

Community Group Sermon Notes March 8, 2026

Senior Pastor, Kevin Flannery

Series: Exiles in Babylon: Living as Strangers in a Fallen World

Sermon Title: Only God is Great!

Big Idea: Because the Most High rules over every kingdom, God graciously humbles human pride and restores the humbled so the world will know that God alone is great.

Spring Term: Week 10 of 20



Ice breaker: What is one accomplishment, role, or area of life that can quietly become part of your identity and you've had to "blow your candle out" to give God the glory?

Read and reflect on **Daniel 4:1-37**, with excerpts below:

Daniel 4:4-18 ⁴ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. ⁵ I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me. ⁶ So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me. ⁷ When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me. ⁸ Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream. (He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.)⁹ I said, "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream; interpret it for me. ¹⁰ These are the visions I saw while lying in bed: I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. ¹¹ The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. ¹² Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the wild animals found shelter, and the birds lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed.¹³ "In the visions I saw while lying in bed, I looked, and there before me was a holy one, a messenger coming down from heaven. ¹⁴ He called in a loud voice: 'Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches. ¹⁵ But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field. "Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth. ¹⁶ Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times pass by for him.¹⁷ "The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people.' ¹⁸ "This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me what it means, for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me. But you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you."

Daniel 4:24-27 ²⁴ "This is the interpretation, Your Majesty, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: ²⁵ You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes. ²⁶ The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. ²⁷ Therefore, Your Majesty, 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."

Daniel 4:34-37 ³⁴ 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.³⁵ 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?"³⁶ 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 was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. ³⁷ 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.

Sermon and Scripture Application Discussion:

1. **God's gracious interruption of pride.** Read **Daniel 4:4–18**. What stands out to you about Nebuchadnezzar's condition in verse 4: "contented and prosperous"? In what ways can comfort and success slowly train a person to feel self-sufficient? The dream is frightening and disruptive. How might disruption sometimes be an act of God's mercy rather than only a problem to remove?

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2. **The limits of Babylon's wisdom. Read Daniel 4:6–9, 17.** Why do you think the king first turns again to the wise men of Babylon? What does that reveal about where he instinctively looks for help? What are some modern versions of "Babylon's experts" that people rely on to explain or fix the human heart? How does verse 17 re-center the story on what the living need to know most?
3. **Pride, reality, and repentance. Read Daniel 4:19–27 from your bible.** What do you notice about Daniel's tone and posture when he delivers hard truth to the king? Why is it significant that the stump remains and the kingdom can be restored? What does that show about God's purposes in discipline? Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar to renounce his sins and be kind to the oppressed. Pastor Kevin said, "pride has victims", how does pride usually affect the way we treat other people?
4. **Restoration, sanity, and the greater King. Read Daniel 4:34–37 and Philippians 2:5–11.** Why is "I raised my eyes toward heaven" such a powerful turning point in the chapter? The sermon said pride is a kind of madness and humility is a return to sanity/reality. What do you think that means? How does Nebuchadnezzar's story prepare us to appreciate Jesus, the true King who did not grasp for glory but humbled Himself for proud people like us?

Digging Deeper — (Work through one together, over the week, or assign portions to different members.)

- **Trace the theme of pride and humility in Scripture.** Read Proverbs 16:18, Isaiah 2:11–17, Luke 18:9–14, James 4:6–10, and 1 Peter 5:5–7. As a group, identify repeated patterns: What does pride do to a person? What does God consistently do in response to pride? What does humility actually look like in practice?
- **Study the connection between pride and false security.** Read Deuteronomy 8:10–18 and Revelation 3:14–22. Discuss how prosperity, comfort, and self-reliance can dull spiritual awareness. Talk about where your group may be most vulnerable to saying, "My power" or "I built this."
- **Compare Nebuchadnezzar with Jesus.** Read Daniel 4:30 alongside Philippians 2:6–11. Notice the contrast: One king grasps at greatness. One King possesses true greatness and humbles Himself. Discuss why the gospel is more than "try to be humble."
- **Reflect on discipline and restoration.** Read Hebrews 12:5–11 and Psalm 51:10–12. Talk through how God's correction can be painful and merciful at the same time. Share, as appropriate, whether anyone has experienced a season where God used humbling circumstances to restore them.

Closing Prayer: Father, we confess how easily our hearts drift from gratitude to self-glory, from stewardship to ownership, and from worship to pride. Humble us gently where we need warning, humble us firmly where we are resisting You. Lord Jesus, thank You for being the true King who humbled Yourself to save proud people like us; teach us to say with our lives that only God is great. Amen.

Faith in Action:

- **March 28**, Afghan Luncheon, 12 PM, F101; **March 29**, Harvest Sunday, 9 & 10:30 AM, Sanctuary
- **March 29 - April 4**, Prayer Experience, Lobby; **April 3**, Good Friday Service, 7 PM, Sanctuary