

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups Aug 12th 2007

Dare to be Daniel – Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Daniel Chapter 4



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

Pride Comes before a Fall...

When Jonathan Aitken describes his journey he often uses this phrase...“**From pride ... to prison ... to peace**”. His story is one of a proud man who was brought down by extremely humbling circumstances. A man who in the world's eyes had everything in terms of worldly success and yet nothing in terms of his acceptance that “**Only the Most High rules in the Kingdom of Men**” as we read in verse 37...Jonathan Aitken, like Nebuchadnezzar, would have benefited from the words of Jesus...“**What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his life?**” Now in chapter 4 it appears that Nebuchadnezzar had more to learn about God...and he calls once again on Daniel to help him...

His Intense pride...

Nebuchadnezzar was the Ruler of the world's superpower. It is 40 years or so since he had first met Daniel. He had witnessed Daniel's God in the past but now he is a long standing ruler who prided himself more on hedonistic, iconic constructions than victories. In verse 22 we see Daniel speaking of “the greatness of Nebuchadnezzar's empire”. We get the feeling that Nebuchadnezzar thinks he is in control – not God. Human power, money and status can lead us to think that we are in charge and that God, at best, is a consultant.... Nebuchadnezzar's pride and indeed perhaps our pride carry a permanent health warning...“The more we have, the more we attribute it to our own work and shut God out”.

Looking back, Jonathan Aitken said this “Pride was the root cause of all my evils”

His Humiliating Fall... Look at verses 31 – 33.

Nebuchadnezzar suffered what appears to be some sort of acute mental insanity – many historians have observed that this type of insanity was much like that suffered by King George 3rd. Nebuchadnezzar was to go through terrible social disgrace ... to go from the apparent “togetherness” of being the ruler of the world's super power to becoming a wild and uncontrollable king. Read verses 24, 25. Daniel has explained to Nebuchadnezzar that this “humiliating fall” was a decree from God to teach Nebuchadnezzar. God was to use the circumstances that Nebuchadnezzar found himself in to gain his heartfelt commitment and to help Nebuchadnezzar to surrender to God's power. It seems to me that God often uses choices that people make or the brokenness of this world to teach people how earthly pride is often misplaced. Two thoughts then;

- 1/ Things are not always as solid as we think they are – life is more fragile than we allow.
- 3/ We need to listen to God speaking though life's challenging events or circumstances.

Restoration...READ verses 34 – 37

Despite all that Nebuchadnezzar has been through – his very public and humiliating downfall – there is hope! He finds a right relationship with God. He discovers that God is more powerful than he, that his pride was entirely misplaced and that humility is the appropriate response to God. See v 37. Nebuchadnezzar had found restoration - receiving it through a path of humility. The picture that Nebuchadnezzar had in his dream was one of a tree. The tree may have looked great in the world's eyes but all that was of real value to God – that is the root and the stump–remained. The root and the stump – that is our inner self and heart are God's beginnings with us. If He needs to, God will use our choices or life's circumstances to reach our inner selves. Once he has done that we may begin to bloom again but only when we come to that place of surrender and peace –a deep and inner knowledge of being right with God. In our journey God may place a Daniel in our path to help us...

Jonathan Aitken said this as he reflected on his past...“If I had been blessed by a small helping of humility instead of possessed by a surfeit of pride, the entire tragedy would have been avoided...”



Witness: questions to discuss

- 1/ Have you or anyone you experienced pride or “a humbling experience”?
- 2/ Do we tend to treat God as a consultant rather than the Boss?
- 3/ Discuss the picture in the dream of the tree – what does this say to you?
- 4/ Spend time being still with God, journey to the foot of the cross to find restoration...