

# Favor That Overcomes Adversity

Esther 2: 8-9, 15, 17

Pastor James Hicks

God bless you. I want to encourage you to take courage and continue to believe God even during this time of adversity. And yes, I said adversity because our entire economic system is being affected, not just in America but also around the world. But hear me today, God is still God despite what economists call a recession or a failing economy (e.g., banks failing, companies going out of business, job losses by the thousands, bankruptcies, and a struggling housing market)

If we are not careful, we too will take on this gloom and doom mentality. I am not saying we should ignore what seems to be reality, but I am saying in the midst of reality we must continue to believe that **Our God is yet in control** and he is going to take care of us. He is going to continue to provide for us and bring us into our season of "more than enough". Heaven is never bankrupt. The Bible declares that sin separates us from God. Therefore, if you have sinned or slipped away from him repent and press forward in God so that you too can partake in His promises.

We must remember that we have endured other types of adversity before this economic crisis. Our nation has faced adversity for a long time (great depression, wars, equal rights movements, etc.). Of course, the economic crisis seems to overshadow the aforementioned because the economic crisis affects all of us, not just a few. But again, we need to know and be reminded that no matter what the crisis, no matter what the adversity, God is yet God. He is in control and he is working it out for you. I believe Rev. Shirley Caesar wrote a song that said, "God's in control and he's working it out for you".

So let me encourage you today from the book of Esther.  
Please turn with me to Esther 2: 8-9, 15-17

So then, I want to speak to you from the subject, "Favor that Overcomes Adversity".

Favor means to receive supernatural service or courteous acts, to show special generosity. Favor is nothing but our faith in action. Remember, faith is the victory that overcomes adversity and the world. Adversity means opposition or misfortune, challenging times or circumstances.

It is in this story we find Hadassah, Hebrew for Esther, and her uncle Mordecai being faced with adversity. Let me preface this story with a little background information. The time was between 500-400 BC. King Jeconiah of Judah, Mordecai and Esther along with a select group had been overtaken by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and were exiled into Persia. When a nation is overtaken by sin, God judges the nation. Remember, sin and disobedience to God brings bondage and chastening (correction) from the Lord all over again. For the nation of Judah this meant:

- They would become isolated from family members and friends.
- They were forced to change their names and learn a new language.
- They were forced to abide by the culture and laws of the Medes and Persians.
- They lost their right to religious freedom.

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Esther had her own personal issues - no mother, no father, separated from siblings. But Mordecai and Esther would embrace the correction the Lord sent the people and receive favor.

Seven years into King Xerxes' reign his queen Vashti disqualified herself when she refused to obey his orders. Persian law stated that the queen be dethroned as punishment for such an act. While hundreds of qualified young ladies of the region threw their names in to be the next queen, there was one who against the odds placed her name also.

Being a Jew in exile, Esther's chances were slim and marginal at best. Faced with such adversity she trusted her God and her Uncle and by faith, placed her name in the pageantry.

Esther immediately received favor from Hegai, the Eunuch who was placed over the ladies in the palace. He placed her and her seven maidens in the best rooms. After spending 12 months in preparation she would be called to pass in review. Again, she found favor from those who observed her in the King's stead.

When she passed before the King he loved her above all the women and she obtained grace and favor in his sight. He placed the royal crown upon her head and made her his queen. The favor of God placed her above all others.

You may be asking yourself, **can God make anything special out of me?** Listen, this is the time when God wants to make things happen for you. Yes, even during adversity, even during your negative situations, God is doing a new thing.

Are you asking yourself and doubting at the same time because of the adverse situations that confront you?

Maybe you are struggling or contemplating giving up on becoming debt free, or making enough money to pay your bills without struggling?

Maybe you are faced with a health challenge that seems to never go away?

Maybe you are praying for a family member to be healed, delivered from some addiction and all the odds seem to be against you?

Maybe you have been praying for a special loved one and your odds look very slim?

What ever it is, I challenge you today to believe in God and believe he can yet bring it to pass. Don't give up, don't doubt, just believe. Jesus said, all things are possible if...

- We must commit ourselves to walking in faith and persistent obedience to God.
- Just because things are tough, don't stop being faithful to God (reading your word, praying, tithing, attending church and Bible study). Now is the time to increase our efforts when the heat is up!
- We must never allow adversity to discourage us, bring doubt or defeat our faith.
- Instead, renew your mind with thoughts of victory knowing that God is working even when we don't see it.

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- Remind yourself that the battle you're facing is not yours. You're the scorekeeper. God is controlling the players and winning the game on your behalf.
- Let your adversities only serve to remind you of that God is using them to ultimately bless you when you are walking with Him (Romans 8:28).
- See yourself like David the shepherd boy facing the giant Goliath. David pulled the sling, but God almighty provided the power and gave him the victory.
- Don't look at adversity or distractions but listen keep your eyes on God's promises in His word. If God spoke a word to you, keep pushing and fighting toward it. Get back up when you are knocked down and try again!

Like Esther, when we set our mind on our God, commit ourselves to stand with God no matter how big the adversity, it is only a matter of time before God comes through for us. The favor of God brought her into a prominent place. The favor of God made her name great. The favor of God brought blessings to her and her entire family. Amen.

### **About the Author**

Pastor James Hicks is the Senior Pastor of Center of Faith Church located in Apopka, Florida. This publication and website was entirely funded by the generous support of families and individuals just like you.

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