

The King's Testimony

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Date: 05 October 2025

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[0 : 00] We've got quite a large Bible reading this morning, so I'm going to read the first half.! Then when Corey comes up to preach, he's going to read the second half of our reading. So I'm going to read from Scripture now in Daniel chapter 4.

The words will be on the screen. The words are in your bulletin. There's also Bibles at the back. If you'd like to get up and get a Bible at any point, feel free to get up and do that. Now, Daniel chapter 4, I'm going to read verses 1 to 16 and then 20 to 27.

This is God's holy word. King Nebuchadnezzar, to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth, peace be multiplied to you.

It seemed good to me to show the sign and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. How great are His signs! How mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion endures from generation to generation.

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace. I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed, the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me.

[1 : 14] So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make it known to me, make known to me its interpretation.

At last, Daniel came in before me, he who was named Belteshazzar, after the name of my God, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. And I told him the dream, saying, O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy God is in you, and that no mystery is too difficult for you.

Tell me the vision of my dream, that I saw, and their interpretation. The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these. I saw and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great.

The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. Its leaves were beautiful and its fruits abundant, and it was food for all.

The beasts of the field found shade under it. The birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it. I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven.

[2 : 32] He proclaimed aloud and said thus, Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it, and the birds from its branches, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of the field.

Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. Let his mind be changed from a man's, and let a beast's mind be given to him. And let seven periods of time pass over him.

The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, so that its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth, whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the field lived.

It's you, O King, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reached to the heavens, and your dominion to the ends of the earth. And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, come down from heaven, saying, chalk down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him.

This is the interpretation, O King. It's a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my Lord the King, that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field.

[4 : 11] You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men, and gives it to whom he will.

And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that heaven rules. Therefore, O King, let my counsel be acceptable to you.

Break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may be, perhaps, a lengthening of your prosperity.

Amen. Amen. This is God's own holy word. All right. Well, we're going to read together one more time from our sermon passage, and one of our deacons, Colin Armstrong, is going to come and read for us.

So this is Daniel chapter 4, verses 28 to 37. This is God's word. All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar.

[5 : 19] At the end of 12 months, he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, and the king answered and said, Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power, as a royal residence, and for the glory of my majesty?

While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken, The kingdom has departed from you, and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field.

And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will. Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar.

He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' cloths.

At the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever.

[6 : 26] For his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.

And none can stay his hand or say to him, What have you done? At the same time, my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me.

My counselors and my lord sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right, and his ways are just, and those who walk in pride, he is able to humble.

Amen. This is God's word for us today. We're in Daniel 4 today, and every week in Daniel we're asking, how does a believer in the Lord live a life of faith in the midst of exile?

So what we mean by that, exile, exile is living in the city of man, as Augustine put it, as a citizen of the city of God. So it's being a believer in the Lord, but not yet living a life, not yet living in the new heavens and the new earth.

[7 : 42] Anytime you're in that situation, you're in exile. So we're all in exile. And objectively, what exile means is that you're surrounded by idols. We live in a city that's full of idols, and subjectively what it means is you're still tempted by idols.

You're still struggling with idols. And so to live in exile means to be tempted and surrounded by the problem of idolatry. And idolatry is just anytime we take good things in this life, in this world, creaturely things that God's made, and we turn them into little gods that we worship and we chase. And it just really means to center your life on anything except the true God that made you for himself. And it's when your imagination's consumed by something in this life, your desires are consumed by something in this life, that is not the real God.

And so that's idolatry. Last week in Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar made a 90-foot-tall golden statue to himself. That's also idolatry. He wanted all the peoples of the world to worship an image of himself, and he made them bow down.

And it's interesting that today in this reading and so far, you will not ever have come across a single mention of a Babylonian God in this book. And if you read the rest of Daniel, there is not a single mention of a Babylonian God in this book.

[8 : 58] It just uses the word God. Never Marduk, never Nebo, these famous gods from Babylon. And there's many more than that. And the reason for it is because the author, Daniel and others, are trying to get us to center in on the real problem.

And that's that underneath the worship of Marduk and Nebo was actually just the worship of self, right? Nebuchadnezzar was just worshipping himself. And he put a 90-foot-tall golden statue. And so every week we've been looking at that a little bit, and we've been dancing around the main term, the real term that describes the problem here.

And it's found in this text in verse 37. It comes out of Nebuchadnezzar's mouth. He says, The issue that this book is addressing is pride.

And Nebuchadnezzar's a man of pride. And this is, I said last week that from chapters 2 to 7 is all in Aramaic, not Hebrew. The rest of the Old Testament's in Hebrew, but this little section's in Aramaic.

[10 : 01] And at the center of the Aramaic section is chapters 4 and 5. They're the dead middle. And both are about the pride of kings. And so the book is really trying to get us to see how much pride is at the center of idolatry and how much pride is at the center of all that's wrong with this world.

And so every week we've been talking about some of the principles of living by faith in the midst of exile. Be in the world, but not of it. Get wisdom. That was week three.

Last week, when you enter into the furnace of suffering, you have to long for God. God has to be the apple of your eye more than anything. Let's find a fifth principle today for living in an exilic city, in the city of Babylon or Rome or Edinburgh or New York or London, by faith.

How do you do that? And let's see it through the lens of hope for prideful people, the reality of pride, the cost of pride, and deliverance from pride. So first, hope for prideful people.

Now if you look down at verse 1 to 3 that Chris read for us, you'll see this real shift in tone. Last time Nebuchadnezzar issued an empire-wide mandate, it was the empire-wide mandate that said, bow down before a 90-foot tall statue of myself and worship me.

[11 : 19] But if you look at this, what does he say in verse 1 and 2? He says, to all the peoples, nations, languages, he's talking to the whole empire. And then verse 2, he says, peace be multiplied to you.

It is good, he said, I'm writing to you today because it's good that you know what's happened to me from the Most High God. And he goes on to use language like, God's kingdom lasts forever from generation to generation.

And you see, just very quickly, point one, this is a radical shift from the language we've seen already in the book. Where the last time he said, all peoples, nations, languages, gather and bow before this golden image of me.

Now he's saying, everyone gather and listen, I'm writing you a letter, the whole empire, to say peace to you. The God of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the Most High, is the God who reigns everlasting to everlasting.

That means what we're reading about here in this chapter is the story of a transformed man. This is a man who has been transformed from the roots, from the inside out.

[12 : 26] And he's telling his story here. And we learn later in verse 33 why. It's because he, for seven seasons, maybe years, maybe seven months, he became a beast. He was eating the grass.

He was like an ox. He was like a bird, the text tells us. And you've got to imagine that because of that, everybody, seven years, it could have been seven whole years that he's living like this. I would imagine that on the streets of the city, all the people were whispering, did you hear what happened to the emperor?

You know, who's running the show? This guy, he's eating grass like an ox. So now he's writing a letter to the whole empire and saying, let me tell you what happened to me. Let me tell you the truth.

Let me tell you my story. What are we reading here? We're reading a testimony. This is a testimony. This is Nebuchadnezzar's conversion story. And what it teaches us, the fact of it, the very fact that it exists, what it says to us is that God saved a man who is entirely consumed by pride.

God saved a man and changed his life from the fact of his total self-absorption. And it simply says to us that God can rescue anybody, anybody from what J.C. Ryle called the greatest spiritual disease, the greatest spiritual cancer, which is pride.

[13 : 48] God can rescue you from pride today. If he can do it with Nebuchadnezzar, he can do it with all of us. And it's the biggest cancer at the bottom of our heart is the problem of pride.

The reality of pride, secondly, in verse four, we learn that Nebuchadnezzar, he starts to tell a story. He says, I, Nebuchadnezzar, he says, I was at ease. I was prospering.

I was in a state of rest at my house. And then all of a sudden, fear grips him. And the way that the fear grips him is through another dream. So this is the second dream that he's had where he's become very afraid, very fragile all of a sudden.

Now, this is a man of absolute power. I don't, I was trying to think about this. I don't think it's, I do not think it's possible to convey in the time we have how powerful he was.

We haven't mentioned at all in this entire series, the very famous hanging gardens of Babylon. It's thought that the hanging gardens of Babylon, one of the seven wonders of the world were made by Nebuchadnezzar, that we've never, of course, seen them, that they all died.

[14 : 50] But the story is that he made the hanging gardens of Babylon for his wife because she came from a tropical climate and she hated the arid desert, the plain of Shinar.

So he irrigated a desert to make it into a tropical climate. That's immense power in the ancient world. And from our archeology, from our records, apparently the bridge leading into the city was 400 feet long.

The walls were 40 feet high. There were three major palaces, all of which were his three homes in the city center. He, if it was a known part of the world, every part of the world at this time that was known, he owned.

So by comparisons, the commentators will say that per percentages, Babylon was far bigger than Tokyo relative to the population of the ancient areas, Tokyo being the largest city in the world right now.

And his power was something that no other person on planet earth right now could say they have. Not even close. Elon Musk is nothing compared to his money. Relatively. Relatively. So this is a man of absolute power.

[16 : 00] And again, he's shaken in his boots because of a dream. And God here gives him a dream. And the dream is there to expose his pride.

And what we learn here is that no matter how much you have or get in this life, when pride is at the bottom of your heart and the center of your life, you can't sleep. You can't rest.

Prideful people cannot rest. Prideful people are always afraid. And the reason for that, C.S. Lewis has a great chapter on pride in his book, Mere Christianity. And this is what he says. A prideful man gets no pleasure out of what he has.

His pleasure is only in having more of it than the next person. So Lewis says, A prideful person does not enjoy what they have. The joy that they get, the pleasures they get, are only that they have more than their neighbor, more than their friend.

So Nebuchadnezzar cannot enjoy these gifts, this amazing power and bounty that he's been given. Instead, his only concern is that he has more of it than the next person.

[17 : 02] So imagine, you know, a prideful person cannot enjoy their wealth and use it for good because they're always thinking about how much the next person has that might be more than them.

And so pride really struggles to sleep at night. Here's how, here's what Lewis means. He means pride cannot rest because you're always, if you're prideful, you're always competing. You're in competition all the time.

And so you're protecting your stuff and you're concerned about what you might lose. And you're walking into every room thinking, who's more beautiful than me in this room? Who has more money than me in this room?

Who is greater than me in this room? Who's accomplished more than me in this room? And so you're never at rest. You can never be at peace. You're not free because your pride makes you compete 24 seven.

And so you've got to defend and acquire. And really, I think the heartbeat of this passage, the real lesson of this passage is that the opposite of, what's the opposite of pride? The opposite of pride in

this story is being able to realize everything I have is a gift.

[18 : 05] And to be able to say everything I have in this life, I don't deserve it. And even if it's the tiniest thing, even if I don't have very much money at all, even that I don't deserve.

Boy, it's so anti-modern. It's to say everything I have, I'm not owed. I only, it's all a gift from top to bottom. And this is the exact thing that Nebuchadnezzar can't see. And so he has this dream, verse 10, and in verse 10, Daniel comes and gives him the diagnosis.

The dream is a bit like Zootopia. If you've seen that movie, everybody's an animal. Everybody's a bird. There's a big tree at the middle of the city. Nebuchadnezzar is the tree. He's the great tree, we're told very directly.

And his branches and his beautiful leaves extend over all the world. And all the animals come and the birds come and they feed from his tree. So he, in other words, the dream is depicting what he thinks of himself.

He's the great nurturer. He's the father of the world. He's the absolute power, but also the one who gives to everyone. He sees himself as this fatherly dictator, in other words, this absolute power who is yet nurtured.

[19 : 14] And in verse 13, it says a watcher comes down from heaven and chops that tree down.

Now, if you want to know what a watcher is, that's mentioned three times in this passage, come and talk to me afterwards.

All right. Watchers are very specific types of heavenly beings. But if I started to talk about them, then we couldn't finish the sermon. So if you're, if you're interested in that, come ask me about it. The watcher comes, he chops down the tree, takes away his glory. And then in verse 17, we get the main point. Nebuchadnezzar, this is going to happen so that you may know heaven rules, the most high rules overall.

In other words, he's saying, you think you're in charge. You think everything you have is something you made. You don't see life as a gift. You don't see the kingdom as a gift given to you. You're not a grateful person. This is going to show you that the most high God really is the most high, that he's the great tree.

He's the one that's over everything, not you. All right. It's very simple. Okay. It's very simple. It's very obvious. It's very clear. So 12 months later, he said he's on the rooftop. He's standing on the highest palace above the whole city.

[20 : 24] And it says in verse 30 that he looks out and he says, look what I've done. Look what I've built. Look at this great city, Babylon, the great built by my power, my might, the glory of my name.

And immediately he was struck. Now here we, here we learn what is pride. And one author puts it this way. It's so simple to say such a cancer to defeat.

So simple to realize what's going on here. So difficult to rip this problem out of the soul. And here's what it is. Pride is saying the good things I have in this life are because of me.

And my life is for me. And if there's anything going on that's bad in my life, it's somebody else's fault. Pride says that everything that's good about my life is because of me and my accomplishments.

Everything bad about my life is because of somebody else's faults and acts against me. I've not gotten what I'm owed. And that means that my life is all about me. That's pride.

[21 : 26] And that's what's going on. And so in other words, again, pride is just simply blind to the fundamental nature of our human existence. And that's that everything we have is a gift. You do not have anything that you've earned.

Anything that you deserve. Nothing. You know, you didn't birth yourself. You don't supply the oxygen that you breathe. If you were born in the 13th century, you may have died by the bubonic plague and your life would have been very different.

Everything we have, even our accomplishments are obviously products of things we've received all throughout our lives. And this is the fundamental issue with pride. Jonathan Edwards says, Pride is the worst viper in the heart.

It's the greatest disturber of the soul's peace. I wonder today if anybody in here can say, I struggle with pride. And say today, Boy, pride is making me miserable.

Pride makes us miserable, doesn't it? Because it makes us think about ourselves all the time. And I don't know about you, I want to be freed from that. I want to walk into a room and not think about myself.

[22 : 31] But what pride does is it walks in a room and says, What does everybody in here think about me? Very difficult for a preacher, in fact, right? And we want to be freed from it. We want to be, it makes us miserable.

And he was miserable. C.S. Lewis, it's no coincidence, by the way, that Nebuchadnezzar is on a rooftop looking down when he says this. He's above everyone. C.S. Lewis writes, The proud man is always looking down on things and on people.

And of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see anything that's above you. The dream does not just predict this judgment. The dream is exposing his heart.

And it's there to expose our hearts too. So thirdly, the cost of pride. Now in verse 33, exactly what the dream said is what takes place. In verse 33, For seven years or seven months, we're not sure exactly, seven periods of time, he becomes like a beast of the field.

He eats grass like an ox. He grows feathers like a bird. This is a real event. This is a physical event. This is a physiological and psychological event. After a little bit of study this week, I realized that this has happened many times throughout history and still can happen in the sense of the psychological problem of thinking one is a beast, an animal of the field and acting like it.

[23 : 48] But let's put all that away and realize that this is obviously a supernatural event, a judgment that's been given by God here. And what do we learn here?

We learn the real cost of pride. The real cost of saying, my life is for me, it's about me, that everything I have in this life that's good is because of me, that anything bad in my life is somebody else's fault.

Here's the real cost of pride. Pride dehumanizes us. Nebuchadnezzar becomes a beast. Why? Because God is saying to us, he's given us a spiritual lesson, and he's saying to us, pride makes us beastly.

Pride takes away the fullness of the image of God that we are. Pride dehumanizes it, defaces the truth of what we are as human beings. And the reason for that is because of Genesis 1 and 2.

Genesis 1 and 2 says that God made you in his image to image him into the world. And the real call of that, what does it mean to image God, to be maximally human, to be fully alive, to be fully human?

[24 : 52] It means to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor, love other people, and to forget yourself. That's what it means to image God into the world.

And so to be maximally human is simply self-forgetfulness, the self-forgetfulness of loving God and loving neighbor, all the way to the end. When Nebuchadnezzar here becomes a beast, God is saying, if you try to be more than human, you become less than human.

If you try to become a God, you become less than what you were made to be human. Pride makes us beastly. It dehumanizes us. Let me show you a couple ways that that works.

Number one, really quickly. Number one, dehumanizing pride will steal the joy that comes from giving your life for other people, to other people.

So think about it. Nebuchadnezzar's a beast of the field. He's eating grass like an ox. You think about the ox. Think about, I was in Glencoe on Monday, saw a couple highland cows. There's not many in that part of Scotland, but we saw a couple.

[25 : 56] And you think about the beast of the field. And when you approach the beast of the field, one of the things you know is that they are not driven by self-forgetful love. Right? Cats are not driven by self-forgetful love.

We have a cat at our house, and I can tell you that that's for sure. Right? Beast of the field. Maybe dogs. But beasts of the field in general are not driven by giving themselves away in love to another. And instead, what do they do? They operate by fulfilling their wants. An ox, for an ox, their god, the ox's god, is his belly. Right? So he just wants to fill that belly with grass.

He wants to eat grass like the ox. The beastliness of pride walks into a room and simply wants to receive from everyone in order to fill up their belly, to meet their desires and their pleasures.

It treats every... The beastliness of it is it treats everyone else as simply a means to get full. And so it walks into a room and it says, what can I get, not what can I give here?

[27 : 05] Let me give you one example. We walk into a church as 21st century modern people.

This is the season where people are looking for churches. Every September, October, November, we walk into a church and we ask in our hearts, is this the kind of place that's going to give me what

I need?

Is this the kind of place that will get my emotions satisfied week by week? Do I like the music? And does the worship style suit me? Are the programs going to be good enough for me here or do I need to try somewhere else?

And what are we doing? We're shopping, right? And the church has become a market. And the market of the church is a place where we say, I'm just looking for what's going to fill my needs. And what we've done is we've entered into the marketplace of the church and treated it as a storehouse where we come to get not to give instead of seeing that broken person in the corner that needs a hug.

Instead of seeing that person that's just suffered a major loss and saying, I've come here to give myself away, not to just get, not to just ask, did I like that song? But to give myself away to a family.

[28 : 14] See, pride treats the church, for example, like Netflix. And humility treats church like family. And you know that if you're in a family, oftentimes you have to lose, you have to give, you have to sacrifice.

Secondly, dehumanizing pride creates constant threats in our lives. If you walk up to the, well, maybe an ox that hasn't been around people very often, they're skittish, right?

If you walk upon a group of stag in a valley, they're very skittish. They run, they bolt as fast as they can. Dehumanizing beastly pride makes us like that.

We walk into a room feeling threatened, feeling skittish, we walk into a room and we say, again, did the people around here in this room like me? We say, what if I'm exposed for who I really am?

Boy, I felt like that so often when I did studies at New College, every study space, every classroom you walk into, what if people find out, I have no idea what I'm doing? And that's what pride does.

[29 : 16] See, that was pride. I walk into every room and we think, what if someone here is better than me? What if someone here makes more money, is more beautiful? Dehumanizing beastly pride makes us skittish people.

Now, we'll move to the final point. That means that pride takes away the truest sense of our humanity, which is joy. Self-forgetful joy. Self-forgetful joy comes from thinking about God and other people far more than ourselves.

That's what it means to image God into the world. And pride rips it away from us. We can't be grateful for the things we've been given. We don't see life as a gift. We think we're owed everything. And it rips our joy away. Can anybody today in here relate to this? Can anyone here today say, I'm suffering from spiritual cancer called pride, and it's making me sad and miserable.

Can we be delivered? Let's look finally at the deliverance we need. Let me show you something surprising here in this passage that's really a surprising feature throughout the whole book of Daniel so far.

[30 : 23] In verse 19, when Nebuchadnezzar tells Daniel the dream, Daniel is very clearly concerned for Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel does not come in and say, you deserve this, though he does.

Daniel does not come in and say, I cannot wait to see you like an ox in the field. That's exactly who you are and where you belong. Daniel's a slave to Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Daniel's life and home and took him into slavery.

And when Daniel comes to give this dream interpretation, we're told in the text he shows compassion. And he says, Nebuchadnezzar, I don't want this dream to destroy your life.

Instead, would you just break off your sin, repent, and let God restore you? And one of the surprising things, I think, throughout this book is the shocking reality that the slaves of Nebuchadnezzar who believe in the Lord love him.

And the second shocking thing that we read in this passage is little language like verse 21. In the dream that God gives, it says, the leaves of his tree were beautiful.

[31 : 28] Meaning that God is not suggesting, this book of Daniel is not suggesting that Babylon is all rotten top to bottom. No, it says the leaves were beautiful. It says the city of Babylon had a lot of great, had a lot of good.

Imagine living in a wonderful city that's full of a tropical environment, a green city. We have a pretty green city. It's great. And Babylon had a lot of good in it.

And what we see here throughout the story, it's been building up to this, is the shocking reality that God and his servants continue to give gifts to a city consumed in idolatry.

God loves Babylon. God loves Nebuchadnezzar, a man who is utterly set against him. Think about the end of the book of Jonah where God sends Jonah to Nineveh, that wicked city where crucifixion was first invented in Nineveh.

And at the very end of the book of Jonah, what does God say to Jonah who's mad about it? He said, God says, should I not care for 100,000 people who don't know their right hand from their left and also the cattle too, much cattle?

[32 : 33] Meaning God loves every facet of Edinburgh and New York and London and Babylon. The question, one of the questions of this book is, do you, does the believer in the Lord in this room today love idolatrous cities and idolatrous people as much as God does?

God loves Babylon. He's for her. He wants to rescue Nebuchadnezzar. He doesn't want to come against, he wants to save him from himself. And so he lets Nebuchadnezzar hit rock bottom. And when we read about him becoming a beast, we realize Nebuchadnezzar has truly hit rock bottom. And rock bottom, rock bottom in God's providence is not merely there as a statement of utter judgment.

Rock bottom is what has been called a severe mercy. It's God saying, I'm here. You couldn't see it any other way, so I sent you here so that you might finally see, so that I could save you.

And you could be, there could be people in this room today, in a room this size, there probably are somebody that's at rock bottom. And it's not a statement that God wants to condemn you forever.

[33 : 46] It could very well be a statement that God loves you and wants to rescue you. And that's what he did for Nebuchadnezzar. And so what do we learn here? How do you come up? How do you get out of the cancer of pride? How do you seek deliverance?

How can you be rescued? And in verse 34, this is what happens. It says that Nebuchadnezzar lifted his eyes up to the heavens and he was restored. And so the answer we're given is that you've got to lift your eyes up to the heavens.

This is metaphorical language for the fact that Nebuchadnezzar repented. He saw his need. He saw the pride at the bottom of his soul and he repented and he said, woe is me, I'm a prideful beast and only the God of heaven can rescue me.

In other words, listen, friends, if you go today and you say, I don't want to be a person of pride anymore. I want to be self-forgetful. I want this out of my life. And you try to will yourself into that.

And you try to say, I'm going to stop walking into every room and asking, what does everybody in here think about me? Try it. You can say, I hate my pride, but you cannot rescue yourself from it.

[34 : 52] You can't will yourself out of it. It can't be done. And what do you need? In other words, you've got to lift up your eyes and you've got to look to the God of heaven in repentance. That's the language that we're given here. How in the world could God say to Nebuchadnezzar, that wicked man who had done so much wrong to this world, you're forgiven and you're restored and I'm going to take away that spiritual cancer of pride and give you a heart of flesh and I'm going to say, you're my son.

That's what's happening here. How could he do it? On what basis? And here's the basis. In Isaiah 52 verse 14, there's a prophecy. It's a prophecy about the servant that is to come in the middle of history.

And it says that one day when the Messiah comes, he will be marred beyond the likeness of a man. Isaiah 52 verse 14 says that when Jesus was to come, he would be marred beyond the likeness of a human being.

And what we're reading in that is that Jesus Christ, the way that Nebuchadnezzar could be forgiven from his pride and restored the way that any person in this room today can be healed of your pride and restored, forgiven ultimately, is because Jesus Christ, the true king of all nations, languages, and peoples, the truest human, the fullest human, the image of God himself, he was made like a beast for us.

Our pride dehumanizes us. It makes us beastly. Jesus Christ was marred beyond human likeness for us. He became a beast. The beastliness of our pride was placed upon him, and he became a beast at the cross in our stead.

[36 : 34] He who knew no pride became our pride so that we might learn the joy of real humility.

And all of that is grounded in the reality that when Jesus Christ went to the cross and he was marred beyond recognition, he was in that moment pursuing us and pursuing you just like God was pursuing Nebuchadnezzar.

He was chasing you in that moment and wanting you to come home. Today you've got to, let's finish with this. You've got to look to Jesus, the one who was marred beyond recognition, became a beast at the cross for us for healing and restoration and forgiveness, and you've got to then go to him every single day in repentance if you're going to get humility.

So here's the final word. The path to real humility is forged in daily repentance. Nebuchadnezzar ends this story by repenting again, and the path to actually growing out of the problem of pride is to wake up every single day and repent and say, life is a gift.

I'm not owed anything. All I have has been given by God to me in his love and his grace. Life is a gift from top to bottom, and that's the only way out.

Now, here's the fifth principle, and we'll finish. Get humility. Pursue humility. Humility is joy, and the way you do that is through daily repentance.

[37 : 59] I love Luther's small catechism. It's a wonderful little catechism on the Christian life, and at the end of this passage, we read Nebuchadnezzar's catechism.

He says at the very end in verse 37, Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of Heaven, for all his works are truth, his ways are just, and those who walk in pride he will humble. Here's what Luther's catechism did. Luther struggled so much with pride, and so at the very beginning of his small catechism, he asked the question that he read every day, What does it mean that God created me?

And this was his answer. I believe that God has created me in all that exists, that he has given and still preserves to me, body and soul, my eyes, my ears, my limbs, my reason, my senses, my clothing, my shoes, my food, my drink, my house and my home, my family, my chair, my land, my cattle, my possessions entirely.

He provides me richly and daily with all the necessities of life. He protects me. He preserves me. He guards me against evil, and all of this out of a pure, fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine, I deserve nothing, for all of which I am in duty now bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey him.

[39 : 23] This I most certainly, this is most certainly true. With this today, I will agree. Daily repentance and saying, everything I have as a gift is the path to true humility, and it's the path to joy.

I look forward, I hope you look forward today to meeting Nebuchadnezzar in heaven. He was transformed. This is his conversion story. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this conversion story, a story of a man who was bound by pride from top to bottom, and you rescued.

So, we ask, Lord, that you would rescue us from our spiritual cancer pride. Lord, we don't want to walk into rooms and think about ourselves. We don't want to always be consumed with our achievements and accomplishments, and our beauty, and our wealth.

We don't want it anymore. Take it from us, oh Lord. So, we want to meet with the Holy Spirit now as we sing and as we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Save us and rescue us, oh God.

We repent. We ask for this in Christ's name. Amen.