

# THE **crossing** small groups

## The Greatest Reversal

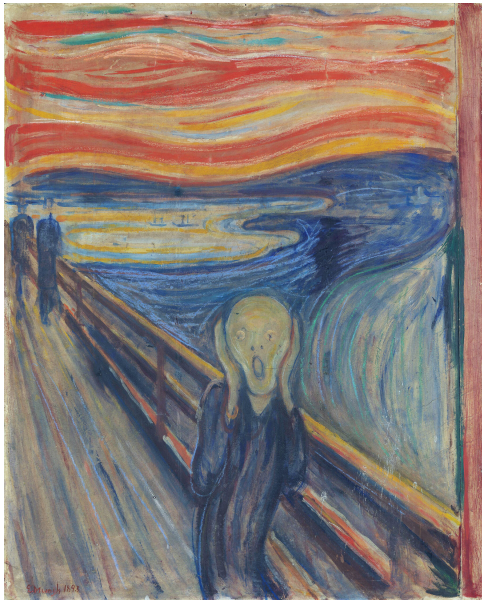
*Dave Cover | Esther 8-10*

### Sermon Discussion Participant's Guide

**Purpose of Discussion:** To join the fight and the celebration of God's defeat of our enemies.

**Icebreaker:** What is your favorite holiday meal?

**Optional Discussion on Munch's *The Scream*:**



Edvard Munch, *The Scream*, 1893.

**Munch on his inspiration for the painting:** "I was walking along the road with two friends — the sun was setting — suddenly the sky turned blood red. ...There was blood and tongues of fire above the blue-black fjord and the city — my friends walked on, and I stood there trembling with anxiety — and *I sensed an infinite scream passing through nature.*"

This painting is much loved. Why do you think people can identify with Munch's passing sense of "an infinite scream passing through nature"?

**Discussion:**

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**Transition:** After Haman was killed in chapter 7, the problem was that Haman's decree was still active which was granting permission for people throughout the Persian Empire to kill whatever Jewish people were living around them.

1. What is at stake if the Jewish people are wiped out?

**Read:**

[Esther 8:3-6](#)

<sup>3</sup> Esther again pleaded with the king, falling at his feet and weeping. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman the Agagite, which he had devised against the Jews. <sup>4</sup> Then the king extended the gold scepter to Esther and she arose and stood before him.

<sup>5</sup> "If it pleases the king," she said, "and if he regards me with favor and thinks it the right thing to do, and if he is pleased with me, let an order be written overruling the dispatches that Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, devised and wrote to destroy the Jews in all the king's provinces. <sup>6</sup> For how can I bear to see disaster fall on my people? How can I bear to see the destruction of my family?"

2. How would Esther have felt sticking her neck out again? What does that tell us might be sometimes called of us?

**Read:**

[Esther 8:7-8, 11-12, 9:1-2](#)

<sup>7</sup> King Xerxes replied to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, "Because Haman attacked the Jews, I have given his estate to Esther, and they have impaled him on the pole he set up. <sup>8</sup> Now write another decree in the king's name in behalf of the Jews as seems best to you, and seal it with the king's signet ring—for no document written in the king's name and sealed with his ring can be revoked"... <sup>11</sup> The king's edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves; to destroy, kill and annihilate the armed men of any nationality or province who might attack them and their women and children, and to plunder the property of their enemies. <sup>12</sup> The day appointed for the Jews to do this in all the provinces of King Xerxes was the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar... <sup>1</sup> On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out. On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now the tables were turned and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them. <sup>2</sup> The Jews assembled in their cities in all the

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provinces of King Xerxes to attack those determined to destroy them. No one could stand against them, because the people of all the other nationalities were afraid of them.

**Note:** The previous decree to annihilate the Jews could not be revoked because no decree from a Persian emperor could be overturned. So, they needed a plan.

3. What do you notice about how the deliverance came about?

Read:

[Esther 9:20-22](#)

<sup>20</sup> Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Xerxes, near and far, <sup>21</sup> to have them celebrate annually the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar <sup>22</sup> as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration. He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

4. What would celebrating the feast do in the lives of those celebrating it?

5. Dave reminded us that as morally shocking as this story can seem to us that it's important to read this story in its context and to remember the whole story. What did you find helpful in what he unpacked?

6. Reflect for a moment together on how sin is plaguing our life and our world right now.

7. What can we take from the story of Esther in our own fight?

8. How is the Feast of Purim a picture of the greater feast to come?

## **Sharing and Prayer:**

Have an open time of short prayers of thanksgiving for what God has done in Jesus to rescue us from our enemies. Next, pray short prayers that we would fight well against our spiritual enemies that we are facing.

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## **Announcements:**

- **Next Sermon Series: Jonah**

The Crossing will start its four-week sermon series through Jonah next week. New study guides were handed out this morning that are meant to be started tomorrow to study the passage we will study together next week. Digital copies can be downloaded on The Crossing's website.