

Stand Up

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- [0 : 00] So the reading this morning is in two parts, and firstly is a couple of verses from Daniel chapter 4, from the section which is entitled Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of a Tree.
- Finally, Daniel came into my presence, and I told him the dream.
- He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my God, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him. I said, Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you.
- Here is my dream, interpret it for me. And then we're moving to Acts chapter 6, and the first few verses.
- In those days, when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.
- [1 : 22] So the twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, it would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.
- Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you, who are known to be full of the spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them, and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.
- This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and also Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicholas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.
- They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. And so the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.
- Good morning, church. Thank you very much for inviting me to come and fellowship with you.
- [2 : 46] I bring you greetings from my family, my wife, and our children. My wife, Diana, is not here with me today because she is preaching over at Perry Rise.
- Normally we go out together and come in together, but it's such that she had to stay behind and preach whilst I am away.
- I bring you greetings from your brothers and sisters at Perry Rise Baptist Church at Forest Hill. And I've been informed that you are doing a series on Daniel, and that today you are in Chapter 4.
- Stand, stand, stand. Courage in the Book of Daniel. And this morning I just want to build upon what has been discussed or preached so far.
- I'll preach briefly because I see you have communion today, so I'll get out of the way for the service to flow on. Let us pray. Father, in the name of Jesus, thank you for your word.
- [4 : 00] Your word is seed. And this morning, come and plant your seed deep in our hearts. Let our hearts take hold of your seed and bear fruits.

In the name of Jesus, Holy Spirit, pastor of the church, come and fill us. And help us to be receptive to the word of God.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. The book of Daniel is an outstanding book.

It's a very beautiful book. And because I'm called Dan, obviously, naturally, I fall in love with it. And in my previous ministry, I served as the executive pastor of a Trinity Baptist Church for about 70 years before we were called to Perry Rise Baptist.

And then, so I found myself very much like a Daniel because I was in charge of the administration of the church, had about 12 pastors working with, looking at their welfare, looking at their payroll.

[5 : 16] And we had about four services. And they still have four services every Sunday from two campuses. That is beside the youth service and then the young adult service. So, very big church.

So, my role was very much like a Daniel for my namesake. It was a role of administration, of prayer, overseeing the growth of the various campuses, overseeing ministry, and so many others.

So, Daniel is my book. Amen. But I did not write it. Yeah. Daniel is a unique figure because the hand of the Lord came upon him and God called him to ministry right from when he was a teenager and being carried away from his motherland to a foreign land and finding favor in the eyes of the king and serving in the palace with other people.

You know the story, so I will not bore you. But Daniel chapter 4 is the only chapter in the entire Bible which was written by a pagan king. A pagan king wrote that chapter.

And he introduces himself from the salutation, Nebuchadnezzar, king. So, he was a king like, let me say, the former president of the United States of America, Donald Trump.

[6 : 44] Everybody, you know, when he comes out, the whole world pays attention to him. When he talks, whether good or bad, everybody wants to listen. And even though he's no more in presidency, it's like he's still ruling because everybody still have to because he's such a figure.

And Nebuchadnezzar was such a figure like that. He was a king of the known world of the time. He had power. He was wicked. He was a no-nonsense man.

He does what he likes. You know, nobody questions him. So, when he wrote that chapter and said, Nebuchadnezzar, king, the whole world had to stop to listen. And then he took time to praise God.

He took time to exalt the name of God. Then, following on, he tells us that he's had a dream.

And he was a dreamer. He's had a dream. And unfortunately, his magicians and soothsayers and diviners were not able to help him except a young man who he had had encounter with before that is in chapter 1 as you have already heard so much about.

[7 : 55] But, there are some unique things he said about Daniel that makes us to pause and think. He calls Daniel Belteshazzar after his own personal God.

So, to him, Daniel is an extension of his God because of what God the Almighty uses Daniel for or what Daniel stood out for.

So, he tells us in the verse 8 because these people couldn't say anything or couldn't give any interpretation, he says, Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream.

He is called Belteshazzar after the name of my God and the spirit of the Holy God is in him. That is where I'm dwelling today. The spirit of the Holy God is in him and I'm preaching on the team, be filled.

Be filled. If you want to stand up, then you have to be filled. If you are not filled, you cannot stand up.

[9 : 01] Be filled. Nebuchadnezzar says, the spirit of the Holy Gods. He's not talking about Yahweh. He's not talking about God the Almighty.

He's not talking about the Holy Spirit. He is referring to the spirit that is resident in Daniel that gives him the ability to be beyond himself, to solve puzzles, to solve enigmas, to interpret dreams, to do so many things that these magicians and soothsayers and diviners are unable to do.

It is the spirit of his God, Belteshazzar, that is resident in Daniel. I am an African and lived majority of my life in Africa until the Lord brought us over to live in England.

And when you talk about diviners, when you talk about soothsayers, when you talk about magicians, when you talk about witchcraft, I have a first-hand knowledge of these. These are guys you don't mess up with.

Either you are with them or you are with something that is higher than them. You don't go against them. You are dead. They will put a curse on you. Your bloodline is gone forever.

[10 : 13] So if you are not with them, then you need to be with a power that is higher than them. And that power is Jesus. By the grace of God, I had the opportunity to cast out devils from people.

So I know when these soothsayers could not. These were powerful people. These were people with supernatural powers who could do anything. They could divine things.

Let me bring you to the book of Exodus. when Moses went in the presence of Pharaoh and he cast the rod of God down and turned into a serpent. Pharaoh magicians did the same thing.

This is what we're talking about. People who could conjure things to come from darkness and rule on people, sit on people. But in this case, because God, Yahweh wanted to be exalted among the people, because he wanted to bring Nebuchadnezzar to his knowledge, these guys couldn't perform.

And in chapter 1, chapter 2, found out that Daniel had already been placed ahead of them. This young man, all of a sudden, is their boss.

[11 : 21] All of a sudden, he's their boss because he was more powerful than them. He was filled with the Holy Spirit. But because these guys were pagans, they didn't know the difference between the Holy Spirit of God and the spirit of a little deity.

Saying a little deity because if you know who you are in Christ, they are nothing. Because he says, I give you power over all the works of the enemies and nothing shall by enemies hurt you.

Nothing. You cast them out. So, enough introduction and explanation about these guys. It says, Daniel came in because he's got the spirit of the gods.

Friends, just as I said, it is not the spirit of these gods because these gods were nothing and they are still nothing.

Nowadays, you turn on your TV news or you read magazines or you go on social media, you go on the internet and you are confronted with the advent of AI.

[12 : 38] AI now does everything. I have a little one in, when you open our front door to the house, as soon as you enter, you see where the telephone is just at the landing.

There's this Alexa speaker, as small as this. You just speak to Alexa, connect Bluetooth. And then it replies, searching.

Then it connects it. And I say to it, Alexa, play worship songs. Then it will sample and then ask me, I've got this, do you want it?

It's okay, play it along. And then it will play. Alexa, increase the volume. It will increase, decrease the volume. Alexa, turn off. He say, AI. And I visited my brother and his one, Alexa, light.

And then the light box guy said, hey, is that how far this thing goes? Yeah. It's in our car. It's everywhere. These are supercomputers that's got the ability to do things we don't want to do or to reason for us where our reasoning could not go.

[13 : 51] I am not comparing this to the Holy Spirit of God. But the Christian or the believer who has the residence of the Holy Spirit in him or in her also goes beyond him or herself.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and then from the verse 9 he says, who has known the mind of God? And then he goes on to say, eyes has not seen, neither has any ear heard, what God has in store for those who love him.

Then he goes on to say, but we have the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, the very deep things of God. That is what the Holy Spirit does.

It is his Spirit. And there's a particular line in that verse. It says, who can know the thoughts of a man or a woman? It says, no one except that person, him or herself.

So, nobody can know the mind of God. Then he goes on to say, but we have the mind of God. Why? Because the Spirit lives in us. So, when God tells us in Jeremiah 29 verse 11, I know the plans and thoughts I have for you, thoughts of good, to give you a hope and an expectation, I am able to connect and believe it because the Spirit that is resident in me as a believer is able to show me the mind of God concerning me, is able to show me the plans of God.

[15 : 25] Although I may be going through a little bit of turmoil today, I am not so much moved because my trust is in the Lord because I have seen what he wants to do by the Spirit.

And that is what was in Daniel. The Spirit of God that enabled him to interpret dreams. The Spirit of God that enabled him to do all those remarkable things.

And brothers and sisters, if we are going to stand in our time, a time where the church has been boxed in and silenced and the church cannot talk, the church cannot speak, the church is being stifled out.

The very life is stifled out of the church. If we are going to come out as a church and stand for our rights and for the rights of people and for the rights of God, we need the Spirit of God just as God.

He was resident in Daniel. The Holy Spirit of God is the difference maker. He is the one that sets men and women apart from one another.

[16 : 32] He is the one that distinguishes us and makes us to stand up and to become relevant to our generation in a time and generation when majority of churches and Christians are folding up.

Just about four days ago, I happened to be on Twitter and I saw a short video of some Muslim students during their Eid praying in one classroom.

When I saw it, I asked myself the question, could I ask young people who are in secondary schools, gather together and pray and not be stopped? No.

the time to stand up is now. But for us to stand up, we need an infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Paul says to us in Ephesians chapter 5 verse 18, do not get drunk on wine. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery.

[17 : 44] Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit. Be filled, Henn Hill Baptist Church. Be filled, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And this is a command. It's a command that needs our hidden view. We need to seek out for him.

We need to wait for him. We need to long for him until we become full of him. If HBC is going to stand up in this crooked and perverse generation, if you are ever going to be counted, matter, or become relevant to your vision, to your mission, to your goals, its leaders, its people, and children needs to come to that place where they are filled with the spirit of the Holy God and not the spirit of Belteshazzar.

Unfortunately, today, a lot of Christians are filled with the spirit of Belteshazzar, but not the spirit of the Holy Spirit. We easily, easily, easily, we easily compromise.

We easily keep quiet. We easily sit down. We are easily pushed aside. We want to mingle together. We want to be known. We want to be said. We want it to be said to us, you are good.

[19 : 08] So we are not able even to tell people, Jesus loves you. We are not able to say, this is not good, this is not right. Even the natural laws, as Paul says in Romans chapter 1, the natural laws itself speaks about righteousness and about God.

He says, if a people doesn't know God, and they know what to do, which is right, and they do it, he says it becomes a gospel to them. Even the natural laws, that is not gospel.

It speaks to us. But we are not able to stand, because inside of the Spirit of God, sometimes we are filled with the Spirit of Belteshazzar.

In our times, we have churches, pastors, leaders, and whole congregations who are filled with what seems to be the Holy Spirit, but not the Holy Spirit.

we portray ourselves sometimes as godly, but we know we are walking in a deception. And that is why we gradually turn in cold, die, and whole congregations are becoming irresponsive to the move of the Holy Spirit.

[20 : 25] And as Baptists, sometimes we say, oh, one thing that is very common with us as Baptists, I've been a Baptist all my life. I was born a Baptist. My dad just retired about four years ago as a Baptist minister, you know, and went to a Baptist nursery, a Baptist primary school, a Baptist secondary school, a Baptist system until university.

Became the president of the Baptist Union. Everything about me is Baptist. All I've known about my life is Baptist. And sometimes I want to try something else. Sometimes.

And one thing that is common, universal within Baptists is discerning the mind of God. Discerning together. And sometimes in our discerning, we fight. In our discerning, we hate.

In our discerning, we growl at each other. But how do you discerning? Nobody can discerning on the face of the earth without the spirit of God. If we are discerning the mind of God, it is with the spirit of God.

But the spirit of God is not the spirit of violence. It's not the spirit of hatred. It's not the spirit of fighting. It's not the spirit of biting. It's not the spirit that sets one against the other. So what spirit do we discern when we meet together as a church?

[21 : 38] It is not the spirit of God. But time has come when we will desire the sweet spirit of God fill us. Now to become full of God, I'm running up.

There must first be the need of an emptying. we need to come to that place where we empty ourselves. Where by the grace of God, we open the doors and the windows of our hearts and our minds and say, Lord, we surrender.

We empty ourselves before you because we cannot fill, we cannot be full of the spirit. If a bottle is already full of water, I cannot continue to fill this bottle because it's already full.

If I want to fill it with something other than clear water, let's say apple juice, then the water needs to come out of this container. It needs to come out of the bottle and sometimes it needs to be cleansed before I can pour in the apple juice or the squash or the lemonade or whatever it is I want to put into the bottle.

We need to come to that place where we say, Lord, I've come to the end of myself. Lord, we have come to the end of ourselves as a community, as a fellowship and Lord, we just want to humble ourselves before you to empty ourselves before you.

[23 : 06] We need to empty ourselves of our self-egos and the flesh and the worthiness and the compromise and any other thing that stands in the way of the spirit.

And secondly, there needs to be a washing and a cleansing of our hearts and our being from sin. Let me give you an example. Before, when I came out of college, at Spurgeon's College, it's about 15 years, isn't it?

Yeah. And it's my senior at Spurgeon's College, so yeah. And I was sent out to start a church plan, yeah, a pioneer ministry.

So we started it at Cumberwell. myself and another pastor. And now it's a big church within the association and the union. And one day I said to myself, I think I need to go on retreat because I've not gone on retreat for a long time.

So I booked a retreat center and went. And I got there on a Monday. I was going Monday to Wednesday and come back. I got there at 12 o'clock in the afternoon and I was shown my room and as soon as I got there, I dropped my bag and I knelt down by the bedside to pray, to thank the Lord.

[24 : 25] And I will never forget. I was seized like an electric fire has been poured on me by the Holy Spirit. I could not pray any other prayer for the three days I was there than Lord have mercy on me.

Forgive me. Cleanse me. Have mercy. Forgive me. I had my prayer points. There was a reason why I was going to pray during that retreat.

But he had a different agenda. And after the third day, brothers and sisters, I felt so light. I could see there was a change in me.

But I couldn't describe it. I couldn't describe it. And then I came back to my church and when I came back, it was a prayer meeting in the evening. I was so tired but I dragged myself there because coming back from the retreat, I drove a long way and said, okay, I'll go.

So I went. And my other colleague finished the service. So since Pastor Dan has just come up from the retreat, come and then give us the benediction. As soon as I stood in front of the lepton, the same Holy Spirit came upon me.

[25 : 31] And what happened in that service that day, I have never, ever experienced it. And since that time, I've never experienced it again. I've never experienced it again.

people were shaking. Things that were beyond reasoning. We couldn't close the service. The service that I was going to give a benediction had to go on for another two hours.

People were crying before God. Why did that happen? Because he cleansed me. Because he washed me. It had nothing to do with me. I didn't go to that retreat to be cleansed.

I went with my own objective, but he had a different agenda. My brothers and sisters, we need, after being, you know, emptying ourselves, we need a washing. We need a cleansing.

By the lamb's blood. We need to come to that place where we love righteousness and shine on righteousness. And if you are a student of Daniel, you find out that Daniel shunned on righteousness.

[26 : 37] righteousness, we need to come to that place too where we will resolve in our hearts without fear or favor and say, I will not defile myself with the king's meat and wine.

Daniel chapter 1, verse 8. For we cannot eat and drink the king's meat and wine and expect to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God at the same time.

lastly, if you go to the verse 27 of the same chapter 4, Daniel admonished the king.

See, when you and I get filled with the Holy Spirit, it doesn't matter who stands before us. If they are sinning, we'll tell them, stop sinning. He says in the verse 27, and Daniel, after he had interpreted the dream, said to the king, renounce your sins and do what is right.

renounce your sins, do what is right. And he said, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed.

[27 : 48] It may be that then your prosperity will continue. How dare you stand in front of somebody as reckless, as dangerous as Nebuchadnezzar and tell him, renounce your sins, if not the Holy Spirit of God that is within you, giving you that boldness.

When we get filled with the Spirit, we will be so bold, no matter who stands before us, we will tell them, renounce your sin, stop your wicked ways.

And it is the same Spirit that was resident in Peter in Acts chapter 2, verse 38, whereby he stood in front of the masses and said, repent and and be baptized.

Every one of you, in that very moment, 3,000 people came to know Jesus Christ. Would you want to tell the world to turn from their sins and come to Christ?

Are you tired of not being able to reprove people of their worthiness and sin? Would you want to be a Daniel and stand up? Are you tired of compromising and would like to stand up?

[29 : 03] Then, my encouragement to you this morning is be filled, filled, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Let us stand, please. In about a minute or two, why don't we all come before the Lord and ask him, Lord, I surrender.

Fill me. I surrender, Lord. Lord, I empty myself before you. I want to stand.

I want to stand up. Fill me, Lord. Why don't we pray? Father, in the name of Jesus, thank you for your word that has come to us.

We receive it with gladness. Help us to come out of ourselves, to know who we are, to know ourselves, to humble ourselves before you.

[30 : 17] Teach us to empty ourselves, to come before you, get washed, cleansed from all impurities. Teach us to humble before your spirit.

Holy Spirit, we just don't want you to live in us, in our spirits.

We want to be full of you. Just like Stephen, a man full of the spirit and wisdom, we seek you, Lord, in Jesus' name.

Amen. God bless you. Please kindly take your seats. Amen.