



September 29, 2019

“Who is King of Your Life?”

Daniel 4

Pastor Gary Hamrick

From the moment we were born God has been pursuing our hearts because he wants to be in relationship with us. The faster and farther we run from him, God runs faster and farther still! King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon understood this firsthand. God had revealed himself to Nebuchadnezzar in profound ways over a period of 30 years, pursuing him, until he finally surrendered to God as King over his life. What will it take for you to come to a similar place of surrender? What will you have to go through before you finally humble yourself and submit your life to Jesus as King and Lord? Pastor Gary’s message today will help us answer these and other questions.

Historical Background

1. Pastor Gary said, “Nebuchadnezzar’s story really is our story. [He was a man] who had it all and yet, he lacked everything. [He was a man] who was pursued by God time and time again but [he] didn’t really surrender to [God] until something terrible happened in his life. This is a story about a [man] who paid the price for pride, and [a man] who understood a little bit about the agony of arrogance. But this is also a story about redemption, [restoration] of someone who got to the end of his life and realized that the only one that he could really look to was no longer himself but [the Lord].”
2. We read about Nebuchadnezzar’s reaction to the amazing way Daniel heard from God in [Daniel 2:47](#) when he said; *“The king answered Daniel, and said, ‘Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.’ ”*
3. There was about a 15 to 20-year gap between Daniel 2 and Daniel 3.

4. **Daniel 3:28-29** - *“Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, ‘Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him... there is no other God who can deliver like this.’ ”*
5. Nebuchadnezzar openly praised God in a way that was almost like a personal proclamation.
 - a. **Daniel 4:2-3** - *“I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me. How great are His signs, and how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation.”*
6. Nebuchadnezzar praised God and told everyone about God, but he had yet to surrender his life to God because he was a proud and self-made man, who wasn't willing to submit to God.
7. God had been relentlessly pursuing Nebuchadnezzar for quite some time. One example would be the dream he had that Daniel described and interpreted.¹
8. Pastor Gary said, “The more God pursues us, and if [his pursuit] is met by resistance... and we don't respond to him and we don't surrender to him, and we don't acknowledge him as Lord and King what happens is God ‘steps up his game.’ ... The more [God] pursued Nebuchadnezzar the farther Nebuchadnezzar [strayed away from God]. ... A passing acknowledgement and praise every now and then is very different from a surrendered life, and Nebuchadnezzar simply did not surrender to God [even though he acknowledged God and offered praise every now and then]. ... [God loved Nebuchadnezzar and he loves us, which is why he goes to great lengths to pursue us.] ... No matter how fast or how far we run, God never gives up the chase. ... God runs faster and farther still!”²

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

9. **Daniel 4:10-12** - *“These were the visions of my head while on my bed: I was looking, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. The tree grew and became strong; its height reached to the heavens, and it could be seen to the ends of all the earth. Its leaves were lovely, its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, the birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.”*
10. The tree Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream was noted for its size, strength, prominence, beauty, fruitfulness, and shelter.

¹ **Daniel 2:1-45**

² Pastor Gary referred to a poem written by Francis Thompson (1859 - 1907) in 1898, titled *The Hound of Heaven* - <https://www.bartleby.com/236/239.html>

11. **Daniel 4:22–26** – “[It] is you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth. ‘And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and **let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him**’; this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, **till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.** And inasmuch as they gave the command to **leave the stump and roots of the tree**, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules.” (Emphasis added)
- Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, which described the strength and prominence of his kingdom and empire.
 - The fact that the stump and roots of the tree would remain is an indication of the promise of God to restore Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom, but judgment would come before restoration.
 - Daniel informed Nebuchadnezzar that he would become like an ox and that seven years would pass until he came to the place where he could humble himself before the Lord.
12. Pastor Gary said, “There’s no co-regency with God. He’s either fully king and completely Lord or he’s none of those things at all. ... We are either on the throne of our lives or God is, but it won’t be both.”
13. **Daniel 4:27** – “Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.”
14. Nebuchadnezzar didn’t take the dream seriously nor did he take Daniel’s advice to get right with God.
15. **Daniel 4:28–33** – “All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. The king spoke, saying, ‘Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?’ While the word was still in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from heaven: ‘King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.’ That very hour the

word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws."

16. Simply put, Nebuchadnezzar lost his mind!
 - a. Boanthropy is a rare psychological disorder in which a person believes himself or herself to be a cow or an ox.
 - b. Dr. R.K. Harrison (1920-1993) documented the first case in a British mental institution in 1946.
17. Nebuchadnezzar came to the place where there was nowhere else to look but up to the Lord.
 - a. **Daniel 4:34** - *"And at the end of time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation."*
 - b. **Daniel 4:37** - *"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down."*

God Purses Us Because He Loves Us

18. In the book of Daniel, chapters two through four cover about 30 years, so we see the evidence of God's pursuing love for lost people like Nebuchadnezzar.
19. Pastor Gary said, "There is nothing we could do to keep God from pursuing us. There is no sin too great, if [that's on your mind], I want to dispel [that] myth. ... There's [nothing that can] discourage God from loving us or pursuing us."
20. **Jeremiah 31:3** - *"The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: 'Yes; I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.'"*

God Is Patient With Us

21. God gave Nebuchadnezzar one year to humble himself, repent, and turn to God before judgment came upon him.
22. Pastor Gary said, "We don't deserve an extra minute let alone an extra day let alone an extra week or an extra month! God gave Nebuchadnezzar an extra year!"
23. **2 Peter 3:9** - *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, **not willing that any should perish but***

that all should come to repentance." (Emphasis added)

Pride Is Our Biggest Obstacle To A Surrendered Life With God

24. Most sin issues can be traced back to pride.
25. Pride is our biggest obstacle to a surrendered life with God, so God will humble us if we don't humble ourselves.
26. [Matthew 23:12](#) - *"And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*
27. [James 4:6](#) - *"But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'"*

God Will Hear Us, Forgive Us, And Restore Us

28. God will hear us, forgive us, and restore us when we cry out to him in our brokenness.
29. [Jeremiah 29:12-14](#) - *"Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD..."*
30. [Matthew 11:28-30](#) - *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Daniel 4:1-18](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's comments about the similarities between Nebuchadnezzar's story and our stories. (See #1 above)
3. Describe the ways your understanding of God was like Nebuchadnezzar's in that you acknowledged God and said good things about God, but you weren't surrendered to God. (See #2 through #6 above)
4. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about the ways the Lord pursued them. (See #7 and #8 above)

5. Read and discuss [Daniel 4:10-12, 22-26](#) and related Scriptures and comments by Pastor Gary. (See #9 through #16 above)
6. Allow the people in your group to share their story about the moment they humbled themselves before the Lord. (See #17 above)
7. Spend time talking about the pursuing love of the Lord and the extraordinary ways that he is longsuffering toward those whom he loves. (See #18 through #23 above)
8. Read and discuss [Jeremiah 31:3](#) and [2 Peter 3:9](#).
9. How has your pride created sin issues in your life? (See #24 and #25 above)
10. Read and discuss [Matthew 23:12](#) and [James 4:6](#). (See #26 and #27 above)
11. Allow the people in your group to share their salvation experience and the ways the Lord answered their prayer of confession and repentance. (See #28 above)
12. Read and discuss [Jeremiah 29:12-14](#) and [Matthew 11:28-30](#). (See #29 and #30 above)
13. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.