

CALL to PRAYER -

Thank God for Him having someone give you the gospel

Daniel 4:18ff - Nebuchadnezzar's Conversion Testimony *(part 2)*

Intro - Daniel 4 is the testimony of a great king who was a great sinner with a great ego. It is also a testimony to the great lengths God went to demonstrating His great grace. This dramatic account of how God converts is also a pattern for that conversion process. Last week we noted Neb's intuitive desire to tell the world of the great things that God had done for him (and to him). Angels/Watchers had noticed Neb's excessive pride & had issued a sentence against him which was relayed in a dream. God used this disturbing dream (about a great tree getting chopped down) to get Neb's attention. This *word from God* served as a merciful warning of the judgment which was to come. *God's Message* *God's Patience* *God's Punishment* *God's Mercy*

GOD'S MESSAGE & MESSENGER

1. God's message required God's messenger to deliver it - 4:18
 - a. Worldly messengers rarely give heavenly results - Wrong counselors will leave one empty.
 - i. 1 Cor. 2:14-16
 - b. Romans 10:14 1 Cor. 1:21
2. God's messenger is not eager to deliver the bad news portion of the message - 4:19
 - a. The *good news* is balanced (contrasted) against the backdrop of *bad news*.
 - i. 2 Cor. 2:15-16
 - b. Daniel wanted the best for his enemy and addressed him with proper respect.
 - i. 1 Peter 2:17 1 Peter 3:15
3. God's message should be delivered with genuine love for souls
 - a. Daniel demonstrated compassion controlled by truth - Eph. 4:15 - warning with warmth
 - i. Concern for souls while clearly giving the whole council of God.
 - ii. Warning with warmth
4. God's message was clearly stated.
 - a. *The tree* is privileged. *The tree* is proud. *The tree* will be cut down.
 - i. You are the tree - 4:22-25 (app - humanity is the tree - Is. 40-6-8)
5. Beware of "evangelism" that conceals the truth in too much nicety.
 - a. The sign of a false prophet is a message of "*Peace, peace when there is no peace.*"
 - b. *Evangelistic flattery* conceals a poison while withholding real medicine.
 - i. Prov. 29:5 Prov. 28:23 Prov. 27:6
6. God's message offers a repentance that diverts punishment. Daniel 4:27
 - a. Repentance is a key component to God's message - Matt. 4:17
 - i. Acts 3:19 Acts 26:20
 - ii. Repentance is turning from something and to something (Someone)
 - b. Repentance is personal with a personal application for personal sins.
 - i. Neb was guilty of governmental type of sins - issues of justice for the poor
 1. Isaiah 10:1-3 Jer. 21:11-12 (God's messengers address rulers responsibilities)
 - ii. The gospel will get very personal. (woman at the well/rich ruler/ Zaccheus)

7. Daniel could teach evangelism 101.
 - a. Concern for sinners, confronting sin with a clear message of repentance...
 - b. Neb's conversion testimony included how he was confronted.
 - i. Does yours?

GOD'S PATIENCE

- God was patient and longsuffering with Nebuchadnezzar.
 - He was given a long reign littered with many mercies - dream / fire / Daniel
 - He had only given lip service with a façade of faith
 - Years of opportunity and now another warning from the King of kings
 - The prophet interprets the warning and urges repentance.....
 - The dream disturbed him but did not change him
 - 4:28-29
 - God gave Neb another year to heed the meaning of the dream!
- Human history *redemptive history* is a vivid testimony to God's patience with humanity.
 - We all deserve instant death, yet God gives most of us time...to repent.
 - Romans 2:4
 - Exodus 34:6 Joel 2:12-13
 - Ezekiel 33:11 2 Peter 3:9 Isaiah 30:18
 - God gave Noah's generation 100 years to repent before judgment came
 - God gave the original inhabitants of the *Promise Land* 400+ years
 - God gave the nation of Israel 100's of years
 - How many years has God given our nation?
- Since God's message is personal...
 - How many years has God given you?
 - Is God's patience a part of your testimony?
 - It can be!

GOD'S PUNISHMENT

- God's patience came to an end and God's punishment was to begin.
 - One final moment of pride brought Neb's downfall - 4:29-30 Pride & Punishment
- God's punishment was publicly announced.
 - 4:31-32
 - Maybe he was alone on the roof or maybe an audience was with him....but many would have heard this public pronouncement from on high.
- God's punishment on Neb was unique - 4:33
 - A loss of sanity and humanity....both of these are tremendous gifts from God.
- God often punishes people and society with a form of this
 - Romans 1:24, 28 loss of mind / dehumanizing / animalistic

GOD'S MERCY

- ❖ We are going to have to wait on God's mercy to Neb until next time...
 - You don't personally have to wait.... today is the day of salvation.