

# The Brewing of Bitterness

15 October 2023 AM – Text: Esther 5 – Topic: Bitterness – Series: Est23

**Introduction:** After three days of fasting and prayer, Esther entered the king's court uninvited. God intervened, and the king held out his golden sceptre. When asked what she wanted, she invited the king and Haman to a banquet she had prepared. Evidently, the king knew that Esther was preparing him for a request. After the meal, he asked her for her request. She asked that he and Haman come again on the morrow for a second banquet, and then she would make her request. We do not know why she delayed, but God used this delay, as we shall see. That afternoon, Haman went home joyful (v.9), that is, until he saw Mordecai standing in the king's gate. Upon arriving home, he called his wife and friends and bragged on himself and told of the private banquet. However, his bitterness toward Mordecai spoilt it all.

**Transition:** Examine with me the bitterness of Haman.

## 1. The Beginning of Bitterness

Jim Berg identified bitterness as “the discontent of the soul that says, ‘I don't like what God has allowed.’” Another author adds, “From our own perspective, our bitterness or dissatisfaction is always completely justified. “It just wasn't fair,” we argue to ourselves.” <https://activechristianity.org/am-i-bitter-person-overcoming-the-root-of-bitterness>

However, God views bitterness from a righteous perspective. In Romans 3:14, we find bitterness listed as a typical sin of an unbeliever. God said in Colossians 3:19, “**Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.**” God associates bitterness with anger and commanded that Christians put it away in Ephesians 4:31. “**Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:**” Hebrews 12:15 speaks of the “root of bitterness” but does not specifically identify it. James warns us in James 3:14, “**But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.**” Bitterness is a dangerous sin that begins small but grows deep in the heart and is difficult to pull out.

### a. What is the taproot of bitterness?

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- 2) His bitterness overflowed to his wife and friends. He could not keep his bitterness to himself. Now his wife and friends are sharing in his bitterness.
- 3) That is common today as well. You may hide your bitterness for a time, but if not dealt with biblically, it will eventually spread. Entire families become bitter.

### b. The pressure eventually erupts into vengeful actions.

- 1) Haman's ungodly wife and friends now take up his bitterness and suggest a plan to get rid of Mordecai (Read v.14). Did you catch the size of the gallows? That afternoon, he ordered workmen to construct a gallows that was about 23m tall. He wanted everyone to see.
- 2) Haman ordered the gallows to be built and spent the evening planning his early morning speech to the king.
- 3) If you are bitter toward someone, and you do not forgive that person and ask God to forgive you, your bitterness will eventually cause you to do something regretful. At the very least, it will rob you of God's blessing, peace, and power.

**Conclusion:** Is there a seed of bitterness growing in your heart this morning? Has someone hurt you that you have never forgiven? Have irritations been festering into bitterness against your spouse? Have you been carrying a bitter emotional feeling toward one who has offended your loved ones? If so, that bitterness is standing between you and the Saviour. Jesus made it very clear that if we do not forgive others, He will not forgive us.

If the Holy Spirit has identified bitterness in your heart, you have a choice to make. You can ignore the Holy Spirit and allow the bitterness slowly to eat away at your emotional, physical, and spiritual life like a cancer, or you can confess your sin of bitterness to God, forgive the offender, and receive God's forgiveness and peace. I strongly recommend the second choice.

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**Song:** Nothing Between - 321

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- 2) Bitterness is like a weed; it thrives where flowers struggle. Take a dandelion, for example. It grows well in harsh conditions because it has a long taproot that burrows deep, straight down into the soil.
- 3) We are sinners living among sinners. People will hurt us, **sometimes unjustly**, but God commands that we do not allow their sin to cause us to be bitter.
- 4) **Bitterness is a choice**. We cannot always control how people will treat us, but we must control how we react to their treatment. Remember what God commanded in Ephesians 4:31 (above).

#### b. Does bitterness have any other roots?

- 1) Yes! Another root of bitterness is the refusal to forgive. If your spouse has offended you, if a neighbour cheated you, if someone hurt you (physically or verbally), if a friend betrayed you, what does God tell you to do? (Matthew 18:15) "**Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.**" Jesus also said in Matthew 6:14-15, "**For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**" If you do not obey this, you become bitter.
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## 2. The Growing of Bitterness

Each time Haman saw Mordecai standing while everyone else was bowing low, his resentment grew and his passion for revenge increased.

#### a. Resentment

- 1) Haman hated it when Mordecai did not bow. Even while he was gloating over the privilege of feasting with the king and queen, when he remembered Mordecai, his delight turned into hateful resentment. Read v.9-13.
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- 1) Haman's bitterness led him to plot the murder of all the Jews. As his bitterness grew, his hatred increased, and he became increasingly impatient, waiting to exterminate Mordecai with all the Jews.
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## 3. The Brewing of Bitterness

Haman's bitterness continued to brew. That brewing may be undetectable for a time, but it will eventually erupt.

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