

Thriving in Babylon
Staying Faithful While Waiting for God to Do What Only God Can Do
Daniel 4:1-37

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / April 8, 2018

I. Don't Make the Mistake of Assuming that Earthly Prosperity Can Produce the Internal Riches of True Peace and Rest with God

Daniel 4:4 "I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace."

Being fortunate financially doesn't solve everything or mean you're at rest.

In **v. 5**, Nebuchadnezzar talks about being afraid and the thoughts on his bed and the visions in his head were troubling. That verse is talking about not sleeping well because of an inner turmoil that is unrelated to financial circumstances.

Daniel 4:5 "I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions in my head troubled me."

In contrast to the unrest and sleeplessness of our world, the Psalmist expresses what we can have that money can't buy.

Psalm 4:7-8 "You have put gladness in my heart, more than in the season that their grain and wine increased. I will both lie down in peace and sleep; for You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety."

II. Don't Make the Mistake of Hating Unbelievers or Rejoicing in Their Destruction

A. Look at How Daniel Loved a Man that Had Wrecked His Own Life and Country

Daniel 4:19 "Then Daniel... was astonished for a time, and his thoughts troubled him... My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!"

Daniel could have been thanking God for what was going to happen to King Nebuchadnezzar, but that's not what he did and that's not what Jesus calls us to do in this dark day either.

Luke 6:27-28, 35-36 ²⁷ "But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you... ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. ³⁶ Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful."

B. Look at How Daniel Loved Him Enough to Call Him to Repent

Daniel 4:27 “Therefore, O king... break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor...”

Daniel had been serving King Nebuchadnezzar for decades before this loving and bold moment arrived.

Sometimes God will put you in a place for years where it looks like there's no opportunity to speak or make a difference. But God's not in a hurry like we are and His timetable's not anything like ours.

C. Daniel Served for Decades in a Wicked Administration without any Indication that God was at Work in this Man's Heart

Daniel submitted to God's sovereignty and served with integrity becoming the best that he could be for a pagan king, because he understood that he was on a mission for the One true living God.

Wherever God has you see it as the place where you've been called to be salt and light. If you stay long enough God might allow you to see some amazing transformation in the lives of unbelievers around you.

III. Don't Make the Mistake of Trying to Live for God without Being Filled with the Spirit of God

Nebuchadnezzar recognized and discerned that there was more to Daniel than just the man Daniel. We see this in **v. 8, 9, and 18**.

Are you filled with the Spirit and does anyone sense anything different about you? **Galatians 5:19-25** shows what being filled with the Spirit looks like.

IV. Don't Miss What We Should Learn about God and His Mercy

A. God is in Control of Who is in Control

Repeatedly, the big theme of God being in control of who is in control jumps out of this chapter in **v. 17, 25, and 32**.

The prophet Jeremiah clarified that wicked Nebuchadnezzar was still God's choice and God's servant.

Jeremiah 27:6-7 “⁶ And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. ⁷ So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son’s son, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them.”

B. God Delights in Showing Mercy to People We Might Have Given Up On Long Ago

Nebuchadnezzar was murderous, arrogant, materialistic, idolatrous and the very enemy of God’s people, yet God made him an object of mercy and saved him.

This means there’s hope for us and for every person you encounter in our twisted, dark world today!

In total, Daniel faithfully served a wicked king for 40 years before that king ever responded to Daniel’s witness.

Never give up no matter how hard you think the person’s heart might be, because God can reach the hardest heart.