

# The Holiness of God

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[ 0 : 00 ] Jesus, Saviour, risen not to reign. Behold our God, seated on His throne.

Come, let us adore Him. Behold our King, nothing can compare.

Come, let us adore Him. I should have said a very warm welcome to any who are visiting with us this morning.

It's always great to have friends joining us from different parts of the city and from different countries of the world. So, warm welcome. As we have joined our voices in praising God, let's now unite our hearts.

Let's pray to the God who is worthy of all praise. To the God who knows. To the God who sees. And to the God who cares. Let's pray. Father in heaven, we thank you that you are seated on a throne.

[ 1 : 19 ] That you are high and lifted up. That you are powerful yet personal. That you are the one who is over and above all things. And yet you are actively and personally and powerfully involved in the life of this planet.

And in the lives of its people. Father in heaven, we pray that we would be lifted up. That our voices would be lifted up. That our eyes would be lifted up. That our hearts and our minds and our lives would be raised to behold you.

To see you as you are. And in turn to see ourselves as we are. Made in your image. Precious and infinitely valuable.

And yet we recognize that there is a vast gulf between the creator and the creature. The vast gulf between the one who is altogether pure, holy and righteous. And a people that we are.

And we thank you that you have come to fix what we have broken. You've come to restore what we have lost. You've come to solve the problem that we ourselves have caused.

[ 2 : 28 ] And which we are incapable of solving ourselves. So we thank you for the message of hope. And the message of comfort. And the message of restoration. And the message of redemption. That we find in none other than your son, the Lord Jesus, our Savior.

And we pray that as this new year commences. That he would be the theme. He would be the theme of all of our praise. He would be the center of all of our worship. That he would be the reason why we exist corporately as a church.

And the reason why we live and breathe and have our being here on earth. Heavenly Father, we recognize that as we gather together we are in desperate need. Desperate need of strength because we are so naturally weak.

Desperate need of wisdom because we are naturally foolish. Desperate need of grace because we have sinned and we have fallen short. We thank you that we have an ample and abundant supply of all that we require.

The God who is all powerful. The God who is all wise. The God who is rich in mercy. So shower upon us every blessing as we come to you in that precious, personal, and powerful name of Jesus.

[ 3 : 39 ] Your son, our Savior. Amen. Amen. In just a moment when we sing we're going to lift the offering. The offering that will support the work of this church and the wider work of the free church.

For example, when we give to the church, whether you give online or by standing order or in person, you support theological education.

Keeps people like me off the streets. So I'm delightful that you provide a job for me. The central administration of the church. The free church camps. So what we give here benefits us but has a wider resonance.

So as we give, let us give cheerfully and joyfully. Whether in person, as I said, or many of us who give online through standing orders.

Our hymn that we're going to be singing is The Battle and the Blessing. This is the hymn of the month. We'll be singing this through the month of January. So let's join our voices.

[ 4 : 41 ] Let's stand and we are going to sing The Battle and the Blessing. We did not bear the wounds that freed us.

Let's do verse one again.

We did not bear the wounds that freed us. Walk the road to Calvary.

We did not share your cup of suffering. And yet we share your victory. We did not wear that heavy burden.

Nor face the shame and agony. A crown of thorns was placed upon you.

[ 6 : 16 ] Now we are crowned with love and peace. Praise the Lord my God.

Now I am free at the cross. Your grace took hold of me. There you paid my debt.

There you fought my fight. Yes, the battle was yours. And the victory is mine. You chose to be a man of sorrows.

That I can be a child of God. You stood and faced this world's rejection.

I stand accepted by your love. Praise the Lord my God.

[ 7 : 33 ] Now I am free at the cross. Your grace took hold of me. There you paid my debt.

There you fought my fight. Yes, the battle was yours. And the blessing is mine. My sin was buried with the Savior.

Now there is hope beyond the tomb. For you were raised again in glory.

And I am raised to life in you. Praise the Lord my God.

Now I am free. At the cross your grace took hold of me. There you paid my debt.

[ 8 : 45 ] There you fought my fight. Yes, the battle was yours. And the blessing is mine. Yes, the battle was yours.

And the blessing is mine. Yes, the battle was yours. And the blessing is mine. Amen.

Let us join our hearts together in prayer. Let us pray. father we come to the one who creates and sustains all things we come to the one who sees all knows all understands everything we come to the one who is altogether holy and righteous and pure and we come to the one that we can call our father in heaven we are your children your offspring we are members of your family we are citizens of your kingdom we are those who have been made for you who have been made by you and who have been made to know you and to love you and we pray that as we pray now that we would know that we are speaking to one who is loving caring gracious and kind one who is here with us who has come down to our level one who is personally for us god is for us who can be against us and we thank you that the ministry of the holy spirit is such that you now dwell within us so father we thank you that you are the god who hears the god who answers the god who is able to do above and beyond our asking and even our imagining so we thank you for all that you are and we thank you for all that you have done and are doing we thank you lord that we can cry out to you we don't even need to make sense in our prayers because you can untangle the cries and the groans of your people you hear the longings of our heart you hear the the desires of our in our minds and you are able to unravel and able to hear and answer our deepest needs father we need to know where we have come from we need to know where we are going we need to understand why we are here and you provide us with abundant answers to these profound questions we thank you for this wonderful city called edinburgh this nation of scotland we thank you that a growing number of people are calling this city home and calling this nation home and we pray that as they come here whether they come from the east or from the west or from the north or from the south whether they come from a short or a long distance that they would find a welcome in this city and that they would particularly find a welcome among your people and for any who join with us here may they know that this is where you live where you dwell and where your people are gathered in worship and in praise heavenly father we pray for each one of us here you know us you know our families you know our joys you know those causes for celebration that we have and those reasons for thanksgiving and we thank you for the giving of every good and perfect gift but you know too the sorrows you know the trials you know the anxieties you know the uncertainties and we thank you that as it were our lives are books open before you and you see each and every page you know the past you know today and you know what not one of us does know is what lies ahead tomorrow so we ask lord that you would give us strength even strength for unseen challenges that you would give us wisdom for unexpected difficulties and that you would be ever present with us because we need you we need

your help we need your comfort we need your hope and we thank you lord that you have given to us your word that we can sing your word that we can read your word that is both an enlightenment to our mind and a word which is an encouragement to our heart and a word which directs us in our path so lord as we look back as we look back to a scene enacted long long ago might you give to us insight for today and clarity for tomorrow and lord we commit all to you now we thank you for the physical material resources that you have entrusted us with

for the time and the talent and the treasure and lord as we give a small portion of what you have given to us we ask that you might multiply might multiply these givings that you might do good do good among us and do good in the wider nation in the wider church that many would come to know for themselves the grace that is ours in jesus christ so lord hear us lord help us and do us good we ask and all for jesus sake amen amen so the young people are going to make their way to junior church and will you turn with me in the old testament to one of the major prophets to daniel and we're going to read this is a long chapter but i tell you what it's an exciting chapter this is high drama because what if you're not completely familiar with the rise and fall of ancient kingdoms the kingdom of assyria rose and the kingdom of assyria fell the kingdom of babylon rose and its golden era was nebuchadnezzar and that's daniel one to four but the kingdom of babylon was on the slide in fact it was coming to an end so babylon was replaced by the persians if you're interested in how the story continues the persians were replaced by the greeks remember alexander he was known as the great remember julius caesar and augustus the greeks were then replaced by the romans and so it goes on nations rise and fall kingdoms rise and fall empires rise and fall but the lord is lord of all he's lord of all ages he's lord of all kingdoms we're now at the tail end of the babylonian empire the enemy is at the gates literally the enemies are right at the border of the city and what does the king do king throws a party i remember preaching on this passage when i was uh in prison for those of you that know me you'll understand what that means but when i was preaching in prison i asked uh the gathering i said to the guys they said have you ever been to a party that started well but ended badly and they said yes they've been parties like that this was a party that started well and it was a party that ended badly king belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them while belshazzar was drinking his wine he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that nebuchadnezzar his father had taken from the temple in jerusalem so that the king and his nobles his wives and his concubines might drink from them so they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of god in jerusalem and the king and his nobles and his wives and his concubines drank from them as they drank the wine they praised the gods of gold and silver of bronze iron wood and stone suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall near the lamp stand in the royal palace the king watched the hand as it wrote his face turned pale and he was so frightened that his legs became weak and his knees were knocking the king summoned the enchanters astrologers and diviners that he said to these wise men of babylon whoever reads the writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain around his neck and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom then all the kings wise men came in but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant

so king belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more pale his nobles were baffled the queen hearing the voices of the king and his nobles came into the banquet hall may the king live forever she said don't be alarmed don't look so pale there is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him in the time of your father he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods your father king nebuchadnezzar appointed him chief of the magicians enchanters astrologers and diviners he did this because daniel whom the king named bel to shazer was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding and also the ability to interpret dreams explain riddles and solve problems call for daniel and he will tell you what the writing means so daniel was brought before the king and the king said to him are you daniel one of the exiles my father the king brought from judah i've heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you have insight intelligence and outstanding wisdom the wise men and enchanters were brought before me to read this writing and tell me what it means but they could not explain it now i have heard that you are able to give interpretations and to solve difficult problems if you can read this writing and tell me what it means you will be clothed in purple have a gold chain placed around your neck and you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom then daniel answered you may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else nevertheless i will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means your majesty the most high god gave your father

nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor because of the high position he gave him all the nations and peoples of every language dreaded and feared him those the king wanted to put to death he put to death those he wanted to spare he spared those he wanted to promote he promoted and those he wanted to humble he humbled but when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory he was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like the ox and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until he acknowledged that the most high god is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and sets over them anyone he wishes but you belshazzar his son have not humbled yourself though you knew all this instead you have set yourself up against the lord of heaven you had the goblets from his temple brought to you and you and your nobles your wives and your concubines drank wine from them you praised the gods of silver and gold and bronze iron wooden stone which cannot see or hear or understand but you did not honor the god who holds in his hand your life and all your ways therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription this is the inscription that was written many many many take parson here is what these words mean many god has numbered the days of your

[ 21 : 46 ] reign and brought it to an end take you have been weighed on the scales and found wanting perez your kingdom is divided and given to the medes and persians then at belshazzar's command daniel was clothed in purple a gold chain was placed around his neck and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom that very night belshazzar king of the babylonians was slain and darius the mede took over the kingdom at the age of 62 amen and may god add his own blessing to this his from this his word amen let's pray father in heaven we pray that your word would register not just in our minds but in our hearts that we would not just be reading a history lesson from ancient asia in the ancient middle east but rather we would be reading a lesson of personal and powerful importance for us this very day we are commencing a new year help us to commence a new year with you not against you help us to commence a year knowing that you are for us with us and in us and heavenly father we pray that we would learn the lesson that belshazzar did not learn that we would learn from your word and from your truth that instead of exalting ourselves we would exalt you instead of bringing you down we would humble ourselves we thank you for the great promise that the lord jesus gives he tells us that the exalted will be humbled and that he who humbles himself will be exalted help us to be in that category of men and women young and old who are humble in your sight knowing that in due time you will exalt us we thank you that you are high and holy we thank you that you are lifted up and majestic and glorious and we pray that we would honor you with our praise that we would honor you with our hearts with our minds and with our lives because you are worthy hear us and help us we pray in jesus name we ask amen we're going to sing now we're going to sing a portion from psalm 99 psalm 99 is version a and it's from the sing psalms the lord reigns his throne on from his throne on high this is what nebuchadnezzar realized daniel 4 this is what belshazzar did not realize in daniel 5 let's join our voices together to sing the lord reigns from his throne on high let all the nations quake he sits between the cherubim so let the whole earth shake great is the lord on zion hill exalted over all upon his great and holy name let all the nations call the king loves truth and equity

the king loves truth and equity established by his might in jacob you have done for us all that is just and right exalt the lord our god with us let all the world abroad the lord before his foot to worship him for holy is the lord as we turn to this portion of god's word we realize that god paints on a big canvas at the beginning of psalm 24 we are reminded the earth is the lord the fullness thereof the world and they that dwell therein this world is god's its people belong to him he's made it he's made us he sustains it and we belong to him so it's a big canvas the word of god is a big canvas the world is a big canvas and god i think wants us to recognize that he is everywhere at all times and in all places at the commencement of the university of notre dame back in 1981 sorry that's how we americans call we don't say notre dame we say notre dame at notre dame uh university francis schaeffer was the keynote speaker and he said this he said christianity is not a series of truths in the plural but rather truth spelled with a capital t truth about total reality not just about religious things biblical christianity is truth concerning total reality and the intellectual holding of that truth and then the living in the light of that truth so as a christian we don't set aside a certain part of a day or a certain day of the week and say that's god's day or that's god's hour or this is god's time rather everything everything that we see comes from god everything that we know or learn is filtered through the lens of god's word and i think what schaeffer is saying i think what the psalmist is

saying i think what daniel is reminding us is we need to understand the big picture the big canvas to understand something of our god to understand something of ourselves and to understand something of the lord jesus christ so this morning uh i'm going to preach a a sermon that i've prepared for this evening i'm going to be across town in in cornerstone and it's the first in a series of four and just to give you an idea of of where i'm going because there's a book it's one of these books that have literally changed my life it's um it's got a bright yellow cover it's called the dynamics of spiritual life it's written by a man called richard lovelace and he was a historian he was a practical theologian and he gave a history of revivals uh revive there's been revivals in scotland revivals in lewis there's been revivals in places like campus lang places like uh like shots uh places that you don't really associate with vibrant christianity

maybe anymore but god did a remarkable thing in different times and in different places and lovely says there are two main pre-conditions when god begins a work a big work or a small work in the heart and life of life of a person he begins by establishing two key truths truth number one god is holy he's high he's lifted up truth number two we aren't we are sinful sinful in mind sinful in heart sinful in action sinful in words sinful in thought and you see when you see this gulf and it is a gulf it's a big gulf it's a big gap it's it's a gap that we cannot cross and you think well what's the point of that you've just told people that there's a god who is high and holy they are low and sinful what's the answer well the answer is not from us we cannot bridge that gap we cannot cross that gulf there must be a solution that comes from elsewhere as we turn to the bible with you know when you're when you're preaching especially you read a passage like daniel 5 it's a long passage in scripture it's a big narrative but actually daniel 5 you really need daniel 4 to really grasp what's happening in daniel 5 and it's it's referred to in the chapter itself but what we see here is a story and it's a quite a fascinating story for the first four chapters daniel though he's charting his own experience in babylon and his friends shadrach meshach and abednego what he's basically giving us in four chapters is a spiritual biography of king nebuchadnezzar what an unusual theme a spiritual biography of a pagan king who is proud who is haughty who took into exile the best and the brightest from jerusalem what an unusual subject for a spiritual biography and what's more in daniel chapter 4 we have the first person account we have a spiritual autobiography nebuchadnezzar is sharing his story and he's sharing his story with the world he wants the world to know what god has done now the emperors the ancient emperors were great they they they wanted a world platform i'm reminded of one of the emperors of uh of assyria king asher banipol and he had a way of signing all of his decrees asher banipol king of assyria king of the world and he was most important most powerful person the king of assyria was the most powerful powerful potentate of the world but nebuchadnezzar's spiritual autobiography closes on this note now i nebuchadnezzar praise and exalt and glorify the king of heaven because everything he does is right and all his ways are just and those who walk in pride he is able to humble then daniel turns daniel chapter 5 and you think okay there's a chronology here but actually what you don't see between daniel 4 and daniel 5 is two generations of past daniel is a teenager in chapter 1 daniel is a young man in chapters 2 3 and 4 daniel's an old man now daniel's in obscurity it's only the queen who kind of reminds the king you remember daniel you remember in your grandfather's time there was a man who had insight from god so two generations have passed and god is telling us something profound about himself he's telling us that he is holy now as a

teacher of theology i could define the word holy but theological definitions are fairly abstract what daniel 5 does is give us an illustration in daniel 5 what do we read the enemy is at the gates it's party time let's eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die literally in the case of belshazzar and what does he do let's get the best stuff let's get the goblets you know we've got the gold and silver goblets we got them from jerusalem solid gold solid silver from the temple let's drink from those goblets so he brings the goblets in and he shares them with his nobles his wives his concubines but not only that let's praise the gods of gold of silver of bronze iron wood and stone so instead of an abstract definition for holy these goblets are holy cups they are set apart for god by god and meant to be used for his service and for his worship they are holy vessels holy means to be set apart you and i are holy people we are set apart from the world we are set apart for god these cups are set apart for god's temple for god's worship and belshazzar said this is the end of the age this is the party of parties let's get the cups and let's toast the go the gods of gold of silver of bronze wood and stone what is he doing he's taking that which is holy and he's using it for for profane and for blasphemous purposes not only does he use the cups that he shouldn't use but he uses them to praise the gods that don't exist so what does this tell us there is a god who is so holy that all things

belong to him all people belong to him everything in the world the earth is the lord's and the fullness thereof now this isn't what you often see with children and adults you know children who say to their siblings don't touch my stuff don't play with my toys that's mine that's not yours you know that's just characteristic i think of human nature we see it more visibly in young people we as adults we disguise it a bit better this is not god saying don't play with my stuff this is god saying this is for me this is not for your party this is not for your gods this is for the god so our god is a holy god he is high he is lifted up because the holiness of god and the exaltation of god are inextricably linked when we have that great heavenly chorus and we're going to sing a hymn at the end of our service when god when isaiah goes into the temple in isaiah chapter 6 in the year that king uzziah died i saw the lord high and exalted seated on the throne and the train of his robe filled the temple above him were seraphim with six wings and with two wings they covered their faces with two they covered their feet and with two they were flying and they were calling to one another holy holy holy holy is the lord almighty the whole earth is filled with his glory the holiness of god and the exaltation of god our god is high and lifted up and our god is separate from and yet inextricably linked to this world he's the creator we're the creatures he is the lord to be worshipped and we are a people who are tempted to worship other things or to worship ourselves so holiness is real god is set apart and god is set above he's not just slightly amplified you see in the ancient world the greeks and the romans particularly if you know your ancient mythology what you have are gods small g but what you have are really amplified human beings yes they are more powerful they are physically stronger they're more jealous they're more petty they you know all of our characteristics are just amplified the good ones and the bad ones our god is not like that our god is pure he can't look upon sin he is never guilty of sin he never does anything that is in contradiction to his character or to his nature and he cannot bear sin in his presence he's high he's lifted up and even the very utensils that are meant to be used in his temple are to be used exactly as he says belshazzar didn't make a mistake you see he wasn't just being a little bit careless he knew exactly what he was doing and that really brings us to our second point if god is holy and lifted up what are we like what do we do well we are characterized by bringing god down and bringing ourselves up at least three times in the new testament jesus said for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted that's the principle of the kingdom of jesus and it's a principle that he spoke and it's a principle that he demonstrated because he who is high and exalted what did he do he became humble he humbled himself even to death death on a cross his his style of leadership he said you know what the gentiles are like they lorded over people not so with you for even the son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many the god who is exalted comes down is born who lives who dies and is risen again and he articulates this principle and he demonstrates it in practice perfectly the exalted will be brought low but the humble will be exalted belshazzar was a proud man he's king if he says bring the goblets in they bring the goblets in if he says to the crowd let's praise the gods of gold stone iron bronze and wood that's exactly what they do he's the king but what do we see here we see an exalted man who is proud who wants to do his thing in his way with god's stuff and that's what really sin is i want to do what i want when i want how i want but in so doing i'm effectively using god's stuff whatever that stuff is for my benefit in my way to satisfy my needs to satisfy my desires so you have a holy exalted god and you have a proud king and a proud king who says i'm going to use god's stuff i'm going to praise our gods who aren't real god's stuff i'm going to use god's stuff i'm going to use god's stuff i'm going to use god's stuff high exalted without sin belshazzar the pride the arrogance the blasphemy and then we see the writing on the wall party's over folks the toasting stopped the drinking stopped the celebration stopped the king was now pale because there's a hand writing on a wall writing a language that no one can read but the king realizes i need to know this message i need to heed these words and yet what do we

[ 42 : 12 ] find it's too late the message is given and i'm you see when i was mentioning before that when when there are revivals major revivals the preachers tend to preach god's holiness and human sinfulness and in the in that frame they then present the clear message of jesus christ jesus christ is a savior of sinners jesus christ has not come to make good people better he's come to rescue sinners to set the captives free to rescue to restore and to renew so a holy god and a proud king encounter one another and the difference is is that the king knew better the king knew the truth the king knew the experience that his father nebuchadnezzar his grandfather technically in the in the ancient language father was used for both the the next generation one generation above but it could also be used for ancestor so there are two generations between nebuchadnezzar and

belshazzar but belshazzar knew the story of his father he knew what god had done in nebuchadnezzar's life and he knew it from the very words of nebuchadnezzar himself and when daniel had the chance to speak he says you belshazzar his son have not humbled yourself though you knew all this when we are gathered together to hear god's word we have a great privilege we hear the very voice of god the very word of god but yet we have a great responsibility because we not only hear it we are to receive it we are not only to receive it but we are to accept it to believe it and we are not only to accept and believe it we're actually to incorporate and live it out belshazzar knew that there was a god a real god belshazzar knew that that god had worked in the life of his family and yet all that he knew he did not respond to it seems like this is a message of dismay this this is a recipe of just simply disaster is there any help is there any hope is there any solution i'm reminded of i don't know about i i love quotations and and sometimes i i look for motivational quotations and one of my favorites comes from f scott fitzgerald you're the author of great gatsby one of the great writers of the jazz age the 1920s and he says in a letter he said for what it's worth it's never too late to be whoever you want to be i hope you live a life you're proud of and if you find you're not i hope you have the strength to start over now on a personal level i find that encouraging that you know here's words of wisdom words of comfort actually you can maybe start over if you if you haven't started well but what was scott fitzgerald's experience chronic alcoholism a very difficult marriage to a woman who was unwell and when he died he died convinced that he himself was a failure great words but of little comfort motivational but not transformational is the gospel just words to make you feel better for a while or is the gospel able to change you from the inside out and if you have the opportunity read daniel 4 see what god did in the life of nebuchadnezzar nebuchadnezzar had a dream and in the dream he saw this huge tree that covered the whole earth and in the dream he saw the tree cut down its branches stripped its leaves

taken off and a chain and a chain of iron or being across the stump and an image of one living in the wild and the one living in the wild that's you and unless you humble yourself oh king that will be your experience and for the next 12 months nothing happened and then one day 12 months later nebuchadnezzar is looking out on this magnificent city of babylon look at babylon look at this city that i have created look at all that i and as he was speaking at the very moment the words were in his mouth his rat his reason left him his kingdom was taken away from him and he went into the fields and ate like an animal of the field until he lifted his eyes to heaven and his sanity was restored so what do we have here we have a story of two kings one proud king who was humbled and who repented and believed and another proud king who was not humbled who did not believe and when judgment came it came with finality the judgment of daniel 4 was temporary the judgment of daniel 5 is permanent what's the difference belshazzar knew better and didn't respond belshazzar had the testimony of his grandfather and did nothing with it belshazzar knew that time was short but rather than turning to god who is real he said let's have a party let's enjoy one last night then let's praise the gods and that are not real but let's praise the gods that are not real and drink from the goblet of the one who is god says time's up god says you've been weighed in the balances you've been found wanting your kingdom has been taken away from you so if the goblets tell us what a holy god is like at the end when we're told what the words mean take all you have been weighed on on the scales and found wanting our god is a righteous god our god weighs us in a balance righteous means a standard conformity to a standard when you go and pour petrol or diesel into your car there there is a a stamp there is a on each of the pumps there is a stamp that guarantees that this pump will give you a liter of diesel or a liter of petrol at the right pressure at the right temperature so that you can be assured that when you put 10 liters of diesel in your car you're actually getting 10 liters otherwise it's very easy to defraud people the pump might say 10 liters but you only get nine no we we want if if we're paying the money we have to pay for petrol or diesel you want to get what you pay for right that means you want a righteous pump you want a righteous scale and god says i want a righteous people i want a people that measure up i want a people that on the scale of eternity that there's a balance belshazzar you've been weighed and you've been found wanting there's no balance here you're out of balance meaning god is righteous and you are unrighteous god is holy you are unholy and again you say well what's the good news here because on that scale on one side we have god with all of his glory with all of his majesty we have god with his purity god with his word god with his truth and on the other side you me i don't balance you don't balance how can we possibly have hope how can we possibly have comfort from the story of belshazzar well

here's the answer we have a god who is high and lifted up he's holy he's righteous he's pure and this god has come down he's come down in the person of his son jesus in order not that he can give us what we lack he does more than that he's not just come down to instruct us he's not just come down to encourage us he says on the scales of eternity i'll tell you what let me take your place let me let me stand on the scales or sit on the scales and i tell you what when jesus is on the scales he's been weighed and he's not been found wanting he's been weighed and he satisfies the righteous requirements the standard of god is met perfectly and personally in only one human being his name is jesus christ and if you're not yet a follower of jesus it's not too late it's never too late to start over so actually what scoff at sherald was saying there is a truth there that if you find that you're not living the life that you're meant to live you're not living the life that you want to live i hope you have the strength to start over well i'd rather put it this way i hope you have the strength to let god start your life over again at the end of a in the middle of a letter that the apostle paul was writing he put it this way second corinthians chapter 5 at verse 17 therefore if anyone is in christ he is a new creation has come the old is gone the new is here that's the gospel whatever you were you are no longer whatever you once did you do no longer whatever your status and standing was you are that no longer you are a new creation in christ all this is from god who reconciled us to himself through christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation as a minister i have one message that one message is reconciliation the god of heaven who has been offended by sin has sent his son to rescue the lost and he has sent his ministers both those who are in a pulpit but he and he equips each one of us with this new message of reconciliation listen to this that god has been reconciling the world to himself in christ not counting people's sins against them and he has committed to us the people of god the message of reconciliation we are therefore christ's ambassadors as though god were making his appeal through us we implore you on christ's behalf be reconciled to god nebuchadnezzar and daniel 5 was imploring the world to be reconciled to the god who humbled him sadly his grandson did not heed that message sadly belshazzar did not respond to the wisdom of his own grandfather god has making his appeal through us we are therefore his ambassadors we implore you on christ's behalf be reconciled to god god made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of god god the scales now balance the holy righteous exalted god has come down and we humbly accept what he has done in our place and in humbly accepting that he exalts us as his children as his people and he guarantees us that in jesus christ we are new creations in jesus christ the impure has become pure the unholy has become holy the unrighteous has become righteous and the scales that were out of balance now balance the holy god the sinful people the gospel of jesus christ that is our only hope he is our only hope god speaks give us ears to hear god has shown what he has done in the past give us eyes to see give us minds and hearts that are now consecrated to him the high and lifted up one the holy and righteous god has come down to us in order that we a humble people could be exalted in his son amen