

Counterfeit Faith

Review of last week:

- Babylon was the personification of evil.
- Daniel was a light in a dark culture. He lived out genuine faith through his **hope, humility, and wisdom.**
- We can be light in our culture.
- Daniel thrived in Babylon as he trusted God. **So can we!**
- God is in control of who's in control.

Definition of *thrive*: to flourish; to grow strongly and vigorously. (www.dictionary.com/browse/thrive)

A very brief history:

The people of Judah persisted in their own way. They chose to ignore and reject the warnings God sent through His prophets, and they chose to listen to false prophets instead. (**Jeremiah 23**)

- **God used Babylon to judge and discipline Judah.**

Daniel 1:1-2 (NIV) In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. **And the Lord delivered** Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god. (emphasis added)

Habakkuk 1:5-11 (NIV) "Look at the nations and watch—and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told. **I am raising up the Babylonians**, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwellings not their own. ⁷They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor. ⁸Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar. They fly like an eagle swooping to devour; ⁹they all come intent on violence. Their hordes advance like a desert wind and gather prisoners like sand. ¹⁰They mock kings and scoff at rulers. They laugh at all fortified cities; by building earthen ramps they capture them. ¹¹Then they sweep past like the wind and go on—guilty people, whose own strength is their god." (emphasis added)

- **God disciplines the ones He loves.**

Proverbs 3:11-12 (NIV) My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, ¹²because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.

Counterfeit Faith vs Genuine Faith

Traits of counterfeit faith:

- *Having only a form of godliness...*

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NIV) ¹But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ²People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—⁵**having a form of godliness but denying its power.** Have nothing to do with such people. (emphasis added)

- *Depending on your own righteousness...*

Romans 10:3 (NIV) Since they did not know the righteousness of God and **sought to establish their own**, they did not submit to God's righteousness. (emphasis added)

- Thinking of God as a "*cosmic consultant.*" *Thriving in Babylon* by Larry Osborne

Traits of genuine faith:

- *Having a legacy...*

2 Timothy 3:10-17 (NIV) You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, ¹¹persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. ¹²In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every goodwork. (emphasis added)

- *Choosing to see life through the lens of God's Word...*

James 1:2-3 (NIV) Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

- *Thriving wherever you are planted...*

Jeremiah 29:1-11 (NIV) ⁴This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵"Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. ⁷Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." ⁸Yes, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. ⁹They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the Lord... ¹¹For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

- *Believing God...*

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV) And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

Our VISION and MISSION

(V) Legacy of strong God-honoring families that impact our communities.

(M) Helping people build full-time relationships with Jesus.

Our goal is to create a community that equips its people to **THRIVE** in a spiritually dark world—a community where we flourish, grow and shine!

Questions to Consider:

1. What passage stands out to you?
2. What thought from the sermon sticks with you?
3. How do you know your faith is real?
4. What part will you play in creating a community where people thrive? (Where do you start?)
5. How do you respond to what you've heard? What help or resources do you need in taking your next step in what God is showing you?