

# The Sovereign: Episode 5

## Discussion Guide + At-Home Worship Guide



This week we're worshipping from our homes instead of gathering together at our church building. For more information and other updates, visit [www.bellevuechristian.church/coronavirus](http://www.bellevuechristian.church/coronavirus). In addition to the discussion guide below, which can be used to go deeper with the sermon, I'm including a few tips for worshipping together at home on your own, with your family, or with a few others:

- **Spend some time in worship.** Colossians 3:16 says, "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts." Sing a few songs together, whether it's with a musician in the room, with a couple songs on Youtube, or just *a capella*.
- **Take communion.** Break bread and drink juice (if you have some). If you're doing this with others, take precautions to ensure that you're doing it in a way that promotes health (i.e., not sharing one piece or drinking out of the same cup). As Paul writes, "For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, *This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.* In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, *This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.* For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)
- **Pray.** Spend some time in prayer. Give thanks for what's good and spend interceding for our church, our community, and any other needs that come to mind.
- **Give.** Finally, we encourage you to still give financially if you've been in the habit of doing so. You can give online at [www.bellevuechristian.church/give](http://www.bellevuechristian.church/give).

The livestream of this sermon will be available at 11am on March 15 on Youtube:

<https://youtu.be/8z3wK2wIP0s>. If you miss the livestream, the audio will be uploaded to the Bellevue Christian Church podcast and website shortly after.

## Read Together

We're in a series called *The Sovereign: An 8-Episode Series on God, Esther, and the Rest of Us*. It's the story of young Jew, exiled from her homeland, wrestling with her identity as she rises from orphan nobody to Persian royalty—just in time to save her people from genocide.

- Can anyone recap the story so far in less than two minutes?
  - Episode 1: "The Refusal" (Esther 1:1-22)
  - Episode 2: "The Contest" (Esther 2:1-18)
  - Episode 3: "The Letter" (Esther 2:19-3:15)
  - Episode 4: "The Awakening" (or "The Plea") (Esther 4:1-5:8)

This week, we're in Episode 5: "The Fall" (Esther 5:9-7:10). We're focusing on the downfall of Haman.

- **Can someone read this week's episode for us?**
- When we're finished, **can some recap (or paraphrase) the episode in your own words?** If you miss a few details or leave anything out, the rest of the group can jump in at the end.

## Discuss Together

*It's okay if you don't get through all the questions. As discussion leader, your job is to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit and facilitate a conversation that leads people toward everyday life like Jesus. Feel free to add additional questions of your own. If you have a big group, it can be helpful to discuss some questions in groups of 2-3 before opening it up to the whole group. If you're with kids, feel free to rephrase some of the questions or add questions of your own that might be more suitable for them.*

- **What is something that struck you from an initial reading of the text?**
- This week we're focusing on Haman's downfall. **What are some things that stood out to you about Haman in this week's episode (and in the episodes so far)?**
- In Esther 5:10-13, we get a view into what Haman builds his identity on. **What are some of the things he lists in this passage?**
  - **What does it mean to build your identity on something?**
  - **Of money, family, achievements, or attention, which of these are you most prone to build your identity on? Why do you think that is?**
  - **What makes an identity built on these things inherently fragile?**
- In Esther 5:14, we find out that Haman's fragile identity is buffered by affirming friends.
  - **Have you ever made a decision and looked for people you knew would affirm it?**
  - **What's the problem with only surrounding yourself with affirming friends?**
- Haman tries to protect his fragile identity by getting rid of Mordecai—who posed a threat to it every time Haman saw him.
  - **What are some of the treats to an identity built on money, family, achievements, or attention?** For example, a threat to an identity built on money might be losing your job.

- **What are some of the things we do to protect ourselves from these threats?**
- In Esther 6-7, we see Haman's final downfall where he's humiliated. **What's the difference between being humble and being humiliated?**
- It's easy to see ourselves in the best characters in the story (like Esther), but we don't like when we see ourselves in the worst characters (like Haman). **What are some reasons why we don't like to see ourselves in characters like Haman?**
  - **How might a willingness to see yourself in someone like Haman change how you experience the gospel (what God has done for us in Jesus)?**
- **How does the gospel give us an identity that's resilient instead of fragile?**
  - **How does the gospel speak to someone who might be building their identity on money, family, achievements, or attention?**
- **What is the main thing you want to take away from this episode?**

## **Pray Together**