

INTRODUCTION: 2020 was an unprecedented time. A “once in a lifetime” series of events that turned our entire world and current way of life upside down. Through all the chaos, we might wonder if God is at work and what our proper response should be. The book of Esther echoes many of these current cultural themes, and that is why it is the focus of our summer sermon series. By studying Esther, we want to ask hard questions, to be inspired when we find ourselves in places or positions we didn’t seek, and to feel encouraged when we aren’t sure we have what it takes to succeed. And we want to be reminded that God is still at work in the cultural chaos, accomplishing His good purposes today.

CENTERING: Take a moment to center yourself for communion with God.

READING: Book of Esther (Character focus: King Xerxes)

REFLECTING ON SERMON & SCRIPTURE:

- Share a time when you experienced the pain of someone’s poor decisions. How did you feel?
- Share a time when your decisions had a negative impact on someone else despite the intentions you may have had. What was the impact?
- How aware are we of the impact what we say and/or do has on others?
- Who are your advisors/your wise counsel?
- What practices can you all identify as a group that can help ensure that your counsel with one another is centered in the way of Jesus?

PRAYING:

Sometimes we do things with good intentions that may result in an impact that is less desirable. On the other hand, we may find ourselves doing things out of fear, complacency, self protection, or self interest. It is important for our intentions to align with the impact that we want and, most importantly, that we lead out of a heart for Christ and His people. Spend some time in prayer over our country, our city, our state and government officials, and for each other as we navigate this time and space we are living in.