

# Give God His Rightful Place

by Friedel Stegen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of acknowledging God's sovereignty and submitting to His will, lest we face the consequences of not doing so.*

**Duration:** 45:28

**Scripture:** Daniel 4:24-25, Daniel 4:27, Colossians 1:28, 2 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 10:29, James 4:7

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the consequences of losing one's royal authority and the feeling of emptiness and desolation that comes with it. He uses the example of a king who was driven away from his people and lived like an animal until he acknowledged God. The preacher warns against relying on prosperity and blessings as signs of being on the right track, as God may be working to draw us closer to Him. He then references a passage from Daniel 4, where the interpretation of a dream reveals that the king will be driven away and live with wild animals until he acknowledges God's sovereignty. The preacher encourages the audience to lift their eyes to God and avoid falling into deeper darkness or wandering off into deserted places.

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## Transcript

I would like to read a very well-known portion of scripture out of Daniel. Chapter 4. Bear with me if I read a few verses. I'll read from verse 24.

This is the interpretation, O King, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my Lord the King. You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals. You will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven.

Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone He wishes. The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you. Your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that heavenly rules.

Therefore, O King, be pleased to accept my advice. Renounce your sins by doing what is right and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.

We'll read thus far. Here in this portion of scripture we hear how Daniel interprets the dream of the King. And after he has interpreted and told the King what's going to happen to him and his kingdom, then Daniel turns to the King and personally addresses him and says, O King, be pleased to accept my advice.

Isn't that something wonderful? That immediately after the interpretation of that dream, Daniel pleads with the King. And at the same time he warns the King. And he says, you know, if you repent from your sins and turn away from evil, it might be that God will forgive you and He'll turn away this which is going to come upon you and He'll turn it and He'll grant you prosperity.

And how terrible that the King didn't heed that warning. But you know, so often that very same thing happens to you and to me. My mother comes and she warns me.

My father comes and he warns me and he pleads with me and says, don't do that. Why are we people so stiff-necked? Why are we so self-willed? Here, a child of the Lord, a young man comes to the King and he pleads with the King. And he says, you know, this is the interpretation of your dream.

This is what's going to come upon you. But I want to give you advice. I want to give you hope.

I want to help you. Renounce your sins. Turn away from your sins.

Don't continue doing that what you are doing. It is displeasing to the Lord. Please don't.

And you find people pleading with people and say, please turn away from your evil ways and turn to God. Don't live your own life anymore. Please don't do as you please.

Don't think that you are the only person that is right. Turn away from that and put God first in your life. Let God be the first in your life.

Acknowledge Him. And let your life from now onwards belong to the Lord where God is God in your life. Yes, we all want to serve God.

We all acknowledge or say that we are Christians. But God says, there is something in your life which I detest. There is something in your life which I don't like.

Turn away from it. If you don't turn away from it, you will have to reap the consequences. And yet we find ourselves stiff-necked and self-assured.

We continue with that what we think is right. We can say, oh no, God is blessing me. God is speaking to me.

Just like the king was. Just look at the prosperity he enjoyed in his kingdom. And he had all reason to say, God is blessing me.

And he had all reason to say, I am on the right way. Just look at how I am blessed. And little did he realize God was blessing him in such a way because he wanted his heart.

And that is so often we think everything is fine, I am on the right track, because God is blessing me, everything is going according to plan, and we don't realize that God is actually against us. And we don't realize that God does everything in his power to draw us to himself. And here we see a king having a dream.

And in this dream, Daniel interprets that dream for him and says, King, you are in the gravest of dangers. Don't continue on that road. Please accept my advice.

Turn away from your sins. Renounce your sins. And do what is right.

You see, so often we can think that what I am doing, what I am thinking is right. And we don't realize that it might be contrary to the will of God. And that is the danger of us Christians, that we become self-assured.

And we think we are still on the right track. And God's word comes to us every Sunday. And God speaks to our hearts.

God warns us. God pleads with us. But it doesn't change our lives.

We continue the way we've been living the last 10, 20 years. And we don't want to submit under the mighty hand of God. And here we get Daniel coming to the king and saying, I'm warning you, please turn away from your ways, those ways which you are going.

Although you might think they are blessed, they are a curse in God's eyes. They are a curse in God's eyes. In Colossians 1 verse 3 we read, Him, Jesus Christ, we preach warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

That we warn every person. Teaching every man. That is important, that we warn the people if we see that they aren't walking in God's ways.

That is the message of a preacher. That we warn the people that they might be sanctified and purified with the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Teaching them in every possible way.

Warning them. Telling them, listen, that way which you are going is the wrong way. Submit to God.

Even if you think you are on the right way, you are not doing anything wrong. You know that is the most difficult thing for a person to submit, to bow, to acknowledge, to accept, if he thinks he is right. Hear the king thought, he is king, he is prosperous, everything is going according to his plan.

And he sees all the people, all the nations, they accept him, they honour him as king. And God in his love and his mercy, he speaks to him. How often has God spoken to you already? And yet you continue in your way.

You continue in that what you feel is right. And you continue in that which appeals to you. But to submit and to bow to something where you feel, I don't agree with it.

I don't feel at home here. I, you know, it's far too pressurising. And they put fear into my heart.

Oh, I wish I could put fear, the fear of the Lord into everybody's heart. But here we see King Nebuchadnezzar being addressed by a young boy, and that young boy interprets the dream the king had, and he says, renounce your sins, turn away from them, and do right. How often has God spoken to you? And you know it's wrong what you are doing.

But somehow you are vindicating yourself. You somehow try to prove to yourself that the way I'm going is right. Instead of just bowing, submitting, admitting, and say, God, I bow under your mighty hand.

That's why so many people land in trouble. That's why you see so many people, all of a sudden it is as if God withdraws his hand from them, and they are in dire need. And whatever they do, doesn't turn out to be good.

And you work, and you pray, and you do all sorts of things, and think, I'll still get it right in the meantime. You don't realise that God is against you. And sickness comes upon you.

And accidents come your way. Nobody understands you. It is as if everybody is against you.

And you only see the fault in the next person. Instead of bowing and saying, Lord, what are you trying to tell me? Because everything that happens to a Christian has passed God. Everything works together for good to them that love the Lord.

So if things come your way, know very well, it's got to work together for good, for your life. And instead of bowing low and saying, God, oh please help me, forgive me, cleanse me, I don't want to go my way. I want to submit to your way.

But know, I still try to vindicate myself. I still try to prove to others that I'm right. And I'd like to give you an advice this morning.

Submit and bow to the will or to the mighty hand of God. You know, it's easy to submit and to bow to God if you know you are wrong. But to submit and to bow, if I for myself think I am right, then to submit becomes difficult.

And we forget that God's thoughts are not our thoughts. God's ways aren't our ways. They are far higher than what we can think or comprehend with our mind.

And that's why it is so important that we learn that if God speaks to us, if God's word warns us, bow, submit, don't be stiff necked. Just look at Noah. When he was warned about the things which were yet to come, which weren't seen yet, he submitted and in a holy fear, he started building the ark.

And every person on earth looked at him and thought he was mad. Everyone said that what you are doing is totally insane. Do you see, that is the moment we try to think with our mind, with our human mind.

We are in the danger to go against that or not to accept that which is in God's place. When the wise men went to Bethlehem to see the born child Christ, they were warned in a dream not to go back to Jerusalem, not to go back to Herod. And they had promised King Herod, we are going to come back and we are going to tell you where Christ is born.

Now according to our thinking, we would say, no, well, we have committed ourselves, we have got to go back to Herod and tell him where the child is born. But through a divine dream, God warned them and said, don't go back to Jerusalem. And they listened, they submitted to the will of God.

Noah submitted to the warning of God. And through that, they saved themselves. Noah saved himself and his family by bowing, by submitting, not to their thinking, but to the will of God.

Joseph was warned not to go back into his home country. But he was warned in a dream and said, go to Galilee. And he lived in Nazareth from that day on.

Here we have the wise men, we have Noah and we have Joseph heeding the warning. Against all human thinking. But they submitted to the speaking of God.

And that is important. Oh, I wish we could learn that. And that saved them.

And if you want it to go well with you and to be under the blessing of God, then heed the warning that is coming to you from this pulpit. Heed the warning when God's word speaks to you. That is most, most important.

And Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, If you don't acknowledge God in your life, this will come upon you and your kingdom. And if you don't admit and recognize and acknowledge that everything is of God. And that's why I asked the youth choir to come and sing that song again.

Where we recognize and acknowledge that God is God. And that God gets his rightful place. And instead of the king heeding this warning, and acknowledging that everything he has and his whole existence, his whole kingdom, is there because of God, because God gave it to him.

Now just listen to this tragedy. After God has spoken to him through that dream. After sending that little boy Daniel to him, who warned him and who pleaded with him.

And he said, you turn away, you renounce, that you turn away from your sins and from your life in the past. It may be that then your prosperity will continue. Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, is not this all the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty.

God had warned him, Nebuchadnezzar, don't do that, give me the glory, give me the honor, I want to be king and God in your life. And he used that young boy and that young boy warned him and pleaded with him and yet he didn't have a change of heart. Tell me, how often has your father pleaded with you? How often has your mother pleaded with you? How often has your brother pleaded with you? How often has the preacher pleaded with you from the pulpit? How often maybe through you reading the word of God, God has spoken to you, pleaded with you, warned you and you didn't change.

And you just say, no, I'm continuing, I'm carrying on the way I'm used to. I'm driven by my feelings, because I'm convinced that I'm not doing wrong. And I'm sure people have done me wrong and I just carry on, I bulldoze my way through.

I don't want to listen, I don't want to heed the warning, I don't want to acknowledge God, you are God. I take it out of your hand, you are doing this to humble me, to attain your purpose with me. Lord, I bow to your will.

I submit my whole being to thee, whether I understand it or not. But here we see the king going on to the top of the palace and he looks over Babylon, over all that what he has done and he said, that's what I have done. The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, this is what is decreed for you king Nebuchadnezzar, your royal authority has been taken from you.

Oh children, pupils, parents, how terrible when that voice rings out from heaven and says, all your royal authority has been taken away from you. All that what you thought you were, all your work you have worked for 10, 20, 30, 40 years and all of a sudden you realize and you feel it, it's been taken away from me. What a terrible day must that have been, where all of a sudden you realize, hey that what I had, I have

lost.

That prosperity, that joy, that feeling of being good, all of a sudden it's gone and you feel empty, you feel desolate and you feel forsaken. And he was driven away from the people. All of a sudden he wasn't amongst the people anymore.

He didn't feel at home anymore. You don't feel at home amongst the Christians anymore. And you go, we in English say you go to the dogs.

And we go to the animals, we live with the wild animals, we eat grass, we behave like an animal who hasn't got a brain. And just imagine this king, he was eating grass, he was behaving like an animal, he was sleeping with the animals, he was amongst the animals and he was quite happy there. Because his mind was taken away from him.

And oh Christian be careful, be careful, be careful that you don't end up there with the animals. You eat grass, you behave like an animal and you don't even realize it. And for seven years he lived like an animal, outside in the wild, in the desert.

Terrible if a Christian ends up in the desert amongst the wild animals, amongst the cows, the goats, the donkeys and that's where he feels at home. Tell me where do you find yourself today? In your spiritual life. It would be good if you just think for a moment, where am I spiritually? Am I still there where I once was? Or have I lost everything? I just do as if everything is in order.

But in the meantime I'm living with the animals. You know there's only one thing, when I read this, I just bowed down and I said God, there's no God like you are. Although I have failed so utterly, although I've been living with the animals, I've been living in the desert.

I've behaved like an animal. God has a time and when God's time was fulfilled, those seven years, he lifted his eyes to heaven and acknowledged God. And when he lifted his eyes and acknowledged God and said God, you are the first, you are the last, you are the only one, you are God and everything is of you and from you, his mind and his senses came back to him.

Thank God that there is a time. And maybe God is giving you that time. Please lift your eyes to the one, to our creator, the one who died for us on Calvary.

Oh, that you don't fall into more sin. That you don't fall into deeper darkness. That you don't wander off into the desert and it's deserted.

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