THRIVE – **WK 5 – Crazy in Babylon**

**This series is about, How to Thrive in a place we don’t belong**

**Daniel & friends (13-14 yrs old) kidnapped, castrated, names changed, a culture that’s anti-God, and forced serve a maniacal King in Babylon**

**Despite this incredibly difficult situation - they lived as if they know the ending of the story – God is in control – they Thrived**

**It’s important to realize - Daniel is a polaroid picture scrapbook. Simply snapshots - not details. Big holes (because of this some reason Daniel did not exist). Some of Daniel visions chaps 7-11 might thru out the 70 yrs.**

**Last week: Daniels 3 friends took a stand… now nearly 40 years later…**

**(Today’s chapter flies thru 8 yrs) Daniel 4:1** **King Nebuchadnezzar, To the nations and peoples of every language, who live in all the earth: May you prosper greatly! (in 3rd person – a story from Neb & Daniel – part was a kingdom distributed letter) 2 It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. 3 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation. 4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. 5 I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me. (another nightmare - He again calls for his interpreters)**

**6 So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me. 7 When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me. 8 Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream. (He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.)**

**Notice at first, he talks as if he follows the LORD God – but he still has other idols. Perhaps like you… But, there is a change…**

**THE DREAM**

**4:9 I said, “Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods (God) is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream interpret it for me. (2 dreams of Neb – 1st a large statue / 2nd a large tree)**

**A TREE – from the earth**

* **There is a large tree in the middle of field that reaches the sky**
* **It is large, strong, and its leaves are beautiful**
* **It is filled with fruit that feed many**
* **Many animals and creatures gather under it for shelter and food**

**A MESSENGER - from Heavens**

* **Commands tree to be cut down, trim branches, and scatter the fruit**
* **Secure the stump with iron & bronze**
* **The stump will be drenched with the dew and live among the wild**
* **The stump’s mind – will be that of an animal for 7 seasons**

**Daniel 4:18 “This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me what it means, for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me. But you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”**

**Neb does not truly understand the LORD God in his life at this point. LORD God is a “god” of convenience – the “dream god”**

**19 Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, “Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you.” Belteshazzar answered, “My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries!**

**In spite of Neb’s maniacal manners and violent attitude – Daniel cares for him. If only it was someone else…**

**INTERPRETATION: Daniel interprets Neb’s Dream:**

* **The field is - the earth**
* **The Tree - is you (beautiful, abundant, giving shelter & provision)**
* **Reaching into the sky – your kingdom extends to distant lands**
* **The messenger is from the LORD God – saying to you that…**

**- You will go crazy & live like an animal - For 7 yrs**

**25b … Seven times (years) will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes. 26 The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules.**

**- The stump is secured = your kingdom will be restored.**

**27 Therefore, Your Majesty, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.”**

**- Turn to God while you can... perhaps this can be prevented. Daniel did not water down the truth – not a feel good version.**

**It Happened a year later – Crazy Town**

**28 All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, 30 he said, “Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?” (look at all I have done! I am so awesome!!!)**

**31 Even as the words were on his lips, a voice came from heaven, “This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. 32 You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox. Seven times (years) will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes.”**

**33 Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like the ox. (vegan) His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird. (7 years he lived like an animal in the wild)**

**34 At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. (His will was broken - notice how differently he talks about God in his life) Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. 35 All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: “What have you done?” (he acknowledged God supreme power and rule in his life)**

**36 At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble. (few years later Neb kingdom ends)**

* **God has determined certain truths to be known**

**There will be differences on minor issues – but there are major truths we must hold tight. (Hold loose the minors – Hold tight the majors) (ie. - Jesus life, death resurrection – salvation through faith in Jesus.)**

**There are some majors in Daniel 4**

1. **Sin separates you from God and others**

**4:27b Renounce your sins… and your wickedness… (or you will lose everything – your sin will destroy our life)**

**Neb’s primary sins were pagan idol worship and taking advantage of the weak – What are yours?**

**Our idols today – the things that steal our devotion…**

**That sin – a falling short of God’s design – results in a separation…**

**From God – from his love – his plan – his peace – his purpose**

**From others – isolation and self-obsession – a lack of true intimacy.**

**Those secrets and the fear of discovery – keep us arms length**

**We all find our self here at some point – this life or the next**

1. **Arrogance and pride are incredibly destructive!**

**4:30 he said, “Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?” (I am a self-made man)**

**Good and bad pride in the bible:**

**\* Positive pride – satisfaction in a job well done, proud of others**

**Galatians 6:4, Romans 12:3, 2 Corinthians 8:24, James 1:9-10**

**\* Destructive pride: looks down & takes advantage of others, above the law, disregard for God’s power and rule**

**Daniel 4:29-30, Luke 18:9-14, 2 Chron. 26:16, Psalm 10:2, 10:4, Pro 8:13,15:25, Prov 21:4, 26:12, 27:2, 29:23, Isaiah 23:9, Matthew 23:12**

**Pro 8:13 To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. / Pro 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. / Pro 16:5 The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished. / Pro 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.**

**Matthew 23:12 For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. / Psalm 10:4 In his pride the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.**

**James 4:6 - "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."**

**Oppose = wars against. I don’t you want to be on his enemy list**

**Speaking to the next King - Daniel 5:18 “Your Majesty, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor. 19 Because of the high position he gave him, all the nations and peoples of every language dreaded and feared him… 20 But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory. 21 He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like the ox; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and sets over them anyone he wishes.**

**Arrogance & Pride drove Neb away from God & people - drove insane**

* **Pride pushes away true intimate relationships**
* **Pride brings shame and isolation**

**Neb was extremely gifted general and ruler – filled w/ arrogance – he saw his accomplishments, brilliance, skills, abilities - as his own.**

**That talent – that voice – that success. Unfortunately, some do not use that gift / success to honor God. Actors, artists, writers, business men, educators, politicians, inventors, etc.**

**Christian or not – everything you have - everything you’ve achieved – everything you are good at – is given to you by God.**

1. **God always does what he says he will do**

**4:28 All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 Twelve months later…**

**A year passed – nothing. God gave him a year to turn to Him. I can do what I want – God is not there… then it happened**

**He went insane - and it lasted 7 yrs… just as God said.**

**For you it may be a year – 5 years – 1 day… But God will always do what he says. He is always fully in charge.**

**You see others who appear to be getting away with it and think I can too - The difference is, if you are His child, He loves you, and for your own good He will not let you get by with evil.**

**There is an easy way to learn and hard way to learn (learn the easy) Throughout the Bible we see illustrations of men who learn these important lessons of life, some the easy way, others the hard way.**

* **True wisdom is learning from other’s mistakes…**

**Neb declares v4:37b And those who walk in pride (himself) he is able to humble.**

**Like Neb some have lip service w/out a heart & life change – God is included with the idols of their life – then God crushed his pride.**

1. **God is incredibly gracious**

**God lovingly warned Neb - Daniel knew the heart of God and offered Neb grace - 27b Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.”**

**Much of the OT is about cycles of God sending warnings from people called prophets – turn get right – be restored – or find destruction and discipline.**

**God sends warnings to us: people, dreams, situations, that spiritual nudge. That still small voice, "Flee, this is not the place for you." "Get out of this relationship, it can destroy you." "Don't do it, it is wrong."**

**Like Daniel to Neb - God often uses the counsel of godly friends to turn us from our path of folly.**

**Why does God warn us – He loves us = He loves you!**

**After the 7 yrs was over – God extended grace to him again as he turned to God – and restored him - God could have destroyed him then… but he did not.**

1. **Nobodies hopeless**

**By the end of Daniel 4 – Neb made a full 180. A turn / repentance of his sin and acknowledgment of the Lordship of God**

**He was a changed man**

**This violent – maniacal – arrogant – self-obsessed - pagan worshiping man declared – Dan 4:34 At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. 35 All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth… 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.**

**It took 40 years for Neb to finally give everything he had to God and surrender his life. (Daniel 4 – was his testimony)**

**I’ve heard it said in relation to the LORD he was: (ch1) Non-believer (ch2) notion believer (ch3) nominal believer then (ch4) genuine believer**

**Daniel never gave up on him – loved him / prayed for him**

**How long will you wait for that family member / friend?**

**While pride destroys humility heals – marriage, friendship, soul**

**Phil 2:8-9 – Jesus humbled himself for us. God became a man – and that man gave his life for our sin. (Rom 5 - Even when we were His enemies - he did this)**

**Is pride keeping you from - God, others, serving?**