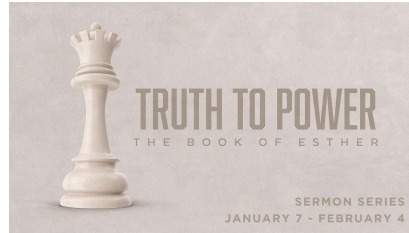


**Hope Presbyterian Church  
Sermon-Based Bible Study Group**



**January 21, 2024**

**“Power” - #2 in the series Truth to Power: The Book of Esther**

**Texts (NLT):** Esther 2:1-7, 12-14, 16-17; Isaiah 1:17

1. What stood out to you about the message?
  
2. Consider the passage of time between the first and second chapters of Esther - about four years. Xerxes' wife, Vashti the Queen, has been banished from his court, and the Persians have suffered a humiliating defeat in their attempt to conquer Greece.
  - How do you imagine Xerxes was processing what might have felt like a loss of control or power?
  
3. **Read Esther 2: 1-7.**
  - What is your response to the description of the objectification of women in this ancient and patriarchal social system?
  - Why, in spite of modern-day laws and institutional policies to ensure gender equity, are there many instances and practices of gender-based abuses of power?
  
4. **Read Esther 2: 12-14.**
  - What do the elaborate and extensive processes to prepare suitable candidates for Xerxes' wife tell us about the power structure of his court?
  - How would these practices have become socially and culturally acceptable?
  
5. **Read Esther 2: 15-17.**
  - What factored into Esther's acquiescence to Xerxes' plan to find a new wife?
  - How do you respond to the idea that God is sometimes at work in situations that involve people making bad decisions?
  
6. **Read Isaiah 1: 17**
  - What are some examples of how we can bring truth to power in situations where power is being abused?
  
7. How can we pray for you?