



## A New Queen

Session Two

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### Look Back at Last Week

- Based on what you have learned so far, what is your assessment of King Xerxes, Queen Vashti, and Esther?
- In his sermon on 5.26.24, Pastor Curtis said that one reason to study Esther is because it shows us that God can be trusted even if He cannot be seen. Talk about times in your life when God seemed absent and you still trusted Him.
- Discuss how we can encourage one another in those times we have to walk by faith and not by sight.

### Read Aloud

Passage for this week: **Esther 2:1-18**

### Head (15–20 Minutes)

#### OBSERVE THE TEXT AND THE AUTHOR'S MAIN POINTS

1. What does the text reveal about the cultural landscape of Susa during this time? What social hierarchies are present in this passage?
2. How do Esther, Mordecai, and King Ahasuerus interact with the culture where they live? How are their interactions similar? Different?
3. Discuss the relationship between culture and justice. Which parts of this passage strike you as 'unjust'?

### Heart (15–20 Minutes)

#### ENVISION HOW THE TEXT—WHEN APPLIED—MIGHT TRANSFORM YOUR INNER LIFE IN TERMS OF YOUR THOUGHTS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORS

1. The Lord is referred to by the name “Elohei Mishpat,” God of Justice, several times in scripture (for ex., Psalm 50:6). Jesus, quoting Isaiah 42:1-4 in Matthew 12:15-21, describes his mission to proclaim justice to the nations. What does this mean for us, and what are Biblical ways to think about justice?

2. Sometimes it feels like there is too much injustice in the world to correct. What are ways to keep from being overwhelmed by this feeling?
3. Discuss examples where specific types of injustice became culturally permissible in the past, in current times, and in our lives.

## Hands (10 Minutes)

APPLY THE TEXT BY MOVING FROM INWARD REFLECTION TO OUTWARD ACTION LOOKING FOR WAYS TO LIVE THE TEXT OUT IN OUR LIVES TO SERVE OTHERS

- What is the role of the church in engaging culture and justice?
- Discuss what gifts and opportunities we have to help bring God's justice to Houston in 2024? What part does sharing our faith play in this?
- What are ways to more deeply care for those harmed by culturally permissible injustice in Houston today?

## Reaching Upwards: Growing in Your Relationship with God

1. Confess to God those systems in which we participate intentionally or unintentionally that do not reflect God's justice.
2. Read aloud and discuss Isaiah 42:1-4.
3. Talk about the role of God's providence in this passage and in other difficult situations such as with Joseph in Genesis 37-50. Where do God's providence and our responsibility to address injustice intersect?

## Reaching Outwards: Investing in Your Neighbors

1. The Landing offers shelter and encouragement to human trafficking victims in Houston at their Drop-In Center in southwest Houston. On May 23 FPC staff and covenant partners toured their facilities. We learned of the following specific opportunities to serve The Landing. Consider selecting one of these to do with your small group:
  - [Host a Mid-day Meal for 25](#) Feed survivors and increase engagement by hosting a home-cooked or catered meal at the Drop-In Center. To schedule, contact former FPC staff member, Lea Byrd at [lea@thelanding.org](mailto:lea@thelanding.org). For information, go to [app.vomo.org/opportunity/host-a-meal](http://app.vomo.org/opportunity/host-a-meal)
  - [Make Survivor Snack Packs](#) These provide nourishment and caring for survivors as they leave the Drop-In Center. Snack packs are easy to assemble, and are needed anytime in any quantity. For information about what to include in a snack pack, go to [app.vomo.org/opportunity/make-survivor-snack-packs](http://app.vomo.org/opportunity/make-survivor-snack-packs). For drop off of snack packs, contact former FPC staff member, Lea Byrd at [lea@thelanding.org](mailto:lea@thelanding.org).
  - Find additional opportunities to support The Landing at [thelanding.org/take-action/](http://thelanding.org/take-action/).
2. **Star of Hope Field Trip: June 27; 12 -1 pm** - Calendar this lunchtime Field Trip to Star of Hope Mission Women and Family Development Center at 2575 Reed Rd., Houston, TX 77051. If you plan to come, please contact Madie Weir, Missions Coordinator at [mweir@fpchouston.org](mailto:mweir@fpchouston.org).

## Reaching Beyond

1. **VBS Volunteer** Help children from FPC, the Nehemiah Center, and the community to experience the every-flowing, never-ending love of God at VBS 2024 by volunteering to serve

during this important week, Monday - Friday June 10-14 (9AM -12PM). The theme is SCUBA, diving into friendship with God. For more information and to register go to [fpchouston.org/vbs](http://fpchouston.org/vbs)

2. **Post-Alpha Prayers** Jesus told us to make disciples of all nations. People of many nationalities are and have been involved in Alpha at FPC and in other Houston locations. FPC Spring Alpha concluded May 23. Thank you for your prayers supporting it! Pray that those with unresolved questions about Jesus would sense His love and draw close to Him. Pray that the Holy Spirit will be working in the lives of those who came to Alpha, and that many will return for post-Alpha events at FPC. Pray for rest and refreshment for the hosts and helpers from FPC Spring Alpha.