

**“Not A Game”**  
**Esther 9:6-16**

**Introduction:**

1. As We Think About The 4<sup>th</sup> Of July Coming Up This Week:
  - There Are Some Things That America Is Known For!
    - Like - “Baseball” & “Apple Pie!”
    - But In Recent Years - America Has Also Become Known For A Phenomenon Known As:
      - “Fantasy Football!”
  - Where Football Fans:
    - Invent Their Own Fantasy Leagues:
      - And Their Own Fantasy Football Teams!
      - It Has Become A \$1.5 Billion Industry!
  - And Some Fans:
    - Can Get So Caught Up In Their:
      - Fantasies - That They Almost Forget About:
        - The Reality!
          - Sometimes, They Need To Be Reminded That:
            - “It’s Just A Game!”
2. But There’s A Similar Problem:
  - That Even Christians Face:
    - All Too Regularly!
      - Where We Forget That When It Comes To:
        - Our Lives As Christians:
          - It Is **Not** Just A Game!
  - Instead:
    - All Too Often, We Live Our Lives As If:
      - This World Is All There Is!
        - And As If The World, The Flesh, And Even The Devil Either Don’t Exist:
          - Or Really Don’t Pose Much Of A Threat To Us!
  - And So - We Live Our Lives:
    - Just Playing Around With Our Faith & Our Religion:
      - & Our Walk With God!
        - We Don’t Take Spiritual Matters:
          - All That Seriously!
3. Well - This Morning:
  - As We Head Back To The Book Of Esther:
    - We Will See:
      - Just How Serious These Matters Really Are!
  - And In Esther 9 - We Read About What Happened:
    - On The Day That Was Originally Designated:
      - For The Destruction Of The Jews!
  - Read 9:1-16:
    - Last Week - We Looked At The First 5 Verses:
      - And Saw The Stubbornness:
        - Of Sin & Hatred!
    - This Morning - We Are Going To Look At:
      - Verses 6-16 - And See Why:
        - When It Comes To Spiritual Things:
          - It’s **Not** Just A Game!
4. We Need To Be & To Stay:
  - Serious About Spiritual Things!
    - Because There Is Still A Great Battle Raging!
      - It May Be Invisible To Us In Many Ways:
        - But It Is No Fantasy!
          - And It Is **Not** A Game!
  - In Ephesians 6:10-11 - Paul Writes - “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. / Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil!”

- And In The Book Of Esther:
  - We See The Nature Of Our Adversaries:
    - As We “Fight The Good Fight Of Faith!”

\* First - We See:

**1. *The Caustic Nature Of Our Adversaries!***

- Like The Jews:
  - Our Adversaries Are Very Caustic & Bitter!
    - Toward The People Of God:
      - And Toward God Himself!
- See This In 9:5-10 - “Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them. / And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men. / And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha, / And Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha, / And Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vajezatha, / The ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they; but on the spoil laid they not their hand!”
  - Spiritual Bitterness:
    - Is A Deep, Deep Weed That Is Nearly Impossible To Be Destroyed!
  - And It Can Be Seen In Both:
    - The Numbers Of Our Adversaries & The Nature Of Our Adversaries!
- The Number Of Our Adversaries:
  - Is Large - And Is Often Overwhelming To Us!
    - Just As It Might Have Seemed To The Jews:
      - On That 13<sup>th</sup> Day Of The 12<sup>th</sup> Month!
  - Where, In Shushan, Over 500 Men:
    - Came Against Them To Destroy Them!
      - Even Though The Tides Had Already Shifted In Favor Of The Jews!
        - Yet, They Were So Stubborn & So Bitter, That They Attacked Them Anyways!
  - But - The Lord Was With His People:
    - So That They Were Able To:
      - “Slay & Destroy” 500 Of Those Men!
        - But Their Bitterness Can Also Be Seen In:
- The Nature Of Our Adversaries!
  - In 9:7-9 - We Have The Names Of All 10 Of Haman’s Sons:
    - Who Were Likely The Leaders Of Those Who Were Still Opposed To The Jews:
      - And Possessed The Same Spirit Of Their Father, Haman:
        - Who Was *Still* Regarded As “The Enemy Of The Jews!”
  - Haman’s 10 Sons:
    - Had The Same History As Their Father:
      - They Were From The Amalekites, The Ancient Foe Of The Jews!
        - And Had The Same Hatred As Their Father!
      - Those Apples Didn’t Fall Far From His Tree Of Hate!
  - But Again - The Lord Was With His People:
    - So That They Were Able To:
      - “Slay” Them As Well!
- The Nature Of Our Spiritual Adversaries:
  - Is Still Very Caustic & Bitter!
    - And This Is Why:
      - We Need To Be Serious About Spiritual Things!
  - Because - It Is *Not* Just A Game!

\* Second - We Also See:

**2. *The Careless Nature Of Our Adversaries!***

- Like The Jews:
  - Our Adversaries Are Very Careless & Blind!
    - Toward The Hearts & Souls Of People!
- See This In 9:11-12 - “On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace was brought before the king. / And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king’s provinces? now what is thy

- petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what is thy request further? and it shall be done!”
- After That Bloody Day In The City Of Shushan:
    - The King Was Informed:
      - Of What Took Place - And Was Given The “Body Count!”
  - And To His Utter Surprise:
    - What Was A Potential Tragedy For The Jews:
      - Turned Into A Providential Triumph!
        - And The Score Was - Jews 510 / Their Enemies 0! The Jews Won!
  - And It Seems As If:
    - The Lives & Souls That Were Lost:
      - On That Day - Were Just A Game To Him!
        - He Doesn’t Even Seem To Care That Some Of His Own Subjects & Probably Some Of His Own Officials Were Among The Casualties!
  - And The King Just:
    - Couldn’t Care Less!
      - His Careless Attitude Is:
  - Seen In The King’s Curiosity!
    - In 9:12 - The King Then Informs The Queen:
      - Of The Casualties Of The Day’s Battles!
        - And Says - As If He Were Rather Impressed With The Jews & What They Accomplished:
          - If They Killed 510 Men Here – “What Have They Done In The **Rest** Of The King’s Provinces?”
  - It Was As If He:
    - Was Playing “Fantasy Football” With The Lives Of His Own Subjects!
      - And He Couldn’t Wait For The Other “Scores” To Come In From The Other Provinces!
  - To Him - This Warfare Against God’s People:
    - Was Just A Game!
      - His Careless Attitude Is Also:
  - Seen In The King’s Celebration!
    - In 9:12 - Breathless With Excitement - He Asks Esther Once Again:
      - “Now what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what is thy request further? and it shall be done!”
    - The King Is In Such A Good Mood:
      - It’s As If He Wants The Queen To Celebrate Along With Him!
        - After All – They Had Won!
    - This Was **His** Kind Of Game!
      - Yet - It Was A Game Of Blood!
  - The Nature Of Our Spiritual Adversaries:
    - Are Still Very Careless & Blind!
      - We Need To Remember That:
        - This World & The Prince Of This World, The Devil Himself:
          - Is Just As Careless As King Ahasuerus About Your Soul!
    - And This Is Why We Need To Be Serious:
      - About Spiritual Things! Because:
        - The Devil Doesn’t Care About Your Soul:
          - To Him - It **Is** Just A Game!
            - And The More That Can Be Added To His “Body Count” The Happier He’ll Be!
    - But God Does Care About Your Soul!
      - To Him It Is **Not** Just A Game!
        - You Are Why He Sent His “Only Begotten Son Into This World, That We Might Live Through Him!”
    - Need To See:
      - It Is A **Battle** For Your Soul:
        - **Not** Just A Game!

\* Third - We See:

### 3. ***The Ceaseless Nature Of Our Adversaries!***

- Like The Jews:
  - Our Adversaries Are Ceaseless & Relentless:
    - In Their Pursuit!
- See This In 9:13-15 - “Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to morrow also according unto this day’s decree, and let Haman’s ten sons be hanged upon the gallows. / And the king commanded it so to be done: and the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged Haman’s ten sons. / For the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men at Shushan; but on the prey they laid not their hand!”
  - For The King - That Day’s Events Were Just A Game!
    - But Not For Queen Esther!
      - For Her, It Was Personal & Very Serious!
        - The Lives & Souls Of Her People / God’s People Were At Stake!
- And So - In Response To The King’s Offer:
  - She Makes 2 Very Serious Requests!
    - The First Request:
      - Is To Extend The Decree For The Jews By Just One Day There In Shushan!
    - The Second Request:
      - Is To Hang The Dead Bodies Of Haman’s 10 Sons On The Gallows!
  - Now - Why Would She Make Such Serious:
    - And Seemingly Ruthless Requests?
      - I Believe It Was Because She Knew That:
- The Mission Was Incomplete!
  - Somehow, Esther Knew That It Was Not Quite Time:
    - To Celebrate!
      - Because - There Were Still Many Adversaries That Wanted To Destroy Her People!
  - And So - She Requests:
    - That The Jews There In Shushan Be Allowed:
      - Just One More Day:
        - Not To Pursue Their Enemies, But To Defend Themselves From Their Enemies!
  - Just Like The Decree Published By Mordecai:
    - Described - Back In 8:11 - “Wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey!”
  - And So - Esther Was Seeking To Do Things:
    - Lawfully - Whereas Her Enemies:
      - Did Not Care At All For The King’s Laws!
        - And Were Planning An All-Out Assault On The Jews - When They Would Not Be Expecting It!
    - “The Enemies Of The Jews Were The Aggressors!” (MH)
      - Not Esther! And Not The People Of God!
        - And So - Esther Requested Haman’s Sons To Be Hanged:
          - As A Stern Warning For Anyone Who Would Chose To Attack Them! More Out Of Mercy Than Vengeance!
  - And Yet **Still** - On That Next Day - At Least 300 More Of Their Enemies:
    - Attacked The Jews:
      - And Suffered The Just Consequences Of Their Illegal Venture!
- The Nature Of Our Spiritual Adversaries:
  - Is Still Ceaseless & Very Relentless!
    - We Need To Remember That Our Spiritual Adversaries:
      - Don’t Play Fair!
        - They Will Stop At Nothing To Destroy The Lives & Souls Of Human Beings!
  - Even Believers Are Not Exempt:
    - From These Relentless Spiritual Assaults!
      - Luke 22:31-32 - “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: / But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren!”

- So Don't Live Your Life:
  - As If Spiritual Things Are Just A Game!
    - You Need To Keep Fleeing:
      - What You Need To Flee!
        - "Flee Youthful Lusts!"
    - You Need To Keep Fighting:
      - What You Need To Fight!
        - "Fight The Good Fight Of Faith!"
- There Is Still A Battle To Be Fought!
  - And Your Adversaries Are:
    - Ceaseless & Relentless!

\* Fourth - We Also See:

#### 4. ***The Comprehensive Nature Of Our Adversaries!***

- Like The Jews:
  - Our Adversaries Are Comprehensive:
    - They Are Everywhere!
  - See This In 9:16 - "But the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes seventy and five thousand, but they laid not their hands on the prey!"
    - And All This Took Place - 9:17a - "On the thirteenth day of the month Adar!"
      - In This Verse - We Finally Get The Answer:
        - To The King's Question!
    - In All Of The Persian Empire:
      - The Jews "Stood For Their Lives" And:
        - "Slew Of Their Foes" - 75,000 Men!
          - A Great Number!
            - Average - 591 Per Province!
    - And All This Happened:
      - Not In Just One Big Battle:
        - But In Hundreds Of Skirmishes, Where The Jews Faced Hundreds & Thousands Of Their Enemies!
          - But God, In His Providence, Was Able To "Divide & Conquer" The Forces Of All Those Enemies!
  - The Nature Of Our Spiritual Adversaries:
    - May Still Be Very Large & Very Comprehensive:
      - But Our God Is Greater:
        - And Is Always With His People:
          - No Matter Where We Are / Go!

#### **Conclusion:**

1. We Need To Remember - That When It Comes To Spiritual Things:
  - We Are Not In A Game:
    - We Are In A Battle!
      - And The Nature Of Our Adversaries Is:
        - Very Serious! They Are Caustic / Careless / Ceaseless / Comprehensive!
2. But - Those Who Have Jesus Christ:
  - As Their Lord & Savior Can Truly Say:
    - "Greater Is He That Is In Me, Than He That Is In The World!" (1 John 4:4)
  - And If You Take These Spiritual Adversaries:
    - And These Spiritual Battles Seriously:
      - Look At What God Provides!
3. As We See In:
  - 9:16 - He Provides Rest:
    - For His People!
      - "And Had Rest From Their Enemies!"
  - And Isn't This What Jesus Himself Offers:
    - To Those Who Realize That:

- Their Sin & Their Soul:
  - Is Not Just A Game! Not Just Things To Play Around With!
- Jesus Says To You - "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls!" (Matthew 11:29)
- 4. But We Also See In These Verses:
  - That God Provides Contentment:
    - For His People!
      - There Is A Phrase We Read 3 Times:
        - As The Jews Were Defending Themselves & Destroying Those Who Attacked Them:
          - They Restrained Themselves From The Spoils Of War!
  - See This In:
    - 9:10 / 9:15 / 9:16 - Even Though They Were Given:
      - Royal Permission To Do So!
        - But They Didn't! Why?
    - "The Spoils Were Not Theirs To Take!" (Duguid)
      - They Knew That The Battles They Were Involved With Were Primarily:
        - Spiritual Battles!
          - And So They Were Content To Have Their Lives Spared, So That They Could Serve Their God!
    - And So All Of The "Spoils" Were Left!
      - Left Even For The Families & The Communities:
        - Of Those Who Were Slain!
          - And Ultimately For The Lord Himself!
  - Jesus Christ Alone Offers You Rest & Contentment:
    - In This World Of Sin & Spiritual Stress!
- 5. So Remember Today:
  - The Serious Nature Of Our Lives!
    - We Are Not Living In Some Fantasy Game:
      - We Are Living In A Spiritual Battle!
        - So - How Can We Survive?
  - Ephesians 6:10-18 - "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. / Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. / For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. / Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. / Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; / And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; / Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. / And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: / Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints!"
    - We Need To Keep Doing This!
      - Because It Is *Not* Just A Game!

**Grace Baptist Church**  
**Stephen Elmer, Pastor**  
**4245 North 200 West**  
**Greenfield, Indiana 46140**  
**317-326-2362**  
[www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace](http://www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace)  
[www.growatgrace.org](http://www.growatgrace.org)  
[pastor-elmer@hotmail.com](mailto:pastor-elmer@hotmail.com)