

Throughout the first three chapters of Daniel, we have seen God working in the king's life. In chapter 2, God sends a vision to Nebuchadnezzar to remind him that even the most powerful human civilisations would fall, but God's kingdom would endure forever. Instead of responding with humility and submitting himself to God, Nebuchadnezzar built an idol (reminiscent of the golden head) and demanded everyone in his empire to worship it. The Lord brought in His three chosen instruments who would not bow down to the idol. The king was furious and had them thrown into the furnace. He thought his power was absolute. But God protected their lives and once again demonstrated that He was the King of Kings.

After this, Nebuchadnezzar made a statement about God's greatness. But it was just temporary, and he reverted to his arrogant ways. What happens next is a lesson in humility and the dangers of success.

When have you had to eat 'humble pie'?

Read Daniel 4

1. How would you describe Nebuchadnezzar's experience of God in Daniel so far? Imagine a world leader today who was intent on the whole world knowing that God's kingdom exists and is everlasting. Can you think of any modern-day examples? What reaction would the media have?

2. The city of Babylon, the Babylonian empire and the King's reputation were well known. There is a type of pride that gives thanks to God for allowing the accomplishment of great things and there is a pride which assumes sole credit for them. How do we know the difference between the two?

3. v4-8 What similarities are there between this and the last time Nebuchadnezzar had a dream?
4. The king keeps turning to people who can't help him. Can you think of any comparable situations in the world where people keep turning to something ineffective?
5. V9-18 the King's dream has a similar theme to Adam and Eve. In what way did King Nebuchadnezzar fail in the same way as Adam and Eve? Someone said recently, 'people don't want to know there is a God, they want to be a god themselves.' In what way do you think this is true?
6. Daniel interprets the dream, but the King does not listen to Daniel's advice in v27. In v34 after a time of being humbled, clarity comes to the King. Are you good at taking advice from others? If we ask more and more people their thoughts to a problem, how could that become unhelpful?
7. What is God's activity in this reading? How does it relate to the wider story of God's salvation story?
8. We are unlikely to have created a vast wealth and power like Nebuchadnezzar, but we all have gifts and abilities. What things in your life tempt you to pride? Are you good at remembering where your gifts come from?
9. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. Think about the gifts God has given you. Do you exercise them with love? Do you ever see spiritual gifts being used competitively?
10. Who needs to hear this story? What lessons are here that can be shared with someone who doesn't yet know Jesus?

Prayer Points

Pray for Michelle and the team of employees and volunteers at the Bexhill & Battle Foodbank, as they continue to work hard, not only to provide emergency food and support to local people in crisis but campaign against poverty.

Pray for the minority Christian communities throughout Israel-Palestine. Pray that they would have grace and strength in the midst of the misunderstandings and pressures that they face from the majority communities around them and that they would be beacons of hope in their land.

Sermon Notes



BIBLE STUDY

October 6th 2024

Daniel – Faith in the Fire:

The Test of Success : Daniel 4:19-37

The book of Daniel tells Daniel's story—and a fascinating and instructive story it is. But the main purpose of Daniel is to reveal to us who God is - His character, His purposes, His way of working in the world for the good of His people. The main lesson of Daniel, then, is not, as is sometimes assumed *Dare to be a Daniel!* Rather, the main point is this: *Dare to trust in Daniel's God, even when the world seems against you.* How do we remain faithful to God, especially in an age where it seems a great deal is moving in a different direction? What does it look like to trust in God when our world is turned upside down? Daniel remained faithful and God used him to great effect, how can God use us in the fiery challenges of life?

If you would like to join a Connect Group, please contact the church office 01424 730001