

The Gathering Community Group Guide

Brave // Week 1 // Stage a coup

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Esther 1

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. TAKE TIME BEFORE GROUP TO GO OVER THIS GUIDE.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

Brave means different things to different people, but as we start our new series in the book of Esther, we'll find that the most courageous thing we can do is get ourselves off the throne that rules our lives. As Paul pointed out, we make bad kings, and as bad kings, we make bad decisions. As much as we want the story of Esther to just be about her and the others on the book, the reality is that we find ourselves having a bit too much in common with the people in the book.

- We make bad kings:** King Xerxes was a bad man, and when he assumed the throne, he became a bad king. He was powerful, rich, and totally ok rubbing people's noses in it. It's easy (and convenient) to read about King Xerxes from a distance and think that we would never use unlimited power and wealth the way he did, but that's like thinking we'd only do good if we won the lottery. It's hard to admit, but we have more in common with Xerxes than we think. When we sit on the throne, we tend to make bad kings.
- Bad kings make bad decisions:** As we saw with King Xerxes, one bad decision led to another until eventually he had removed his Queen from her throne. Proverbs 13:20 was played out in living color as this fool grew more and more foolish because of the people he had around him. Not only was it a bad decision to display such extravagant disregard with his wealth, but he also had the Queen removed simply because she made him look bad.
- Bad kings bow to a better King:** Whether we've been the bad king (and anytime we rule, we play the fool) and hurt people or been hurt by a bad king, the good news of Esther chapter 1 is that there is a better, more powerful King who is working behind the scenes to achieve his plan. Whether we need to repent or trust, Jesus is a king who can handle it.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What, if any, is your takeaway from this week's message?
- What would you do if you won the lottery and were given 250 million dollars? What would be your first purchase? What would you do with the rest? Read Proverbs 30:7-9. How could the truth in these verses help with your spending plan? How could it have helped King Xerxes?
- There's a famous quote: "absolute power corrupts absolutely." Give examples from Esther 1 of how that is seen in the life of King Xerxes. Can you give examples of times that you've been "the king of your life" and it turned out poorly? According to Jeremiah 17:9, why do you think we have a hard time with power and wealth?
- King Xerxes used power and wealth to step on; King Jesus used power and wealth to step down. Read Philippians 2:6-11. How we can live out the command given to us in Philippians 2:5.
- Read Ephesians 1:22-23. What hope does this give to those of us who – like Queen Vashti – have struggled or are struggling under the rule of "bad kings?" Spend time praying for each other and thanking God for the better King Jesus who is higher and more powerful than bad kings.