6. In verses 6-8 Mordecai gives Hathach (Esther’s servant) evidence of something very sinister. Describe the threat. What does it remind you of in 20th century history?

7. Sometimes when we hear about conflict between faith and government officials, we throw up our hands and figure we can’t do anything about it. Or we assume that since it doesn’t involve us directly, it is not our business. Mordecai tells Esther to get involved. As a group, discuss some of the reasons we might give for doing nothing in the face of such conflicts.

8. What is Esther afraid of in verses 13-15? What are some of the common fears we have in getting involved in these kinds of issues?

9. In verse 13 Mordecai warns Esther that inaction may not be a safe alternative. Why?

11. Discuss the spiritual component of how Esther is moved to act in verses 15-17. What do you learn?
1. When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and he cried out with a loud and bitter cry. He went up to the entrance of the king’s gate, for no one was allowed to enter the king’s gate clothed in sackcloth. And in every province, wherever the king’s command and his decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and many of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

2. When Esther’s young women and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed. She sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was.

3. Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king’s gate, and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king’s treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and command her to go to the king to beg his favor and plead with him on behalf of her people.

4. And Esther called for Hathach and commanded him to reply to Mordecai, “Do not think to yourself that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

5. Esther tells Mordecai to gather all the Jews in Susa, and fast a day on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, day or night. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.”

1. Sometimes we convince ourselves we are standing for the truth when in reality we are guarding our preferences. As a group, make a list of some of the issues you have seen people challenge others about issues that were mostly differences in preference, tradition, or taste rather than issues of truth.

2. Sometimes we are on the other end of the scale. Identify some areas of conflict between the teachings of the Bible and modern culture where those who call themselves Christians sometimes unwisely back down or go along.

3. In verses 1-3, how did Esther become aware that something very tragic was going on?

4. Initially this was a personal concern that involved her cousin (and guardian) Mordecai and his behavior outside the palace. What ‘problem’ was she trying to fix in her actions in verse 4? What did she learn from Mordecai’s first response?

5. Esther digs deeper by ordering her servant to have a conversation with Mordecai. Why do you think she didn’t talk to him directly herself?