

Turning the Tables

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[0 : 00] Do you remember our last study in Esther a few weeks ago?

! We had a couple of subplots going.! Esther, while still keeping her identity as a Jew secret,! was maneuvering the king so that he would reverse the decree of Haman to have all the Jews destroyed.

And meanwhile, we saw God's providence at work in another way because Mordecai again refused to bow to Haman. And after that, Haman intended to ask King Ahasuerus to have Mordecai executed before the second of two banquets with Queen Esther and the king.

God intervened, though. If you'll remember the night before Haman planned to have Mordecai executed, the king was unable to sleep. And the king requested to hear from the chronicles of his reign.

The reader just happened to read the narrative of how Mordecai had saved the king's life. When the king asked how Mordecai had been honored, his attendant said that nothing had been done for Mordecai.

[1 : 08] And the king immediately set out to correct that oversight. True to form, the king needed help to decide what to do, though. For review, look at chapter 6, verses 4 through 6.

So here are chapter 6, verses 4 through 6. It says, And the king said, He's about to have his question answered, and it's not going to be answered the way he wants it to be answered.

So Haman, thinking that he was going to be the one to be honored, laid out a detailed plan for honoring the mystery person. He was later shocked to learn that Mordecai was the object of that honor.

Worse yet, the king asked Mordecai to carry out the recognition. And those were the first signs that this would be Haman's terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day, as we referred to it the last time. After doing what the king asked, Haman returned home to sulk and mourn. And verses 13 through 14 of chapter 6 set the stage for tonight's new text.

[2 : 37] They say, These verses still are all part of the same very bad day for Haman.

Most of the verses focus on the second banquet that Queen Esther had prepared for the king and for Haman. Esther finally comes clean about why she'd earlier risk approaching the king uninvited. During the banquet and the events that follow, we'll see Esther turning the tables on Haman. So let's read verses 7, 1 through 8, 2. They say, Queen Esther had a deep, dark secret.

And that was her Jewishness, which she'd kept under wraps ever since she'd first been taken into the royal harem way back in chapter 2. She'd followed Mordecai's advice to hide her ethnicity so faithfully that even when she was elevated to the level of queen, five years later nobody knew who her people were or her real connection to Mordecai.

[6 : 12] Everybody knew that Mordecai was Jewish and that's what triggered Haman's king to annihilate the Jews in the first place. But Esther had been under such deep cover that no one, with maybe the possible exception of the household eunuch or two, had a clue about Esther's ethnicity.

To hide her nationality that well while living so intimately among the pagans, she must have broken every law in the book of Moses that the Jews were required to keep.

She certainly couldn't have observed the laws of ritual cleanliness or of kosher food or of special times and of seasons of Thanksgiving and fasting. She couldn't have even prayed to God publicly. She blended in so completely with the pagan culture that nobody suspected that she was a Jew herself. But now Esther had to come out of the closet.

That's because Haman's edict threatened the whole Jewish community. So for the sake of her people, she'd agreed to go before the king to intercede with him for their lives. And this was going to

be tricky because King Ahasuerus was a dangerously unstable individual.

[7 : 19] Esther knew that quite well. She was queen because the king took hasty action to remove at least one other queen before her. If you remember back in chapter 1, Queen Vashti was dethroned because Vashti had defied the king.

Admitting that she'd been less than completely honest with the king was only one of the challenges that Esther would have to face. To be successful, Esther would have to change the king's opinion about Haman, who was the second most powerful man in the empire.

The edict that Esther needed to have revoked had been put forward by Haman. It was signed by him in the king's name and stood to benefit the royal treasury to the tune of a half a year's taxes for the empire.

All Esther had to offer in exchange was a pretty face, but behind that pretty face was a smart brain that had been working overtime. Since she'd agreed to intercede for people back in chapter 4, Esther had been pursuing an intricate strategy with the king.

She kept inviting him and Haman to banquet after banquet. And by almost revealing her request and then backing off, she persuaded the king three times to commit publicly in advance to give her whatever she wished up to half his kingdom.

[8 : 31] So Esther had kept the king in suspense long enough the time had finally arrived to tell the king what she really wanted. And that's what we see here in chapter 7.

So we'll break tonight's text into four sections, starting with the first six verses of chapter 7. And in those verses, we see a full explanation. A full explanation.

Esther finally gives the king the full explanation of what she wants him to do. So let's start looking at this section by reading verses 1 and 2 again.

They say, So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther, and on the second day, as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king again said to Esther, What is your wish, Queen Esther?

It shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom it shall be fulfilled. Verse 2 mentions the second day.

[9 : 30] The first day included the first banquet, and verse 2 refers to the second banquet on the second day. And again, the second day is the same day that Haman had failed to honor Mordecai, or had been forced to honor Mordecai for saving the king's life.

So Haman surely thought that the worst part of his day was over. Now he just had to go to the banquet and enjoy the banquet with the king and queen. But he was about to find out that the worst part of his day was just beginning.

Verse 2 has the familiar question from the king to Esther. The king said, What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom it shall be fulfilled.

So as we mentioned in the introduction, this is now the third time that the king had asked Esther that question. And each time the king had offered Esther up to half his kingdom.

The king assumed that Esther would ask for material possessions, but she was interested in something more important, something that really mattered, and that was human lives. Look at verses 3 and 4 again.

[10 : 34] They say, After the typical pleasantries about finding favor in the king's sight, Esther's answer was clear and to the point.

She included the exact words that Haman had used in his original decree. Esther's words were just as carefully chosen as her strategy had been. What she wanted was the sparing of her own lives and the lives of her people.

And at this point, Esther came out of the closet far enough to link her own fate with the fate of her people. If they were destroyed, she would be destroyed too. And if they were spared, she would be spared.

Notice that she waited to reveal which people she was talking about. But if you remember Haman's edict, he never identified the people that he wanted to destroy either. So she's just following Haman's lead there.

Haman certainly, though, would know and have no doubt about what her request really meant. If her petition was refused by the king and the edict stood, Esther had now publicly linked herself and added her own name to the list of those marked for slaughter.

[12:07] And she had irrevocably sided with her people at the risk of her own life. Esther explained how if the edict were carried out, the result would affect the king's honor and his wealth.

We know from earlier in the book of Esther that honor and wealth were things very near and dear to King Ahasuerus. Notice in verse 7-4 she uses the word I in confessing her own part in the situation. And she drew attention to the fact that her precarious position necessarily involved the king's honor. Anything that shamed her shamed her husband, the king. Instead of requesting up to half of the kingdom for herself, Esther instead talked about the loss to the king.

She said that slavery for her people and herself wouldn't have warranted such an intervention. So she's drawing Ahasuerus or Xerxes' attention to the reality that even the vast sum Haman has promised to the treasury will fail to adequately compensate for the king's loss of tax revenue. And with this exaggerated comparison, Esther, like Haman, appeals to the king's self-interest. If he reduced the Jews to slavery, he would at least have the benefit of their free labor.

[13:20] But by killing them, he'll lose all of the tax money they would have contributed to the kingdom. Being sold as a female slave was precisely what had happened to Esther personally.

She herself had been enslaved as a personal toy of the king, and this was not the issue she was protesting. She was making the point to the king that his personal interest would far outweigh small injustices like that.

And of course, she's playing the king all along. Most likely, the king was nodding happily in agreement with what she was saying at that point because her logic had to appeal to him.

Obviously, he wanted to keep as much tax revenue as he could have. Esther couldn't appeal to the king's sense of right and wrong and point out that genocide is evil because he didn't think it was. He didn't have any problem at all with signing the decree that would have killed the people. So she had to appeal to him a different way. The only constitutional right given in his empire was the right of the king to maximize his own self-interest.

[14:23] So Esther's case had to rest on the fact that she did have his best interest at heart in making her request. After all, sparing this people also meant sparing her personally.

And so now we can see that the conditional clause with which she opened her request, where it sounded like pleasantries, when she said, if I have found favor in your sight, that clause is more than conventional flattery.

It's really the heart of Esther's argument. She's saying that if she really has found favor in the king's sight, then an attack on her would also be an attack on the king. You can see that her speech had a dramatic effect on the king because she aroused more than his curiosity.

He actually was very angry. The life of his own queen was in danger because of a plot by one of his most trusted men. Look at verse 5. It says, Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, Who is he and where is he who has dared to do this?

So Xerxes was first stunned and then enraged as he contemplated the atrocity embodied in what Esther had told him. For her part, Esther had awakened the king to the kind of emotions that could lead to prompt action.

[15:35] And maybe this glimpse gives us a little glimpse into what King Ahasuerus really thinks because he had very little regard for human life.

He had yet to connect the dots that Esther was talking about the decree that Haman had made the king sign. It's almost as if he'd forgotten about that already. It's kind of interesting to think, isn't it, that you could sign a decree that would do away with the whole people group and yet you don't even realize what your wife is talking about when she brings it up.

That behavior really sounds almost unbelievably callous to us, but it's consistent with the king's character that's revealed in secular history books. In one such account from the history books, the king made an attack against Greece into Europe and it shows that he threw men about as if they were expendable.

He lost thousands and thousands of men in that campaign, but it didn't disturb him one bit because human life to him was very cheap in that day. The thing that now disturbs him is that they are the people of Esther and his queen's in mortal danger, so that's why he asked, who is he and where is he?

Who has dared to do this? And now we see Esther's bravery because she puts her own life on the line by answering the king's question and that answer comes in verse 6. She said, a foe and enemy, this wicked Haman.

[16:59] And then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. You can almost see her pointing at Haman whenever she says that. We don't know whether she did or not, but you can certainly picture that, especially when she says, this wicked Haman.

And of course, Haman has no answer. He's dumbfounded to learn that Esther is Jewish. And keep in mind that this is the very same day that began with this exchange between Haman and the king in verse 6 of chapter 6.

And that's the verse that said, Haman came in and the king said to him, what should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor? And Haman said to himself, whom would the king delight to honor more than me?

He didn't know that that was going to be the high point of his day. But the day continued with Haman being shocked to realize that the king wanted to honor Haman's enemy and that he had to be the one to carry it out.

But now something far worse was about to happen to Haman. So Haman's honor had quickly turned to humiliation and then to horror. And so it really was Haman's terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.

[18:02] And the end of verse 6 just told us that Haman was terrified before the king and queen. Verses 7 and 8 summarize what happened next.

And in these verses, we learn that Haman makes a fearful exclamation. So a fearful exclamation is the second category of our study tonight. And let's read about that fearful exclamation one more time.

We'll start by looking at just verse 7 by itself. It says, And the king arose in his wrath from the wine drinking and went into the palace garden. But Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm was determined against him by the king.

At least Haman is more perceptive than the king is and things like that. But we know the king was astonished and furious. And so he left the room and went out into the palace garden.

And this must have been a very unusual act for him because usually he would be expected to respond immediately and rashly. This time he was so taken aback by the turn of events that he needed time to think.

[19:08] Possibly he simply couldn't believe that Haman would do such a thing. But the queen had begged and pleaded for her life because of Haman. And he believed his queen. And the king needed time to cool off a little so that he could think clearly about Esther's plight and about Haman, his trusted advisor and prime minister.

So his enraged response alerted Haman to the precariousness of the situation. And that's why Haman stayed to beg for his life from the queen. So Haman was perceptive enough to know where the real power was.

And that real power in this case was with Esther. After all, the king was willing to give her up to half his kingdom. So the king certainly would not condemn his wife. But instead he would condemn the one who had caused all this havoc.

And Haman knew that that was Haman himself. So Haman could see that Ahasuerus had determined to do him harm. And the king was unlikely to lose any sleep over what happened to Haman.

Instead, what was troubling the king likely was the issue of the king's own reputation. Because he had authorized Haman's edict and his royal seal had ratified it. Now the problem the king had was how could he, without losing faith, punish Haman for putting forward a decree that the king had approved himself.

[20:23] And so that was the king's tricky dilemma here. The king only has a short time to wait for the answer to his problem. Because in verse 8, Haman's actions provide the king with a way to save faith.

Check out verse 8 one more time. It says, You see the irony in that verse?

The one who had unwittingly sought to take the queen's life now wanted her to save him. And to emphasize his request, Haman had fallen down before her.

And Haman's falling down on Esther's couch gave the king precisely the excuse he needed to eliminate Haman without making any embarrassing public reference to the edict about destroying the Jews.

The Persians had strict rules of contact with harem by any male other than the king. Only the eunuchs were the persons who had access to the rooms of these women, and that included the queen too.

[21 : 34] So Haman was in danger merely by being near the queen. So ironically, the one who wanted to kill a Jew for not falling down before him was ultimately executed on a charge of falling down inappropriately before a Jew.

You know, the king mentions that, Well, is he going to assault Queen Esther in my presence? Surely he had no thought that he was actually going to assault her. After all, there were other people present.

We see that later on in the chapter. But it gave the king the appropriate excuse he needed to get rid of Haman without having to admit that he had made a mistake. So even if we'd not read the verses already, we could guess what will happen to Haman next.

We have the third section of the lesson in verses 9 and 10. And in verses 9 and 10, we see a forecasted expiration. A forecasted expiration is what comes in there.

And here are verses 9 and 10 again. It says, Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman's house 50 cubits high.

[22 : 43] And the king said, Hang him on that. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated. With Harbona's words, Haman knew the third capital offense had been charged against him.

The first capital offense was that he had manipulated the king into planning to kill the queen's people. The second one was that he fell on the queen. And the third one here is that he planned to execute a man whom the king had just greatly honored for extreme loyalty to the kingdom.

So this really was three strikes and you're out for Haman. And earlier we talked about the irony of Haman falling down before a Jew when Haman had been so upset by a Jew refusing to fall down before him.

The ultimate irony, though, is that the death instrument built for Mordecai would now be the method of death for its creator, Haman. So Haman had built his own place of execution.

And in verse 10, the writer tells us that Haman was executed without delay. I call this section a forecasted expiration because it completes the fulfillment of the prediction made by Haman's wife and friends.

[23 : 53] We looked at it earlier, but here's verse 613 again. It says, Then his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, If Mordecai before whom you have begun to fall is of the Jewish people, you will not overcome him, but will surely fall before him.

So you can see that even his wife had forecasted his expiration. The writer of Esther likely wanted his readers to notice that the word translated falling in verse 7-8 is from the identical root word translated as fall in verse 6-13.

So the writer actually ties those verses together with the language that he chose. Haman's fall happened just as his wife and friends said that it would. This section also is a forecasted expiration because it illustrates the truth that we see so often in Scripture.

Listen to Jesus' words in Matthew 23-12. In Matthew 23-12, Jesus said, Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

The first two verses of chapter 8 go with what we've just read in chapter 7. So, so far we've seen a full exclamation, a fearful exclamation, and a forecasted expiration.

[25 : 11] In verses 1 and 2 of chapter 8, we see a fitting elevation. So a fitting elevation is the last point. Look at verses 1 and 2 again.

It says, On that day King Ahasuerus gave to Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, and Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told what he was to her.

And the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai, and Esther sent Mordecai over the house of Haman. So these verses complete the turning of the tables.

On the same day as Haman's execution, the king gave his queen the house of Haman. And the term house here refers to his estate. This was in keeping with Persian law, which put the estate of a traitor into the custody of the crown, so the king could do with the estate whatever he wanted.

And then Esther also brought Mordecai before the king. She told the king that Mordecai was her cousin, and that he cared for her after her parents died. And Mordecai, of course, was much older

and wiser than Esther, and that made his guardianship of her much more valuable.

[26 : 20] So the king took off his ring and gave it to Mordecai, and he placed Mordecai then in the position that Haman had held previously. So they've completely flipped. Now all of a sudden, Mordecai is the top advisor to the king on the day he was supposed to be executed, and the former top advisor to the king is the one that got executed himself.

We've talked about Esther's wisdom in how she approached the king, but these verses show that perhaps Esther and Mordecai's strategy to hide her Jewishness was less wise than it may have first appeared.

Perhaps if Esther had revealed her Jewishness and her connection to Mordecai way back in chapter 2, the whole threat to the Jewish community might have been circumvented. The king might have promoted Mordecai then instead of promoting Haman, and that would have kept the whole thing from happening like it did.

Although Haman has been removed from the scene and Mordecai's life has been spared, the story is not over because the edict of annihilation for the Jews is still intact. More is at stake here than just Mordecai's life.

Also at stake are the lives of all the Jews in the Persian Empire. In subsequent verses, we'll see how Esther and Mordecai worked together to solve the problem of that edict, but you'll have to come back for that next week and later chapters as we go through that.

[27 : 42] For now, though, let's consider what we can learn from tonight's passage. The first thing we can learn is the interaction of God's sovereignty and human responsibility.

Esther's intricate plan was a necessary part of the process of bringing Haman to justice, and it was a plan that required a combination of subtlety, boldness, and strength to carry it through.

But Esther's plan by itself wasn't what turned around the fortunes of God's people. Prior to the king's sleepless night at the beginning of chapter 6, the fortunes of the Jews were heading steadily downhill.

From that moment on, their prospects were transformed, and the key event had nothing to do with Esther and Mordecai, but instead it was a seemingly insignificant detail in which the hidden hand of providence can be discerned.

And we can see that through careful hindsight. Think about that, though. Isn't that how it is so often in life? We can come up with intricate plans, but they never come to fruition without God's providential blessing on them.

[28 : 49] Think about Psalm 127.1. That's the verse that says, Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. So chapter 6 was the pivotal chapter in the book, and it was a chapter from which Esther was completely absent.

But chapter 6 is surrounded by two chapters that show Esther diligently using all of the means at her disposal to bring about her desired result. God's sovereign act is the turning point, that God works through the faithful efforts of his people just as much through remarkable providence.

And that's a very practical truth for us to keep in mind. Think about that, because if we want to see our friends come to Christ, we can't reach our hearts and change them.

Only God can do that. But we can and should plan to talk to them about Christ, to introduce them to Christian friends, and to invite them to church. And if we want to find God's leading for our lives, we need to do some action ourselves too.

Progress may depend on his opening key doors, but there's nothing wrong with us getting out there and knocking on those doors ourselves. So the message there is, don't sit back and wait for God to work if you're unwilling to put yourself out in pursuit of godly desires.

[30 : 07] If you think about it, most Christians err on one side or the other of this equation. Some are the sit back and pray types whose motto is always leave it to Jesus, and their tendency is for God to drop a solution to all of their problems right into their laps, and they wait on that.

Others are constantly saying, if it's going to be, it's got to be me, and they leave God out entirely of that. For them, the tendency is to assume that the key to progress is following some three- or four-step strategy.

The Bible, though, sets before us the goal of the balance of prayer plus action and of leaning on Christ and leading the people to Christ. It also talks about resting in the Lord and walking with the Lord.

Either one or the other is inadequate, but both together are the goal. The truly wonderful part of God's plan, though, is that even when we get the balance wrong, God will still accomplish His holy will.

Esther is the perfect example of that because Esther had no balance in her life that we could see. We know that she was not the model of prayer life.

[31 : 20] We never saw her pray. If she did, it was completely hidden. And back in chapter 4, we saw the Jewish community among whom Esther was raised fasting and mourning after the edict came out, but there is no word about them crying out to God.

Yet God still delivered them. The second thing we can learn from tonight's passage is that God is faithful to His covenant. And that should be very encouraging and wonderful to us.

God will certainly deliver His people whether or not they're faithful to Him. And we can be sure of this truth because God's actions stem from His character and not ours.

Think about what Paul reminded Timothy of in 2 Timothy 2.13. He said, If we are faithless, he remains faithful because he cannot deny himself.

We could be certain all along that Haman would never ultimately triumph, not because we had confidence in the cunning of Esther, but we had confidence in God and His keeping of His covenant promise to Abraham and his seed.

[32 : 26] Way back in Genesis 12, God declared that those who bless Abraham and his offspring will be blessed while those who curse them will be cursed. Haman had assaulted the descendants of Abraham and he would face the consequences.

And being executed and impaled on the tree, which was a sign of the cursed death in the ancient Near East, was the consequence of having offended God. And of course, God is the great king and he suffered the consequences of offending the great king more than he suffered the consequences of having offended King Ahasuerus.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter declared that the promised Holy Spirit, the promised gift of the new covenant era, is not just for the descendants of Abraham who are by birth near to God, but also for Gentiles.

And we looked at these verses last week with Pastor Mike, but listen to Acts 2, 38 and 39 again. It says, And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself. That should be really reassuring to us because we are the people who at that time were far off, and we are the people whom God later called to himself.

[33 : 51] And that promise that Peter made there also extends to us even today. So God has promised his Holy Spirit to be at work in our hearts, generating his fruits of righteousness and holiness.

And the work may not progress as fast as we wish, but its progress is assured because God has promised that it will happen. So we're not to simply sit back and to say, Let go and let God.

We're supposed to strive with every fiber of our being toward the holiness that God has designed for us. But once again, we can do so with confidence, knowing that God will work his righteousness in us on the day we stand before him.

And in the meantime, God will use our awareness of our own sin to drive us again and again to the cross in thanksgiving for his long suffering. And he suffered, of course, and gave grace to such unprofitable servants as ourselves.

The third thing we can learn from our passage tonight is we see the contrast between the human king and the real king. Several times in our study of Esther, we've seen how different God is from King Ahasuerus.

[34 : 59] And this chapter illustrates that point again. Think about what we see from King Ahasuerus in this chapter. He's ignorant of what's going on. He doesn't even remember signing the decree, apparently, when Esther brings it up.

He's shallow, he's fickle, and he's weak. He can be manipulated by Esther to do her bidding just as he once was manipulated by Haman to do his bidding. And the king apparently is content to fabricate charges against his own right-hand man in order to avoid the personal embarrassment that the real charges would have caused him.

So he has no concern for anybody but himself and no morality except his own personal self-interest. Yet, this is the man whom Haman put his trust in.

So Haman's life was built around the pursuit of power and achievement, and he achieved both to the full extent that this was possible within the bounds of the empire. He'd reached the top of his career path.

No one apart from the emperor himself had matched Haman's glory and status, but all he had gained disappeared completely in the space of a few minutes, including Haman's own life.

[36 : 08] At the end of his life, what did he have to show for all his striving after wealth and recognition? He didn't have anything, except he finally was elevated to a position where everybody noticed him.

So in his death, he got what he wanted. He got noticed by everyone in the kingdom. So our fall may not be as dramatic as Haman's was, but if our trust is in things that will burn and rust or things that can be stolen and destroyed, then ultimately they will let us down.

Because even good things, such as the love of family and friends and the respect of our colleagues, can't survive the test of the grave. If that's all we have, then when all is said and done, we have nothing.

But think about the contrast for God's people, because God's people have built their lives around the only truth that will last. And that's the truth of a king who's utterly different from King Ahasuerus. We have a king who doesn't need to be manipulated and cajoled into doing what is right. Our king does what is right because he himself is righteous. He can't do anything other than what is right.

[37 : 18] And we have a king who, instead of being consumed with himself and his own interest, has staked his name and reputation upon a people whom he will always call his own, even when it's costly for him to do so.

And we have a king who, far from inventing charges against us, took the charges that we deserved and laid them upon his dearly beloved son. So it was our king's son who was taken and impaled on a tree, bearing our curse all the way to death.

So our king's wrath was poured out in full upon his own son on the cross. So if God's fury has been poured out in full upon Christ, there's nothing left for us to endure.

If our debt has been paid in full, then we're free to go. So what's more, we're free to come into the king's presence as a dearly beloved son or precious daughter, welcomed for Christ's sake.

No one and nothing can separate us from the love of this king. He won't love us today and let us hang tomorrow, no matter what we do, because his love rests in his character and not in ours.

[38 : 24] And Romans 8, 1 and 2 remind us of this truth. Listen to these two verses. They say, therefore there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.