

**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: Haman)

**REFLECTING ON SERMON & SCRIPTURE:**

- When you think about ethnicity and race relations in our country, what are some things you believe you were inherently taught? You may or may not believe these things today. What impact did that teaching have on you?
- What values have you adopted that serve you well? How did you arrive at those values?
- How can you individually or as a group continue to work towards being Christ’s ambassador in the area of racial reconciliation?

**PRAYING:**

God of love, God of justice, we thank you for meeting us in this space today. Lord, help us to look at others and ourselves as image bearers created in your image. Through the midst of racial and ethnic division in our country, we are reminded through the story of Esther that you are still at work. We praise you for the ways in which you are still on the move, even when we can’t see it. Lord, give us the courage, the wisdom, and the strength to serve boldly as an ambassador of reconciliation. In Jesus’ name, Amen.