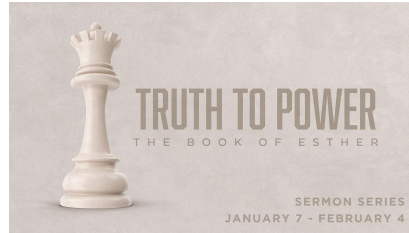


**Hope Presbyterian Church
Sermon-Based Bible Study Group**



January 7, 2024

Vanity - Truth to Power: Esther

Texts (NLT): Esther 1: 1-4, 10-12, 19-20; Philippians 2: 3-4, Matthew 5: 5, 8

1. What stood out to you about the message?

2. Vanity - the excessive pride in or opinion of oneself, their appearance, or achievements - was a character trait of Xerxes, the Persian king from 485-465 B.C., who is featured in the story of Esther.
 - Where does vanity come from?
 - Why does vanity often not produce its intended outcome?

3. **Read Esther 1: 1-4.**
 - What might we infer from the duration of the lavish celebration?
 - What does the guest list suggest about the purpose of the banquet, which occurred 1-2 years before Xerxes' conquest of Greece?

4. **Read Esther 1: 10-12.**
 - What might we derive about Queen Vashti's role (v. 9) in Xerxes' court?
 - Why do you think Vashti refused to appear before her husband's guests?

5. **Read Esther 1: 19-20.**
 - What does the action taken by Xerxes say about the roots of his vanity?
 - How does this study of vanity resonate with you regarding current affairs?

6. **Read Philippians 2: 3-4 and Matthew 5: 5, 8.**
 - What do we learn from putting the interests of others before our own?
 - How would you describe the meaning of "pure in heart," and do we achieve it?

7. How can we pray for you?