



Unshakable Faith

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Week 5

Theme: Posture (Chapter 5)

Weekly Memory Verse

"He did this because Daniel, whom the king called Belteshazzar, was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means."

– Daniel 5:12

Day 1: Kingdom

Prayer of Illumination

Guide us, O God, by Your Word, and Holy Spirit, that in Your light we may see light, in Your Truth find freedom, and in Your Will discover peace; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

Read Chapter 5 entirely, then focus on Daniel 5:1-9

Meditation

What is the Lord revealing to you today through Daniel 5:1-9?

What do these verses say about God's character?

How does this apply to us today?

Contemplation

In Daniel 5, on the heels of Nebuchadnezzar's fall from grace, we are introduced to yet another king. A similar story line emerges—an arrogant king confronted by a God he doesn't know, haunted by a message of destruction he can't interpret. We've been here before. In fact, to some degree this is the arc of all empires—one kingdom giving way to the might of the next, only to crumble in the hands of another. And at the center of each earthly kingdom, each empire, are false gods and false egos. In Daniel 5:3-5, King Belshazzar brings out the trophies of the Jerusalem conquest, praising the false gods of their kingdom, while shaming the one true

God. And while Babylon seems to have had a penchant for worshipping natural resources, you could just as easily replace gold with money, bronze with power, or stone with security of self over others.

Some scholars argue that through the structure of chiasm, the chapters in Daniel point to a central theme, found in 7:13-14 "...there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."

The book of Daniel is a book of kingdoms, an expose on power, but always pointing—through the righteousness of Daniel and the revelations of God—towards a greater Kingdom, one that endures. It's the Kingdom that centuries later Jesus, the Son of Man, would ask for: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done."

The question is, what kingdom are you pursuing?

Reflection

What are the false gods our current kingdom idolizes? In what ways have you allowed these gods to become your gods?

In what ways have your ego and posture of pride countered the Kingdom of God?

Frederick Buechner once wrote, "The Kingdom of God is not a place, of course, but a condition." Take a few minutes to reflect on this idea. What are the attributes of God's Kingdom? How can you be an active participant in God's Kingdom today?

Day 2: Connection

Prayer of Illumination

Lord, sanctify my mind to pray with understanding of Your Will. Teach me to tap into the mind of Christ so that I have the ability to think and pray from Heaven's perspective. Amen

Reading

Read Chapter 5 entirely, then focus on Daniel 5:10-12

Meditation

What is the Lord revealing to you today through Daniel 5:10-12?

What do these verses say about the human condition?

How does this apply to us today?

Contemplation

Everyone has a sphere of influence. We don't always notice who in our sphere is paying attention. Having heard a great cacophony, King Belshazzar's queen came to address the competing voices in the king's hearing. Her advice: "Don't be alarmed! Don't look so pale! There is a young man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father, he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods."

What strikes me as significant is that Daniel's wisdom and insight are displayed through numerous prophetic gifts: dream interpretation and the ability to explain mysteries and solve enigmas.

In short, Daniel was a 'solutionary.' He mastered the language and literature of the Babylonians. He learned their culture but didn't take his cues from there. The Holy Spirit was on Daniel so he could serve the people around him. He was gifted, and he stewarded that responsibility with humility and nobility.

Kris Vallotton teaches us the difference between IQ, EQ and SQ (spiritual intelligence):

Conventional intelligence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ) are like the storage space on a smartphone. We can listen, learn, and experience. At some point, we reach our human capacity.

Daniel models what is available to us by the power of the Spirit: spiritual intelligence or SQ, which is developed through intimacy with God. We're reminded in Daniel 6 that he had a regular habit of praying to God 3 times a day.

Your smartphone can connect you to seemingly infinite amounts of information on the internet. Spiritual intelligence is connecting to the Holy Spirit, except you are tapping into a web that is not just worldwide, but cosmos wide. Even now we have the mind of Christ. So we, like Daniel, have access to infinite possibilities for others through the Holy Spirit.

Reflection

Ask the Lord to give you new gifts of the Holy Spirit for the sake of others in your sphere of influence.

Reflect on a time when someone recognized the Spirit of God in you. Did you respond with your natural IQ and EQ or with your SQ?

Pray for the boldness to take risks in the area of sharing your spiritual intelligence.

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Day 3: Significance

Prayer of Illumination

Open my eyes to see where I have made my significance about my vocation and gifts rather than the significance of being the beloved. Help me surrender in new ways as I am on the path of shedding away my false self to become who You created me to be. Amen.

Reading

Read Chapter 5 entirely, then focus on Daniel 5:13-17

Meditation

What is the Lord revealing to you today through Daniel 5:13-17?

What do these verses say about God's character?

How does this apply to us today?

Contemplation

I have been singing most of my life and at 16 I was asked by a producer if I wanted to be GREAT. As he began to lay out the life of riches and fame I would have, I was tempted to say yes at the thought of having the "American Dream" of success. I ended up turning down the offer. Why? I knew what I had was worth more. It was greater than any earthly measure of success. In the story, King Belshazzar was offering Daniel a purple robe, gold, and the position of the third highest ruler in the kingdom. In the same way, Daniel told the king to keep his robe, the gold, and position and yet, Daniel still used his gift. I think Daniel had an understanding of the posture of humility, which is having a true understanding of who you are. When tempted with the riches this world had to offer, he was confident in his gifting and knew his position as a son.

Culture would say use your gift to bring riches and wealth to yourself. Culture would say, everyone should know their brand and from that flows significance. However, when we take the posture of humility, we have an understanding that whether my name is known or not, my significance is in who I am. Who I am then becomes a gift to the world and a portion of the creativity of God. It is my job, just like Daniel, to be prepared for the moments in life where my gift is used. I've learned over time, your gift will make room for you, but to not let it name you.

Reflection

Where in your life have you allowed your vocation and talent become a source of significance?

Write a statement of identity using Scripture.

How can you continue to develop your gifts so that you are ready when called upon?

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Day 4: Humility

Prayer of Illumination

Holy Spirit, we invite You to examine our hearts today. We recognize that all things come from You for Your glory. Forgive us for our pride. We humble ourselves before You today. Amen.

Reading

Read Chapter 5 entirely, then focus on Daniel 5:18-31.

Meditation

What is the Lord revealing to you today through Daniel 5:18-31?

What do these verses say about God's character?

How does this apply to us today?

Contemplation

I don't know about you, but when I read verses 18-31, it feels so applicable and relatable to my own heart and struggle. No, my mind has not been made like that of a beast, nor have I had to dwell among wild donkeys like King Nebuchadnezzar. I have, however, often forgotten that it is God who gives. Pride starts to creep in when I shift my praise to the gifts God has given me instead of worshipping the One who gave it all.

I find this passage to also be really encouraging because it reminds us that our success doesn't fall on us. We believe that we need to work like it depends on us, and pray like it depends on God. In Job 1:21 we read, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." It's our job to work hard and posture ourselves before Him, and we need to release the pressure to determine the outcome! We just get to give Him praise for whatever He wants to do through us.

We can humble ourselves and be restored like King Nebuchadnezzar or pride will destroy us like King Belshazzar. The Kingdom of God is upside down. We are lifted up when we bow down. How will you respond?

Reflection

What is something God has revealed to you? Share with someone what you think God has been speaking to you about and ask them to pray for you.

Read vs 23 again.

What do you need to praise God for today? Use this as a reminder that all things come from God.

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Day 5: Pause & Reflect

Ask the Lord, journal, and pray through the following questions ...

God, what are some of the takeaways from Chapter 5 that you want to highlight in my life?

Spend time today posturing yourself to listen and reflect on each day's theme:

- Kingdom
- Connection
- Significance
- Humility

What is one thing you are going to do in response to this week's message and reading plan, and who is going to hold you accountable?

Write down one takeaway and one action step in a journal to commit to it.

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