

Kingdom Down #5 - Party Like It's 539 B.C.

- All right, we're Daniel 5, find it in your Bible or on your phone. And what's interesting is, we live in this day where the world has gotten very small and information travels very quickly. All of a sudden call text, email, whatever the case may be, social media platform news alert, we're constantly bombarded with information, most of it is troubling to us, it frustrates us, it makes us discouraged or anxious or fearful, or even angry. And I would say that, that explains, in large part the current mood, the more we know, the worse we feel. All of a sudden we know what's going on around the world, we know what's going on in the lives of people that we love. And it's very frustrating, and it's very troubling. Now, that being said, I wanna emotionally connect with you and have you changed perspective, think for a moment what it must be like to be God. God knows everything, right? He can't just cancel his internet subscription, can't just throw away his phone, can't just ignore all that is happening, God sees everything, God hears everything, God knows everything, and if we have a right to get frustrated or angry or upset or demand change, God has that same right. And God has been viewing and hearing all of human conduct, for all of human history. And what's gonna happen in Daniel 5, you're gonna see where God, finally reaches his boiling point and he responds with justice, okay? So let me just tell you in advance, this is gonna be a little bit of an intense sermon, not like Daniel to this point his been all bunnies and roses and Tooth Fairy and hugs and giggles, but this is the dark portion of the text. And so we're gonna jump right in and we're gonna hear this magnificent day in history where God showed up in power. And the first thing we learn is God will not be mocked. Daniel 5:1-14, King Belshazzar, telling a little bit about him in a moment, made a great feast, a huge party a nun holiday, for 1000 of his lords, those are the Sith Lords, they're the dark side of the verse and drank wine in front of the thousand. Belshazzar when he tasted the wine commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar his father, it's actually his grandfather. So they would refer to their father and their grandfather as their fathers, had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem, be brought that he, his kings, his Lords, his wives, his concubines, yes, that means what you think it does, this is gonna be a naughty night, might drink from them. Then they brought in the golden vessels that have been taken out of the temple of the house of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his lords, his wives, his concubines drank from them, they drank wine and praised, they're having church, the gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood stone, this is all a counterfeit. Everything that God creates, Satan counterfeits. Throughout the Bible God has feasts and festivals, this is where people are supposed to take a day off, get together, have something to eat, have something to drink, throw a party, celebrate rejoice in His Kingdom. We call these holidays which literally means holy days, they're day set apart for the Lord, this is the counterfeit. This is a different King than Jesus, this is a different Kingdom than God's, and this is a different kind of party than the one that we throw every Sunday for the Lord Jesus. And they're getting together to do that which is abominable in the sight of God. And this grandson here, he's just a spoiled third generation Trust Fund rich kid. He's just, he just is. I mean, his grandpa is Nebuchadnezzar, who was a mighty king and warrior and he was sort of prominent in the storyline up till chapter four, his dad was king, and then his dad was away and so this kid is assuming the throne. This is literally a high school movie, right? Dad's away, the spoiled rich kid

throws a big drinking party at his house, that's exactly what this is. This is every 80s movie that I ever saw as a kid, that's all that this is, he's thrown a party while his dad is away. And here's who shows up 1000 of his lords, these would have been certain political leaders of status. In addition, there would have been other men present and there's the wives and the concubines, and the servants. So, commentators will estimate that there were upwards of 15,000 people at the party, this big party. This is a big, big, big party in their equivalent of the White House. So everybody's dressed up, this is a big deal, there's a red carpet, everybody's taking selfies, underwear is now outerwear, none of this is right, this is all going the wrong direction. And they have unearthed this palace, the archaeologists have and it is about the same size as the main section of the White House. So just thinking kind of those terms, and they throw this massive, gigantic party. Now let me just say this, let me ask you as a question. Has anything changed? Does this stuff happened? People were things they shouldn't in public, to drink things that they shouldn't in public, to enjoy a party they shouldn't, do you think this happened last night in Old Town? Yes, yes, and if you're under 30, we forgive you for going there but welcome to church. Now, how about this, what we do we create whole days where we sort of make exceptions, we're like, well, on that day, you get to do this kind of naughty thing. Let's just have this conversation, I got nothing else to do. What would some of those days be, Mardi Gras? Mardi Gras, Mardi Gras is for sure a Babylonian holiday. It just for sure is, right? St. Patrick's Day, I'm Iris, we're like, oh, let's get drunk, why? That's been a problem for the Irishman for a long time, I would just encourage the Irishman don't get drunk, right? Don't get drunk, just pray, eat potatoes move forward, just have a plan B. What other holidays do we? New Year's Eve, it's a new year, I'm gonna throw up, what better way to start a fresh than throwing up? Okay, what else? Super Bowl, oh, grown men are gonna carry a dead pig over a line, let's all get drunk and eat nachos and watch the Halftime show, okay? That is, His concubines, okay, what else? Oh, it's gonna get worse. What else do we have for the hol, for the days where we get to celebrate like this? Halloween, mom dresses up like a naughty nurse, dad does shorts and we terrorize children. Well yeah, that's a great idea, who came up with that? Anything else? Cinco de Mayo, let's your drunk like Mexicans, let's get drunk like Irishman till, I mean, it's just, it's crazy, Cinco de Mayo is the Greek word for Bad morning the next day, that's what it is, okay? So we do this, so that we say things like it's my birthday, I'm getting engaged, I'm getting married, we're having a baby, it's Friday, it's Saturday, it's Tuesday, let me just say that we kind of still have the spirit of Babylon at work, Amen? We kind of do, so that's what's going on here. Three things are happening, deviancy, so they have the wives, the concubines, and the other girls, and in most ancient parties, when the guys would start drinking and carousing, the women would depart, right? 'Cause it's gonna be a bad situation. There's another book of the Bible called Esther, where there is a queen that is hosting a state party event with her husband, and it's time for the guys to drink and carouse and so Esther the queen takes the women out to go do something else, here they're all together, why? It's gonna get naughty, and some of these girls were likely captured in war, we would call them slaves and trafficking victims, I mean, this whole thing is just ungodly, unholy, and unacceptable. In addition, there is drunkenness, this is just a drinking party and the king gets up and he is going to just start taking shots, I'm sure there's a ping pong ball involved, some guys being held by his ankles, this is just a large fraternity event, that's what this is. And so what he decides is, hey, let's go drink out of what cups, Gods cups. We looked in chapter

one, they went in, the Babylonians did, they conquered the nation of Israel, they plundered the temple, they then took back with the slaves, the articles from God's temple, used for the sacred worship of the one true God. In Ezra 1, it tells us that they actually had 5000 different items largely of gold that they stole from God. This was his grandpa Nebuchadnezzar, it's all locked up and he comes up with this crazy idea, hey, let's go get those and everybody gets a golden goblet that belongs to God and we're all gonna get hammered and drink out of it to show that our God is the real God and there God is the weak God. How many of you, you see that this probably isn't going the right direction? This is deviancy, this is drunkenness, and ultimately, this is public dishonor. This is just their way of literally, rebelling against God openly and publicly to give you the equivalent, this would be like, imagine last night you're driving by the church, and the lights are on and there's a lot of music and the parking lot is packed and you're like, is there a revival, what is going on? You walk in, they're not wearing enough clothes, there's naughty stuff on the screens, there's a DJ up here, a guy with two turntables and the microphone, wearing a gold chain, wearing purple, you'll meet him later. And then imagine that the baptismal set up, but it's turned into a hot tub party and dudes are ripping pages out of the Bible they roll up joints, and then they break into the communion wine with the goblets and everybody's getting hammered. Okay, that's the equivalent of what is happening. The question is, where's God's line? Now let me say this we've all got a line, right? We tell people this, don't cross that line, don't say that, don't do that, if you cross the line there will be consequences. If we have the right to have a line, God has a right to have a line. The question is, where is God's line? Let me just say they found it, okay? Here's how the story moves forward, God has a line you don't want to find, how long after? Immediately Gods like, oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, this is it. It doesn't say, he sent them a warning, he sent them an angel, he gave them 10 years to repent. God's like we're done now, enough of this. Immediately, the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace opposite the light stamp, so there's literally a spotlight, it's a dark party, spotlight and a finger. Not a dude just a finger on a hand like this. Let me just tell you this, this is how you get sober, right? This will do it for you, you're like, oh, that's different. Finger shows up just writing on the wall. All right, when God shows up, people sober up, that's the moral of the story. And all of a sudden God shows up and the king saw the hand as it wrote. Now this guy probably is thinking, how much have I had to drink, like I'm not in a good place, but then he looks around and everybody's seeing the same thing. The party stopped, the DJ ends, the dancing is over, everybody is worried, the king saw the hand as it wrote, the king color change, right, dude went flush. His thoughts alarmed and he's like, this can't be good. His limbs gave way, some would say that he had a bowel movement, some of the commentators do, and his knees knocked together, the dude literally, he was arrogant and now he's terrified. The king called loudly. Right, so the party stops, to bring in the enchanters, the chaldeans, and the astrologers. So here comes Larry, curly and Moe, gonna help the situation. The King declared to the wise men of Babylon, here's my point, I don't know why we call them wise men, they don't ever get anything done or do anything right. There's just, they're like community college professors, like why do we salute them? Hey, look, my goal is to offend everyone because I believe in equality, so just hang in there. Here's the point we take ourselves so seriously, we take God so lightly, okay, there you go. All right, that was free, write that down. Okay, the king declare to the wise woman of Babylon, whoever reads this writing and shows me

its interpretation shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck. Full on, Rick Ross, hip hop, lifestyle upgrade, you get a chariot with rims, you get to wear purple, the color of kings, you get a gold grill, you can get tattoos up your neck, you can wear a gold chain, it's gonna be amazing for you, you're gonna get promoted to hip hop lifestyle, okay? So, it's weird how things never change. Then all the kings wise men came in, so every guy's like, I wanna go Rick Ross. They all give it a shot, but they could not read the writing or make known to the king its interpretation. Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his color changed, his lords were perplexed. They've got a god sized problem, sometimes you got a god sized problem. The queen because of the words of the king and his lords came into the banqueting hall and the Queen declared. Now this queen is not his wife, it's his grandma. We're already told in chapter five verse two that the wives were present. This is his grandma, this is Nebuchadnezzar's wife, she's an older woman, but she would have been regarded like the queen mother. So the queen mother comes in catching her grandson, trashing dad's house having a big party. The queen because of the words of the king and his lords came into the banqueting on the queen declared, o king, live forever and we all will just somewhere. Let not your thoughts alarm you or your color change, there is a man, I know a guy, there is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods or the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, in the days of your father, a long time ago, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods were found in him and king Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, made him chief overseer of the magicians, the enchanters, the chaldeans, the astrologers, because of an excellent spirit knowledge and understanding, to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Beltshazzar. Now let Daniel be called and he will show the interpretation, it's really interesting here. Daniel was his God given name, Beltshazzar was his Babylonian given name. His God given name means, God is my judge. And they refer to him here by his God given name, because it doesn't matter what they call him, he doesn't accept it, he knows who he is by his identity and relationship to God. That's how he can make it through Babylon. And what happens here the queen says, we got a guy and he could be helpful, we need to bring him in to the equation. Now what you may not know about this, at this time, Daniel is in his 80s, okay? Chapter one, he was in his teens, chapter five is roughly 70 years later, he's an older guy. He's been faithful to God and at this point, he's basically retired. He's not working for the government, he's just kind of off to the side of history. And as we look at Daniel's life, we've covered 70 years in just five chapters and the question is, why are there gaps? The same reason that there are gaps in your life in mind. Sometimes God shows up in an amazing way, and then we just brush our teeth, do our dishes, do our laundry, go to work, pay our taxes, it's boring for a decade and then something else happens, okay? As you read, Daniel don't just look at what happened, but the timeline and say, God shows up in his life, like God shows up in my life, but it's not every single day that something extraordinary happens. There's been large gaps of mundane time where he was just working his job and living his life. Now, what's interesting here is something called an anthropomorphism. The Bible says that God is spirit, that God is not a man, but the Bible will you use human language and God will use human imagery to portray truth. And so the finger of God is here, what is typified. And what it's literally saying is this, if God wants to get something done, it's this hard. God wants to take down a nation, there you go. God wants to take down a king, there you go. It's, what is

impossible is for any nation to conquer Babylon and God just flicks his finger and it will come down. And this is where it doesn't matter how much power you have, he who is all powerful, cannot be thwarted, cannot be overcome cannot be defeated. And he works oftentimes by his finger, okay? And what it's saying is, God doesn't have to fully exert himself, this is not difficult. Imagine you're watching, let's say, an Olympic weightlifting competition. One dude comes out and he's like, just picks it up with his finger, you'd be like that dude's amazing. It's God's way of saying, this is not heavy or hard for me. And God uses his finger, it says an Exodus 8, to take down the entire nation of Egypt. In Exodus 31, as well, God shows up and he writes the 10 commandments with his finger. Says, hey kids, these are the house rules for the God's family. Jesus shows up and says that he cast out demons by the finger of God. Demon possessed people that others are terrified of, and people can't extricate this evil presence from their life, Jesus shows up just does this and it's over. And there's one occasion, I think it's in John 8, where there's a woman caught in adultery by a bunch of religious guys, and it makes you wonder if it wasn't a trap, 'cause why are these religious guys all outside of her window in the middle of the night, right? I mean, oh, we caught her in adultery, my question would be like, what were you doing there? So they catch her in adultery, it seems to be an entrapment, and they want to put her to death by stoning and Jesus gets down and what does he do? He writes something in the dirt with his finger, we don't know what it is, it may be their sin or the name of their girlfriends. And all of a sudden, every religious leader leaves from oldest to youngest. God gets a lot done just with his finger. And here, the finger of God shows up in the palace. And then the key to the whole story here as well, is that Daniel is chosen because he has the Holy Spirit. Three times in Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar the king, said that he had the Spirit of God, here his wife, the queen mother says, Daniel has the Spirit of God. Here's the point, you and I need to live our faith openly and publicly and unashamedly, okay? If everybody else gets to be proud of their thing, we get to be proud of Jesus in everything. Now, the pressure in the culture is this, keep it to yourself. That's it, faith is a private matter, not a public matter. Daniel's faith is private and it's public. Everybody knows who has God is, that's who he worships, that's who he prays to, that's who he serves. ` You and I live in Babylon, there will constantly be temptations to participate in that which is evil, there will also be pressure to have our faith not be public, so that we don't pay some sort of negative price. But if we don't live our faith publicly, then they don't know that we know God, and when they need God, they don't call us because they don't know that we know him. He lives his faith publicly and all of a sudden, it's like, okay, we have a god sized problem, we need God. Does anybody know God? She's like, I know one guy, the Spirit of God lives in him. The same Holy Spirit that empowered Daniel, empowered the life of Jesus Christ. The same Holy Spirit is given to the children of God, to live by the power of God, and to demonstrate the character of Daniel and Jesus. And so what, Nebuchadnezzar has, he has fame, he has money, he has power, he has glory, he has pleasure, the one thing he doesn't have is the Spirit of God, because the Spirit of God is the one thing that you can't achieve, you can't conquer, you can't obtain. You need to humble yourself and receive the presence of God's power. Daniel has the only thing that Nebuchadnezzar does not have, though Nebuchadnezzar has everything that Daniel doesn't have. Let me just show you this, if you have the spirit, you're the rich one. You're the rich one. So the question is, where is God's line? And the main idea I wanna just drive home from Daniel is this, is that character counts. He has been faithfully

...serving in Babylon by the Spirit of God and when they need help, the queen remembers, I know a guy who has character you can depend on him, he will tell you the truth, even if you don't wanna hear it, he'll do what's right, even if you were hoping that, that was not the future that was coming. So the story then continues, that we all have a day of judgment. Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said, Daniel, you are that Daniel, it's interesting again, he calls him Daniel. It doesn't matter what other people call you, if God says you're loved, you're loved, if God says you're forgiven, you're forgiven, if God says you're clean, you're clean, if God says you're saved, you're saved, it doesn't matter what they say, it only matters what he says, okay? So for his whole life, they keep calling him Belteshazzar and he's like that ain't me, I'm Daniel. Finally they're like, okay, you're Daniel. You are that Daniel one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. Skip the whole conquered your land, robbed your God, enslaved you, castrated you, it's interesting how sometimes we skip the details when we're dealing with people. Oh, yeah, you work for my dad. Well, it's not exactly how it went out. I've heard of you, that the spirit of the gods is in you, might we live in such a way that people know who God's Spirit filled people are? And that light, 'cause they're in a dark place, and understanding, because they're in a foolish and evil place, an excellent wisdom are found in you. Now the wise man, the enchanters have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, this is their whole job, but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. But I've heard that you can give interpretation and solve problem, now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed, Grand Prize, show him what he wants Johnny, purple and a chain of gold around your neck, and you get to be number three in the kingdom. 'Cause it was his dad, and then this kid, and then he would be number three. It seems like a promotion but it's not, he already works for a king, okay? He's already going to inherit a kingdom. And this kingdom is gonna go down that night, so it's not like this job has got a real future, okay? Story continues, next slide. Then Daniel answered and said before the king, let your gifts be for yourself, I don't work for money, I work for God. I am not for hire, I am not a hireling. The way you get a hireling is you hire somebody. And sometimes people will give a lot of money to have a leader, especially religious or spiritual leader, tell them what they wanna hear, so that they can justify that which God does not. And what Daniel is saying is, I ain't in this for the money, I'm in this for the Lord, I'm not for hire. He's gonna be a prophet, not a politician. This world has too many politicians, it needs more prophets. Let your gifts be for yourself and give your rewards to another, nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known him the interpretation, O king, the most High God, that's a major theme of Daniel, the most High God. Over all gods, religion, spiritualities, ideologies, rulers, kings and kingdoms is the most high God. He gave Nebuchadnezzar, your father kingship, greatness, glory, majesty, everything you have son, that came from God, you're just a spoiled kid. And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, languages trembled and feared before him, whom he would he killed, whom he would he kept alive, whom he would he raised up and whom would he humbled is, your grandpa acted like God. 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, and his glory was taken from him. Let me just pause here. Here's Daniel old guy, okay, I think he looks like Clint Eastwood, I'm just gonna put it out there. I think he's like, you want some of this? I mean, he's old, but he's still in

the game. And then here's the young guy, okay? This conversation is the old guy taking the young guy to the woodshed or taking them to school or taking them to the school woodshed, whatever you prefer. This is the old guy looking at the young guy saying son, you have no idea how you got here, you have no gratitude for God, you're just spoiled and arrogant, and let me tell you a story about what God has done for your family, okay? Sometimes people need not just to receive an encouragement, sometimes they need a rebuke. What happens in Daniel 5, is that it is an intense and difficult section of scripture. And part of the reason that some people avoid it or struggle with it, is that we live in a day when the Bible is really, in some regards, just to be treated as motivational quotes, right? So positive, uplifting, safe for the whole family, hope, you read Daniel 5, your like, finger on the wall, dead people, I don't know what category that fits in. It fits in the category of judgment, it fits in the category of sin, it fits in the category of the wrath of God. And when we're saved, we're saved from sin, we're saved from the wrath of God, we're saved from the judgment of God. If all you ever want are soft words from God, you'll end up with a hard heart against God. Sometimes God allows hard words to produce soft people, okay? And when we read of this, we're reading of judgment and we're reading of wrath, and we're reading of consequence, and we see this man rebuking that man. It is still God's grace giving that guilty man an opportunity to repent, he's still alive, he's not dead. There's still an opportunity for him to turn from his ways and to trust in God and to receive forgiveness and to join Daniel in the service of the real King. Yeah, we're all just like this guy, aren't we? I mean, let's just be honest. Let's not just look at them and say, I can't believe he did that, if you had that much money and that much power, truth be told, we'd probably do the same thing. We probably would, and what he's saying here, the problem with your grandfather was pride, and he became hard hearted. Pride is demonic, the first being to ever become proud was Satan. We live in a culture that honors pride we have, we have pride movements, we have pride parades. Don't make it the goal of your child raising to have them have good self esteem, but humility and repentance and faith in God. Our entire educational system is for pride, self esteem, there's nothing wrong with you, you're amazing, everybody should celebrate you, nothing needs to change, you're awesome. God shows up through Daniel and says, your lifestyle is unacceptable to me. It may be popular, there may be a whole parade behind you, but I am against it, and it's a call to repentance. It's the same code that Daniel gave to his grandfather. And this is a courageous moment, do you think the king wants to hear this, in front of his party, in his palace? But it's the truth. Daniel has a tender heart, a soft heart, so he can communicate hard truth. And his hope would be that, that man's heart would not harden like his grandfather's, but it would soften. So the story continues, he was driven from among the children of mankind, he's telling the story of his grandfather. We looked at this in chapter four, his mind was made like that of a beast, his dwelling was with the wild donkeys, he was fed grass like an ox, his body was wet with a dew of heaven. Your grandpa lost his mind, son, his nails grew out, his hair grew out, he lived in the yard and ate stuff, like grass for seven years and slept outside. Pride is a problem with God. He was fed grass until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdoms of mankind and sets over it whom he will. And you his son Belshazzar have not humbled your heart, though you knew all of this. How many of us God showed up in our parents life, God showed up in our grandparents life, and we know that God showed up and we ignore him? That's what's happening. But you have lifted yourself up, that's pride, against the Lord of heaven and the

vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, your concubines have drunk from them and you have praised the gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood, stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hands is your breath. Son your breath is a gift, and those, and whose are all your ways you have not honored. This is really about pride versus humility, that's what he's saying. Nebuchadnezzar in chapter four, we looked, God gave him a warning, one year you need to repent, apologize, worship Daniel's God, be forgiven, we call it getting born again. God gave him a prophecy, you got one year, then you're gonna lose your mind. The end of one year, chapter four, Nebuchadnezzar is up on the roof of his palace, what's he doing? He's looking down on everyone else, and he becomes full of pride, he says, look at my kingdom and what I've done, and how awesome I am and what achievements I've made, and he loses his mind for seven years. When you're proud, you start to go crazy. And then he says at the end of chapter four, he said, when I looked up to the king of heaven, the Most High God, my mind returned to me. The point is this, pride is what happens when we will look down on other people. Humility is what happens when we look up to God. His problem was he looked down on people or looked in the mirror of himself, but he didn't look up to God. The goal is not to focus on your humility, the goal is to focus on the Lord and that produces humility. Here what he is saying is son, you've never looked up to God, you just look down at everyone that you rule and conquer and all that you have and possess. God wants you to look up to him otherwise he's going to come down and deal with you. Let me pull a few principles here from the life of Daniel and the life of Belshazzar, these are two men that serve as case studies, regarding Daniel, don't get caught up in power, praise, possessions or pleasure. Right, 'cause what the king is telling him is, you can be third command power, praise, I'm gonna tell everybody what you've done if you help me, possessions, you're gonna get gold, pleasure, here's a party, here's a harem, welcome to the party, don't get caught up in those things. Those things are fleeting and passing and the joy of the Lord is deeper and richer and never ends, okay? Number two, the only way to conquer fear of man is with fear of God, Proverbs 29:25 says that, fear of man is a trap or a snare. How terrified would you be if you had to do Daniel's job? I mean, this family is a situation, right? They've already thrown his friends into a fiery furnace, I mean, his grandpa's, the Adolf Hitler of the Old Testament, through military blitzkrieg, he conquers nations, plunders them, burns them to the ground, enslaves them and if the Jewish people get out of line, he puts them in a furnace. I mean, this is not a family that you pick a fight with. But Daniel is going to overcome fear of man with a fear of God. Some of you don't like to have hard conversations, some of you don't like conflict, some of you don't like consequences, some of you don't want any trouble, you have fear of man. He has love For his enemies, because he has fear of God so he no longer fears his enemies. He just knows what is right, he seeks to say and do that which is right, no matter the consequences. Number three regarding this man Daniel, we saw earlier that he would kneel before God, and then he will stand before a king. Everyone else bowed down except for Daniel and his buddies. Here we see that if you will kneel before God, you can stand before kings. This is where God opposes the proud but he gives grace to the humble, humble yourself and he'll lift you up when it's time. Kneeling in prayer, kneeling and worship is a demonstration of humility in the heart and in the soul, and if you have humility, then you'll have the integrity as you kneel before God to stand before kings, that's the story of Daniel. In addition, regarding this man's life, he doesn't edit or write the mail,

he lets God write the mail and he just delivers it as a faithful mailman. When he stands before these men and he has these hard, complex, difficult conversations, he doesn't withhold those things that could be a little controversial, and he also doesn't add things that could be a little personal. How many of you feel, God's like, okay, go tell that King I'm done, I'm sick of them, how many of you would add a little bit of your own? Oh, and while we're here, I'm castrated in Iraq and a vegetarian and, God's gonna kill you and, yeah. So he doesn't do that, when you take it personal, you make it personal. The next point is, if somebody has a problem with God, leave the problem between them and God don't put yourself in the middle, right? He's like, okay, God's got a problem with you, you and God got a problem. I'm not putting myself in the middle, this between you and God. Sometimes we get frustrated with people and we get ourselves in the middle and that means it's harder for God to deal with them because we've complicated the situation. Daniel just leaves it as it is between this man and God. How about Belshazzar? Well, one thing we learned is, unless God is your father, it's always like father like, son. See, we have this evolutionary myth of progress, if we just wait everybody gets better. I don't know about you, it doesn't feel like it. It doesn't seem like the world is a more loving, safe, kind, benevolent, generous patient place. The only way people change is they need to meet God and God becomes their father, they then join the family of God, they're filled with the Spirit of God, they're conformed to the image of the Son of God, that's the only way that change happens. Otherwise, it's like father like son. This is just generations of just drunk and brutality. After Nebuchadnezzar left the throne, his successor was murdered by his brother. They put another guy on the throne, he got killed in battle. So then they throw up this grand son and he gets drunk and throws a party and literally declares war on God. It's three generations, how many of us, we don't learn from our family history? We just repeat it like father like, son, that's the story of this family. Number two, pride is a problem. Pride is a problem for God. All of this is ultimately the fruit of the root of pride. And I'm not saying that, that pride is something that some people struggle with, all people struggle with pride, the only difference is whether or not it's a problem for us, and we're fighting against it, or we're succumbing to it. In what areas of your life are you proud? You look down on others, you're defiant, you feel like you're the exception to the rule, that you are above the law that you get to write your own life story and rules that govern your conduct, that's the heart of pride, that's the heart of Satan. Number three, if you don't worship the Creator, you will worship the created. They worshiped the god of gold, silver, they go down the line. Says this in Romans 1, they exchanged the truth of God for the lie and worshiped and serve created things rather than the Creator God who is forever praised, Amen. I'll hit that this summer, we're gonna jump into Romans after Daniel, all right? So this is the easy book, just brace yourself, we're gonna get into Romans. On Romans 1, says that if you don't worship the Creator, you worship that which is created. We're all worshipers, we're all passionate about someone or something, we all take our money and give it somewhere, we take our days and put them somewhere, we take our energy and invest it somewhere. This can be a creative thing that God made, this can be worshiping the environment, this can be worshiping beauty, this can be worshiping your pet. If people cared as much for their soul as they did for their pet, the world would be a better place.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- I get people all the time like, is my dog going to heaven, are you going to heaven? I would start with that, if the dog does make it and you don't, who's gonna throw the frisbee, right like? Created things can be our GPA, it can be our income, it can be our place in the pecking order at the company, it can be our retirement account, it can be our sports team, it can be our political party, it can be our favorite hobby, we worship with religious devotion created things. And what happens in idolatry, a good thing takes God's place, thereby making it a bad thing. So I'm not saying that food or good stewardship or relationship or a pet or a hobby or a job are bad, they're good, they're just a bad God, okay? And that's what's happening here, they worship the gods of created things. So this last point, I wanna make it very personal. They had judgment come from God, for using holy vessels in unholy ways, true? Today, we are the people of God, part of the kingdom of God, we're under the rulership of King Jesus, to use the analogy here in this house, what are the holy vessels? You are, I'll prove it to you. Picking up on this theme Paul in 2nd Timothy 2:20-21 says, in a great house, there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wooden play, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use set apart as holy useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. You are God's holy vessels. In this house, you are the holy vessels. So what we can do, we can look at the story and say, I can't believe they did that with God's cup, then we also need to ask what am I doing with God's body? They not only were partaking in a way of using the vessels as unholy, the body that God gave them, they also made unholy vessels. Repentance, change, holiness, it's God's way of cleansing us so that we can be pure vessels rightly used not wrongly used. But we can look at these people and say, I can't believe what they did with a cup and God would say, I can't believe what you do with your body. I'm just gonna say it, some people are gluttons, they don't care for the holy vessel, some people are drunkards, they don't care for the holy vessel, some people are perverted, they don't care for the holy vessel, some people are self medicating, they don't care for the holy vessel. And here's what I want you to know, it doesn't matter how dirty you've made the vessel, Jesus is the one who can make it clean, okay? Jesus is the one who can make me clean. And so what tends to happen, we think, okay, I've dirtied up my vessel, I'm dirty. Now Jesus comes to not only forgive your sin, but to make you clean. And he does so by putting the Holy Spirit of God in you to make your holy vessel. So the same Spirit of God that lived in Daniel, the same Spirit of God that lived in Jesus, the same Spirit of God that lives in you, makes you clean and pure. See in this story, these people were using an unholy vessel and they were treating their bodies as unholy vessels. Daniel is still a holy vessel, you see that? He comes clean, pure, serving God, being used for God's purposes. I didn't have this in my notes, I didn't share it in the first service, I just feel inclined to say something. I believe that some of you are not serving God because you believe you're too dirty. I believe that some of you are not freed from your past to enjoy your future because you are haunted with guilt, shame and condemnation from mistakes, errors, sins, faults, flaws and failures of your past. Some of you are haunted, you say I can't believe I did that with my body, I can't believe I touched that, I can't believe I smoked that, I can't believe I drank that, I can't believe I did that with that person or persons, I am so dirty. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, okay? The one thing that this man doesn't do is repent of

his sin, so he's never made clean. This man Daniel repented of his sin and God made him clean. How do you clean up your life? You'd be honest about the parts that are dirty and you invite God to come clean it up. So that your body can be used as a holy vessel for God's purposes. But the moral of the story is, don't mistreat God's holy vessels, I would just say this includes your kids, don't hit them or harm them. This would include your wife, don't lay hands on her, don't mistreat God's holy vessels, okay? This is all very sober, but it's very hopeful. There's two men here and the point is, you can be like this one or this one. God welcomes you to receive this King Jesus be part of this kingdom, the kingdom of God, be filled with his spirits, so you can be like this man, Daniel, rather than this other man who ultimately dies. Story concludes, you never know how much time you have, true? And if you lost somebody and you didn't see it coming, you like cancer, car wreck, what? Gone, life moves very very quickly and people are making plans for days they don't have. Therefore, we read this, and I just want you to know friend, you never know how much time you have. Then from his presence, the hand was sent and this writing was inscribed. And this is the writing that was inscribed; Mene, Mene, Tekel and Parsin. This is the interpretation of the matter, Daniel is just gonna get right to it; Mene, God is numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end, it's over now. It took generations to build an empire, it took minutes for God to take it down. Tekel, you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting, your life God's not pleased. You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Peres, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and the Persians. These are two joint military forces that come together against a common enemy, the Medes and the Persians, becomes the Medo-Persian Empire, then Belshazzar gave the command and Daniel was clothed, does Daniel want this? No, purple that's the color of, a chain of gold, a proclamation made and he gets to be number three for the kingdom that's gonna go down in three minutes. The point of the story is, even if you get the top of a kingdom on this planet, it's not a big deal, wait for the kingdom that never ends. That very night, prophecy given fulfilled the same day. That very night Belshazzar, the Chaldean King was killed, and Darius, the Mede received the kingdom being about 62 years old. Now we read this, and some people will judge God and they forget to know God is judge, and some people will say, I don't like God doing this in the same way that criminals don't like cops, okay? Well, I don't like that, well, you're the criminal, okay? Criminals don't like cops. That's not the cops fault. What happens is people will come to this text of I can't, see that's why I can't worship the God of the Bible, he's just harsh, he's mean, he's angry, he's violent. Let me say this, he's patient, I'll prove it to you. 150 years prior, through the prophet Isaiah, in Isaiah 13, here's what God says, the Oracle concerning Babylon. Behold, this is before they invaded, before Daniel, this is long before anything. Behold, I'm stirring up the Medes against them, who have no regard for silver do not delight in gold, their bows will slaughter the young men, they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb, their eyes will not pity children and Babylon the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pop of the Chaldeans will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them, it's time is close at hand and its days will not be prolonged. Daniel being the chief Bible teacher in Babylon was well aware of the prophecies of Isaiah, and would have taught them, okay, it says right here, the clock is set, it's coming. God waits 150 years, let me ask you this, how many of you have waited patiently with love in your heart for your enemy for 150 years? God waited 100, let me say, that's amazing. I'm not shocked at the end that God judges them, I'm shocked that he

waited 150 years. Some people say, I don't know how God can send people to hell, I'm still perplexed at how he could get people to heaven, right? I mean, when you do wrong, and you get judgment, that seems right. When you do wrong and Jesus gets judgment, we call that grace. In addition, 50 years before Daniel, in Jeremiah 27, this prophecy was given, thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, this is what you shall say to their masters, it is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm, have made the earth with men and animals that are on the earth, and I give it to whomever it seems right to me. Now I've given all these lands into the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar, names him and his family. The king of Babylon, my servant. Nebuchadnezzar is still ultimately ruled by a sovereign God. He makes freewill decisions, he will have consequences for them, but God repeatedly calls this man my servant. See, it looks like people are defeating God, they're not God is ruling over them, he is still God's servant. And I have also given him the beasts of the field to serve him, all the nations shall serve him and his son and his grandson. This kid knew exactly what God said, until the time his own land comes, then many nations and great king shall make him their slave. We read this 50 years prior, God says, hey, told you 150 years ago, just a reminder, 50 more years, and then he sends Daniel. Sends him through slavery and exile, gives a dream that he interpreted in chapter two of a mighty warrior king, head of gold Babylon, that would be overcome and supplanted by the Medo-Persian Empire, typified with the two arms, Medo and Persian, the kingdom of silver. And Daniel said, okay, here's where we're going, and the family kept saying, nah, we don't believe the Bible. Everyone who dies and stands before God, without knowing the Lord Jesus Christ after hearing about the Lord Jesus Christ, is in the same position as the Babylonians. God told you there's judgment, God told you there is heaven and hell, God told you there is Life beyond the grave and some people, they think number one, that's not true, number two, the Bible can't be trusted, or number three, I've got plenty of time. There's a little bit of Babylon in all of us. This is a counterfeit heaven, the reason they feel so secure, they have built heaven on earth. Their Empire is the biggest, their military is the strongest, their economy is the richest. Surrounding their capital city of Babylon is a massive walled compound. Each Empire would throw another height on the wall to show that their kingdom was greater. It was so large that you could run a chariot around it and turn the chariot around. It was surrounded by a moat, it was a fortified city in which was the king's palace. In addition, they had years of food as rations, they could grow food within the walls of the city and they have the mighty Euphrates river flowing into it, they are impenetrable, they are undefeatable, this is heaven on earth. We're safe, we're rich, it's a kingdom of gold, we eat and drink and play at our pleasure, nothing can topple us. And let me just say this, we're all trying to build heaven on earth. We're all trying. That's why we have security on our house, not saying we don't need it. We put behind gated communities and we try and pay off our mortgage and we try and hide our retirement account and we try it fill up our fridge and our pantry. We try and get everything we want and then we feel secure. I'm safe, I have no debt, if trouble comes, I've got the God of wealth to deliver me. That's, and I'm not saying it's bad to have a house not bad, to have a job, it's not bad to have a plan. But if your plan isn't to trust the Lord, whatever happens, you've got the wrong plan, okay? They set up heaven on earth. It's counterfeit, this isn't heaven. This isn't the kingdom of God. And this is one of the most legendary stories in the history of war. Herodotus, he's an ancient historian, reports what happens it's a legendary military move. I'll tell you exactly what happened. So the party's

going on in the walls, what's outside of the walls? The joint military forces of the Medo-Persian Empire. They had marched in, and what is the king say? Nothing to worry about, we've got heaven on earth, let's all get drunk and throw a party. So while these guys are drinking and partying, these guys are plotting and planning. As their city is under siege, they are ignoring reality and they are drinking heavily. They can't penetrate the wall, so what the advancing army decides is, let's divert the Euphrates River. What happens to a riverbed that dries up? Now it's a walkway under a wall, into the city. They just walk right in. They walk right in, and they conquer and they plunder and everything God promised came to pass. Let me say this, you're gonna die, you will stand before a king, there will be a judgement and you will have an eternal destiny. The Bible is true, God will not be mocked, we do reap what we sow, we do need to be forgiven, we all are unholy vessels, we need another king and another kingdom and we need forgiveness and to be changed from the inside out by the Holy Spirit. Okay, and so ultimately the moral of the story is everybody needs Jesus and even if it works, it doesn't work until you need it most, okay? That's what's going on here. So let me say this, the only secure fortress is God, all the guys in the secure fortress they're dead and enslaved. The one guy, Daniel who has God as his secure fortress, he's fine, come back next week, the next king hires him. He's still got a job, right? Different King, different kingdom, they're like that guy's helpful, he's got the Holy Spirit we'll take him. The moral of the story is if your ultimate eternal fortress, your strong place, your place of protection, your shield is anything or anyone other than King Jesus, you are in grave danger because only God is a secure fortress, okay? Couple of things, this whole storyline by the way, it's about a king in the kingdom and it's all leading to Jesus as King of kings, and Kingdom over all kingdoms. That's where we're driving in Daniel 7, that's where we're driving to the resurrection of the dead and Daniel 12. But ultimately, I wanna have you see how Daniel is filled with the Holy Spirit and he is a type, he is an example, he is a foreshadowing of King Jesus. I wanna share this with you, Daniel, watch Babylon fall in his day and Jesus will make the spirit of Babylon fall forever on the day of his second coming. Daniel and Jesus were both filled with the Holy Spirit. Daniel and Jesus live far away from home in a hostile nation. Daniel and Jesus traveled through the world with a few faithful friends. Daniel and Jesus never got to enjoy marriage or parenting. Daniel and Jesus loved and served their enemies. Daniel saw the hand of God right on the wall, Jesus felt the hand of God nailed on a cross. Daniel saw king endure the wrath of God for his sin, our King Jesus endured our wrath for our sin. And Daniel saw a king drink from a cup in sin, our King Jesus drank our cup of sin. If you remember the story of the Lord Jesus, the night before he died, he was in prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, and he prayed father, take this cup from me. It was an unclean vessel, it was an unholy vessel. It was a cup filled with your sin and my sin. Our lives are just like the Babylonians, we say and do the same things they said and did. And Jesus was a holy vessel and he did not want to partake of that cup, to make himself sin and to endure the wrath of God as they endured. And then Jesus surrendered his will to the Father's will. Not my will be done, but your will be done. And Jesus went to the cross, and he drank the cup of your sin and God's wrath, so that you would receive what the Babylonians did not receive, forgiveness, cleansing, relationship, a king, a kingdom that never ends, and new life through our King Jesus Christ. We remind ourselves of this every time we take communion and we take communion every week. It's to say that, I was an unclean vessel, Jesus was a clean vessel, Jesus drank my cup, and

made me clean, we remind ourselves of that every Sunday, why? Because if the enemy is going to throw parties, where people eat and drink against God, then church is to be a place where people eat and drink in the presence of God, for the glory of God to their joy, that's why we're here. Let me close with this, in the end, there's two guys, the king and Daniel, you got to decide which one you're gonna follow. Do you know Jesus? Do you love Jesus? Have you given him your sin? Are you asking him to make you a holy vessel and to fill you with the Holy Spirit? If not, you're following the example of this fallen King. If you receive Jesus, if you repent of your sin, if you acknowledge the goodness of God and your need for cleansing and forgiveness, you're following in the example of Daniel. My job is to tell the truth, your job is to make the most important decision you will ever make, and that is which man you will be like, and what leader you will follow, and which example you will emulate with your life. Hear me in this, you don't know how much time you've got. They have no conception that an entire kingdom that had ruled for decades would come down in minutes. Don't presume on the grace of God, run to the God of grace. Give yourself to Jesus, get cleaned up and walk in the Spirit. Father God, thank you for an opportunity to study Daniel together. God I believe that hard words produce soft people and soft words produce hard people. And Lord God, with love in my heart, and I hope that people hear that and know that, we're all unclean vessels, we all need to repent, we all need forgiveness. We need to stop looking down on others and start looking up to our Lord and Savior who is coming again on the clouds of heaven to set up a kingdom that never ends. Where the party will be greater than that in Babylon, and no one will have anything to regret or apologize for because it'll just be joy with Jesus, in whose name we pray, Amen.