

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Far From Home

PART

6

TITLE

Until You Know

SCRIPTURE

Daniel 4



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Well, Providence family, it's great to see you. I hope you've had a great week, and welcome home.

For those of you who are guests, we're glad that you have joined us. If you have a Bible in your hand, if you would turn with me to Daniel 4. We're in a series that's called Far From Home, just working through this book, and we're up to the fourth chapter. If you don't have a Bible in your hand, there's lots of Bibles in the chairs near you. If you don't have one of your own, please take that home as a gift.

Those of you in the other room as well as those of you who are at home, welcome. We're also glad that you've joined us.

Tonight is a really important night. One time a month, normally, we have a night where we meet as the church family, and we pray, and we sing. That's tonight. It's at 6:00. It'll be from 6:00 to 7:00. For those who have been to one recently, you know that it's really one of the most spiritually engaging, satisfying, moving services that we actually have. It's for your benefit, but there's another reason that we do it, and it's because we believe God's word is true, and God's word tells us that He opposes the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. Within His word, He tells us that one of the ways that we express humility that attracts His gracious assistance is that we pray. That's what prayer is. It's us saying, God, we can't, but we believe You can. You have the power. You have the mercy. You can help us to do what it is that we've been told by You to do, and so we come to You.

That's what we're going to do tonight, and so I hope that not only you can be there tonight, but I hope that you want to be there tonight. That's probably even more important, but it is good to see you. Let me just tell you in the fourth chapter of Daniel, this is a little painful. I'm not asking you to leave, but the fact is we don't typically see Daniel 4 written on paintings on walls, and it's not cross-stitched in pillows, and it's not on coffee mugs. It's not the inspirational place within the Bible where we can draw a little verse here or there, but it's incredibly important. It's going to address something that we all struggle with, and that's pride. I'm praying and will pray that the Lord uses this in your life. It's important that we recognize, and I want to show you how this works, that our problems that we have are typically much deeper than we can see with our eyes.

In 2007, there was a sinkhole within a city. Of course, the problem didn't begin in 2007. There was a busted sewer line beneath the city of Guatemala City, and it began to erode the limestone underneath this section and, when eventually it fell, it absorbed with it five human beings who happened to be on top. They fell down a hundred meters. It's a remarkable sinkhole. There's really nothing like it and, this tragedy, it does illustrate something, and that is that a lot of our problems we typically think that they're surface deep, and yet they're very, very deep.

This is important because, today, a lot of people spend a whole lot of time, and they're imagining why is it that culture, our culture is in such a spiral. We see all these problems. What's interesting is a lot of people want to talk about the problems that we see, but very few people either have the stomach or the ability to look deep down to actually recognize and see the real problems that are, and so God serves us in a pretty remarkable and humble way, and yet it's a stinging indictment upon our own pride.

In Romans 1, He says, "Let me tell you what's wrong with your society." He says, "Since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done." Now, I know when we look at this, this isn't necessarily that warm, fuzzy verse either, and yet it's really important for you to be able to see within your own heart three different levels within this own verse.

America, we typically only acknowledge the last and that there are people who were doing things, and we say, "They ought not to do those things." When we see injustice or lawlessness or we see abortion or we see violence or abuse or we see immorality or idolatry and all these kinds of things, we say, "That's the problem."

That's what you see is the problem, but it says that there's actually two layers deeper than that. He says, "There's a reason that people are doing what we're looking at and saying, "People ought not do that," and the first is this. They're actually doing that because God gave them up to a debased mind, a corrupt mind, a mind that is operating at less capacity as a mind that's been made in the image of God, but then God wants to serve us by going a step even further. There's a reason that that happened. It wasn't arbitrary. It wasn't accidental that He gave us up to a debased mind. It's that an individual or a culture does not see fit to acknowledge God.

Every single day, you see pundits and experts file upon news station after news station to be able to tell us everything that's wrong in the world, and no one stands up there and says, "It's because our culture and our hearts refuse to see God as holy," and so instead, we have to talk about the violence that we see, and we have no understanding as a culture why people are doing what it is they're doing, and it's because God has given up to a debased mind because we as a culture have said, "There is no God."

When we come to Daniel 4, what we find is an illustration of divine judgment that comes upon a human being or upon a culture that continues until that man or that culture knows that the Most High reigns overall the earth, so let me pray.

Father in heaven, we bow before You, and I pray, God, that You would Help us not just to be able to point and identify the problems in the world, but would You help us to have the humility to see that we contribute to them and the humility to lift our eyes to heaven and see Christ the Lord is holy, the only one who can fix, the only one who can redeem, the only one who can rescue us, the only one who can give us rest? I pray, Father, that you would speak through weakness and, for those who are considering even the claims of Christ today without a relationship with You, oh God, please, by Your spirit, draw them close to You now. We pray all of this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Verse one, "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."

King Nebuchadnezzar wants the world to be able to see what he has come to see. He's not always seen what he now sees, but he recognizes in verse two that, "God Almighty, the Most High has done something unique in

my life, and I want to be able to express the good things that He has done in my life to everyone on the planet.” That’s what he just said, that other people can also see that the Most High reigns over heaven and earth.

The rest of chapter four is his personal testimony of what God did in his life in order to bring him to this conclusion so that he feels the joy, so that he writes the whole world, “This is what God did in my life,” and so the story begins with a setting, and it’s a setting of great pleasure. Verse four, “I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace.” Nebuchadnezzar was the very first king to conquer and then rule the entire known world. He had no rivals. He had no equals. He had everything at his own disposal. When he says, “I was at ease,” not only at ease, “I was prospering,” this word, prospering, sometimes is translated flourishing, and its actual word translated purely is “he was growing green”. That’s prosperity, when we’re growing green. That’s going to be really important when you continue to read what’s about to happen.

Here was a man who was growing green, and then he had a dream. This man with everything, he became so restless he couldn’t sleep. This is what he says, verse five, “I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me, so that I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me and that they should 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.”

Friends, what we just read here is happening every single day on news networks as legal experts and scholars and philosophers who do not acknowledge God are brought on TV to explain their utter confusion as to the decay in our culture, a culture that will not acknowledge God as holy. Verse eight, “At last, Daniel came in before me, he who is named Belteshazzar, after the name of my god and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods, and I told him the dream.”

Now, if you’re brand new here, we’re really glad that you’re here, and I need to help you understand a little bit. The other people, if you’ve been here the last month, you know some of this history, but the king in 605 BC left Babylon and he went to Jerusalem, and there he invaded the first time out of three times in 19 years, so in about a 20-year section he’s going to invade Jerusalem three different times, and every invasion led to a deportation of people back to Babylon. The first time that he goes in, he invades, he conquers, and he looks and he takes from the noble families, those that were the rulers, the elite, and he looks at their children. They’re teenagers, and he says, “All the people who have aptitude and learning and skill, there’s some wisdom, discernment, they’re good-looking and they’re also influential, they’re tomorrow’s influencers of the Jewish people, that’s who I want to take,” and he brings these young people. They’re teenagers at the time, and one of them was Daniel.

They go to Babylon. When they get to Babylon, they’re put into a three-year school which was specifically designed, we read in chapter one, to reprogram their worldview, to be able to discount their old worldview from the Bible and to look at the gods and the worldview of all of Babylon and say, “This is my new way of thinking,” and they’re doing this in order to prepare so that when the people are in masses are exiled from

Jerusalem into Babylon is that these young cultural influencers will become the ones that help to convert and assimilate the rest of the Jewish people into Babylonian culture.

When these young people get there, they get a new name. Each one of them is given a new name that corresponded to one of the Babylonian gods. That's why this verse says, "At last, Daniel came in before me, he who is named Belteshazzar." One of the king's idols was named Bel. That was his God that he worshiped. That's why he says, "After the name of my god," but then he also recognized something.

Now, this is important. You know this. In Daniel 4, we fast-forward 35 years from when he first invaded Jerusalem. What this means is that Daniel is now in his 50s. Over all of these 35 years of service in the king's court, Daniel has distinguished himself. The king still worships. That's why He says, "After the name of my god." He still worships Bel, but he looks at this man who seems to have discernment and wisdom at the most opportune times, and he recognizes this because the Spirit of the Holy God is in him, and so he keeps bringing him in to ask for counsel. This is a really important truth for our culture today. The truth that our nation needs is only going to come from those who have the Spirit of God within them who are proclaiming the word of God. Babylon was a ship of fools, and it had one wise man.

Verse 10 is when he gets to hear the dream. He says that, "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, and 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."

Nebuchadnezzar, within his dream, he saw a flourishing tree, a tree that was growing green. It was feeding off flesh and dominating the landscape of the entire world, but then a scary part of the vision for the dream. Verse 13, "I saw in the vision of my Head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one," that's an angel, "came down from heaven. He proclaimed aloud and said thus, 'Chop down the tree and lop off His branches. Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beast 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.'"

Just notice what happens right here. He stops talking about a tree and he starts talking about him, which is indicative that this dream is about a person. "Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beast in the grass of the earth, and let his mind be changed from a man's and let a beast mind be given to him, and let seven periods of time pass over him." Most probably that was seven years. "The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end." This means this is why. In his dream, the angel actually tells him this is why this is going to happen. "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."

In other words, what he's saying here is this, is that God is going to allow this to take place and cause this to

take place, so that the world will recognize that there is one true living God and He is the most holy overall and He, with His authority and by His sovereign will, entrusts and gives that authority to both good leaders and wicked leaders, for blessing or for curse, in order to cause its people to acknowledge Him as the Most Holy.

The kind of leader that God gives to us is the kind of leader that we need in that moment most to acknowledge that He is the Lord of heaven and earth. It's a remarkable thing what we just read, but you need to understand that every single person in the world, every boss, every school board, every mayor, governor, judge, congressperson and president must know, and that is that heaven rules, that there is one and only one, and He is the Lord and there is no other, and yet, remarkably, knowing that God is merciful in particular to the repentant, Daniel goes a step further than what the king asked him to do.

The king said, "I have a dream. You interpret it." Daniel interpreted it, and then he made an appeal. In verse 27, he says, "Therefore, oh, 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." This was important because Daniel interpreted the dream and, when he interpreted the dream, it was really, really difficult.

When finally after he stopped being blanched, it says he became so overwhelmed that he said, "Okay, let me tell you what it's about." Verse 22, he says, "The tree that you see," verse 22, "it is you, oh, king. It's you. You have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reached the heaven and your dominion to the ends of the earth," and then when it came to this stump, this terrifying stump that would be cut down and left its little stump, he goes, "Let me tell you what that's about."

Verse 24, "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 beast 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," and then he says, "When is this going to end?" "Until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom He will. As it is 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."

This is what everyone needs to know. Heaven rules, and this is when Daniel then says, "But I know something about God, and that is that He is so merciful to the repentant, that this is the dream, but I'm begging you, put off of your sin, repent, and you got to start showing mercy to people."

What happens next is pretty terrifying. Verse 29, "At the end of the 12 months, he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon." This is the king, 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, 'Oh, 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. Seven periods of time shall pass over you until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of man 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 until his hair grew as long as eagle feathers and his nails were like birds' claws."

Then there's this beautiful transition. Don't forget what he's trying to do. All of this is his testimony in order to tell the world the good things that God has done for him, so you're like, "Well, when does the good happen?" Well, here it is. "At the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven." That's the transition. He acknowledged that heaven rules. "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. 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, 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."

I want to take our remaining moments, and I want to show you three big truths about God Himself, but then unpack in three applications. First, let me encourage you to see that God patiently pursues us because He loves us. I know that this story you probably don't think when someone says, "Hey, what's the one passage in the Bible when you think of the love of God?" Most of you don't go, "Daniel 4. That's the one. It's Daniel 4," but think about the love of God that was manifested towards this man named Nebuchadnezzar who deserved to be dead and then eventually in hell.

One thing about King Nebuchadnezzar that I haven't really talked to you about, you know that he's rich and he's powerful and he's a military genius and an amazing political leader, and he had a very, very amazing strategy that played the long game of cultural transition within the heart. One thing you need to know about him is he was really evil. When he invaded Jerusalem, one of the really sad and gruesome things that he did, it was an atrocity and it wasn't the only one that he committed. Let me just tell you one is he stood the king up, the king of Judah, and then he brought his sons in front of the king and he slaughtered his sons, and then he gouged the king's eyes out to ensure that the slaughter of his sons would be the very last visible memory that he had. That's an evil man. That's a sinful man.

The Bible says that the wage of sin is death. God could have just taken him out, but at the end of the story, this man, don't forget, this is someone who didn't acknowledge God, so he was given a debased mind to do what

ought not to be done, but God still loved him because he was an image bearer. He was still a human being. He had a soul. He didn't want him to spend forever in hell.

He doesn't want you to be apart from him. He loves you in your worst. Some of you are literally right now at your worst. You were invited here. Someone else said, "You know what? You maybe at your worst. You should come to church with me." You're Here. You may have a friend, a family member, an adult-child who is at their worst right now. They may be out there, and they're like, "That person there, my goodness, Lord, is there anything You can do?" or maybe you have somebody you just don't like very much, and they're out there, and it just seems like they're just escalating. It just seems like they're amazing and yet they have no regard for God, no acknowledgement of God. I want you to know none of those people are too far away from God's righteous hand. He can reach all of us. He can reach because He loves us.

In fact, one of the verses that I just... I was in high school when I first saw this. I don't know why it just stuck with me, but 2 Samuel 14:14, it says, "God will not take away life, but He devises means so that a banished one will not remain an outcast." In other words, when somebody is separated from Him, He doesn't just write them off. He gets creative and starts devising means, making plans, strategizing how to bring them home. Sometimes, He uses really difficult things like a crisis. Sometimes, He uses a pleasurable thing. Sometimes, He uses people. Sometimes, He uses a song that pops on the radio. Sometimes, it's a sermon that you hear or a book or, sometimes, it's a dream. This king, Nebuchadnezzar, he needed a dream. Some of us are like, "Oh, dreams? That was like for a long time ago." God still uses dreams.

Let me tell you a story about somebody that you may not know, but he's deeply connected to you, who had a dream that utterly changed his life and, therefore, it changed the lives of other people. Years ago, I met this man. His name is Bozon. This is a little picture, a bunch of our college students. There's big Phil right here, and this is Bozon in a red shirt. I have to show you the back of his Head because I can't show you the front. Okay? This is Bozon. He's 95% blind. Years before this, he's living in Syria. He's a Muslim, and he's trying to work it out, and yet he's not happy. He's sort of miserable, and so the Lord pursues him, and he has a dream. He doesn't know what it means, but in the dream he sees this person. He saw this person, and he was like as bright as light. He was just light.

Well, he lived in Aleppo. You remember that city? They were invaded. His people group, they were set for annihilation, and so he and his family fled and became a refugee to another country in the Middle East where they're at right here, and he begins living in a tent village as a refugee. There's an NGO worker there to give food and clothing and water to the people living in the tents, and this one happened to know the Lord. He had no idea about the dream, but he goes up to Bozon and he says, "I want you to know something about this man named Jesus Christ who came to the earth. In John 8, He says He is the light of the world." Suddenly, that testimony from Scripture and that dream that God gave him connected, and he put His faith in Christ. Suddenly, over the next several years, this man named Bozon who we support as a church planter in the Middle East is winning so many people to Christ that today there are 42 house churches in his city. A dream.

A dream.

My point is this, is that God pursued Nebuchadnezzar because He loved him, and He's pursuing you, too. The second truth is that God humbles us in order to rescue us. We typically don't think of being humbled as being rescued, do we? When we think of being humiliated, we're like, "That doesn't feel like a rescue to me," but I want you to think about what's happening Here. Nebuchadnezzar's last recorded words in Scripture are these. "Those who walk in pride He is able to humble."

Now, you might look at that and go, boy, he was really resentful of that. No. Don't forget this is simply the summary statement of his testimony that he looks at and says, "This is the good things that God has done that the whole world needs to know is that He humbled me." Now, why would He say that? It's because, for King Nebuchadnezzar, what He was saying in this passage is this. He goes, "I want the whole world to know that there was a cancer that was growing within me, a kind of cancer that was growing within my own heart that was poisoning all of my joy. Even though God's means to eradicate that cancer, that treatment plan was absolutely brutal, I'm so glad that He did it because He got it out of me."

This cancer he's talking about is pride. It is really important to separate the pride that he's talking about here from... because we use the word pride to describe all kinds of things, right? There's a kind of pride when you have a little kid and they stand up for the very first time and you say, "Oh, I'm so proud of you." That's not what he's talking about here. There is a kind of behavior that actually believes and rests in what God has said is true about us when He says, "You're an image bearer of God. You're different from all other things." When we believe that, it brings security and we can have pride in that. That's a different kind of pride. It's a pride that's based on faith in what God has said about me is true and, therefore, there's a specialness to being created in His image.

That's not what's happening in chapter four. What's happening in chapter four can be seen in verse 30 when He says, "Is this not great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence for the glory of my majesty?" You boil that down, and what he says is this. "This amazing city that I just built," it's like New York City except the whole thing is a garden, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, "I did it, and I'm due it." That is the pride that he's talking about. God sees this cancer and all of its ramifications upon our joy and relationships, and He gets so stirred that He wants to eradicate it.

Now, what does He see in this kind of pride that He attributes His activity in our life as a rescue to humble us in this way? The first reason is that pride causes restlessness. You see, most of us imagine that our discontent in life is a quantity issue. We're climbing a ladder. We just had more of it, whatever it is. It may be money. It may be sex. It may be friends. It may be activity. It may be leisure. It may be sleep. I don't know what it is, but we can just imagine, you know what, I will be so much happier if I simply had more of this quant of this thing. As a result of that, many of us are restless because our rest is interrupted by ambition. I've just got to get there. If I can get there, then I'll rest, but until then I can't rest.

There's only a handful of people in all the world like this man who felt a different kind of restlessness because he made it to the top. Now, some of you, I know you think you've made it to the top, but you've not made it to the top. Nebuchadnezzar was the ruler of the entire world. He had unlimited resource and power to do anything that he wanted. That's a different kind of on top than you being on top. He was on top of the world. What you find for people like this is their rest is interrupted knowing that their soul wants something that's bigger than the whole world can provide.

We need to go a little step deeper with this restlessness because what pride says is, "I did all this." When we say I did all this and we didn't do all this, that's called spiritual plagiarism. Claiming God's work as our own is plagiarism. When we take another person's work and we plagiarize, what happens is we grow restless, and the reason is because we're fearful of being exposed as the fraud and thief that we are. That's why there's all kinds of people who stand in front of their house and they go, "You know what? It's all mine. I did it all," and yet they're really insecure as a human being, because they really hope nobody knows just how weak they are, and so we become restless.

Some of you say, no, the reason I'm on top is because I worked harder than everybody else or I worked smarter than everyone else, and maybe you have worked harder and smarter than everybody else, but let me ask you, with what? 1 Corinthians 4 says, "What do you have that you did not receive?" I mean, you showed up to this world totally naked. You had nothing, so did I, and so he says, "If then you received it, why do you boast as if you didn't receive it?"

You see, pride takes authorship in what is a gift from God's hand, and that makes us restless. When we go one step deeper into this restlessness, and not only does pride say, "I did it," it also says, "I'm due it." Pride assumes this ever-growing debt with other people. The world owes me, God owes me, everybody owes me and, therefore, when blessings are withheld, our sense of justice won't let us rest. God looks at all of this restlessness and, instead of saying, "You're right. You just need to climb higher and taller," He sends His Son to the earth. In that stable, there was a little baby who was literally bigger than the whole world, and that baby grew up, and He said, "Come to me all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I'll give you rest."

Not only does pride cause restlessness, it also causes rebellion, and that rebellion causes guilt. You see, pride says, "I'm in control. I'm going to do what I want. I'm going to determine my course and my cause," but sin erodes joy, which is why Daniel's call for the king's humility included the words "break off your sins by practicing righteousness". Pride causes rebellion that God wants to protect us from, and the last thing is that pride defaces our humanity. That's why it's so exhausting. It defaces our humanity. You see, God showed in the king's body, his physical body, what pride does to our heart. He looks at Nebuchadnezzar and He says, "You want to become more than I made you, and so, for a time, I'm going to show you by being less than I made you."

When we become less, we become animalistic. Isn't it amazing? That's why when the Bible talks about how

we fight with one another, it's like a bunch of cats that's like clawing each other's back. When pride is in our heart, it's really interesting what we do. We are debased in our thinking. We create pecking orders. We're like, "Okay, I just don't want to be the least. I'm clearly better than that guy and better than that person, so at least I'm not the lowest," just like an animal, and then there's a lack of empathy, which is why Daniel's call for humility says, "Break off your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed."

You see, when we become, our heart becomes proud and we become animalistic, what happens is we become self-absorbed. We don't even see the hurts in other people around us because we're so concerned about whatever it is that we're going through. We are never so empty as when we're full of ourself. God wants to protect us from all of this by either inviting us to humble ourself or by willing to humble ourselves Himself. That gets to the third and last thing I want you to see, and that is that God restores those who lift their eyes to Him.

There is that beautiful marker in verse 34 when He says, "And then I lifted my eyes to heaven." Everything changed when that happened. You see, in each one of our lives, there comes a point to where the effects of pride become so overwhelming that we want to change. We see just the weightiness and the restlessness when it comes. When we're self-loathing or self-boasting or just constantly consumed with ourself, we're like, "I don't want my day to be all about myself. I want to be about other people," and then all of a sudden you go out, and the first thing you think about is you. When we feel the effects, we try to change ourself, but we can't. We don't have it in us to change us. We need somebody else.

C. S. Lewis illustrates this fact in such a vivid way in his books, Narnia, with the character Eustace. You remember Eustace? A little boy who's pretty arrogant, he goes to bed arrogant. Within this story, he wakes up as a dragon. He's got dragon skin, and he hates it, and so he was self-loathing, and he's trying to tear it off of him, but it won't come off. This is what happens. You try to become a humble person in your own strength, and what happens is you just become a self-loathing person, which is just as arrogant as a self-boasting person just in the wrong direction. Finally, he says, "I can't do it," in desperation as he's clawing, and so he looks to this character in the story named Aslan, who is the Christ figure, who is a lion, and he says, "I need you to heal me."

What does Christ say? You remember? "I will have to undress you." Aslan is a lion and he has claws, and so it's going to hurt, but it was worth it. It's always worth it. How do you get free of your pride? First, you see that we deserve nothing from God but judgment. That's what I'm due. When he is telling us about all the things that God has done in his life, he says, "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted is nothing," which would include himself. In other words, this man in this moment in time, he didn't become hardened. He became humble. He's now seeing life as a gift.

Then, second, we must lift our eyes to heaven for mercy. We lift our eyes for mercy, and the reason is because God is merciful. Unlike the king's violent ascent, God Almighty saves us in the most humble ways. He sends His son on a descent. Philippians says, "Though He was in the form of God, He did not count equality with

God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. Being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

As Jesus, He lived without sin. He died for our sin. He was buried in a grave, and He rose from the dead, and when He rose from the dead, He said, “If you’ll put your trust in me, not only will I forgive you of your sin and give you my righteousness, but I will cause my Holy Spirit to come and abide and live within your Heart, giving you the power to not be consumed with pride that makes you restless.” He is the only source of strength to deal with this problem in our life.

Let me close with just a few things. First, let me urge all of us to lift our eyes to Jesus if you know Christ as your Savior and Lord. Perhaps it may have been a long time since you’ve called upon Him and just talked to Him. Let me just ask you do you have a long account right now with the Lord of things that you need to talk, but you just haven’t? This would be a great day to do that, to lift your eyes to heaven. If you have never put your faith and trust in Christ, this would be the great day to do that, to say, Christ, I believe that You died and rose for my sin, and I confess You as Lord.

Second, let me encourage each one of us to examine our heart for pride. Many of us have listened to this entire sermon thinking about another human being and not ourself. When we listen to these kinds of sermons about pride and we’re thinking about other people, other leaders, leaders of countries, leader of cities, leader of churches, leader of businesses, corporations, we just have somebody else in mind, what happens is we escape self-examination, which is really bad for us, and so let me encourage you to not think about someone else right now. Think about you. What is your receptivity right now to the word of God? What is your desire to pray? What is your attitude when you’re serving? What is your disposition when you find resources? Is it to hold on to them because you’ve earned them and you’re due them, or are they a gift to be able to share with people who are in need? What is the condition of your heart related to pride?

Last, let me encourage us to share what Christ has done for us. It’s exactly what the king did. He had an entire testimony he says the whole world needs to know. Let me encourage us as a church family as I close with this. You’re going to be asked about the problems of the world sooner than later. When you are, let me encourage you to not stay on surface level. Let me encourage you as somebody who knows better to tell the people who are asking the problem in the world is that we are not acknowledging the Most High God who reigns overall and who sent His Son to rescue us, to restore us, to give us rest. Let’s be the Daniels in those situations that we need to be, so let’s pray.

Father in heaven, we bow before You, and we thank You that we have something to share. We have something to sing about because we can lift our eyes to You and we can be restored. I thank You, God, that You’ve done that in so many of our lives. We thank You, God, that you humbled us at that pivotal moment for us to be able to put our faith and trust in Christ and stop resting in ourselves, stop relying upon ourselves. I thank You that

You did that in our life. For those who are considering the claims of Christ in the room, I pray, Father, that You would draw them to Yourself now.

Christ, as we sing to You, we believe that You are the only one who can bring restoration. You did bring restoration to our heart, and now we want to be able to share that with others, and so would you give us opportunity even today to share a truth that we saw within Daniel 4 today with somebody in our life that we would be able to proclaim that You reign? We sing to you now. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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