

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: Queen Vashti)

REFLECTING ON SERMON & SCRIPTURE:

In the sermon, Pastor Jeff Krajewski asked these questions for us to reflect on throughout the week. Take some time in your groups today to share and reflect on these questions:

- Are there any difficult decisions that you currently find yourself having to make? How are you thinking about these decisions? Do you have others with whom you can speak?
- For our women. Have you experienced the pain of patriarchy in your life? Maybe even within the church? Have you dealt with the hurt and wounds that come with that experience? How could our church help with the healing?
- For our men. Do you see how our society is set up to allow for male power to be unchecked and damaging? Are there places in your life where you could or should reflect on how you use that power? Are there people whom you have hurt? Is there reconciliation to be done?
- As a group, how can you be more mindful of one another when decisions are made? What are some practical ways you can hold each other accountable?

PRAYING:

To understand people is to understand them in their context. When we are able to put ourselves in a position of humility to see the perspective of someone else, there is an opportunity for compassion and empathy to enter.

Spend some time in prayer today lifting one another up.