

The Sin God Will Not Tolerate

Daniel 4

Pastor John Miller

Have you ever had an embarrassing moment, like Gabe just had a moment ago? You know, something crazy happens to you, a real embarrassing situation. Well, when you have an embarrassing moment you don't really write about or publish it or tell other people about it, but what makes this story in Daniel 4 unique is that king Nebuchadnezzar had an embarrassing moment. Not just an embarrassing moment but an embarrassing seven years. We're going to find out that God, because of his pride, allowed him to have the heart of an animal and go out into the fields and actually grovel like an animal—to be turned into a beast for seven years until he realized that it is God who rules in the heavens. When he turned his eyes back onto God and recognized that, God then exalted him and reinstated him in his place and position as the king of Babylon.

This chapter is unique in the Bible in that it's actually a king's proclamation, and by that a Gentile pagan king proclaims his conversion. I do say the word "conversion" because most conservative Bible scholars believe that Nebuchadnezzar, this wicked polytheistic, pantheistic king that worshipped all these many gods, actually comes to know the God of heaven—the high and holy God of heaven. Here's a real mind-blowing thought, that we would actually see Nebuchadnezzar in heaven! The amazing thought that God would show mercy to this pagan king and would humble him so he would turn his eyes on Him, convert him, and he would one day go to heaven. God spoke to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2 through a dream. In Daniel 3 God spoke through appearing in the fiery furnace, and now tonight God speaks to Nebuchadnezzar through another dream in which he didn't really humble himself, so God forcibly brings judgment upon this man until he repented and turned back to God. I believe at this point the king is not saved but is giving us a testimony of his conversion.

There are about eight sections that we're going to cover tonight as we survey and then make application. I want you to follow with me. First, in verses 1-3, we see the preface to this proclamation that the king is going to make or his testimony, beginning in verse 1. "Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you." What is being said here is actually spoken by the king himself. He said (verse 2), "I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. 3 How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation." Verses 1-3 are just an introduction to what is going on in this chapter. What is going on in this chapter is simply amazing in that this pagan king is going to (verse 2) give his testimony. Now, he's writing this testimony about his conversion in retrospect—it's after the fact. It's after it has happened and, by the way, it's seven years after chapter 3. So, he has this dream. He gets it interpreted by Daniel of this great image and acknowledges that God was speaking to Daniel, but he doesn't turn in repentance to God. Then he throws Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fiery furnace and sees the Lord Himself walking in the furnace with those three Hebrews and still he

doesn't repent. He still doesn't turn to God. God allows him to have this experience that brings about a conversion in his life. Notice verse 2, "'I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me."

It's a good thing to have a testimony. All of us should have a testimony—the ability to say, "I once was blind and now I see." To be able to say, "This is who I was, this is how I was living, this is the condition of my life. I met Jesus Christ, and this is how I've changed." Do you know that's a powerful tool to being an instrument and being used by God? You don't have to be a theologian. You don't have to know a lot about Scripture. All you have to be able to do is like the blind man say, "All I know is, I was blind and now I see. All I know is, I was lost and now I'm found. All I know is, once I was dead but now I am alive." Amen? "Once I was sad, lonely, and empty. Now I have purpose and meaning in my life, and Jesus puts joy into my heart." That's all you need to do. People say, "Well, Pastor John, when the Jehovah's Witness knock on my door, I really don't know how to answer them or what to say. Will you come over?" I'm not saying I won't come over, but you need to figure out how you're going to deal with them yourself. Don't go, "Come on in. Let's call Pastor Miller and we'll talk."

Do you know one of the most powerful things you could do when a cultist comes to your doorstep is give them your testimony—how Jesus Christ has changed your life. No doubt, if they haven't truly been converted then they're going to go away thinking, "Man, I don't have what they have. Jesus Christ is certainly real to them, and He's not real in that sense to me." Now, I'm not saying we shouldn't know doctrine or we shouldn't know what the cults believe, and we shouldn't be able to answer every man, but we should be able to also just share our testimony, and that's what the king had. We all have a story. You say, "Well, I wasn't in drugs," and "I didn't get saved in prison," and "I wasn't a mass murderer. I got saved at an early age. I lived in a Christian home, and I followed the Lord all my life." That's your testimony. I want you to know, that's a powerful testimony. That's an amazing testimony, and you should never be ashamed of it.

Christians have been found guilty to invent testimonies, you know. "I used to kill people and rip their heads off. I was a wicked, vile, wretched sinner. I did all these things, and God saved me." They write a book and tell about it. They become popular only to find out they're making it up! It's not even true. One of the most powerful testimonies is, "I got saved when I was 8 years old. God kept me from sin, and God has blessed my life. I've followed Jesus Christ my whole life." That's a powerful testimony! Amen? Wherever you find yourself on that spectrum, you have a testimony like Nebuchadnezzar.

We move now into the dream that the king had (verses 4-18). It says, "I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house," now he's telling his testimony, his story. "...I was at rest in mine house," or in his kingly palace, "and flourishing in my palace: 5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me." I want you to know his danger (verse 4). He was in his house flourishing in his palace. Prosperity can be a danger. It can be an avenue to pride. You can begin to think, "Look what I've done," as the king is going to say. You have a job, a nice house, your marriage is going well, the kids are okay, everything is

kind of smooth. You're successful and everything looks great. You need to realize that's a very vulnerable, a very dangerous time. I want you to know right now if everything is going smoothly for you, everything is going good for you right now, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. That's a quote from the Bible, by the way.

If you think, "Man, I don't really need to pray right now too much because things are really going good! Why should I spend time in prayer? I can kind of slack off. I don't need to go to church. Nobody's dying. I've got a job. I'm making money, everything's great. I'm not in pain. Why pray?" It's a shame that prayer is only used in time of crisis. I believe that many times we have crisis because we know God knows that's what drives us to His throne of grace. So, whenever things are going good, get on your knees and say, "Lord, keep me humble. Keep me dependent. Keep me focused on You." When you get a raise, get on your knees and say, "Thank you, Lord. Help me to not get my eyes off You. Help me to stay dependent upon You." When you get a promotion say, "Lord, keep me humble. Keep me dependent. Keep me relying upon You." I believe every Christian should have a passionate prayer that goes their whole Christian life through of, "Lord, keep me humble. Do what You need to do to keep me dependent and relying upon You." Don't ever begin to think that you have your act together.

Nebuchadnezzar was in a dangerous situation. He said he saw this dream, but God comes to us in our pride, and He will humble us. "I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me." All of his wealth, all of his palace, all of his power, all of his position, all of his pleasure couldn't bring satisfaction to his troubled heart. What a picture that is of the unbeliever. You can have everything the world provides but you can't sleep at night. You're troubled upon your bed.

"Therefore," verse 6, "made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. 7 Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof." When I read that I think, "What else is new?" These guys never seem to be able to have the ability to read or understand the dreams. Back in Daniel 2:7, they boasted when the king had his first dream, "Tell us your dream..." remember the king said, "I had a dream but I forgot it. I want you to tell me the dream and what it means?" They said, "Tell us the dream, and we'll tell you what it means, okay?" "I'm telling you the dream, let's have the meaning." We find out that they were unable to do that. They were a bunch of charlatans. The world cannot provide what we need. "But at the last Daniel came in before me," I don't know why he didn't call Daniel from the beginning, unless he was suspect that Daniel would actually be able to interpret it and didn't want to hear from the God of heaven. I don't know, but you'd think from experience he would've just forgotten the other guys (they'd be long gone) and he would call Daniel in.

"Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods," this is his pagan view of all the different gods, "and before him I told the dream, saying, 9 O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my

dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof. 10 Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed,” so Nebuchadnezzar just says, “I’m going to tell you my dream, and then I want you to tell me what it means.” “I saw, and behold a tree,” the first one there was a statue in chapter 2, and now Nebuchadnezzar himself is going to be this tree. “...in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. 11 The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: 12 The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat,” or food “for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. 13 I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven,” now, in verse 13, this “watcher” or also called a “holy one” is none other than an angel.

The Bible has so many stories that involve angelic beings. What is an angel? It’s a spirit being made by God. In the beginning they were all made to serve God. Satan was an angel who rebelled against God. He fell and took other angels with him, and they became demons. But this is an “holy” angel or a good angel. I believe there are angels in the church here with us tonight. I believe angels follow you when you drive home in your car, and the way some of you drive he has to get a legion of angels around you! They’re out in the parking lot around you car going (breathing hard as if out of breath), “Man, I don’t know if I can handle this anymore!” There have been so many times in my life I’ve sensed angels keeping at bay automobile accidents on the freeway—angels watching over us. I believe in angels, and I believe that they are servants of God sent forth to take care of us His people.

This “holy one” comes from heaven and, “He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down...,” or cut down, “...the tree,” interesting. A big, beautiful tree and beautiful branches of fruit and the animals and the birds all get the benefit of shade from it. This angel says, “Cut down this tree,” and in verse 15, “Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his...,” I want to point out a little interesting thing that you may miss. In verse 15 and before, the image there is of a tree. It’s cut down, and there’s a stump. Then he uses a personal pronoun to describe it in verse 15. So, the angel is actually disclosing the meaning of the dream as he makes the statement that it’s actually a representative of a man, in this case, king Nebuchadnezzar. It says, “...let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: 16 Let his heart be changed...,” he needed a change of heart. God looks at the heart and wants to change the heart. “...from man’s, and let a beast’s heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.”

When the Bible uses the term “heart,” it’s used in different ways but primarily signifies the whole inner person. It’s not talking, in most cases, about the actual organ. It’s talking about the inner person which involves the mind, emotion, and the will—the real person. The real “who you are” is the heart, and that’s what God wants to change and transform. That’s what God is dealing with. “Let his heart be changed from man’s, and let a beast’s heart be given unto him,” and the “seven times” there speaks of seven years. If you want to make a note of that.

"This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent..." and here's the reason for the dream, "...that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." In verse 17, you're given the reason for the dream. We're still just getting the actual dream as Nebuchadnezzar recounted it. "This dream (verse 18) I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee." Again, he recognized that these magicians, wisemen, and soothsayers are incompetent in interpreting this dream, but you are able (still in his pagan concept) because the spirit of the gods is in thee.

I want you to note this third section (verse 19), Daniel's reaction to the dream. "Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies." What does that mean? He means, "Your enemies are going to like this, King. This is not good for you. This is good for the people who hate you." In other words, "King, bad news." I want you to notice how this knowledge that Daniel possessed gripped his heart with fear, and he was struck silent for a whole hour. It is just kind of the awesomeness! Nebuchadnezzar was a pagan, but he had been kind to Daniel and exalted Daniel. It could be that there was a little emotion involved for Daniel to realize this king, that had taken care of me, is going to be judge by God. How would you like to have a dream of God showing you that someone you knew, maybe you were a benefactor or a blessing of them, and you had to deliver a somber truth that God is going to judge you. God is going to chasten you. Sometimes knowing brings fear, and he was shaking for a minute maybe. He was just thinking, "Wow. What am I going to do?"

Let me give you another example. Turn to Daniel 10:1-3 (we'll get there in a few weeks) for another example of what I am speaking of. "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar," again, God revealed the future, "and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision." God gave to Daniel all this understanding, and notice verse 2, "In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks." He says, "For three weeks it just really gripped me and shook me up." Then in verse 3 he says, "I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled."

Knowledge brings responsibility. Knowledge, a lot of times, brings a great sobriety to realize that we in America have turned away from God and can expect, if we continue in our sinful ways, the judgment of God upon us as a nation. It brings us, like Daniel, to that place of awe. Daniel was silent for this entire period. Daniel, as he heard this dream, was gripped because of this knowledge.

In verses 20-26, we have Daniel's revelation. Daniel begins to explain the dream. "The tree

that thou sayest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; 21 Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: 22 It is thou, O king,” in other words, “You are this tree.” “thou art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. 23 And whereas the king saw a watcher...,” again, this angel, “and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him.” Daniel begins to explain the dream to the king. “You’re the tree. The tree is going to be cut down. There’s going to be seven years, but the stump is going to be left,” indicating that Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom will be revived. It won’t be taken away from him, but he would be reinstated. Here God, in wrath, remembers mercy.

Notice Daniel’s interpretation (verse 24). “This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High,” I love those terms that are given for God in the book of Daniel—You’re the most High. “...which is come upon my lord the king: 25 That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know the the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” I call this section: Beauty and the Beast. We have this king in all his splendor, all of his majesty, becoming an actual beast. The description, in a few verses, is pretty graphic. It’s amazing. Here’s the point, “You need to learn something, King, (verse 25) that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and He gives it to whomever He will.” God has a good purpose in the affairs of man. He says, “And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.”

Fifthly, I want you to notice Daniel’s exhortation. Daniel tells him the dream, the meaning, and now here’s the application. He says, “Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility.” “King, you’re going to go insane.”

Do you know that sin has an affect upon us that we don’t think properly? Have you ever known somebody that starts falling into sin and you say, “Man, they’re just not thinking right.” Temporary insanity is what it is. They’re not even thinking. You say, “I can’t believe what they’re doing! I can’t believe what they’re saying. They’re just going headlong into this insanity.” This king is going to go temporarily insane, and he’s going to be groveling like a wild beast out in the field.

What was Daniel’s recommendation or exhortation? Basically (verse 27), repent. “Break off thy sins,” I like that. Do righteousness, give up your iniquities, and begin to show mercy to the poor, “if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility.”

Sixthly, I want you to notice his pride (verse 28). “All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.” Everything that was predicted in the dream, as Daniel had interpreted, happened. Why? Because he didn’t “break off his sin.” He didn’t repent of his sin. He didn’t turn from his sin. He didn’t follow after righteousness. It says, “At the end of twelve months,” God is patient and long suffering. God is waiting for you to repent. Twelve months, one year—He gave the king opportunity. He didn’t say, “Hey, if you don’t repent right now God is going to cut you off.” God let him go, and God let him go, and God let him go, and God let him go—which doesn’t mean God approved. A lot of times people misinterpret God not judging as though God approves, but God is actually patient and long suffering not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

“At the end of twelve months,” (verse 29), “he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. 30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?” Oh my goodness! Some of you are chuckling because you know what’s coming, right? Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. You start looking around at your little kingdom, “Is not this my beautiful house which I have made? Is not this my beautiful job that I have created? Am not I an amazing person?” By the way, the king’s talking to himself—proud people tend to do that. You walk by a mirror and stop, “You’re looking good!” They start talking to themselves in the mirror. They’re kind of just flipped out. It’s insanity. He’s looking over all of this big, giant beautiful kingdom of Babylon. (In a few chapters will describe more of the ancient city of Babylon, its majesty, splendor and its walls.) He says, “Is not this great Babylon which,” here’s his foolish, foolish mistake, “I have made.” Oh man is he destined for a fall! Pride comes before a fall and a haughty spirit before destruction.

Seventhly, I want you to know (verses 31-33), “While the word was in the king’s mouth,” this is his punishment, by the way, his punishment. We have his pride and now his punishment, “there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. 32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. 33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws.” How would you like to have this in your backyard?

Can you imagine the President of the United States...which some probably would like to imagine. Some maybe already picture him looking like this. Where’s the President been? Well, he’s out in the back lawn eating grass. His staff would want to shelter him from that. No doubt, for seven years, Nebuchadnezzar passed off the scene. Now, who was running the kingdom? We don’t know. It doesn’t say. There’s a theory that Daniel stepped in, and Daniel actually covered for him. He took the interviews and the news and kind of filled the gap for him during this time knowing that eventually he would be restored because he knew the interpretation of the dream—that the stump would be left and his kingdom would be restored when the king

finally repented and looked back to God. Amazing! He becomes like an animal, like a beast.

In those days they didn't have a place for people who were mentally deranged. They didn't have hospitals for people to take care of them. They just walked the streets or roamed out in the wild and groveled taking care of themselves. His hair grew long like eagles' feathers, and his fingernails grew long. He was just a full-on, creepy-looking dude that you don't want to run into in a back alley on a dark night. For seven years he is groveling out there.

Notice what happened in verses 34-37. It's the close. It's his praise. His pride brought his punishment, but he ends by praising the Lord. This is his conversion. "And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me," again this is an insanity, a temporary insanity that came upon king Nebuchadnezzar, "and mine understanding returned unto me," and notice here in verse 34, "I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation," this is King Nebuchadnezzar speaking. He has a new heart. "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand," no one can stop Him, "or say unto him, What doest thou?" This is the sovereignty of God. "At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. 37 Now I," here's the conclusion of this proclamation, "Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." God is able to humble him.

I want you to note the first step in his conversion was that he turns back to God. I love that phrase in verse 34, "lifted up mine eyes unto heaven," and then his understanding returned. When we turn back to God, we need to get our eyes off of ourselves and get our eyes on God. He turned his focus to God. Do you know the best way to stay humble is to keep your eyes on Jesus. Anyone who looks at Jesus, studies and meditates on Jesus, and loves Jesus is going to be humbled. How can you not be humbled? How can you not be gracious to think, "God, You saved me by Your grace. I'm so unworthy. I'm so undeserving."

When Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up he said, "Woe is me for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell amongst a people of unclean lips." You show me a proud person, I'll show you a person that isn't looking at God and doesn't have their focus on the Lord. Do you want to stay humble? Keep your eyes on God—on His majesty, greatness, power, and dominion.

Notice the second step in his conversion—he submitted to God. He indicated in verse 35 that He does according to His will and even the armies of heaven among the inhabitants of the earth that none can stay his hand or say, "What are You doing?" He came to the conclusion and understanding, "God, Your will is perfect. I want Your way in my life. God, I want to look to You, and I want to submit to You. Your will and Your way is what I want."

The third step in his conversion (verse 36) is that he began to worship. God will exalt you, and he began to worship. Lastly, in verse 37, he gave glory to God. He said, "I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." Actually, God exalted him in verse 36. You focus on and submit to God, and God will lift you up. This is exactly what the Bible teaches. If you humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, He will do what? He will exalt you in due time. You never want to promote yourself. I know that's what the world says, and I believe that it is important to have a God-focused confidence that God will enable me to do what He has called me to do, but we're not to be self-advancing or self-promoting. We are to humble ourselves and let God exalt us in His time. That's so very, very important.

Maybe you're praying about a ministry or an area where you want to serve the Lord. There is nothing more important for you, if you're going to stay usable, is to stay humble. God uses those who have been emptied of self and are submitted to His will keeping their eyes on Him in humility. The minute you begin to be filled with pride, God has to kind of put you on the shelf or like Paul the apostle who got caught up into the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12). He saw and heard things that were so amazing that because of his paradise experience, when he came back to earth, God had to give him a painful experience to humble him, to balance out his life. Those whom God uses powerfully, God humbles. God has to humble them so that they can stay dependent and reliant upon Him. In so many facets of our lives, God wants to keep you humble.

You might be sitting here right now wondering, "Why am I having these problems? God, I'm praying. I'm reading. I'm going to church. I'm being a good person. I'm here on Wednesday night. You ought to abundantly bless me—a double dose in one week." God doesn't bless you because you perform. "Man, I've read two chapters, I upped it one chapter. I prayed for two hours instead of one hour. Come on, God, bless me." You can't earn or deserve or merit the blessing of God. So many times we begin to think that we deserve more. We need to just realize, "I don't deserve anything God does for me or blesses me with. God, I just pray that You would humble and break me. Put me where You want me to be, when You want me to be, and what You want me to be doing, when You want me to be doing it." I don't ever want to be out of the will of God. I don't ever want to be wherein God hasn't placed me. Humble yourself and let God exalt you, then give God glory. Begin to praise Him (verse 37), "...praise and extol and honour the King of heaven." It's those that are humble that bring honor and glory to God. God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. We have the king's pride, punishment, and then the king's praise. D.L. Moody said, "God sends no one away empty except those who are full of themselves." I love that.

Did you ever read the story about the Pharisee and the publican? Jesus told the story. It's a parable or a story about two guys that came into the temple. One was a Pharisee and the other a sinner tax collector. The Pharisee said, "Lord, I thank thee that I'm not like other men. I'm good. I pray. I give tithes of all that I possess. I am awesome! My picture should be in the foyer: Christian of the Month. Why don't they put my picture in the hymnal? Why don't they recognize me? Why am I not on the cover of the bulletin? I'm just awesome! Lord, I thank you

that I'm not like this sinner over here," and he looked at the publican. He said, "This guy is a sinner. I mean, he's just a wicked sinner, and I fast and I pray. I'm just an amazing person, God." Then, all of the sudden the publican began to pray. He just beat on his chest and said, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" He couldn't even look up. He was just so broken because of his sin. Jesus said to the listening crowd at the end of that story, "Which of those two men do you think went home that day justified?" Obviously, they understood the story—not the self-righteous man but the humble sinner that realized he didn't deserve the least of God's blessings or the least of God's favors.

When you go home tonight thank God for everything that He has given you and realize that it's all the grace of God. This is not, "...great Babylon which I have made," this is, "God, You provided." If you are successful in a monetary possession kind of a concept and you think you've arrived, give God the praise. You don't want to be eating grass for seven years. It's hard enough for me to eat a good salad let alone grass out of the backyard. Let's pray.