

**Title: Hidden: Xerxes**

**Text: The Book of Esther, Psalms 13**

**Date: January 31, 2021**

**WARM-UP QUESTIONS:**

1. How would you define the word, "coincidence"? Have you ever had something happen to you (or to someone you knew) that appeared to be coincidental? What makes those instances so unusual?
2. Think of past experiences when you felt isolated or even abandoned by God. What was it like? What led you to feel this way?
3. Describe occurrences where you felt God's hand was working but you could not know for sure. What helped you make better sense later on?

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

1. We focus on the individual who had the most power and influence on the lives of everyone else, King Xerxes. As you hear the narrative, how would you describe his personality? What do you perceive as his strengths? How about his flaws?
2. Esther 3 marks a critical moment in the story. What prompts Xerxes to agree to such a proclamation? Would it not have been easier for God to have prevented Xerxes from making the edict to exterminate the Jews at that point? As God's ways are not revealed and hidden, how does this create a moment of fate for Mordecai and Esther?
3. Do we see any change of heart and mind in Xerxes through the course of this narrative? How might God be active and in control, even though it is not visible for explicit?

**APPLICATION QUESTIONS:**

1. Describe some hard decisions you have had to make and how God entered into making them. Why is God's will often made more clear only after the fact?
2. How have you found comfort in difficult situations when God appears to be silent? What has helped you to persevere? How has it also been a personal struggle to make that choice?
3. What situations in our world today do you wish that God's ways would be more visible? How can we continue to pray to God about these even in the absence of hopeful signs?