

Message #1064
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"GOD RULES!"
{Daniel 4}
Trinity Presbyterian Church
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INTRODUCTION

I have good news for you this morning: God rules!

...God IS in control!

...God's will WILL prevail!

In the midst of chaos and confusion...God rules!

In good times and in bad times...God rules!

No matter who wins the election in November...God rules!

The theme of our text this morning is...God rules!

People may turn their back upon God during this life, but in the end ALL will discover...God rules!

The Bible says...

"Before Me every knee will bow; by Me every tongue will swear. They will say of Me, 'In the Lord alone are righteousness and strength.' All who have raged against Him will come to Him and be put to shame. But in the Lord all the descendants of Israel will be found righteous and will exult!" {Isaiah 45:23-25}

Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, discovered...God rules! In Daniel 4, the most powerful man in the world at the time is humbled and discovers there is One who is more powerful than he.

...He finds out who is the boss in this world

...He discovers--the hard way--the price one pays for rejecting God's offer of grace!

...what we have this morning is Nebuchadnezzar's story of how God turned his life around...

"It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed in me."

It began with...

GOD'S WARNING TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR

"I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous..."

This man had everything--money...power...an empire--all any person could ever want. He had it all--but that is what made him vulnerable!

Jesus said in the Book of Revelation of the Church of Laodicea: "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked!" (3:17)

It's so easy when everything seems to be going our way to become arrogant...smug and self-reliant with an attitude--who needs God? I rule my world!

...it is at this moment that of contentment when we are actually at a point of our greatest weakness.

...how soon we forget how weak and small we really are.

During the Battle of the Wilderness in the Civil War, Union General, John Sedgwick was inspecting his troops. At one point he came to a fortress, over which he gazed out in the direction of the enemy. His officers suggested that this was unwise and perhaps he ought to duck while passing the fortress. "Nonsense," snapped the general. "They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance." A moment later Sedgwick fell to the ground, fatally wounded.

The Bible says...

"If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" {1 Corinthians 10:12}

...we are most vulnerable when we think we have it all

At the height of his success, God gave Nebuchadnezzar a warning...

"I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in my bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me! So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me."

THE DREAM

Nebuchadnezzar sees a beautiful tree--it was large and strong.

...it gave food for all

...animals and creatures sheltered under its branches and received food from the tree

He then saw a messenger coming down from heaven who commands that the tree be cut down and stripped of its branches.

...the fruit is scattered everywhere

...the animals are driven away

All that remains is a stump bound with iron and bronze.

THE MEANING OF THE DREAM

The tree stump is a man

...this man will lose his mind

...he will become like an animal for a period of time

...the reason...

"...that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone He wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men."

...only Daniel is capable of giving meaning to the dream.

DANIEL'S INTERPRETATION TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Daniel is both alarmed and perplexed...

"My Lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries...You are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth."

Daniel is sensitive to Nebuchadnezzar; nonetheless, he makes it clear that the message contains dire warnings of what will happen if Nebuchadnezzar continues going his way and refusing to acknowledge the sovereignty of God!

The same is true with us when we share the good news of the gospel.

...the message cannot be watered down

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is NOT condemned, but whoever does NOT believe in stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." {John 3:16-18}

Daniel was sensitive--as we are to be--and at the same time he was truthful--as we MUST be!

...to receive Christ is to have eternal life

...to refuse Christ means one does not inherit eternal life.

Daniel warns of judgment to come--

...Nebuchadnezzar will be cut down and reduced to an insane shell of a man

...He will live like a beast until he acknowledges that God is God...and that God

rules!

Yet, he extends an olive branch and offers an opportunity to repent...

"Be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue!"

Jesus said: "If you do not repent you will perish!"

...consider the consequences of not following Christ

...consider the price one pays with their life by not responding to God's invitation

THIS IS THE TIME TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR NEED

An alert flight attendant noted that Mohammed Ali had not fastened his seat belt.

She politely asked him to do so in preparation for take off. Ali responded: "Superman don't need no seat-belt!" To which she replied: "Superman don't need no plane!"

Nebuchadnezzar continued his ways for twelve months.

...he didn't need God

...he and he alone ruled!

"Then...while the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, 'Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?'

"The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, 'This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from the people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by for you UNTIL YOU ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE MOST HIGH IS SOVEREIGN OVER THE KINGDOMS OF MEN AND GIVES THEM TO ANYONE HE WISHES!'"

Nebuchadnezzar had refused to renounce his sins...

...he refused the offer of God's grace

...and God takes away his sanity!

The lesson is clear to every one of us this morning!

...accept Christ's offer of forgiveness

...receive the gift of grace

...acknowledge God's mercy

...give Him rule in your life today!

Admit today your need of Him.

...turn from the way you're going

...turn to Christ...and...

...shout from the depth of your being: God rules!

CONCLUSION

God was merciful to Nebuchadnezzar...as God is merciful to all who turn to Him and acknowledge Him as Lord!

"At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified Him who lives forever.

"His dominion is an eternal dominion; His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him: 'What have You done?'

"At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I became even greater than before. NOW I, NEBUCHADNEZZAR, PRAISE AND EXALT AND GLORIFY THE KING OF HEAVEN, BECAUSE EVERYTHING HE DOES IS RIGHT AND ALL HIS WAYS ARE JUST. AND THOSE WHO WALK IN PRIDE HE IS ABLE

TO HUMBLE!"

God rules!

...that's the most important acknowledgment you and I must make in our lives...God rules!

Don't take the risk of not turning to Him...

...receiving Him

...repenting of your sin

...following Him

Discover the joy that comes from receiving Him as Savior and declaring Him the Lord of your life.

God rules!