

# THE BIG STORY

## Power & Prophets

Week of  
November 15

### Worship

#### Connect Group / Family Discussion

*Re-orienting our allegiance around the Lord as King*

Who is the wisest person you know? What makes them “wise” vs. simply smart or discerning?

If you had to define “justice” how would you describe what it means?

This past Sunday Laurie led us through the BIG Story from the height of Solomon’s wealth and renown to the devastation of exile. What stood out to you?

Look at 1 Kings 3 and the story of the LORD’s revelation to Solomon. What is the relationship in this story between justice and wisdom? How would you explain that relationship in our life experiences today?

In the conversation with Mark Labberton about Jesus’ kingdom Mark made the point that worship is about realigning power – and that Jesus’ kingdom is entirely about power. How comfortable are you speaking about social and political power in the church? How do we have these conversations about loyalty to Jesus’ lordship while in ways faithful to the gospel (rather than faithful to a particular partisan position)?

### On Mission Together

Our Serve team on Session has been looking for opportunities for Connect groups to serve together in our city. The vision is that our Connect groups become the engines that drive our tangible acts of gospel grace and justice in the community. The [Serve page](#) on our website will be updated throughout Advent with some tangible “starter serve” opportunities coming up that your group could try together – opportunities to make care packages, for example, in partnership with West Side Interfaith Network or Bridge Disability Ministries.

### Serve

#### Following our King Jesus on Mission...

*Re-orienting our actions in alignment with God’s kingdom*

Last week we asked the following questions. Share any observations or reflections from your week.

- What are the circumstances that hurt or hinder abundant life for this person or group?
- What “word of the Lord” is being despised to contribute to this situation?
- What “word of the Lord” are we in danger of despising if we do nothing?

(Or, to say it positively, what does God’s word invite us to do in the face of this circumstance?)

If you as a group were to craft a mission statement for just, compassionate and merciful living in our community what kinds of things would it contain? How would you take this statement from paper to personal action?

# Daily Worship & Reflections

*The Bible readings this week follow the Jews into exile. The first kingdom exiled was the Northern Kingdom of Israel, which was scattered by the Assyrian empire (this is the beginning of the “diaspora” or scattering of Israel). The second kingdom exiled was the South Kingdom of Judah (this is the origin of the term “Jews” for exiles/refugees that came from Judah). The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and carried the Jews into exile. During the Persian empire Jews were permitted to return. Our Bible readings follow the stories of Daniel and his friends in Babylon and the go to Esther in the Persian empire. The book of Job was also most likely collected in its final form in the time of the Persian empire so selections are included this week as well. Our reflections this week are from Tim Keller’s book, “Generous Justice.”*

## Monday, November 16

### Daniel 1-2 and Job 1-2

*“It is the generosity of God, the freeness of his salvation, that lays the foundation for the society of justice for all... God’s concern for justice permeated every part of Israel’s life. It should also permeate our lives.”*

Where does loyalty to God’s ways and justice result in praise from the surrounding culture & powers that be?

## Tuesday, November 17

### Daniel 3-4 and Job 3-4

*“[Jesus’] followers help of the poor was thus motivated by a sense of simple justice... and a real concern to alleviate misery... The patronage system was characterized by neither compassion nor justice. It did not unite a society divided by class and race – it sustained the status quo. Jesus’s ethic of love attacked the world system at its root.”*

Where does loyalty to God’s ways and justice put Jesus’ followers in peril or places of rejection by the surrounding culture and powers that be?

## Wednesday, November 18

### Daniel 5-6 and Job 6-7

*“Corporate and individual worship should lay out the power cards of life before the One who alone holds all power. The gospel redefines each card. Some cards we leave on the altar: pride, manipulation, lying, deception and coercion. Some cards we pick up again and in humility offer them to the world: health, education, race, opportunity, responsibility, friendship, advocacy or sacrifice. Or, on the most basic level, having enough to eat, a bed to sleep in, a home to live in, a school or a job.” (Mark Labberton, The Dangerous Act of Worship)*

What power cards are you invited to lay on the altar today? What is God inviting you to pick up?

## Thursday, November 19

### Esther 1-4 and Job 27-29

*“Before you can give this neighbor-love, you need to receive it. Only if you see that you have been saved graciously by someone who owes you the opposite will you go out into the world looking to help absolutely anyone in need. Once we receive this ultimate, radical neighbor-love through Jesus, we start to be the neighbors that the Bible calls us to be.”*

When others have suffered and struggled out loud to reconcile their experience how do you react?

## Friday, November 20

### Esther 4-6 and Job 38-39

*“I propose that Christians’ work for justice should be characterized by both humble cooperation and respectful provocation.”*

In what ways have you felt forced to assimilate to those in power in order to survive?

## Saturday, November 21

### Esther 7-10 and Job 40-42

*“The pursuit of justice in society is never morally neutral, but is always based on understandings of reality that are essentially religious in nature. Christians should not be strident and condemning in their language or attitude, but neither should they be silent about the Biblical roots of their passion for justice.”*

Who are the Mordecai’s in your life that call you to remember your identity and mission in this world?