

Daniel 4:19-37

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- [0 : 0 0] It is a fun week in the life of our church. Tuesday night, even though it is Chris' birthday, and actually, neither of us had any idea that each other's birthday was dead. So, you know, start working with people and you have no idea about when their birthday is.
- I know. But Tuesday night, we are going to be having a newcomer's dessert. So if you are new to Grace and Peace, you've been around trying to figure out what we're all about, I'd love for you to come. It's just a casual dessert that Emily and I host at our house.
- Tuesday night, 7 to about 8.30. And just a chance for you to kind of get to know Natalie and I a little better and be able to ask any questions. We'll tell you the story of Grace and Peace, where we came from, and answer any questions that you might have about what we are doing.
- So we'd love to invite you to that on Tuesday night. We'll have just a casual dessert. Also, if you are new visiting with us, welcome. Glad you're here. There should be a little welcome card in your bulletin.
- And if you don't mind filling that out, dropping it in these offering baskets here at the end of the reunion. That would be really helpful. If you are a regular person, you've got a prayer request that maybe I may not know about, I'd love for you to let me know about that.
- [1 : 1 4] Okay. We have another – we have a women's event coming up, and I want Jenny Gray to come and tell us a little bit about that. All right. Hello. My name is Jenny.
- My family, my husband and our three daughters, have been attending parent-raising peace since about March or April. Kind of had things open back up. So we're really happy to be here. And, yeah, I would tell the ladies.
- And so for the next three minutes, and then if you guys need to, like, tune out, I'm just going to do that. I'm just kidding. Everybody focus in. This is really important. I want you all to support your women in getting involved in this really important ministry. So, yeah.
- The game night that we're having, October 7th, is from 630 to 830 at Hannah Fidler's home. Hannah's in the back with her little bitty baby. So we're excited that she's going to host this for us.
- So two things I want to talk about about women's ministry and sort of what it's meant to me and why I really encourage all of you women to consider diving in to the things that we're doing here. And one is that it's really important as women and what I've found in my life to get to know each other, not just in generalities, but, like, kind of to really find ways to be known.
- [2 : 2 2] Because it's really easy to sort of have these labels that people know about you. Like, oh, that's Jessie's wife, or, oh, that's Naomi and Belle and Josie's mom, or, oh, that's Jenny. I think she just moved here from Nashville.
- Those kind of things are sort of out there for people to know. But there's so many layers of things that we don't get to know about each other and to really sort of deeply experience the hurts and the joys and the losses to kind of our identities.

One of the most amazing ways to do that is in fellowship with other women. We need the support. We need the friendship. And we need the strength to hold us up so that as we go through those roles, that we can do them with more grace and with the spirit of Christ.

And that's something that we share with each other as women. So one of the things I love at our church in Nashville that we used to say a lot is come with me as I go to Christ. And I feel like that's really what women's ministry is about.

It's about women saying, hey, I, this is me. This is who I am. These are all the things I have, all my baggage. Come with me. Let's turn to Christ together. And so it's really a very glorifying thing when we do this in the body together.

[3 : 25] Things that used to go isolating are going to start to feel like things that you can connect with people on. Things like loneliness or self-impertation or feeling like you're confused about work and home balance.

Those are things that we can bring to each other and uplift and encourage each other with. So I would really encourage you to be involved, to get connected. How do we do this? So it can be really awkward.

I'm just going to put that out there. Like, so how do we make friends as adults? You have to just kind of get a little bit awkward and a little bit uncomfortable sometimes. I have to do that myself. I mean, my daughter, this is her.

She'll be like, mom, I made a new best friend today. I'm like, that's wonderful. She's like, yeah. There was a girl on the playground. I loved her sparkly shoes. And I said, who would be my best friend? And can she spend the night tomorrow? Yeah. We can't do that as adults.

But I would encourage you to say to someone, hey, I really like your shoes. Can we help? Like, it's up to hey to say, I want to spend some time getting to know another woman. And I'm going to make myself vulnerable right now.

[4 : 23] And let's be a little awkward. So game night is not going to be awkward. It's going to be really fun. You don't have to play games, okay? There will just be snacks. There will be drinks. You can hang out.

I do encourage you, if you do come, to be on my team, because I'm really competitive. And we're going to win. So it's going to be super low-key, okay? So I would love for you guys to come.

Come with us as we go to Christ. Women, let's support each other. Let's uplift each other. Whether it's jumping in a Bible study, jumping into a game night, a women's retreat that I think Stephanie Crowder is working on for later this year or the spring.

Just be aware of those opportunities and let yourself feel a little bit vulnerable and awkward. So, yeah, come join us for game night. It's going to be really fun. And I hope to see you guys there. You can ask me to be in my emails in the bulletin.

That's all. Please join me in this prayer for the congregation.

[5 : 22] Thank you. Thank you. Our Father in heaven, you are in one true living God, the creator of the universe and all that is in it. And you are sovereign of our own.

You have placed each of us in the ultrawathis locality and brought us together to worship in grace and peace. You have placed us in this time in history where we have the freedom to associate in worship as we please.

It is our duty to always trust you no matter the life circumstances we experience. And we can always be assured that you are with us and in control. Father, it is not our will, but your will be done.

We praise your great name and recognize, as did King Nebuchadnezzar in today's reading, that your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and your dominion endures from generation to generation.

To you belongs, O Gloria. Lord, we are sinful people. We do not always keep your law. We neglect your word.

[6 : 28] And we focus on building up worldly treasures rather than spiritual ones. We ask your mercy and forgiveness as we confess our sins.

Thank you for your everlasting love, which endures forever. Your faithfulness, your mercies, your grace, your peace, and your word.

Thank you for sending your son, Jesus, to die for our sins on your cross. And with the understanding that if we just believe in him, you promise eternal life with you.

I pray that any who are not believers will see the path to your life and salvation. I thank you for your recent healing of James and Tony and Mark.

And for the new life brought to our church through the Tiches, the Edmers, and the Stachos. We are blessed with several grace and peace families that are currently expecting and praying.

[7 : 35] They will have normal pregnancies and deliveries with no complications. Lord, I pray for those who attend grace and peace and those online. Each person in family unit has prayer deeds regarding health, mourning the loss of a loved one, relationships, finances, and deceitful.

Lord, heal them in accordance with your will. We have given wisdom to decisions and restore relationships. I pray specifically for the healing of Dusty and my swine.

Lord, please continue to bless Benji as he greets the congregation and the rest of his staff, the musicians, and all those who work behind the scenes.

Lord, there are those around the world who are being persecuted for their faith. Give them encouragement, Lord, and pray. I pray for their protection and freedom.

Lord, hear our prayers and comfort us knowing that each day we are closer to being in your presence. We pray these things in the name of your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

[8 : 45] Amen. Thanks, Robert. I'd like to choose. We should be friends. That was lovely, lovely, lovely.

We're going to continue on looking at the book of Daniel. We already read the beginning of this passage. The reason that I had Greg read that earlier is because it's a long passage. And I wanted you to get at least the beginning of this.

And I'm going to talk some about it. But essentially, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. A dream of a big tree. They got cut down. An angel came and cut it down. And he was looking for someone to interpret this.

So he went to Daniel. So we're going to pick up in verse 19. I believe 19 is where it is. Is that where it picks up?

Okay. Sorry. That is right, correct? Verse 19. Okay, thank you. Sorry. Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while and his thoughts alarmed him.

[9 : 55] The king answered and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies.

The tree you saw, which grew and became strong so that its top reached to heaven. And it was visible to the end of the whole earth. Whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant in which was food for all under which the beasts of the field found shade and in whose branches the birds of the heavens live.

But it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens. Your dominion to the ends of the earth.

Seems like an exaggeration. And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, you could say watcher or angel, coming down from heaven, saying, Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump and its roots in the earth bound with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field.

And let him be wet with the dew of heaven. And let his portion be with the beasts of the field till seven periods of time pass over him. This is the interpretation of the king.

[11 : 09] It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my beloved king. That you shall be driven from among them. And your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox.

You shall be wet with the dew of heaven. Seven periods of time shall pass over you until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.

And as it was commanded to be the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you in the time that you know that heaven rules. Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you.

Break off your sins by practicing righteousness, your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.

All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months, he was walking upon the roof of his royal palace of Babylon. And the king answered and said, Is this not the great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence, and for the glory of my majesty?

[12 : 24] And while the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven. O king Nebuchadnezzar, To you is spoken.

The kingdom has departed from you. You shall be driven from among men. Your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made grass like an ox.

And seven periods of time shall pass over you. Until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom you will. Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar.

He was driven from among men. They ate grass like an ox. And his body was wet with the dew of heaven. Till his hair grew as long as eagle's feathers. His nails were like bird's claws.

Gross. At the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven. My reason returned to me. And I blessed the Most High and praised and honored him who lives forever.

[13 : 21] For his dominion is an everlasting dominion. His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing. And he does according to his will among the hosts of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.

And none can stay in his hand or say to him, What have you done? At the same time, my reason returned to me. The glory of my kingdom, my majesty, and splendor returned to me.

My counselors and my lords sought me. And I was established in my kingdom. And still more greatness was added to me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the kingdom, the King of heaven.

For all his works are right and his ways are just. And those who walk in pride, he is able to humble. Amen. Friends, remember this is God's word.

He gives it to you because he wants you. And because he wants you to know. You know, as I was thinking about this story of Nebuchadnezzar, I've been thinking about, you know, how do you tell the story of your own life with God?

[14 : 32] How do you tell the story of your story of faith? You know, my story is not all that dramatic. I grew up in the church. From an early age, I believed in Jesus, trusted him to some degree.

But really, it was not until I was a college student that that really began to kind of be pressed home to me. You know, it was a difficult season.

In my first couple years of being in college, there was a lot going on in my family. There was a lot going on in me. And that began a process in my 20s, really, where God made himself more powerfully known to me in particular ways.

God began to unearth the foundations of my own pride and self-sufficiency and arrogance in ways that brought a lot of that crashing down.

In fact, I would say that a lot of my 20s were filled with a lot of failure, a lot of sin, a lot of repentance. In fact, I would say that if you ask my brother and sister, they would say that I was an insufferably arrogant teenager to bid on session.

[15 : 40] God was in the middle of my entire story. It was a story of grace. I wonder how you talk about that.

How you think about your own story with God. You know, the problem is that for most of us, the way that we tell our stories actually undercuts the things that we say that we believe.

We say that we believe that God is gracious, but then here's how we might tell my story. You know, I was an okay kid, but then, you know, things got tough. And I realized that something needed to change.

And what I realized was that I needed God in my life. And so you know what I did? I went and I got rid of that, you know, that terrible girlfriend. And I began to make friends with church people.

And I found a church and I really sought after God. And you know what? My life changed. Things got a lot better for me. And now I'm serving God with my whole heart.

[16 : 41] Now, do you see the difference in telling my story that way? That is not a story of grace. That is a story of self-improvement, self-empowerment, of self-assurance.

It's not a story of grace. And what you get in this roller coaster of a story of Nebuchadnezzar is a story of grace. Did you notice that this was placed in the first person?

It's as though Nebuchadnezzar is like telling his own story. He's writing what he wants you to know about what his story was like. And it's really a doozy.

And this is one of the reasons that we can appreciate it. Because in our world, everything in digital Babylon, as we've been talking about, we live in the midst of digital Babylon. And everything in our world is pushing you away from humility and grace.

And it's pushing you towards pride and arrogance and taking control for yourself. That's the movement that everything is pushing you towards. And so this story is actually really helpful.

[17 : 48] Because in Nebuchadnezzar's story, here's what you're going to see. Two things. Number one is you're going to see the problem that pride is for us. You're going to see exactly what Chris was talking about. The problem of pride, but you're going to see the goodness of grace.

Okay? Problem of pride, goodness of grace. So let's jump in. Nebuchadnezzar was clear about the point of his story. You know, repetition. I mean, how many times did it say that he was going to go eat grass like an ox?

Like five times. Repetition is a major deal for Daniel. He does it in every chapter. But in this case, Nebuchadnezzar was super clear.

In fact, three times, here's what he says. The Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will. Verse 17, 25, 32. What's the point?

Nebuchadnezzar's big point is, is that God rules this world and I don't. God rules this world and you don't. That's the fundamental point that he's driving at.

[18 : 50] That's the lesson that Nebuchadnezzar had to learn. But the problem was, is that his pride didn't let him see that clearly. He thought of himself as something more than just a mere man.

Something more than a man was what he saw of himself. So he had a nightmare. And there was this big tree. And it's repeated a couple of times.

But you see what, you see what it looked like. Verse 10. There was a big tree in the midst of the earth.

Its height was great. The tree grew and it became strong. Its top reached the heaven. It was visible to the ends of the earth. Are you kidding me? This seems a little self-aggrandizing. Its leaves were beautiful.

Fruit abundant. And in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found its shade under it. Birds of the heaven lived in its branches.

[19 : 49] This reminds me of like the tree in Go, Dog, Go. I don't know if y'all remember that book. I love that book. The tree at the end of that. This is what it reminds me of. And all flesh was fed from it. Do you see how self-important that is?

He is in his own self-conscious, in his own self-conscious mind, seeing himself as a tree at the center of the world in which every human being is being fed and supplied by.

He sees himself as God. He had taken over the role of God, providing for everyone and everything.

I think Nebuchadnezzar loved the idea of Babylon being experienced by people as kind of a new Eden. You remember the hanging gardens of Babylon.

This was in the place near where Eden may have been. And I think Nebuchadnezzar thought of himself as creating a new garden of Eden.

[20 : 53] And he was the one at the center of this whole operation, feeding everybody. And so, as predicted, it wasn't long before God's judgment arrived.

It said only 12 months. In 12 months, his own private thoughts were verbalized. Look at verse 30. He's standing on the roof and he says, Is this not the great Babylon which I have built for my mighty power as a royal residence for me and the glory of my majesty?

You know, nobody... It takes a lot to actually verbalize that. But he does. And Nebuchadnezzar is writing this about himself. This is what he was actually thinking and saying.

And he takes too much... He took too much credit for his own success. He claimed glory for himself that should have gone to God alone. And so, you know, this is what pride looks like.

I don't know if you've ever heard this, but when the great French king, Louis XIV, when he died, he left these very detailed instructions of what his funeral should look like. And what they were to do was to darken all the lights in the cathedral of Notre Dame.

- [22 : 11] And his casket would be at the front and there would be one solitary candle and it would be placed right on top of it. That King Louis XIV was the light of the world.
- Light in the darkness. And so when the priest who was supposed to give the sermon stood up to come give the sermon, he walked forward and he snuffed out the candles.
- And he said, he started his sermon with, only God is great. Turn on the lights. See, that's what pride looks like.
- In Nebuchadnezzar's case, the punishment that he received illustrates the true cost of what his pride was doing to him and to other people.
- Nebuchadnezzar went insane and he's reduced to the level of an animal. Now, you should note, there's actually a mental illness that manifests itself something similar to this.
- [23 : 09] But I think we actually have to be really careful in how we interpret the details here. This story is not meant to be one where we are going in and trying to diagnose a particular illness and all of that kind of stuff.
- There's a certain vagueness to the details here. For instance, the language of a period of seven times, seven periods of time is intentionally vague.
- We're not supposed to know how long this went. The point is not to press the details of the mental breakdown that Nebuchadnezzar experienced, but to show the point of the story.
- The point of the story is, it illustrates that Nebuchadnezzar's pride had crushed him. His own sin had crushed his soul.
- In trying to be more than just a man, Nebuchadnezzar became less than a man. That's the point. He was driven away from people.
- [24 : 07] He ate grass. He slept on the ground. His hair grew out. His nails were like claws. The image is that he became like an animal and not a man. You see, throughout the Bible, sin results in the destruction of our very humanity.
- It destroys us. And it destroys other people. Did you notice Daniel's advice here in verse 27? Go back to verse 27. So Daniel gets done interpreting and he says, Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you.
- I mean, who? What sort of advisor walks into the king and says, Let me tell you what to do now, king? That doesn't happen. But here's what he says. Here's his unsolicited advice.
- Repent. Break off your sins. By practicing righteousness. Okay, that's interesting. Because I thought the problem was pride. And your iniquities, break off your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed.
- What is that talking about? Well, the prophet Habakkuk was writing in a similar time frame as this. And one of the people that he wrote towards were the kingdom of Babylon.
- [25 : 17] And here's how he described the problems for the king of Babylon. It may have come slightly before Nebuchadnezzar, but it was the same time period. Here's what he says in Habakkuk.
- He says, Woe to him who piles up stolen goods and makes himself wealthy by extortion. He says, Woe to him who builds his house by unjust gain.
- Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town by injustice. You see, what we actually know about Nebuchadnezzar is that he left a massive toll of human misery and exploitation in his way.
- His entire Babylon project, you know, building Babylonia, it was an act of degrading and destroying humans. He fostered an awful slave trade that built the hanging gardens in Babylon.

He ignored justice in order to achieve his goals. The greatness of his kingdom was built on the backs of a dehumanized population. See, the problem with pride is that our own pride and self-importance has the potential to destroy us from the inside out and to destroy the people who are all around us.

[26 : 49] You know, we think, well, let me say it this way, it is such a grave error for you to confuse success, giftedness that you see in other people, you know, fruitfulness that you see in other people, to confuse that success with the character and the integrity that we are called to have as people.

See, pride can present itself as successful when actually there is spiritual rock on the inside. You want to know how to get a glimpse of your own pride?

Look at the people you dislike. How, notice how you respond to the downfall and the struggle of your opponent.

When your opponent fails, when somebody you dislike is exposed for who they really are, how do you respond? Does it make you a little bit giddy inside? Does it make you feel like you've won in some way?

See, that is a mirror to the depth of our own feelings of superiority and pride. See, and that impulse is actually a pandemic in our culture.

[28 : 13] This is where digital Babylon really gets us. All you have to do is look at anything and everyone is pushing you to give one over on your opponents, to own the other side, to be better than your neighbors and your peers and your friends, to present your social media profile as perfect, your family as having no struggles, as finding a way to distinguish yourself from the stinky, smelling masses.

To be better than that. Friends, our only hope is in the grace of God and in repentance before Him.

So, okay, that's the problem. I want you to see the goodness of God's grace. So, one of the themes that I haven't yet brought out as we've been looking at Daniel is the way that God has been at work in Nebuchadnezzar.

In fact, I don't know if you've noticed, but Nebuchadnezzar is the only character in this book who has shown up in all four of these first four chapters. Christopher Wright, who I quoted before, he says it this way, that there has been a progressive sharpening of Nebuchadnezzar's awareness of the God whom he is dealing with.

And that process of a growing awareness has come to its climax right here. Nebuchadnezzar's life was utterly changed by this. He repented. You know?

[29 : 43] And his repentance was the process, the repentance, when we talk about repentance, it's the process of turning away from one direction. Stop going in one direction and turning in a new direction and facing in a new obedience.

Saying no to sin and saying yes to righteousness and faithfulness. That's what repentance means. And that's exactly what is going on for Nebuchadnezzar. Look at verse 34 where he talks about his, what happened to him.

At the end of the day, as I, Nebuchadnezzar, I lifted my eyes to heaven. He's looking away from, from what has been his preoccupation. From what has been the things that have been the status of the, the things that have preoccupied his life and he's looking in a new direction.

My reason returns to me. I think what he's talking about there is he started actually dealing with the realities of his life. Starting to deal with the reality with truth.

I blessed the most high. He gave credit to the one true God. He gave up any claim of his own towards his own glory, his own self-importance.

[30 : 58] He's actively turning away from the way that he had been going. And then he says, I praised and honored him. He began to deal with God as he actually is.

In Nebuchadnezzar's case, that means that he gave up on this way of doing religion that everyone in the ancient world was doing. This way of seeing that each of these city-states had their own gods.

The nations had these own gods that were the, they were almost like mascots. They didn't actually believe that they were real. They just kind of believed in the power of them, the mystery of them.

It was a way to baptize the desires that they had. And he turns towards dealing with God as God has revealed himself to be. Not what he thinks God might be, but as God has revealed himself.

You see, that's what repentance really demands. Repentance means we're not just trying to do a little bit of self-improvement, just paper over the edges a little bit, make a deal with God on your own terms.

[32 : 02] No, it's turning to God fully for his grace. Because when we repent, we find the fullness of God's grace. There's three ways that you see God's grace in this passage.

I want you to see them. The first one is this, that God had already warned Nebuchadnezzar about this in the dream. God had touched the subconscious mind of Nebuchadnezzar because his conscious reality was blinded to his own pride.

God, his own conscious world was dominated by his striving for something and God pulled it down through a dream.

Isn't that amazing? God took his blindedness and made him to see. Our God is so gracious that he might just work around your sin to get your attention.

The second thing of grace here is that God sent Daniel. Daniel is the chief of the magicians. And this must have been, you know, they must have been working together for a while.

[33 : 16] This must have been decades after Daniel had arrived in Babylon because they do seem, he and Nebuchadnezzar kind of seem to have this friendly exchange. You know, Nebuchadnezzar brings all the, you know, magicians in, but he goes specifically to Daniel.

And not only that, but he and Daniel seem to have an ease with one another. I mean, Daniel confronts him, you know, in his chambers.

Hey, you need to listen to my counsel here. But I actually wonder about this whole first person story. How in the world did Daniel get Nebuchadnezzar to write this?

You know? It's almost like Daniel was like, hey, I'm going to write this book. I think it's going to be great. But he's like, really? Can I write like a foreword or something? You know, would that be helpful? And Daniel was like, wow, that would actually be pretty cool.

Can you just chart out your story a little bit? I'll include it, I'll throw it in. I wonder if that's kind of how we got this particular thing. But the point is this.

[34 : 22] Well, and look even back at verse, is it 19? I think it's 19. Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed.

When he understood what the dream was about, it shook him. His thoughts alarmed him. The king said, Belteshazzar, let out the dream or interpretation alarm. He Belteshazzar answered and said, my Lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies.

What's going on with that? See, it was God's grace that allowed Daniel to have affection for this pagan king who was the one who destroyed his own homeland, who had deported him and his friends.

And yet, you don't see a hint of bitterness or antagonism towards Nebuchadnezzar. Isn't that incredible? I mean, what's going on with that?

What's going on with Daniel and this easy way he's got with Nebuchadnezzar? Is this some sort of like sick Stockholm syndrome or something? You know? What's going on here? I don't think so. I really think that what we're seeing here is a model of what true humility looks like.

[35 : 44] Daniel was a man who had incredible power. He didn't have political power. He didn't have financial power or relational power or military power. Here's what he had.

He had spiritual power. Daniel had a long practiced habit of submitting himself to the power of God who provides all things for his people.

And so over time Daniel had cultivated a beautiful response to Nebuchadnezzar. Here's what Daniel understood. Daniel understood that God was the one who had put Nebuchadnezzar in charge and had put even Daniel and his friends and the other Israelites right into the center of Babylon.

Daniel understood that Nebuchadnezzar was God's man for this moment even if he was a pagan and a wicked king. Daniel understood that God himself was at work in this and that Daniel's responsibility was to serve and to honor that king.

That is humility. He didn't say, well I disagree with you in general O king of Nebuchadnezzar but here's what God says. He actually has affection for him.

[36 : 59] Daniel embodies Jeremiah's words that the exiles were to seek the good of Babylon. He embodies Jesus' words that you were to pray for your enemies and do good to those who persecute you and that can only happen in a person who in themselves has repented of their pride and received grace from God over and over and over again.

Daniel had spent a lifetime turning away from sin turning towards Christ. Turning towards God. You see Paul, the apostle Paul said that it's the kindness of God that leads us to repentance.

And God is being incredibly kind to Nebuchadnezzar. He gave him a dream. He gave him Daniel. The third thing is this. Was his punishment.

The third piece of grace was Nebuchadnezzar's punishment and his restoration. It's almost like an afterthought in this passage that he gets restored. Chris Wright says again, he says God wants humility.

He doesn't want humiliation. But if necessary, God will humiliate the proud into genuine humility if there's no other way.

[38 : 23] See, God's grace was so powerful and good to Nebuchadnezzar that he humbled him. See, Nebuchadnezzar's punishment wasn't God's anger and wrath.

It was God's kindness to bring Nebuchadnezzar to a place of humility and restoration. Nebuchadnezzar's story is a story of unbelievable grace to an arrogant sinner.

See, that was my story. Not nearly as dramatic as Nebuchadnezzar. Mine. And never had eaten grass. Well, one time.

But that's a different story. See, I wonder how you think and talk about your own story. Is it a story of unbelievable grace? An overwhelming grace to an arrogant and undeserving sinner?

See, unfortunately, some of you are holding on to your pride. You know, you desperately want to retain this sense of superiority.

[39 : 34] This sense of that would prove that you are more than just a man. Ray Ortlund says it this way. He says, we proudly believe that we are too good to be judged, but some of us believe that we are too bad to even be saved.

But you see, in both cases, if you believe you're too good to be judged, or you're too bad to be saved, what's at the root of that is this prideful sense of superiority that is keeping you from God.

You know, some of you need to be humble, like I need to. to give up the fight for making yourself more than just a man.

But some of you need to hear the other thing. And that is, you need to hear that in Jesus, God himself has come to rescue the most notorious and unworthy sinners.

You need to hear that just like the voice that came out of heaven to declare judgment on Nebuchadnezzar, there was another voice that came out of heaven that rested upon Jesus, his son, and said, you are my son, and with you I am well pleased.

[40 : 46] And that in him we find the blessing of a loving and a gracious God. I mean, it's almost funny that Nebuchadnezzar, he only spends one sentence talking about his own restoration.

It's verse 36. Then he's kind of going back to normal for you. But Nebuchadnezzar himself wasn't normal. His world had changed. He saw himself and he saw God differently.

Look at verse 37, the very last verse. He says, Now I have Nebuchadnezzar praised and extolled in honor of the kingdom of heaven. For all his works are right and his ways are just and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Do you see what happened? Nebuchadnezzar became a man again. Just like the, you know, the clock and the teacup in Beauty and the Beast, at the end when the spell was broken they became human again.

Nebuchadnezzar became a man again. Exactly the king that he was supposed to be. Not claiming pride and glory for himself but claiming God's grace and mercy.

[41 : 55] He became who he was supposed to be. That is the story for us. The story here is not Nebuchadnezzar as the humble hero who got it right. The story is Nebuchadnezzar was an unworthy and arrogant sinner that God himself had grace upon.

That should be your story. And it can be. And what you find on the other side of turning away and repenting of this pride and this sense of superiority and turning to God is you find that you can be human again.

You can be what God means you be. and it's the only way of God. May it be true of us as a church that what we are calling one another to is to be human again through the grace and the goodness of God.

Okay, let's pray. Father, please do this for us. Let your spirit be at work in us to show us your goodness and your grace. We pray in Christ in the name of God.

As we turn to the Lord's table, I'm sure our children are going to be coming in above over just a little bit today. But I want to invite you. Part of the reason why we come forward is so that you can repent well.

[43 : 22] So that this active movement can reflect your own desire to turn away from those things that make you feel superior and turn to Christ.

And so in light of that I would invite you to come as you are directed. Please go along with me on page 5. We give thanks to God our Father that our Savior Jesus Christ gave us this feast to show His sacrifice until He comes again.

For on the night when He was betrayed the Lord took Jesus to bread and when He gave Him thanks He broke it and said this is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way He took the cup after supper saying this cup is a new covenant in my blood.

Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. Friends, we proclaim together saying Your death O Christ we proclaim Your resurrection we affirm with joy Your coming we await your hope Glory be to You Lord Jesus Hallelujah Our Father together we celebrate this feast that You've given Sanctify these Your gifts of bread and wine by Your Holy Spirit Sanctify us also that we may faithfully serve You in unity constant sea and peace and bring us at the last day of all Your saints into the joy of Your eternal kingdom all this we ask through Your Son Jesus Christ for by Him and with Him and through Him and in the unity with the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is Yours Almighty now and forever Prince please come to the peace Thank you.

Thank you.

[46 : 03] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[49 : 11] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

We pray.

Our gracious, good God, we praise you, give you thanks for the fact that you have given us grace that we do not deserve.

We can never earn on our own. We can never figure out a way to be right with you except that you provided the way. I pray, Lord, that you would give courage to those of us who need your plan to turn away and follow you.

For those of us who need to lay off these sins that entangle us, I pray that you would give wisdom, that you would give us fortitude.

[50 : 32] Father, we need you, and we pray that you would be with us as you have promised to do. And so, Lord, you are the one who is all of these good things, and so we close our time together simply praising you and asking for you to go in front of us.

So we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Friends, let's stand and sing. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. All creation goes together by the power of your voice.

Let the skies declare your glory, let the land and sea rejoice. You're the author of creation, you're the Lord of every man.

And you'll cry, you're murring down across the land. If you left the razor windows, if you seek and save your cross.

[52 : 08] And exchange the joy of heaven for the anguish of our cross. If the bread and bread and bread and bread and bread, with a word you still receive.

Then I'll silently suffer, let the guilty make the free. You're the author of creation, you're the Lord of every man.

And the fire of love brings out across the land. Let the skies declare your glory, let the skies declare your glory.

You're the Lord of every man. You're ascended into heaven, leading captives in your way.

Now you stand before the Father, interceding for your own. From each child and tongue and nation, you are leading spirit's home.

[53 : 26] You're the author of creation, you're the Lord of every man. You're the author of creation, you're the Lord of every man.

And your fire of love brings out across the land. You're the author of creation, you're the Lord of every man.

And your fire of every man. And your fire of love brings out across the land. Friends, remember that the Most High rules.

He rules and He reigns. He's calling you to come and find grace and mercy with Him. If you are new with us, we're so glad that you're here. If you're one of our regular folks, make it a point to say hello to somebody that you don't recognize.

And let us know how we can serve you and help you find where God is calling you to come. So, would you look up and hear God's blessing for you today?

[54 : 35] May the Lord Himself bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and to be gracious to you. May the Lord turn His countenance towards you and grant you His peace now and forevermore.

Go in that face. Away with us, we will be grateful. Thank you. Thank you for having me. Thank you.

So, we love you guys. Thank you.