

SERMON STUDY GUIDE



October 8, 2023 // Thriving in Babylon // Pride/Humility



ABOUT THIS SERMON SERIES

We live in a defining hour of history. The Western world and our country's moral landscape have changed and are changing faster than we can keep pace. What was once wrong is now right and what was once unacceptable is now celebrated. We are living in a type of **"Babylon"** and the question is how will we respond? How will we find hope when it seems all is lost?

ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

- If you could go back in time and see any film in the cinema on opening night, what would it be?
- Have you ever had a dream that you wanted to know the meaning of? What was the dream? Did you get the meaning?

GOING DEEPER INTO THE MESSAGE

Read Daniel 2:1-13

Point 1 – Recognize that God is up to something.

“Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.” Revelation 15:4 NIV

In the situation that we read of here in Daniel, it’s easy for us to gloss over exactly what was happening because it all worked out in the end. What we need to realize was that Daniel and his friends were very close to death. They were being held to an impossible standard. The king was asking of them something that no king had asked of a mortal man before, to not only interpret a dream, but to first tell the king what the dream was. How was this happening? They had been faithful to God. They had kept God’s standards even when their fellow exiles folded to the will of their new king, Daniel and his friends remained faithful. But it was looking like all of that was going to be for nothing because they were about to die.

God set up a situation that was impossible for Daniel to be successful. As far as we know, King Nebuchadnezzar had never before requested that a magician, enchanter, sorcerer, or astrologer tell him his own dream. This was a prompt from God. God wanted to create an environment where the only response from people was one of awe and worship of Him. We have to remember that some of the lowest points of our lives are an opportunity for God to showcase His glory.

In order for this to happen we have to remember that God is always up to something in our lives. No matter what we may be going through, if we have a heart that desires to glorify God, He can use our circumstances to bring honor to His name.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How has God used a difficult situation in your life to bring glory to His name?
- What do you think God may be up to in your life right now? How are you letting Him showcase who He is through you?
- Remembering to let God use our difficult times for His glory is hard in those difficult times. Daniel and his friends chose to practice being faithful before the persecution started. What are some things you can do now so this is easier when it happens?

Read Daniel 2:14-16

Point 2 – Be prepared to act. (Surrender, Pray, Respond)

It's easy to think that when we need to act we need to do something right this second. The better option most times is to take a pause and evaluate the problem, ask God to help you come to a solution and then implement what you've been preparing to do all along. At all times it's most important to remember that we, as Christ followers, are God's ambassadors here on earth. We represent Him in our words and deeds. We need to speak to others in such a way that we reflect His heart for them, even when we appear to be in a lose/lose situation.

Daniel knew that losing his temper in the situation he found himself, or acting like Chicken Little and panicking, would not bring about the result he and his friends wanted, which was to stay alive. He took the time to get to the bottom of the problem he was facing, he had already built the relational equity to make a respectful request of the king, and then he took everything to God and laid it all out at His feet.

Daniel knew that there was no human who could solve this problem. He surrendered everything to God and then he prayed expecting God to do something only He could do in a way that only He could do it. He also got each of his friends to petition God with him after explaining the problem. He wasn't about to do this alone.

After God was gracious enough to answer the prayers of Daniel and his friends Daniel made sure to respond with gratitude. So often we're quick to ask God for help, or to solve a problem, yet we forget to give thanks afterwards. This was a great example for Daniel to set both for his friends, but also for the king and the other leaders of Babylon. Daniel made a request of his God and his God answered and Daniel made sure to thank him. God loves when we recognize the answered prayers in our lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How would you define the term “surrender?” How does Daniel model a life of surrender while in Babylon? What is the last thing God asked you to surrender to Him?
- How are you building relational equity in your work relationships, in your family relationships, with friends, especially with people who don't yet know Christ? How can you do this more?
- What do your gratitude prayers look like when God answers prayers in your life? How have you found this practice builds your faith?

FINAL CHALLENGE

- How are you going to think or live differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?
- How does this week's message shape or nurture your relationship with God?
- BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids in a way that they would relate to or understand?