

Proud King to Eating Grass Like an Ox

by James Jennings

This sermon delves into the story of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4, highlighting the consequences of pride and God's ability to humble the proud. It emphasizes the importance of acknowledging God's supreme control, the need for repentance, and the miraculous power of God to change hearts and minds. The sermon encourages seeking wisdom from God, humbling oneself before Him, and recognizing His sovereignty in all things.

Scripture: Daniel 4:37, Proverbs 21:1, Romans 1:28, Mark 5:15, 1 Corinthians 4:7, Daniel 2:20, 1 Samuel 21:13, Isaiah 55:8

Topics: "Pride and Humility", "Acknowledging God's Sovereignty"

Description

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Transcript

Go ahead and turn to Daniel 4. Now, we have the Scriptures. That's vitally important as a Christian. This is breathed out by God.

These thoughts contained in the Word of God. We believe it's without error. We believe it's profitable for teaching.

We believe that the Scriptures were not produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. You believe that, right? We have a Lord who formed our inward parts and knit us together, intricately wove us together in our mother's womb. We have a God who knows when we sit down, when we rise up.

We have a God who discerns our thoughts from afar. Daniel's right after Ezekiel if you're having trouble, just find Ezekiel and then go to the right. We have a God who knows when we sit down.

We have a God, Job 38 says, who put wisdom in the inward parts and gave understanding to the mind. We have a God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. As Hebrews 13 speaks of the Lord Jesus.

And we could multiply similar truths about the Lord. We could go on and on. That could be nice to do.

Make a big list of truth and just renew our mind with truths of the Word, truths of who our Lord is for the next 20 minutes. But we'll stop with a couple of those thoughts. Most in our world do not affirm these truths.

They would say it's lies. They would say Scripture is not God-breathed. Men just wrote this.

It's corrupt. They weren't carried along by the Holy Spirit. Many would say the book of Daniel in this chapter we're going to look at, it's fiction.

It's made up. Psalms 10 says of our world, of men, it says, in the pride of their face, the wicked does not seek God. And it's not just they don't seek God actively.

Look what they do do. All his thoughts are there's no God. The lost world is just trying to convince themselves there's no God.

All his thoughts, there's no God. God was not a part of that. God's not involved in that.

God's not in control of this. There is no God. That's the wicked.

And sometimes, you know what, we can even fall into that subtly in some way. And then there are many who say there is a God, but their version of God is a distortion of how the Scriptures represent the Lord. There are false Christs, false gods, distortions of who He is.

Now, in Daniel 4 and 5, which is where we're going to be at, we have two chapters side by side that seem to take place at different times. One dealing with Nebuchadnezzar. The other dealing with his successor.

It uses the word his son. One is of a king. And then the other his successor.

And the chapters both deal with the issue of man's pride. That's one of the issues it deals with. And man and their pride who has lifted themselves up against the living God.

Both these men did that. One is shown mercy. The other is destroyed.

One is shown patience. The other is killed. Destroyed.

Just like that. So I want to read Daniel 4. I know we have a little here, but let's read Daniel 4. Verse 1. And you'll notice here, King Nebuchadnezzar to all the peoples. He's writing to all the peoples, nations and languages that dwell in all the earth, peace be multiplied to you.

Verse 2, It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. Nebuchadnezzar is in a way writing a praise report. Looking back on what God has done.

He says in verse 3, what's he about to describe? What are we about to read? We're going to read how great are God's signs. How mighty His wonders. We're going to read how God's kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and His dominion endures from generation to generation.

It's seemed good to Nebuchadnezzar to share about what God had done. Verse 4, I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house. I was prospering in my palace.

I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in the bed, the fancies and visions of my head alarmed me. So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make

known to me the interpretation of the dream.

Then the magicians and the enchanters and the Chaldeans and the astrologers came in. I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation. At last, Daniel came in before me, he who was named Belshazzar after the name of my God and in whom is the Spirit of the holy gods.

And I told him the dream, saying, O Belshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the holy God is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you. Tell me the visions of my dream that I saw in their interpretation. The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these.

I saw and beheld a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. The tree grew and became strong and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and it was food for all.

The beast of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches and all flesh was fed from it. I saw in the vision of my head as I lay in bed and behold, a Watcher, a Holy One, came down from heaven. He proclaimed aloud and said thus, Chop down the tree and lop off its branches.

Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beast flee from under it and birds from its branches, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze amid the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven.

Let his portion be with the beast and the grass of the earth. Let his mind be changed from the man's. And let a beast's mind be given to him.

And let seven periods of time pass over him. The sentence is by the decree of the Watchers. The decision by the Word of the Holy Ones.

To the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men. And He gives it to whom He will. And He sets it over the lowliest of men.

This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw, and you, O Belshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because all the wise men of My kingdom, they're not able to make known to Me the interpretation. But you are able, for the Spirit of the holy gods is in you. Verse 19, Then Daniel, whose name was Belshazzar, who was dismayed for a while, his thoughts alarmed him.

The king answered and said, Belshazzar, let not the dream or interpretation alarm you. He answered and said, My Lord, may the dream be for those who hate You and its interpretation for Your enemies. The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, so that its top reached to heaven and it was visible to the end of the whole earth, whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant and whose was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade and whose branches birds of the heavens lived.

It is you, O King, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven and your dominion to the ends of the earth. And because the king saw a Watcher and a Holy One coming down from heaven and saying, Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth.

Thou with a band of iron and bronze and the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him. This is

the interpretation, O King. It is a decree of the Most High which has come upon my Lord the King, that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field.

You shall be made to eat grass like an ox. And you shall be wet with the dew of heaven. And seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom He will.

And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know the heavens rule. Therefore, O King, let my counsel be acceptable to you. Break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening at your prosperity.

All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months, he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. And the king answered and said, Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power, as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty? While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven.

O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken. The kingdom has departed from you. And you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field.

And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox. And seven periods of time shall pass over you until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom He will. Immediately, the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar.

He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox. And his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers. And his nails were like birds' claws.

At the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar..." And here he's recording this to all the people. He said, I lifted up my eyes to heaven. My reason returned to me.

And I blessed the Most High. I praised and honored Him who lives forever. For His dominion is an everlasting dominion.

His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing. And He does according to His will among the hosts of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.

And none can stay His hand or say to Him, what have You done? At the same time, my reason returned to me and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and my splendor returned to me. My counselors and my Lord sought me. And I was established in my kingdom and still more greatness is added to me.

Now, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of Heaven. For all His works are right. His ways are just.

And those who walk in pride, God is able to humble. Amen. What a chapter.

The very next chapter starts out with what calls His Son, His successor. His successor does something very similar. Daniel recalls chapter 5, verse 20.

He recalls Nebuchadnezzar. And he says, but when His heart was lifted up and His spirit was hardened so that He dealt proudly, He was brought down from His kingly throne. His glory was taken from Him.

He was driven from among the children of mankind. His mind was made like that of a beast. And His dwelling was with the wild donkeys.

He was fed grass like an ox. And His body was wet with the dew of heaven until He knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets it over whom He will. And you, His son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all of this.

But you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven, and the vessels of His house have been brought in before you. And you, your lords, your wives, your concubines, you have drunk wine from them. You have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze and iron and wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath.

And whose are your ways? You have not honored Him. Verse 27, you've been found in the balance and found wanting. Weighed in the balance.

Verse 30, that very night, Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. Two proud men. One, mercy is shown.

The other, death is shown. Many would comment that a year after this happened in Nebuchadnezzar, that's when he died. Just a year later, he died.

After what he is praising God for here. So, we see here a man in a very prominent position. Very prominent position.

But his pride was overflowing. His spirit was hardened. A beast mind was given to him.

To which he went and lived among the wild donkeys, where he could be found feeding on grass like an ox. His hair grew out to be over a foot long. His fingernails were like that of a bird's claws.

Clearly, the point is, his reasoning was so far gone that he didn't even care about maintaining his body. This happened. God did this.

Is this even in our category of one of the possibilities of how God may deal with mankind? Is it even in your list that what could be happening in someone's situation is God is humbling them for their pride? Is that even on the list? Daniel here was a counselor of incredible wisdom. We're going to learn from him this morning in some of the ways he counseled. How long did this last? How long was Nebuchadnezzar like this? Just seven periods? What, 416? Let seven periods of time pass over him? Some debate what is seven periods.

Most would say it's seven years. Some would say it's seven seasons, which would imply somewhere around four years. No one seems to say it was definitely this amount of time.

But whether four years, seven years, my point is this wasn't seven minutes. This wasn't seven hours. You could maybe be gripped with this.

Something happens to someone. They're out there eating grass like an ox. They come back seven minutes later.

Seven hours. Seven days. What if it is seven years? Or the four years? That's a long time.

You'd be losing hope for this individual. In 2009, a lady had a traumatic labor giving birth to her child. She had blood poisoning.

She went into coma. Seven years. She was in coma.

Then came out of it. And here the person to greet her was her seven-year-old daughter who came to her about every day for seven years. My daughter's seven now.

Again, it seemed possible. Cut the lifeline. The lady, there's no hope.

She's gone. Imagine. Nebuchadnezzar.

No cure for seven years. And then in one moment, he was not only put back in his right reasoning, but the glory of his kingdom was greater than it had been before. Our God showed this proud man that the Lord rules and reigns and can take away your reasoning.

He went from looking upward and boasting in Himself to His head facedown in the ground eating grass. He went from a king's palace to living with wild donkeys. He was just reading this chapter this last week.

One of the main things I was gripped with was the humbling fact, if I lash out in my pride, God could do that to me. Do you recognize that? The Lord could strip you of your reasoning. We should abhor pride.

So many of these examples in the Old Testament deal with men's pride. Pride. Wrong thinking about themselves.

An incorrect view of themselves. My majesty. My kingdom.

It's all about Him. And this isn't fiction. This isn't some myth.

So my goal this morning is I want you to see that one, one biblical explanation for why someone loses their mind, it could be this, that in their pride, God in His sovereign power strips them of their reasoning. And He could do that and leave them like that for seven years or longer. I hope this chapter as we look at this, I will fail if you don't in the end feel a very big view of God and you feel very shrunk and small.

And that's what Nebuchadnezzar's application is in v. 37 at the end. Those who walk in pride He's able to humble. It's like that's what God did to me.

He humbled me. Our God rules the kingdoms of men. He gives it to whoever He may will.

So, I've got eight observations. Three about man and then five about God. Three about man and five about God.

And this is not exhaustive. We could add to this. So number one, what is true of man? In pride, man thinks he's God.

Whether subtly or obviously. Does Nebuchadnezzar outright say I'm God? No, but he says I did all of this and it's for my majesty. Who's he living for? Himself.

Who does he believe all the strength and power came for these things to be possible? Himself. He's totally focused on Himself. In other words, he viewed himself as the most important being to be praised in worship.

In a way, he's claiming, maybe not directly, but he's claiming to be God. Worship. Praise Him.

Look to Him. I have built by My mighty power. You could use a modern term and say he's a megalomaniac.

Obsession with the exercise of power, especially in the dominion of others. He walked around praising Himself. You think about the Titanic.

Someone mentioned the Titanic recently. Someone said of the Titanic, not even God Himself could sink the ship. God can sink your ship.

God can sink your mind. God can strip you of your intelligence. You know what? If you're full of vanity of your outward appearance, He can strip you of your looks.

He can give you leprosy like He did to Uzziah in a moment. That's the God we're dealing with. He created us.

He intricately wove us together in our mother's womb. Who can say to the Lord, what have You done? Our problem is we can barely begin to comprehend the mighty works of what God has done. That's our issue.

We don't comprehend it enough. The power of God. So what's true of man? Outside of Christ, they're full of pride.

And God's able to sink their ship. God's able to take them out. Number two, about man.

What's true of man? What's true of man? Man is given a chance to repent. Observe the counsel in verse 27. After all that Daniel says, verse 27, therefore, O King, my counsel be acceptable to You.

Break off your sins by practicing righteousness. He's calling them to repent. Your sin, your iniquity, by showing mercy to the oppressed that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.

And then verse 28, all this came upon Nebuchadnezzar, verse 29, and at the end of twelve months. Twelve months later. So Daniel says these things.

And he says, take heed to my counsel, friend. Repent. Turn from your iniquity.

Nothing happened it appears right away. Twelve months later, he's walking on the roof. In verse 30, again, he's praising himself.

It's not this great Babylon which I have built by my mighty power. And boom, the judgment falls. So, what's true of man? What's true of God? God is patient in many cases for us to repent and break off our sins.

He's patient. I was reading about David this week. It's amazing the patience of God with King David.

After all of his sin, after the cover-up, for God to send in Nathan the prophet to rebuke David, and that he ends up repenting is incredible. Now, what about these twelve months? What was going on in Nebuchadnezzar's mind? Here he had heard what the interpretation of was the dream. This is what's

coming.

It didn't happen right away. What's Nebuchadnezzar thinking? Probably he's thinking, well, the Lord... it wasn't a true word. This isn't going to come to pass.

He was dismissing it. Many do that to the Word. They hear about the warnings in the Scripture and they say, well, this hasn't happened to me yet.

So everything must be okay. I can just keep on going in the direction I'm going in. But God was patient.

God was patient with this man. You think about even the patience of God what's happened previously to these chapters. What did Nebuchadnezzar see previously? He saw three men stuck in the fiery furnace and they didn't die.

He saw supernatural miracles of God preserving people, and yet still, he was not repentant. He had seen the power of God. So, I kind of blended one of those together if I'm going to be consistent with my notes.

Point 1, what's true of man? He's proud. Point 2, man is given a chance to repent. Point 3, about God, God has patience.

He waited 12 months. Daniel even told him to repent and he did not. Point 4, God has patience, but God will act and be true to His Word.

He doesn't just give idle threats. He will fall through at the judgment. Sure, in Nebuchadnezzar's case, they repented and they didn't get that judgment that was coming.

But Nebuchadnezzar, look at v. 33. Verse 31, here he just boasted. Look at this.

While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven. While the words were still in the king's mouth, just like with Uzziah, he turned around, was angry, struck with leprosy. And then it says, O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken, the kingdom has departed from you.

And you shall be driven among men. Your dwelling shall be with the beast of the field. Verse 33, immediately, the Word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar.

He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox. And his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew long, his eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws. So God has patience.

God calls men to repent. But God will act and follow through with His judgments. Another way you could think about it.

People say, well, that's just with Nebuchadnezzar. Sure, with Nebuchadnezzar, the Lord judged him in a very severe way. That's not going to be the often thing that's going to happen.

If you look through history, you'll see different cases of things that are similar. One commentator talked about a person who basically was becoming like a bear for a season of their life. Things like that will happen.

You can find that through history. But you know what happens usually? I thought of Romans 1. People don't see fit to acknowledge God. That's what Nebuchadnezzar didn't do.

He didn't acknowledge God. And God gives them to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. And they are filled with all manner of wickedness.

That tends to be what happens. You look out in the world, the main type of judgment of God that we often see is God giving people over to a debased mind. They're flirting with their sin.

They're giving in to their sin. And then God gives them over to the unnatural lust of the flesh. That's one reason why homosexuality is so rampant today.

God is giving people over to their sin. He's giving them over to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. Filled with all manner of wickedness.

But no, most people who won't take their reasoning so far away as to live like an ox, but He will give your reasoning up to make you in all manner of sexual perversion. For God has patience, but will act. Number five, this is about God.

We see here in this chapter that God is in supreme control and has all power. This text speaks of God's sovereign power to strip you of everything. I know I've said that, but brethren, He did that there.

He stripped this man not just of physical possessions, not just of a wife, a spouse. He stripped this man of his mind. God did that.

Verse 16, chapter 4. Let his mind be changed from a man's. That doesn't mean some brain transplant happened. And let a beast's mind be given to him.

Let a beast's mind be given to him. You say, well, what does that look like? A beast's mind being given to him? It looks like at the end of the day, he's out there eating grass. And he's living with who? The wild donkeys.

This is right in Scripture. God did this. This better be in our list of possibilities of why certain things could happen at certain times.

Even in verse 25, it says it again. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox. Chapter 5, verse 21, when he's recounting this to the successor, same thing.

He says, he was driven among the children of mankind. His mind was made like that of a beast. And his dwelling was with the wild donkeys.

Remember Job. Remember when God comes to speak. And what does He keep saying? Were you there when I did this? Were you there when I did this? One of the things that He says is that God made the ostrich forget her wisdom and has given her no share in understanding.

When you see creatures out there, God gave them that degree of knowledge. He designed them. We don't believe in evolution, right? God's made things.

God's created things. God's created you and me. He's intricately woven us.

He gives us understanding. He gave Daniel insight here that Daniel did not have. This is our God.

He's all-powerful. And here He made a man view his life experience through the world as if he was an ox. He took a man, didn't care about hair, didn't care about the nails, eating grass like an ox, living with the

wild donkeys.

God stripped him. You look back at Daniel 2. We're thinking here about the supreme power of God. Look at Daniel 2. Verse 20.

Daniel blessed the God of heaven and Daniel says this. This well-known section of Scripture. Blessed be the name of God forever and ever.

To whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons. He removes kings and sets kings up.

He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and hidden things. He knows what is in the darkness and the light dwells with Him.

To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for You have given me wisdom and might and have now made known to me what we asked of You. For You have made known to us the king's matter. God removes kings.

He sets up kings. He reveals deep things and hidden things. I'm already running out of time.

So let's pray again. Let me go through this quicker. Father, please, would You help me, Lord, to get the right things out of this that need to be said? Lord, give clarity in Jesus' name, Amen.

So, Proverbs 21, the king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord. He turns it wherever He wills. None of this should be surprising.

The potter has created us. Can He mold the clay how whom He ever He may will? You better believe it, He can. Number six, this is about God.

The Lord has purposes behind what He does. Things don't happen randomly. Look at God's purpose and end.

V. 17 of chapter 4. He says right here, to the end, this is the end, this is the goal, that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of God and gives it to whomever He wills. This is the end. The Lord's saying, I'm going to accomplish in Nebuchadnezzar that He will see that I am supremely in control.

So this man had a problem. He did not see the supreme control and majesty of God. And God's going to make that happen.

In order to do that, He's got to strip the man down and make him like a wild beast. Multiple times this is repeated. V. 31 says it again while the words were still in the king's mouth.

And he says, you shall be driven, and then at the end of v. 32, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdoms of men and gives it to whomever He will. So do we know that? Do we acknowledge? Do we truly know that God is in control? He has this purpose and end. You know what happened earlier when God did something? Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged that truly you are the God.

But it wasn't a genuine repentance. Because chapters later, he's still in the same spot. I realize he's referring back to something that happened, but I believe this happened after the previous sayings had happened.

V. 7, was there ever hope of Nebuchadnezzar returning to a right mind? Yes. In Daniel's interpretation of the dream, he said it would last seven seasons. The Lord already knew there was going to be a point this would come to an end.

That again just shows God's supreme control. Yet, God being supremely in control does not mean that man must not humble themselves. Look at v. 34.

At the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, it doesn't just say everything changed automatically. Look what's happened. I lifted my eyes to heaven.

There's a lot there. He lifted his eyes to God. He lifted his eyes to the Lord.

He lifted, rather than his head being bowed down in pride and not wanting to acknowledge God and all his thoughts being there is no God, he lifts his eyes to heaven. And look what happened. His reason returned.

God gave this man his reasoning back in a moment upon humbling himself. Incredible. And one of the things that I love is Nebuchadnezzar went on to say, who are we, O man, to say, what have you done? You know, we've seen that song by Bob called, What Have You Done? Well, Nebuchadnezzar got to the point where he realized, I can't say to God, what have you done? I can't complain to God and say, what have you done? Like Romans 9, I cannot question God.

I cannot raise my voice against Him. He is in supreme control. Who am I, O man, to answer back to God? Number 8, this is about the Lord, not man.

In the Lord restoring Nebuchadnezzar, we see that for the proud to be humbled is a supernatural miracle of God. Now why do I say that? Look at the start of this chapter. Here he is about to give this praise report.

Verse 2, it seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders. Wonders. Verse 3, how great are His signs.

How mighty His wonders. And here, we look at the signs and wonders. One of them, which is a man who's in a prominent position in a normal right mind is put with the mind of an ox for seven years.

And in the end, Nebuchadnezzar's looking back and thanking God for what God did. And he ends this chapter by saying those who walk in pride, God is able to humble. It's a miracle.

It's a miracle that Nebuchadnezzar was ever in his right mind again. I mean, imagine it one year in. Boy, you're thinking there's no way this is going to turn around.

There's no way. Five years in. Just like that little daughter looking at her mother who's in coma after school.

You're thinking, my mom's never going to be revived. It's a supernatural miracle. Our God is a God who's supernatural.

His thoughts are not our thoughts. His ways are not our ways. So, I guess a couple applications here.

We should be encouraged, number one, that God will save. God can save those who walk in pride no matter how far gone they may seem, no matter the great position they may be in. God is big enough and able to do something.

I was reading a book by Richard Ganz this morning. He had someone, this person had not talked in three years. And this person was claiming to be Jesus Christ.

And Richard had just read in Matthew 24 that if anyone says he's Christ, he is no Christ. And that guy said that. He quoted that verse.

And the man said, where did you get that verse from? And Richard threw him his Bible. And that man read his Bible, got converted. Hadn't spoken three years.

Completely in his right mind. God is able to do that. Number two, we are accountable who have greater knowledge to not fall into the same pride of those who have gone before us.

When the Lord corrects in the next chapter, in chapter 5, when He corrects Belshazzar, He says in v. 22, you have not humbled your heart though you knew all of this. You knew about this happening. You knew what had happened, and yet even still, you didn't humble yourself.

And this man proudly boasted, and God took him out just like that. He killed him. He destroyed him.

He didn't have the same patience as he did towards Nebuchadnezzar, because this man knew, I better not mess with this self-arrogant pride and boasting pride that comes before destruction, a haughty spirit that comes before a fall. So, the Lord's time difference with people may be different. One, He might strike dead in a moment.

One, He might give seven years and put him in his right mind and it appears that Nebuchadnezzar was converted based on the praise He gave to God. A third application. We should imitate Daniel's counseling.

We should imitate the way Daniel counseled. Like Daniel, we too at times are called to counsel men that are hard cases. What should our response be? You know how Daniel responded initially? He was distressed for the individual.

I hope this isn't true of you. This is how Daniel was incredibly compassionate and distressed in v. 19. Then Daniel, he was dismayed.

Thoughts alarmed. Let not the dream be about you. We should have something similar.

Yet, Daniel was not a coward and he did not restrain from telling the truth as he went on to do. He was bold as a lion. Even to the king who could take his life.

Sadly, most don't deal truthfully with men. Because we don't believe in the true God. We underestimate His power.

So, think of this. And this isn't my initial thought. It was Votie Bauckham's years ago.

I heard him say this thought. If Nebuchadnezzar's wife took him to a hospital back in today's generation, what would they have done? They would have instantly drugged him up. I talked to a policeman recently.

I said, there's this person I know about. They were eating grass like an ox for seven years. What would you do if you saw them out in the graveyard over there? That was his exact response.

It's not even on men's radars that one of the possibilities of why this is happening is God humbling a proud man. It's not even on their radar. The majority don't believe in God, much less those who say they believe

in God don't even recognize His supreme power.

What about a man's pride? And God stripping him of that pride and humbling him. You better have that on your list of possible root causes. I made a brief list.

One, is he being judged for pride? That's what happens right here. In seven years, eating ox. He didn't need psych meds.

He needed to humble himself and repent. Number two, is he pretending to be insane? 1 Samuel 21, it says, David pretended to be insane. Is that on your list of possibilities? Number three, is he being given over to debased mind, as Romans 1 says? Number four, is he possessed by demons, as Mark 5 says? The demoniac living in a graveyard.

Cutting himself with rocks. Running around naked. He had demons.

Christ cast the demons out. The man was in his right mind. Number five, yes, does he have a medical issue? Eric Liddell.

He wrote of suffering a nervous breakdown in the prison camp. They later found out he had an operable brain tumor that was pressing against his brain that was leading to the major discomfort. Maybe you could add to that list.

My fear is that we view God too small. My fear is if we get away from this book, the One who intricately wove us together in our mother's womb. The One who determined to give a certain amount of intellect to an ostrich.

The One who stripped intellect from a king. And look, we lack wisdom. And this book is an encouragement to us who counsel people.

Because we're sitting there saying, I lack wisdom. But we should be encouraged. What did it say in Daniel 2? The Lord is the One who reveals deep and hidden things.

The Lord who knows everything reveals. He doesn't just keep everything concealed. He will reveal certain deep and hidden things.

If we lack wisdom, we're to ask for wisdom and God will give it. Nebuchadnezzar, he knew of Daniel. He said to Daniel, the Spirit of the holy gods is in you and no mystery is too difficult for you.

Isn't that amazing? It's like, Lord, You've given me the Holy Spirit. You've given me Your Word. Please, show me what to do.

Give me wisdom. I lack wisdom. I don't want to do something wrong.

I don't want to diagnose a wrong root issue, Lord. I want to be faithful. And God's saying, I'm not just going to shove against you.

I'll guide you. Even Nebuchadnezzar's son. What was Daniel's reputation? The son said that Daniel's a man who explains riddles and solves problems.

And you know what Daniel said? He was a man who solved problems. Why? Because of God. He did not take the credit for Himself.

He did not take the glory and honor for Himself. And we need that humility of Daniel. Daniel says in 2.30, this mystery has been revealed to me not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living.

I don't understand this because of some wisdom that's based within me. It's God who gives wisdom. 1 Corinthians 4. What do you have that you did not receive? If you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? We have no reason to be proud.

Any knowledge we have was given by God. Any intellect we have was given by God. And God can strip us of that in a moment.

He can break us down in a moment. Again, like I said, I was just feeling a little pride in my own heart welling up recently. And I was gripped at the fear of God that He could take my mind away in a moment.

He could do that. He could do that to you. If we seek glory for ourselves, if we're overwhelming with our pride, and He sent Daniel to Him, and Daniel said, take heed to my words.

And He didn't take heed to those initial words. He didn't. Now, I was thinking about anyone here who's not a Christian.

Do you know that the God in whose hand is your breath and who's all your ways, some of you have not honored by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ? And if you don't honor God, if you continue in a path of your sin, if you continue in a Romans 1 path of not giving thanks and praise and worship to the Lord of all the earth, God will give you over to the base mind to do what ought not to be done. If your mind is right, right now, you've got every reason to repent and throw yourself upon the mercy of Jesus Christ to cast yourself on Him. We have a God who knows all things.

Created all things. We have a God who says He works all things together. For those who are called according to His purposes.

How can He say that? How can He say He's going to work all things together? You've got to be in control. You can't make that comment if you're not in supreme control. The Lord is.

Our great need is not more wisdom of the world, but it's a greater glimpse of the supreme control and power of God. At least I know that's my great need. My great need of reason is more a view of how big God is and a more faith to believe that He understands everything, that He's willing to give wisdom in the hardest of situations.

He's willing to give guidance in the hardest of situations. And that He's got the supreme power to change someone's mind and heart in a matter of a moment. And He's got the power to strip them of their reasoning in a matter of a moment.

And if He helped Daniel those years ago, He'll help us too. And give us wisdom. And as you guys know, we're in a place as a church right now where we need wisdom from God in different situations we're dealing with.

And one thing we should be doing is pleading with God for more wisdom, for more insight, for more discernment. And we should be pleading with the Word and reading in the Word and saying, Lord, open my eyes that I might understand wonders of Your law. And we should be asking the Lord to peel back anything that is blurring my perspective of who You are and what You say.

And say, Lord, help. So God is able to humble those who walk in pride. What a thing.

He's able to humble them. Let's pray. Father, I'm not sitting in my brothers' and sisters' seat.

Lord, I don't know if this came across as clear as I had hoped it would. Lord, we need You. Lord, we need You in these different situations we're facing.

God, please. Lord, we know that You understand everything. We know that, Lord.

There are no mysteries to You. Lord, we thank You for Your Word. We pray You'd open our eyes, You'd guide us, You'd help us to believe You.

Lord, please, I just feel like I can just keep saying in these last weeks, help, help, help. Lord, help. Help, we're needy.

Lord, we're poor men who cry to You and ask for help. Lord, what do we have that we've already received? It's not from us. Lord, please, do that which we can't do.

Give wisdom in every situation where we lack it. God, our eyes are on You. You've created everything.

We're coming to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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