

# THE BIG STORY

## Power & Prophets

Week of  
November 22

### Worship

#### Connect Group / Family Discussion

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

When did you last speak for someone or something that felt risky? What were you risking?

What struck you about the sermon this past Sunday?

Read Esther 4:1-17 out loud. What questions or observations come to mind?

Where do you see the expression of God's grace in this passage? What do you make of that verse?

Laurie suggested that Mordecai was signaling to Esther that the time to assimilate was over – now was the time for courage. What was Esther's first response? What was her second?

Where do you feel that you assimilate in order to get by culturally or socially? What would stepping up look like just now?

Laurie also suggested that Mordecai's rejection of clothing was a determination to lament and give voice to the injustice being undertaken by entirely legal means in Susa. Can you relate to this at all? Is there a call for you in this?

### Serve

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

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

This Advent our Serve team on Session has identified a number of ways that you as a Connect Group or individuals can make hope tangible for others in our city. Take a look at the website together. Is there anything that you as a Connect Group can take on together? Here's an example of what is listed:

- Put together Christmas Bags for West Side Interfaith Network to give out to their guests
- Assemble Care Packages for Bridge Disability Ministries to distribute
- Encourage the young Moms with YoungLives in tangible ways

Perhaps you have another passion – what can you tangibly do together as a group to act on that?

*"Speaking out against injustice and standing up for righteousness begins with an understanding that we cannot simply rely on our own strength or human understanding. ...Esther doesn't wonder what to do next. Her spiritual formation informs her actions. She knows she needs to seek the face of the holy and righteous sovereign God. ...When we pray, we affirm that justice and shalom begin with God and not with us."*

– Rev. Dr. Brenda Salter McNeil

# Daily Worship & Reflections

*The Bible readings this week follow the Jews home from exile to Jerusalem – the rebuilding of the temple and the city walls in Jerusalem, and their hopes for a Messiah – an anointed one – who will re-establish the throne of David. As we look ahead to Advent beginning on the Sunday after Thanksgiving it is a perfect time to be reminded of the context for this hope in a Messiah.*

## Monday, November 23

### Ezra 1-5

*“For my part, I am almost contented just now, and very thankful. Gratitude is a divine emotion: it fills the heart, but not to bursting; it warms it, but not to fever.”* Charlotte Brontë

## Tuesday, November 24

### Ezra 6-10

*“I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought; and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.”* GK Chesterton

## Wednesday, November 25

### Nehemiah 1-7

*“Gratitude turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity...it makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.”*  
Melody Beattie

## Thursday, November 26 - Happy Thanksgiving!

### Nehemiah 8-13

*“Piglet noticed that even though he had a Very Small Heart, it could hold a rather large amount of Gratitude.”* A.A. Milne

## Friday, November 27

### Haggai 1-2 and Zechariah 7-8

*“In ordinary life, we hardly realize that we receive a great deal more than we give, and that it is only with gratitude that life becomes rich.”* Dietrich Bonhoeffer

## Saturday, November 28

### Malachi 3-4

*“Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer. And let faith be the bridge you build to overcome evil and welcome good.”* Maya Angelou