

Series: Daniel: Thriving in Exile

Sermon Text Discussion Notes 09/27/2020

Daniel 4– “God Humbles the Proud and Lifts the Lowly” by Drew Hunter

Overview

Daniel 4 is an incredible story that is often overlooked. This story, written by Nebuchadnezzar himself, focuses attention on the radical transformation of King Nebuchadnezzar.

This Babylonian king was one of the most powerful kings in human history. And he was very much anti-God. He burned Jerusalem to the ground, he destroyed the temple, he brought people into exile; many people died.

But God loved him. And God went after him. And God was patient with him. And God humbled him. And now he's telling the world about it.

1. God confronts the king (4:1-27)
2. God humbles the proud (4:28-33)
3. God lifts the lowly (4:34-37)

Quotations

“We’re having discussions in our own nation today about what this [practicing righteousness] looks like: What does it look like to do justice and to show mercy to the oppressed? There is a lot of disagreement about where there may or may not be injustice. There is a lot of disagreement about who is and isn’t oppressed. There is a lot of disagreement about what policies would be best to care for the poor or oppressed.

But one thing we should all agree on is what Daniel says here: A society *should* practice righteousness and show mercy to the oppressed. It would go a long way for everyone at the beginning of a conversation to say that’s our goal. To sincerely want that. And to listen to one another to understand where it may be needed.”

–Drew Hunter

If you ever needed an illustration to understand pride, this is it. He’s looking out on his kingdom. And what thoughts fill his heart? He said, “Is not this great Babylon, which *I have built by my mighty power* as a royal residence for the glory of *my* majesty” (v30). This is what pride is. It’s self-focus. Pride says, “look what I built.” Pride says, “I did it, and I deserve it.” That’s the heart of pride. Pride says, “I do good things, so I deserve good things.” Humility is the opposite. Humility says, “Look what God gave.” Humility says, “God gives this, and I don’t deserve it.”

– Drew Hunter

Understanding & Application

- 1) Read *Daniel 4:1-27*. Consider the intermingling of Daniel’s compassion, credibility, and courage. The next time you need to discuss something controversial, how might you imitate Daniel’s model?
- 2) Read *Daniel 4:28-33*. Also reflect on Pastor Drew’s second quote from above on pride and humility. Take time to personally reflect, leading to confession of any pride in your life. Then, spend time affirming ways you’ve seen each other express humility.
- 3) Read *Daniel 4:28-37*. If you are a Christian, you have a personal story of God’s transforming grace. Share one recent way you have seen God transform your thoughts, feelings, and/or actions.
- 4) Read *Daniel 4:28-37* again. Take turns praying for the one person in your life who needs to experience God’s transforming grace. Then, take turns talking about a next step you hope to take towards sharing the good news of God’s grace with that person.
- 5) (Bonus) Did God’s Spirit press one truth on your heart as you listened to this sermon? Take a moment to share to the group what God wanted you to hear, and how it changes your tomorrow.