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# PURPOSE IN YOUR HEART

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- Our last class was, ***“Our God Whom We Serve is Able to Deliver Us”***

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- We saw that Daniel’s three friends refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar’s Idol

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- There are times when Christians have to disobey the law of the land when it goes against what is being commanded by God.

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- Every day we are all giving choices as to whether or not we will follow the Lord.
- Daniel’s friends were prepared to stand up against the temptation to sin, **WHETHER OR NOT** God were to rescue them
- That is key!

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- I’m going to do what is right, and God **IS ABLE** to rescue me.

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- But, even if God chooses **NOT** to rescue me, I am still going to do what is right.

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- Fill your life with that kind of resolve, and you can face any trial.

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- What we saw in the Furnace is that God participates in our trials.

- They looked into the furnace and saw a fourth person.
- God not only carries us through our Trials, but He is right there beside us to encourage and comfort us as well

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- 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:12 & 19 NLT

- 12) Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you.
- 19) So if you are suffering according to God's will, keep on doing what is right, and trust yourself to the God who made you, for he will never fail you.

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- Keep on doing what is right!

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- Trust yourself to the God who made you!

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- He will never fail you!

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- This morning we will look at how ***“Daniel's Thoughts Troubled Him”***
- Chapter 4 is the chapter where Nebuchadnezzar goes crazy...
- Most of the chapter is about Nebuchadnezzar, and not Daniel, but we learn a helpful bit about Daniel's character here...

- Daniel 4:1-3

- 1) Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.
- 2) I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.
- 3) How great *are* his signs! and how mighty *are* his wonders! his kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion *is* from generation to generation.

- Nebuchadnezzar writes a letter to all the ruling powers of the entire earth...
- Look at his introduction

- It's almost like this has become Nebuchadnezzar's standard introduction to his letters
- Do you think he really believes this?
- We'll see...
- Another dream... This one even **WORSE!**

- Daniel 4:4-5

- 4) I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace:
- 5) I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

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- Nebuchadnezzar is contented and prosperous.

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- When things are going well in your own life, does this make you more or less or more vulnerable to problems?

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- It is often when things look good that we often have cause to be the most worried.

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- You often get lulled into a sense of false security and aren't prepared for even the smallest problem.

- Daniel 4:6-7

- 6) Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream.
- 7) Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.

- What do we learn from these verses?

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- WHY would he call back in the same losers who couldn't help him before?
- This suggests a couple of things...

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- First, that the pagan wise men had again come into favor with the king.

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- Second, that Daniel's job during the intervening years was probably being an administrator rather than a dream interpreter.
- Daniel 4:8-9
  - 8) But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom *is* the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, *saying*,
  - 9) O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods *is* in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.
- Maybe this suggests a reason why Daniel was not consulted first?
  - It seems that Daniel took his time coming before the king.
- Why delay?
- It allowed the power of God to be shown after the others failed.

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- What do you think about the description in the parenthetical about Daniel and his Babylonian name?
- Daniel would not like this.

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- First, Nebuchadnezzar identifies Daniel with a Babylonian god, not the true God.

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- Second, Daniel doesn't have the "spirit of the holy gods" in him, but rather the "spirit of the Most High God"
- Daniel 4:10-17

- 10) Thus *were* the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof *was* great.
- 11) The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth:

- 12) The leaves thereof *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.
- 13) I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven;
- 14) He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:
- 15) Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts in the grass of the earth:
- 16) Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.
- 17) This matter *is* by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

- How hard is this to interpret?
- The dream seems pretty self-explanatory
- It terrified Nebuchadnezzar, and it's not that scary of an image, so even he must have realized that he was the tree, or it wouldn't have bothered him that much
- Why couldn't the Chaldeans interpret this for him?
- Were they being honest?
- Maybe they didn't want to bring the obvious bad news to him?

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- Thinking of yourself as a tree, have you ever been cut down to size?
- We've all been cut down to size at one time or other.

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- Sometimes it's as simple as a coworker pointing out that you gave an incorrect answer.

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- Sometimes it's a boss who overrules a decision you made.

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- Sometimes it's a coach who takes you out of a game.
- Being cut down may lead to all kinds of feelings, none of them good: humiliation, being put down, losing face.

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- The big question is whether you learn something positive from the situation. If you continue to look at it as a negative event, then you'll never get past the humiliation.
- What does the fact that the tree now has no top, only a stump and roots, but it has a mind suggest? (A tree can sometimes revive from the stump.)
- Daniel 4:18-19
  - 18) This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise *men* of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou *art* able; for the spirit of the holy gods *is* in thee.
  - 19) Then Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream *be* to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.

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- Daniel is dismayed that he must give the king the bad news in his dream. If you had to give bad news to a tyrant with great power, would you do it with discretion or with valor?
- We learn a lot about the character of Daniel by how he handles this interaction

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- He isn't glad to see the mighty brought low

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- He doesn't delight in seeing the proud abased

- ***Daniel's thoughts troubled him***

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- He felt honest **COMPASSION** for this man who has treated him poorly

- To learn that would be a great thing...

- Daniel's interpretation is...

- Daniel 4:20-26

- 20) The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;
- 21) Whose leaves *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:
- 22) It *is* thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.
- 23) And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him;
- 24) This *is* the interpretation, O king, and this *is* the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:
- 25) That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.
- 26) And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.

- Why does God, who seems to want to teach the king a lesson in humility, send the king dreams which glorify the king's power?
- Daniel knows that this dream has both good news and bad news. Why does he start with the good news first? What does that teach us about how we should act in similar situations?
- Notice how Daniel gives Nebuchadnezzar hope? (In verse 26 he is told that his kingdom will be restored when he acknowledges God.)
- The next verse is pure Daniel... Not a part of the interpretation...

- Daniel 4:27

- 27) Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

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- Daniel gives some unsolicited advice: repent. What does Daniel's advice teach us about God?

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- God does not desire to harm us.

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- He desires our willing obedience.

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- For that reason, He warns us in advance about judgment and gives us the opportunity to turn from sin.

- **SLIDE**

- God feels compassion for us!
- Recall that Nebuchadnezzar had previously acknowledged the great God of Heaven. Why hasn't the king already made the statements that God requires? (This gets to the heart of things. God is not looking for us to just say the right things, He is looking for us to do the right things. Verse 27 explains that we renounce our sins by doing what is right. We renounce our wickedness by being kind to others in need.)
- God gives Nebuchadnezzar a whole year to repent...
- Daniel 4:28-30
  - 28) All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.
  - 29) At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.
  - 30) The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

- And he doesn't...

- Daniel 4:31-33

- 31) While the word *was* in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.
- 32) And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven



times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

- 33) The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' *feathers*, and his nails like birds' *claws*.

- Seven years later he does...

- Daniel 4:34-35

- 34) And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation:
- 35) And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

- And God doesn't forget him...

- Daniel 4:36-37

- 36) At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.
- 37) Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

- Why does God bring Nebuchadnezzar back into all his glory?

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- God Loves US!

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- God is not against honoring individuals.

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- Nebuchadnezzar is entitled to enjoy the benefits of what he has done. He is a very successful man.

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- What he needs to do, and what he finally does do in verse 37, is to acknowledge God as the source of his success.
- His problem was that he did not give the proper glory to God. He now does that.

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- We need to also...
- Do we?