

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide SB 2.4.2024

GOD'S PURSUING LOVE – DANIEL 4

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Pastor Daniel's message this week reached the thrilling conclusion of Nebuchadnezzar's faith journey. Throughout his journey, Nebuchadnezzar would recognize God as the "God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets," but then he would drift back into his prideful and sinful ways. After 30 years of God's pursuing love, Nebuchadnezzar finally allowed God to break through. No longer did Nebuchadnezzar exalt himself, instead he exalted and praised the true God of heaven. The king discovered that once God was the rightful ruler in his life, only then could he experience true peace. Let's get into our study.

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most from the Pastor Daniel's sermon?
2. Describe a lesson that you or somebody you know learned the hard way? It could be a lesson from your childhood, college years, or any time in your life.
3. Over the last few chapters, we witness the testimony of a Gentile king and how God changed his heart. How might Nebuchadnezzar's testimony relate to your own testimony?

In John Chapter 9, there is an example of a man who testified, "One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" if you are a follower of Jesus, you have a testimony. A testimony is simply the story of how you became a Christian. No one can refute your testimony because you are the world's leading authority in the subject of you. Danile chapter 4 is Nebuchadnezzars testimony.

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ Daniel 4:1-8

Nebuchadnezzar was prideful of the beautiful palace he had created. It is estimated the palace expanded 15 square miles and was surrounded by walls 387' tall and 85' wide (wide enough for four chariots to ride on side by side). The Euphrates River ran through it with lush farmlands and breathtaking Hanging Gardens. These gardens were a remarkable engineering feat and considered one of the Ancient Seven Wonders.

1. Read Proverbs 6:16-19. What are things the Lord hates? What sin is at the top of the list?
2. Is there a difference between being "proud" of something and being "prideful"? When is the line crossed?
3. Read Proverbs 28:11 and Jerimiah 9:23-24. Where should our pride be focused?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ Daniel 4:9-18

ENCOUNTER GOD IN 2024

Nebuchadnezzar's dream needed to be interpreted, but before the king went to Daniel, he considered other wise men and Bel (the god of Babylon). What he experienced previously with Daniel and the three Hebrew young men was enough to impress him, but not enough to convert him. Being impressed with God isn't the same as being converted.

1. Describe some of the details of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. What was in the midst of the earth (v. 10)? What did the watcher or messenger shout out (v. 14-16)? For what reason did the messenger decree this decision (v. 17).
2. The tree in Nebuchadnezzar's dream was noted for its size, strength, prominence, beauty, fruit, and shelter. Who was symbolized by the tree in the dream (21-22). Provide examples of symbolic "trees" we might encounter in the world today.
3. The heavenly messenger is instructed "to leave the stump of its roots in the earth" (v. 15). What do you think is the significance of leaving the stump (v.26)?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ Daniel 4:19-36

Daniel was able to interpret the dream and became heartbroken. For he cared deeply for this king and did not want harm to come upon him. Daniel courageously speaks to the king and even tries to advise him of a way to avoid the matters of the dream. In doing so, he demonstrated the great compassion that our heavenly Father has for us. As Moody said, "no one should talk to others about hell without a tear in their eye."

1. In verse 19, Daniel is perplexed and troubled by the dream. Can you think of a time when you had to tell someone something difficult? How did you convey the truth in love? How did they receive it?
2. What specific steps did God take to humble Nebuchadnezzar (vv. 31-33)? What are some examples of steps God may have taken in your life to humble you?
3. Nebuchadnezzar repents, is restored back to his kingdom, and then praises God (34-37). Why do you think Nebuchadnezzar wanted to declare the things God had done?

Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

After Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation, he lifted his eyes to heaven, and his understanding returned. Then he blessed God and praised and honored Him (v. 34). God continues to pursue us with love. He does not want to discipline, but He will discipline when required. When He does, we need to simply look up and He will be right there ready to reveal Himself as a loving Father, Savior, and Redeemer. No one is beyond the reach of God.

1. When pride shows up in your life, what does it typically look like? What steps will you take to embrace more humility in your life?
2. Nebuchadnezzar turned his life around and praised God. What is something you can praise God for in your life right now?

PRAYER: Close your time in prayer, praise God for pursuing you with love as a Father, Savior, and Redeemer. Ask that God would reveal areas of pride and would help you embrace humility and place Him first in your life.

"Let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have understanding to know me" (Jeremiah 9:23-24)