

The Road to Peace: Humility

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- [0 : 0 0] The scripture reading comes from Daniel chapter 4. Please follow along on the screen, the bulletin or your own Bible. Starting in verse 1, we read, King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations and languages that dwell in all the earth, peace be multiplied to you.
- It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. How great are His signs! How mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion endures from generation to generation.
- I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed, the fancies and the 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, the enchanters, the Chaldeans and the astrologers came in, and 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 Belteshazzar after the name of my God, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods.
- [1 : 2 4] And I told him the dream, saying, O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation.
- The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these. I saw and behold 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 in it was food for all. The beasts 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 visions 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 beasts flee from under it, and the 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.
- [2 : 4 6] Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. Let his mind be changed from a 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 gives it to whom he will, and sets over it the lowliest of men.
- This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw, And you, O Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation.

But you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you. Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him.

The king answered and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you, and its interpretation for your enemies.

[3 : 59] Then, from verse 24, we read, 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 that heaven rules. 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 of 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?

[5 : 19] 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 eagle's feathers, and his nails were like bird's claws.

At the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him, who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and 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 host of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.

[6 : 39] 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 splendor returned to me.

My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right, and his ways are just, and those who walk in pride, he is able to humble.

This is the word of God. Great. Celeste, thank you for reading that long reading, and for reading it so well. I feel like you really brought the narrative to life, so thank you for doing that.

Good morning everybody, and welcome once again. If you don't know me, I'm Kevin, one of the leaders, and it is great to be with you this morning. A couple of new faces, welcome. It's great to see you, and have you with us this morning.

Let me pray for us briefly, and then let's dive into Daniel chapter four. So Father God, as we come to your word this morning, this amazing passage, God once again, we ask you by your spirit to speak to us.

[7 : 53] Father, if we've come just to find three tips on how to be more successful in life, there's many places to go, but God, none of those things will deal with really the root issue.

None of those things will really encounter our hearts. God, we come before you this morning because you are true. Your word is true. You are the one true living God, the most high God, as we read about this morning, and God, we want to encounter you.

We want you to speak to us. And so Jesus, as we look at this word, won't you come and have your way? Won't you establish your kingdom in our hearts and in our lives? And as you do that, God, won't you establish your kingdom here in Hong Kong, we pray.

Let your word be made known to us. Spirit of God, open the eyes of our hearts to see you freshly this morning, we pray. In your awesome and glorious name, amen.

So we are looking at the book of Daniel, and the reason we're doing that is because we are wanting to learn from Daniel and his friends what does it mean and look like to be the people of God in the midst of a world which is not the most God-honoring world.

[9 : 01] Daniel and his friends are taken out of Israel into Babylon. Babylon is a pagan nation. It's not a God-honoring nation. But they are incredibly faithful. And we want to learn as Christians in 21st century Hong Kong, how can we be the same?

How can we be faithful to God even in the midst of a world which doesn't always honor him? And today we are looking at Daniel chapter 4. Now, before we dive into it, I want us just to take note of one thing that's really interesting.

Daniel was in the city of Babylon for 70 years. And that's a long period of time. And in those 70 years, we only have the recordings of about four or five things that he actually did in that time.

And in chapter 1, and possibly chapter 2, most of those events take place in the first few years that he's in Babylon. The next few weeks that we're going to look at, chapter 5 and 6, the next two Sundays, happen right at the end of those 70 years.

And in the middle, kind of 50, 60 years, we know almost nothing about Daniel's life except this one event that we read today. The only thing that we know about Daniel and his friends in that large portion of his life is actually that he's faithful to God and he faithfully serves his boss, who in this case happens to be a pagan king, Nebuchadnezzar.

[10 : 19] And that's really important because for many of us who are followers of Jesus, we want to do something great and we want to change the world. Our generation has been described as the snowflakes generation.

Do you know what I mean by that? We are all told from kindergarten that we are like snowflakes. We are super special. We are one of a kind. There's no one in the world like us. We are precious and we are delicate.

And what that means is that our generation largely thinks that by the age of 25, we should hit our peak and we all want to be like Daniel and Esther that live in the king's palace and just change the world disproportionately.

But actually what's important to note is that for much of Daniel's life, he spent his life faithfully serving God and serving his boss as he lived in the midst of Babylon. And when his time came, because of his decades-long faithfulness, actually God used him to speak with incredible wisdom and profundity.

Eugene Peterson talks about a long obedience in the same direction. And much of the Christian life is like that. A long obedience in the same direction rather than always being in the king's palace or the queen's palace with this disproportionate influence.

[11 : 34] Okay, so that's just by way of introduction. So let's dive into Daniel chapter 4. And this passage is an amazing passage and one of the things that's amazing about it is that it's written, it's one of the only chapters in the Bible that's written by a pagan.

It's written by King Nebuchadnezzar. He writes it in a way giving his testimony. And so look at what he says in verse 1. He says, I, King Nebuchadnezzar, to all the peoples, the nations and the languages that dwell on the earth.

He's saying, listen up, I've got a message for you. And what is his message? Peace be multiplied to you. It's a message of good news. It's a gospel message. He says, It seemed good to me to write the signs and the wonders that the Most High God has done for me.

How great are his signs! How mighty are his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. His dominion endures from generation to generation. Now the book of Daniel up until now has kind of had this one melodic theme throughout the whole book.

This one thread. Which is that the kingdoms of the world are going to bow down to the kingdoms of God. That God alone rules of the kingdoms of man and the kingdoms of our world.

[12 : 46] Remember the statue in chapter 2. All these kingdoms and eventually a stone comes that's going to crush them all and is going to be established as the kingdom over all the world.

So that's the theme for the book of Daniel. Now what Nebuchadnezzar wants to do here is he wants to take that theme and apply it not just on a macro level kingdoms and nations and empires but on an individual level.

What Nebuchadnezzar is going to do here is he's going to show the great lengths that God will go to to establish his kingdom in the hearts and the lives of individuals like you and I. Okay?

So, let's see what happens here. Nebuchadnezzar has this dream. And like in previous chapters he wants to know what's happening with his dream this interpretation.

He calls all his wise men in they don't know what's going on and eventually he calls Daniel in. And he tells Daniel his dream. And this dream is essentially a picture of a majestically beautiful gigantic tall tree.

[13 : 52] Glorious tree. It's a picture of unrivaled stature. And Nebuchadnezzar describes it like this. He says its height was great. It grew and became strong. Its top reached to the heavens.

Okay? That's a reference to Genesis 11 the Tower of Babel its top reached to the heavens. It was visible from the ends of the earth. So it's this picture of magnificence.

It's a picture of supreme glory. And under this tree all the animals of the world take shade and people come and take shade and people get their food and the birds nest. It's a picture of safety and security and refuge.

And of course this tree is a picture of Nebuchadnezzar. Okay? And we're told that this is true. Nebuchadnezzar is one of the most powerful men in all the world.

He is one of the guys that built the seven wonders of the ancient world. Babylon was known for its hanging gardens. They had these magnificent architecture and infrastructure.

[14 : 53] Nebuchadnezzar is the one who kind of designed that and got it going. And Nebuchadnezzar is this amazing majestic king. He is in many ways as someone said he is living the dream.

Right? He has this dream and it's true he's living it. I don't know if you noticed I think it's verse 4 he says I was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace.

How many of you know that if you are powerful and wealthy that often means you've got lots of headaches. Right? That's not always a recipe for ease of life. Wealth and power means lots of problems.

But not Nebuchadnezzar he is living the dream. He's at ease at home he's prospering at work the kingdom is growing and he has a picture of him glorious and magnificent. But of course something goes wrong.

I don't know if you've ever had a dream at night that turns into a nightmare. The dream starts out you're on the beach tropical island drinking pina coladas something like that and by the end of the dream there's some madman that's chasing you with an axe or something.

[16 : 00] A dream that starts out and ends as a nightmare. That's what's happening to Nebuchadnezzar. He has this dream and it's glorious but then an angel says chop it down and the tree is felled and it's brought it gets stripped bare it gets chopped down.

And what God's saying here he's saying you Nebuchadnezzar are going to be chopped down you are going to be stripped bare. And the reason is because Nebuchadnezzar has become proud and arrogant.

In fact look at how he acts in verse 29. Having heard the interpretation of this dream he seems completely to disregard it. He says in verse 29 at the end of 12 months he was walking on the roof of his palace he overlooks his empire and he says is not this great Babylon which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence for the glory of my majesty.

Notice all the personal pronouns. I, I, I me, me, me my, my, my In chapter 2 when Nebuchadnezzar has a dream it talks about how the kingdom is going to come down but for Nebuchadnezzar himself it's okay here things are a little different.

Here God says you are going to be brought down. Daniel says verse 22 this tree is you O king you have grown and become strong your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens but you shall be driven from man your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field you'll be made to eat grass like an ox you'll be wet like the dew of heaven and for seven periods of time until you know that the most high rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.

[17 : 46] I don't know if you saw in verse 17 when Nebuchadnezzar has this dream and he's telling it to Daniel he says and God said that this will happen until those that are living the people of the world know that God rules the most that God the most high rules but when Daniel interprets the dream he doesn't just generically say this will happen until all people out there know he says until you know he's saying you need to know Nebuchadnezzar you God is looking you in the eye and he's saying there's a problem here you need to know oh king that God the most high rules the kingdoms of the world that he is God and you are not and what Daniel is saying here is there's there's a problem Nebuchadnezzar and there's a cancer in your heart there's a cancer which thinks that your majesty and your achievements and your success in life is because of your greatness there is a virus in your heart which is telling you that all power resides in you that you are distinct that you are different from the rest of humanity and that other people are not like you and God is wanting you to know that as long as this cancer is the operating system of your heart you are on a collision course with the almighty God that's what Daniel is saying to him

Nebuchadnezzar's problem here is that he's become proud and arrogant C.S. Lewis who was this incredible writer has an amazing way of describing the everyday affairs of life and listen to how he describes pride he says I've heard people admit that they are bad tempered or that they struggle with lust or alcohol even that they are slightly cowardly I do not think I've ever heard anyone who is not a Christian accuse himself of pride there is no fault which makes a man more unpopular and no fault of which we are more unconscious of in ourselves the more we have it in ourselves the more we dislike it in others it is pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began other faults may bring people together but pride always means enmity it is enmity not only between people but between us and God and C.S. Lewis makes this incredible observation he says there is no fault of which we are more conscious of in others and yet more unconscious of in ourselves friends have you ever been talking to someone and they are complaining about somebody else and you're thinking to yourself you know you do that very thing that you're complaining about has that ever happened that's pride it's work in our hearts friends and the reason do you want to know the reason for the conflict in our lives the reason for conflict in our homes and our marriages and with our kids and with our colleagues and in the workplace the reason is because there's a fundamental attitude in the human heart that says

I am wrong and I am right and you are wrong I know what I'm talking about and you don't there's an attitude that says I am patient and you are so demanding it says I am so humble and you are so proud there's an attitude that says I am selfless and you are self-centered Tim Keller says that pride is the carbon monoxide of all sins we it is invisible and you don't know that you're breathing it in but silently it suffocates everything that is good and pleasant about our lives and pride is obviously very sinister and it's deceptive we see it in others but we don't see it in ourselves and one of the ways that this plays out is that we think that only those that think of themselves as great are proud and yet those who think of themselves lowly are not proud but actually C.S. Lewis says that's not always the case he says that to be humble is not to think of yourself as lowly it's not to think less of yourself it's to think of yourself less altogether the truly humble person is not someone who beats themselves up saying

I'm suck I'm so bad I'm such a loser that's not the humble person the humble person is the person that just doesn't think of themselves at all because when you think of yourself as miserable I'm always a victim poor me the world treats me so badly no one will ever respect me who are you thinking of?

you're thinking of yourself and so C.S. Lewis says pride is the ruthless unsmiling concentration on the self and some of us are proud because we think of ourselves as being great and awesome and some of us are proud because we think of ourselves as being miserable and victims and both of that is a concentration on ourself and so let's do something here this is a bit of a risk I hope this works out okay let's do a little bit of an inventory an assessment and I want to ask us a bunch of questions and let's think whether any of these questions resonate with our own hearts and just disclaimer these questions came out of my own heart right so the reason I could think of these questions is because they're mainly true of me and so you don't need to put up your hand don't tell anyone this is just personally okay how many of us here anyone in the last few weeks got angry with someone at work because they got the credit for something that you did right made you angry how many of us here friends have felt defensive or the need to excuse ourselves or justify something that we did because we feel we got caught out cover a mistake that we've made friends do any of us arrive at church feeling a mess feeling miserable and yet we determine to put our best foot forward to put on a smile because we don't want anyone to know how we are really doing that's pride friends anybody here struggle to admit that something is wrong or that you're unable to cope friends how many of us bounce from job to job to job or relationship to relationship to relationship never able to find contentment and yet we always convince it's the other people it's their fault friends how many of us struggle to rejoice or celebrate or compliment somebody else on their success friends do others find that we get easily angry or offended or if we have a short fuse friends how many of us here struggle to say sorry we know this to be wrong we rather just sweep it under the rug and just move on and just hope that things naturally work themselves out recently

[24 : 31] I saw this in my own life Claire and I have this agreement that I won't have a meeting a one-on-one meeting with another female lunch or meeting without letting Claire know about that it's just a good policy that we have and so two weeks ago I had this meeting planned and I hadn't let Claire know and Claire says to me hey what's your day looking like today I said I've got this meeting with this person I've got a meeting with this person and Claire says oh I didn't know about that and it took me about 0.01 second to jump back well I only made the meeting last night and I would have told you and all the defenses came out and Claire didn't do anything all she asked was I didn't know about that and you know what is happening it took me about another 0.1 percent of a second to realize what is going on in my heart friends sometimes when somebody gives me gentle corrective correction

I take it as they are challenging me and criticizing me and there are relationships in my life that are not the way that they should be because of my defenses and my pride in my heart friends pride is a sinister sinister thing and with the temptation is to see in others but not in ourselves pride is the unsmiling concentration on the self and is the fundamental problem of every human heart and the source of every bit of pain and conflict in the world and that's why God says he hates pride he detests it in James chapter 4 James says God gives grace to humble but he opposes the proud and that's a remarkable thing God doesn't just ignore the proud or distance himself from the proud or avoid the proud he resists him he is an open opposition to him he wages war against our pride and so look at what God does to Nebuchadnezzar here what God does is he makes Nebuchadnezzar physically what he has already become in his heart which is beastly and animalistic for a period of time

Nebuchadnezzar will become animalistic and beastly because God is showing him and God is showing us what is true in his heart already now just by the way you might say oh I could never take the Bible seriously what a joke right do you know that Babylonian culture history tells us that there was a king on the throne called Nabonidus who took on the name of Nebuchadnezzar who for a period of seven or eight years was driven from his throne and went into the wilderness and nobody knows what happens to him for seven years he was driven into the wilderness and then he returned to his throne to Babylon where he ruled and reigned secular culture tells us affirms what the Bible tells us here friends pride will do that to you it is an enmity with God an enmity with man it will kill our relationships it is a prison of selfishness anger unforgiveness and foolishness pride is deadly serious now Daniel chapter 4 not only tells us the horrors of pride but also tells us the beauty of humility because look at the example of Daniel here and there's two things

I want us to take note of the first is look at the humility of Daniel in verse 19 Daniel is told the dream by Nebuchadnezzar and he's given this interpretation and we are told that he understands that Nebuchadnezzar is going to be brought low and if I was Daniel do you know what I would be thinking I would be thinking it's about time right because just remember who are the Babylonians they are Israel's enemies it's one of the kings called Nebuchadnezzar is the guy that marched into Jerusalem burnt all the buildings destroyed the buildings destroyed the temple not before taking all the sacred religious goods out and the temple furnishings and the sacred things taking them to Babylon installing them in the pagan temple of his gods killing Jews but not before taking the very best to go and serve in Babylon the Babylonians are the enemies of

Israel and now Daniel finally gets this interpretation the king is going to be brought down glory right and so I would be trying my best to suppress the smirk on my face but I don't think I'd be very good I would be thinking justice but look at what Daniel says here this is unbelievable verse 19 Daniel whose name was Belteshazzar was dismayed and his thoughts were troubled the king says to him Daniel do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you and so Daniel answered my lord may the dream be for those who hate you may its interpretation be for your enemies oh my goodness friends where are we going to find humility like that doesn't this remind you of Jesus remember Jesus in Luke 19 he's on the way to Jerusalem and Jerusalem is filled with people who have rejected his rule remember in just a few days time

[30 : 06] Jesus is going to be put on trial and Pilate and Herod are going to say to the people of Jerusalem behold your king and they're going to shout back we have no king but Caesar the people are going to say we want our pagan Roman oppressors we will serve them rather than serve this man and so here it says what should I do with him and they say crucify him and Jesus just a few days before this walks into Jerusalem and what does he do Luke 19 tells us when Jesus drew near and saw the city of Jerusalem he wept friends he wept saying oh that you even you Jerusalem would know this day the things that would bring you peace Jesus heart of compassion breaks for the people that are going to put him on the cross friends why does Jesus act like this do you know why because he's perfect and because he shows us what perfect humility and perfect humanity look like but notice something else about Daniel here in

Babylonian culture when the way that a magician or an astrologer would deal with something like the king's dream is they go to the king and they say oh king may this dream fall on your enemies and then they would try by way of secret spells and omens and potions and all sorts of stuff to cast the spell on the king's enemy and so in a way what they would do is to try and neutralize the bad thing that is coming to the king by bringing equally bad news or omen or spell or worse on the king's enemy right so in other words the king's about to go in battle and the king has a dream that the battle's not going to go well for you and they would try by potions and tricks to put a spell on the king's enemy so that even if the battle wasn't good for the king it was even worse for his enemy okay that's how it would be done and essentially what they're trying to do is to remove the bad news or the consequences of this bad outcome from the king and put it on his enemy okay does that make sense friends do you know that we do the exact same thing in our day and age we call it blame shifting and so your boss comes to you and says why is the report late and he says it's not my fault it's my colleague they didn't give me the report or something happens and your spouse is upset with you it's not my fault it's my boss's fault it's the school's fault it's the helper's fault it's my children's fault it's the alignment of the star's fault

I don't know it's someone else's fault and friends we do the exact same thing we like Nebuchadnezzar try and shift the consequences onto somebody else and at first we try and dodge what's coming to us by shifting on someone else and at first God it seems that that's what Nebuchadnezzar is doing he doesn't try and get Nebuchadnezzar to dodge the outcome he doesn't try and cast some spell on his enemy or shift the blame what does he do in verse 27 he says practice righteousness let your iniquity and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity do you know what he's doing he's calling him to repentance he's calling the king of Babylon to repentance friends right here in the book of Daniel we have before us the gospel that though our pride and our sin means we are on a collision course with

God we are going to end in destruction God in his mercy has made a way for us not to bear the consequences that we deserve for the consequences that we deserve to be put on the shoulders of somewhere else and how through humility through confession through repentance through turning to Christ by breaking off of our sin and turning to Christ in confession and repentance and friends this is the main idea of Daniel chapter 4 this is what God wants us to see that what happens to Nebuchadnezzar in the most dramatic of fashion is nothing less friends remember how Jesus is constantly pointing this out it's not the religious or the dedicated or the smart or the successful that obtain salvation it's those who humble themselves and cry out to God for mercy Jesus is saying it's impossible for those who are rich in self sufficiency rich in self worth rich in self justification to enter the kingdom of God

Jesus has wealthy powerful influential people coming to him and he says you're not ready for my kingdom yet you've got to go humble yourself Jesus has children and fishermen and tax collectors and prostitutes and sinners coming and he says yes yes you're ready you can come into my kingdom friends Jesus is constantly saying that the pride of life will destroy us and hinder us from receiving his kingdom and salvation and so what happens to Nebuchadnezzar friends is what in dramatic fashion is what must happen to anyone who wants to be saved friends do you want to be saved this morning maybe you're here and you're not a follower of Jesus friends do you want to know forgiveness of sins do you want to be born again do you want to experience the living God revitalizing your heart and your soul friends if you're not a Christian this morning you must realize you're on a collision course with the holy

[35 : 59] God and it's not going to end well friends do you know that your pride and your sin has put you at enmity with God but God in his great mercy has made a way for your sin to be put on Jesus shoulders will you humble yourself will you admit your need for him will you come to him empty handed and find forgiveness and renewal and restoration friends maybe you are a Christian here this morning but your life is a train wreck your marriage is a mess your relationships are toxic your life is a train wreck because the operating system of your heart is pride and self sufficiency friends can I with all the energy I can muster look you in the eye and say will you please humble yourself will you come and do what Daniel asks Nebuchadnezzar to do which is to humble himself and to cast yourself on the mercy of Jesus Jesus is longing to move towards you in grace will you move towards him in humility friends Jesus says in Matthew 21 he says amazing amazing verse he says this he is the rock and he says anyone who falls on this stone or this rock will be broken to pieces but the one on whom it falls will be ground like powder new king james version says do you know what Jesus is saying here he's saying that when you humble yourself when you cast yourself on the rock of Jesus your pride will be broken and it will hurt it will be painful your pride will be broken but if you resist Jesus the rock will fall on you and he will crush you like powder friends better to humble ourselves and to cast ourselves on the rock of Jesus let our pride be broken than let Jesus fall on us and crush us friends I hope that we can see that Daniel's message to Nebuchadnezzar is God's message to all of us that despite our sin and our selfishness God has gone out of his way not to destroy us but to save us did you see that part in Nebuchadnezzar's dream where he says God will cut you down but he's not going to remove the stump completely there will be a stump remaining what's God saying there he's saying I will deal with you but I'm not going to destroy you friends when God humbles us God is not being vindictive he's being redemptive God has made a way God says I will cut you down but I will not utterly destroy you God's humbling is not meant to destroy you but to heal you friends do you know that Nebuchadnezzar the world's greatest king and yet he experiences this unbelievable fall from grace from being on the throne of the world's superpower and having all power and all authority he goes to eating grass like an ox he goes to becoming beastly talk about a fall from grace talk about humiliation friends do you not know that there the story of the Bible is the story of the one true king Jesus Christ the most high God who left not just an earthly throne but a heavenly one Jesus Christ who too experienced a humiliation not just eating grass like an ox but ultimately he was nailed to the cross and unlike Nebuchadnezzar Jesus didn't end up there on account of his own pride and his own selfishness and his own stubbornness but on account of ours friends Jesus Christ the most high God was disgraced and shamed so that you and I can experience grace and renewal and healing and redemption friends do you know that only by looking

to Jesus Christ and his death on the cross will our pride be crushed without us being crushed you know sometimes as parents Jeremy spoke about being parents earlier sometimes as parents we don't want our children to become proud so what do we do when they're babies we tell them they look ugly right or we never compliment them we never tell them that we're proud of them we never tell them how proud we are or we never praise them we don't want them to become proud and so what do we do we starve them of love and affection friends in this world when the world wants to humble you what will it do it will crush you Jesus Christ alone will humble your pride without crushing you Jesus went to the cross and he says I'm here because of you and that will humble you but Jesus will also say I'm here because I love you Jesus Christ alone knows how to both affirm you and build you up and crush your pride at the same time look to anyone else and you may be humbled but you'll be crushed and beaten look to

Jesus and you'll be humbled but you'll be affirmed and built up only as you look to Christ can you be both humble and confident at the same time friends throughout Daniel we've been told that the kingdoms of this world are going to crumble and bow down to the kingdoms of God and now Nebuchadnezzar shows us the dramatic lengths to which God will go that he might bring his kingdom to bed not just on the nations and the empires and the kingdoms of the world but on the individual hearts of people like you and I can I invite you to stand with me and we're going to continue our time of worship and we're going to have communion in a few minutes time but we're going to start off by singing a song of worship and devotion and while the band is coming up I want us just to see how the story ends look at look at how the story is this remarkable change takes place in Nebuchadnezzar and it's nothing less than a miracle of grace Nebuchadnezzar the king on the throne is brought down by God but God doesn't destroy him he humbles him and so look at what happens in verse 34 it says at the end of days

I Nebuchadnezzar lifted my eyes to heaven and my reason returned to me and I blessed the Lord most high I praised and honored him who lives forever saying his dominion is never lasting dominion his kingdom endures from generation to generation all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth none can stay his hand or say to him what have you done friends at the end of this period of time Nebuchadnezzar is transformed into a worshipper and the story ends with the most powerful man the most powerful nation of the world turning his eyes to heaven and saying I do not rule but you do Nebuchadnezzar is transformed from a proud arrogant man to a worshipper friends what about us what about us

Jesus invites us to come and worship in this morning to lay our pride down to recognize that he alone is God that we are not Jesus invites us to come and be humbled by him but also to experience his grace and so I want to encourage us to take this time of both reflecting but also worshipping let's look at our own hearts and let's reflect and we're going to go into communion in a few minutes time but let's take this time to really examine our hearts to examine the pride to come before our God to admit it to confess it to let God both humble us and fill us up with his love