mordecai. You might expect what Haman's going to say is well, let's just kill Mordecai.

Back to chapter 2 where we're last Sunday night, verse 23, when the affair of these two men who wanted to kill the king, when that was found to be the case, they were both hanged on the gallows. They didn't mess around in the empire. So it would not be strange to hear that Haman wants to kill Mordecai.
He does, but he wants to do more than that. Verse 6 again says that he wanted to destroy all of the Jews.
Haman isn't satisfied to try to just kill Mordecai. He wants to destroy all the Jews. Why? Here's why. Hatred grows and is not easily satisfied.
[19:59] Hatred is not easily satisfied. this conflict between the Agagites and the Jews has been going on for centuries.

Agag had been hacked to pieces. Be careful what you do with your anger.
It's far more dangerous than we think it to be. Haman's an Agagite. Saul didn't kill Agag.
Samuel cut him to pieces. Haman hated the Jews, holding a grudge against them for what happened to his ancestors so long ago. Now, to understand all the complexities here, we've got to go back and think about what life was like in the Persian Empire.
Because in the Persian Empire, they were known to typically be tolerant of minorities in the kingdom. This is why in 539 B.C.
[21:25] when Cyrus, with the Medo-Persians, when they overtake the Babylonians and Cyrus decrees the Jews can go back home, some do go back home, but not all of them by any means.

A number of them stayed in the kingdom. Why? Because life for them was pretty good in the kingdom, in the Persian kingdom. Minorities were tolerated, typically protected, and in Mordecai's case, even able to rise to places of prominence and leadership.
But it could get deadly in a hurry if the wrong person made the wrong decision at the wrong time.
So here we find Mordecai with a courageous commitment to stand. Not merely physically standing, though that's true, but standing up for what he believed would honor the Lord.
that leads us to a second part, the second half of chapter 3, where we find a sinister strategy to destroy.
[22:45] A sinister strategy to destroy. Verse 7, in the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast poor, 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. So now we're in the twelfth year of the reign of Ahasuerus, about five years since Esther's become queen.
And the way the language reads here is they're casting lots with Haman trying to decide what is the best day, what's the luckiest day, what's the most opportune day to do something about this desire to kill all the Jewish people.
If we were to take the wording, it would be essentially like saying this happened, if you put it in our world, this happened from January through December. Throughout the course of the year, they were casting lots.

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It's called poor. P-U-R. It's a kind of dice. Poor was an old Babylonian word. It meant lot or fate.
[24:09] So they would cast these kinds of dice that was determining your lot, determining your fate, looking for the lucky day. what do the dice say about when the best day is to enact this plan to kill all the Jews?

Verse 8, Haman said to King Ahasuerus, there is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom.
Their laws are different from those of every other people and they do not keep the king's laws so that it is not to the king's prophet to tolerate them.
It's an interesting strategy that Haman does here. Haman wants to kill Mordecai because Mordecai won't bow! bow down before him but he doesn't want to just kill Mordecai he wants to kill all the Jewish people.
So he goes to the king and he says there's a group he doesn't name them he just says it's come to my attention king that there's a group there's a smaller group there's a minority group within your empire and they've got different laws than the rest of the people they live different than other people do.
[25:23] He pretends that his reason to come to the king is to protect the king. Essentially Haman says to the king there's one certain people and they are a threat to you and they're all around us.

Verse 9 if it please the king let it be decreed that they be destroyed. I will pay 10,000 talents of silver into the hands of those who have charge of the king's business that they may put it in the king's treasuries.
Now let's stop for just a minute. This is a staggering thing in verse 9. The amount of silver Haman says I will put into the king's treasury was about 60% of an entire annual amount of tax revenue that would come into the kingdom.
This is an insanely large amount of money Haman says he'll give to the king's treasury if you agree to enact this edict where we kill all these people who they are a threat.
He still isn't named who they are. Now where is Haman going to get all that money? It would surely have to come largely from killing the Jewish people and then hilfering from their households every bit of money and income and valuable resource they have as a part to do that.
[27:00] Which tells us in Haman's mind morality could be bought with money. He's willing to kill innocent people because it would give him access to their money.

And now his rage and willingness to pilfer lead him to be comfortable killing innocent people.
When someone's morality is for sale, it's a dreadful thing. Now you and I may be quick to say how terrible someone would do that.
I'm so glad that wouldn't ever be something I would do. But every time you're willing to lie or cheat on your homework, your morality was for sale for a grade.
When you cheat on your income taxes, your morality was for sale to save a couple hundred dollars.
When you take something from your company that's not yours, your morality was for sale for a few items that did not belong to you.
[28:49] Verse 10 says, so the king took his signet ring from the hand and gave it to Haman the Agagite, the son of Hamadathah, the enemy of the Jews.

Haman is now not only reminded that he's an Agagite, he's now described as an enemy of the Jews. And the king said to Haman, the money is given to you, the people also to do with them as it seems good to you.
The king says, here's my signet ring, that was the sign of authority, he says, you now have the authority to enact the very edict you've come to me about.
Interesting to me, the king here doesn't even bother to say, by the way, who are the people that are a threat to me? He doesn't even care. You would think before you gave your authority to kill a group of people, you might say, hey, by the way, who are they?
How are they a threat? Are we sure the best thing to do is to enact a date where we just go kill all of this group? But as we looked at last Sunday, King Ahasuerus surrounded himself with advisors who had far more enthusiasm than they had wisdom.
[30:20] And that's a dangerous way to live. We're reminded again that Haman was an Agagite, an enemy of the Jews.

His hatred, his grudge, his past, leading him to make deadly and dreadful decisions. Which brings us to verse 12.

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The date is set. Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict according to all that Haman commanded was written to the king's satraps, and the governors over all the provinces, and the officials of all the peoples, to every province in its own script, and every people in its own language.
It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus, and sealed with the king's signet ring. Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with instruction to destroy.
Watch this. Here's the official edict from the king. Destroy, kill, and 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.
[31:56] They were to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jews, young and old, women and children, and after they annihilate the people, they were to plunder all their goods, and the date was chosen according to the poor, according to the dice, and the date selected is the day before the Passover lamb was to be slain.

which as you read your Old Testament makes you stop in your tracks and say God had previously delivered Israel from oppression in Egypt in the days of Moses, would He now do the same to deliver the Jews from Haman?
This isn't the first time that someone has threatened to kill God's people. What will God do? verse 14, a copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation to all the peoples to be ready for that day.
The couriers went out hurriedly by order of the king, and the decree was issued in Susa, the citadel, and the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.
Just a quick note here, to go from Susa, the capital, to Sardis, which would be the westernmost edge of the empire, would take them in that day about 90 days to get the word from the capital to the furthest reach of the empire.
[33:38] It's going to take them 90 days to get this edict communicated to every person that's there, and here's what's being communicated. A day has been chosen, and on this day every Jew is to be destroyed, killed, annihilated, and all of their stuff plundered.

It's about a year away. It's going to take 90 days on Courier to get that to all the people in the empire, and then people will have months to decide what will they do.
Here's Haman, who has essentially manipulated his way to get the king to grant authority that all the Jews are to be killed.
Here's the king, who has agreed to do this without ever even asking who these people are that are so troublesome. And these two men who have now plotted together to kill an entire group of people in the empire, how do they spend their time knowing they've just declared war and death on thousands of people?
The end of verse 15 says, the king and Haman sat down to drink. That's how concerned they were.
[35:24] Their consciences by this point are so seared and their judgments so poor, they just sit back and drink as a part of their normal lives.

No concern at all. chapter 4 that we'll look at God willing next Sunday evening leads to one of the real high point climactic verses in the entire Old Testament.
Lord willing we'll get to that next Sunday night. Let's for just a few minutes before we leave this morning, let's consider some implications just from chapter, we're just halfway into the story of chapter 3 and 4.
Let's just pause for a moment and let's look at some implications for us from chapter 3. Let me give you four. Number one, anger is not easily satisfied.
Anger is not easily satisfied. And while you may not have the ability to have a decree that is commanded as law like the king, and you may not have the ability to decree to put an entire group of people to death like Haman did, don't think that the anger you harbor in your heart is some small thing.
[36:52] Jesus makes clear in the New Testament that murder starts with hatred. The book of Romans says, as much as depends on you, live in peace with all men.

As much as depends on you. Now, it's true, there may be somebody who dislikes you, opposes you, hates you, tries to hurt you, and there may be a reason for it, they won't forgive, there may be no reason for it, or somewhere in between.

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You can only do what you can do, which is why the scripture says, as much as depends on you. But don't think that anger is some small thing, and you'll just cultivate a little part of your garden, and allow it to be filled with anger, because it will spread and devour your heart.
If you've got anger in your heart towards someone, you need to seek reconciliation with them. There is no guarantee they will cooperate. There is no guarantee they will be reasonable.
But as much as depends on you, seek to live in peace with all men, because anger is not easily satisfied.
[38:22] if you are a six-year-old this morning in the sanctuary, if you're a 16-year-old, if you're a 66-year-old, don't toy with anger in your heart.

It grows. It overtakes. And it will dominate if you allow it. Number two, if you inherited this trait of anger or stubbornness or animosity, let it end with you.
Some of you perhaps just say, well, that's just how our family is. We're just a family of fighters. our family just yells. It's what we do.
Our family is just difficult to get along with. That's just who we are. My father was angry. My grandfather was angry. My grandfather's grandfather was angry. That's just who we are.
We're just angry people. We're just stubborn people. We're just filled with animosity. We're just a difficult people. That's just who our family is. We're just angry, difficult people.
[39:45] That may be what you inherited. Friends, let that end with you. You don't have to carry that on. And you may have been raised by family and parents that were angry, and they were constantly difficult and constantly causing trouble.

Your entire family tree may be filled with people who did not seek peace, and were not gracious, and could not get along. That may truly be what you inherited, and what you learned, and what you've come from.
That is real for some people, but I'm begging you, let that trait stop with you. You say, as for me and my house, no more of this.
You can't control what everybody else around you and your family does, but you can say, as for me and my house, as for my part of the family, words like anger, and stubbornness, and difficulty, those traits are dying with us.
Because we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. And greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world. And the Bible says, you will keep in perfect peace he whose mind is steadfast because he trusts in you.
[41:12] You want peace in your life, in your home, then trust in God. And when you get together with family meals, and Thanksgiving dinners, you may be surrounded by a bunch of angry people consumed with just spewing all kinds of stubbornness and animosity.

let your family be different. Number three, poor discernment in leaders impacts further than you can imagine.
Poor discernment in leaders impacts further than you can imagine. the king says, bring Vashti to me, let her dance and perform in front of all these men.
She says, no, and then he gets his enthusiastic but unwise counselors and says, what should we do to her? And what should we do to everybody else?
And he makes poor decisions after poor decisions, and now Mordecai won't bow down in front of Haman and rather than dealing with Mordecai, he allows Haman to manipulate him to the place to enact a decree that says, we'll just kill, destroy, annihilate all of them.
[42:44] And this shows us that poor discernment in leaders impacts further than you can imagine. Now, you may say, thank goodness I don't have to worry about that because I'm not a king.

I don't set laws. The way you treat people in your home is a form of leadership and you're impacting them far more than you'll ever imagine.
The way you speak to people at your work has far more influenced than you can imagine. The way you speak to people at church influences lives and hearts and attitudes far more than you can imagine.
Do not think that because this is a Persian empire 2,500 years ago at a part of the world far away in a very different culture, custom, and language that there's not something here for us to learn.
There certainly is. Every leader needs to be reminded that their decisions impact people deeply and widely and every person in this sanctuary has leadership and influence that far exceeds what you realize.

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[44:09] I'll give you one last thing. Our struggles are an invitation to trust the Lord.

Our struggles are an invitation to trust the Lord. So far through three chapters we met Queen Vashti because of her refusal to participate in this immoral request from the king.
She has lost her relationship and she has lost her position. We've met Mordecai who refused to bow down to the Agagite and not disrespect the Lord and it now has an edict against him and all of his people throughout the entire empire.
And in these struggles it's always an invitation to trust the Lord. in your life today whatever struggles that exist it's an invitation to trust the Lord.
Let's step outside of the Medo-Persian empire. Let's step outside of 483 to 473 BC for just a minute. Let's jump into 2026 what struggle do you face today?
[45:46] What disappointment are you facing today? What heartache and heartbreak are you facing today?

What anxious thoughts are on your mind? What are you going through that just seems too big you don't know what to do with it?
What is it that when you go to bed at night is your last thought that keeps you awake at night and when you wake up you're instantly reminded that's still right in front of me.
Whatever that is that's an invitation to trust the Lord. Don't think that trusting the Lord means trials won't come.
They will. And don't think that trusting the Lord means that no one else's sin is going to impact you. That's not the way a broken fallen world works.
[46:53] Here's what it does mean. Through every season and second of your trial and of your struggle there is an invitation from the Lord to trust in him to abide in him to follow him and to say because I have trusted in the Lord therefore my heart hopes in him his mercies are new every morning and great is his faithfulness.

God God has the trials that exist in your life today are there to prove the power in trusting God.
Let not your heart turn to anger rage! Or fear! fear! Let your current struggle remind you you need the Lord and the Lord is good and his mercies are new every morning and let your heart declare even through tears if need be great is his faithfulness.
We trust we worship we pray we obey no matter the cost and no matter who is with us we are a people of God and we find refuge in his name.
Lord we thank you for your word today I pray that it would bring hope to your people we thank you Lord for your kindness we thank you Lord for your grace I pray Lord that we would not tolerate anger in our hearts that we would seek to forgive those who have hurt us wronged us that we would seek forgiveness from those that we have hurt that we would seek to live in peace with all men as much as depends on us and even when we have done the best we can do what is right and when others would choose to injure us anyway!
[49:37] may we even in those moments find your invitation to trust you to be days of grace and growth of mercy and of worship we pray that in Christ's name Amen God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God God

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