

Weighed and Found Wanting

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being spiritually prepared to meet God, as illustrated by the judgment of King Belshazzar in Daniel 5.

Duration: 32:29

Scripture: Numbers 6:24-26, Daniel 4:33, Daniel 5:5, Daniel 5:18-19, Daniel 5:23, Daniel 5:27, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, Daniel preaches to Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, about the consequences of pride and disobedience to God. He reminds Belshazzar of how Nebuchadnezzar was humbled by God and lived like a wild animal for seven seasons until he acknowledged God's sovereignty. Belshazzar, however, has not learned from his grandfather's experience and has defiled the sacred vessels from Jerusalem by using them for his own pleasure and worshiping false gods. Daniel warns Belshazzar that his kingdom is coming to an end and emphasizes the importance of being prepared to meet God, as we will all face His judgment eventually.

Transcript

Lord, we thank you for the opportunity and the privilege of calling upon you and soliciting, Lord, your help, for we are a needy people. Lord, without you, surely we could never stand. But we thank you, Lord, for what you have done for us and that wonderful standing that we do have through the provisions that you have made for us through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Help us to understand and help us, Lord, to appreciate and to utilize those wonderful positions that you have placed us in, in Christ, in heavenly places. In his name we pray. Amen.

You may be seated. Tonight we continue our journey through the Bible, Daniel chapters five and six. We'll be gathering at seven o'clock to worship the Lord.

Pastor Skip will continue in this exciting study through the word of God. We encourage you to come and be a part of it. This morning we'd like to draw your attention to the fifth chapter of Daniel, verse 27.

Daniel is interpreting for the king these mysterious words that suddenly appeared on the wall as they saw a hand that was writing these words but could not see any further form of the body. The word, tackle, in verse 27. You are weighed in the balances and are found wanting.

I wonder how many today, if God is saying to you, you are weighed in the balances, would he also say, and you are found wanting. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, has died. His grandson, Belshazzar, has ascended to the throne.

And in celebration, celebration, he has this great feast for a thousand of the lords. And as they are feasting and drinking, suddenly he gets the idea of bringing in the gold and the silver vessels that his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem. Vessels that were sacred.

Vessels that had been dedicated to the service of God in the temple in Jerusalem. And he orders that they bring these gold and silver vessels that had been brought from Jerusalem by his grandfather to this banqueting hall, that they might drink their wine out of these sacred vessels. And as they were drinking their wine, suddenly there was a real sobering experience.

Because over on the wall, near the candlesticks, a hand appeared, writing strange words that they could not understand. He began to tremble. It says his knees began to smite against one another.

He called for the wise men, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, to come and interpret for him these words that were there on the wall. They were unable to do that. And then the queen mother said to him, you know, during your grandfather's reign, there was a man from Israel who had the Spirit of God within him.

And your grandfather used him very often in interpreting dreams and giving to him advice and counsel. You ought to call him to see if he can help you. And so Daniel was called into this banqueting hall.

And as he was asked by Belshazzar to interpret the words, promising to give to Daniel a chain of gold around his neck and a third part of the kingdom, Daniel said, keep your presence. I'll tell you what the words mean. But before he told him the interpretation, Daniel preached a sermon to him.

He said, your grandfather was given this great kingdom. But he was lifted up in pride. And the Lord allowed him to go insane for seven seasons so that he lived like a wild animal out in the fields.

He ate the grass like the oxen. His hair grew long and matted like feathers. And he was in this condition for seven seasons until he came to realize that the God in heaven establishes those who will rule over the earth.

And you, Belshazzar, were aware of what happened to your grandfather. And you have taken the golden vessels that he brought from Jerusalem, vessels that were dedicated to God. And you have drunk your wine out of these vessels as you praised the gods of gold and silver.

And the God in whose hand your very breath is, you have not glorified. The God in whose hand your very breath is. We have voluntary and involuntary muscles.

The voluntary muscles are attached to the skeleton of your body and they are controlled by the brain. So that if I want to pick up my Bible, my brain sends a message to the various muscles in my arms and in my shoulders. And it directs them to pick up the Bible.

And so I reach down and I pick up the Bible and I hold the Bible in my hand. Because of the voluntary muscles and because of the ability of the brain to coordinate the activity of the muscles and the tendons, it's done in a very smooth action. Now I have involuntary muscles.

They are not attached to the skeleton and I don't have to think for these muscles to operate. One of them is my heart. Now I don't have to think, beat, take another beat, beat, beat.

It just is an involuntary muscle. It just keeps beating. If I had to control it with my brain, I wouldn't make it through my first nap.

There is another involuntary muscle and that is your lungs. And again, you don't have to think to breathe. It's just something that is done automatically.

You don't have to think, take a breath, take another breath, take another breath. But it's just something that is done automatically because it is an involuntary muscle. Interesting to me that those muscles upon which your life depends, God doesn't give you control over those.

He doesn't trust you with those. But God controls the involuntary muscles and that's what Daniel is telling the king. The God in whose hand your very breath is, you've not glorified.

In other words, God controls your breathing. Isn't it tragic that many people whose breath is controlled by God use their breath to blaspheme, to curse God. Their very breath in the hand of God and yet they use that breath to curse him.

So Daniel then began to interpret for him these strange words that were written there on the wall. He said the word meaning. It means that God has numbered your kingdom and finished it.

In other words, your days are numbered. It's all over. This is the end of the line for you, Belshazzar.

Now as he was drinking and cavorting with his friends, I am certain that the farthest thing from his mind was death. That before the night was over, he'd be dead. But such was the case.

We all know that death can come at any time in a variety of ways. That we don't know when death might strike. We don't know how death might strike.

All we know that it will strike in time, each one of us. Many times it gives a forewarning. Sometimes there is no forewarning.

But none of us have a guarantee on life. Death can come at any moment. So what does that teach you? The importance of being ready to face death whenever or however it might come.

That I am prepared to meet God at any moment. The prophet Amos said to the people, prepare to meet your God. It's important to realize that there is preparation that is necessary for me to meet God.

I don't want to meet God unprepared. Sooner or later I'm going to stand before him. And as I do, I will either be prepared to stand before him or I will not be prepared to stand before him.

Someday you will hear God's judgment on you. You will either be condemned by God or forgiven by God. And it all depends on whether or not you were prepared and ready to meet God.

To the king, the message was, it's all over. God has numbered your kingdom. It's through.

It's finished. The word, tackle. You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting.

Today, if God weighed your life in the balances, if you were in the place of Belshazzar and suddenly God would speak to you and he would say, you've been weighed in the balances. Would God also declare, and you are found wanting so many times as we stand in the balances and we look at our life and we weigh our actions and our activities. So many times on the other side of the scale, we will put someone that we know, but we know that they are doing things that God's word said they shouldn't do.

And so I might say, well, I know that I'm not as good as I should be, but I am better than he is. And I usually like to choose those kinds of people to put on the other side of the scale. So it makes me look better, but you see, I'm not the one on the other side of the scale.

You're not going to be measured by my standards. You're going to be measured by the standards of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven.

Now the scribes and the Pharisees spent their whole life trying to be religious, trying to be righteous. And yet here the warning of Jesus that if you're in the scales with the Pharisees and the scribes balancing out, you're going to have to overbalance their righteousness if you hope to enter the kingdom of heaven. One day a rich young ruler came to Jesus and he said, good master, what good thing must I do to inherit the kingdom of heaven? Jesus said, keep the commandments.

He said, which ones? And Jesus repeated to him the commandments that had to do with his fellow men. And he said, oh, I've done these from the time I was a child, but what do I lack? And Jesus said, well, if you'll be perfect, go and sell everything you have, give the money to the poor, come and follow me. The man went away sorrowful because he was very rich.

And Jesus then said to his disciples, how hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. They said in amazement, well, Lord, who then can be saved? And Jesus said, well, with man, it is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.

If you are weighed in the balances and Jesus is on the other scale, you say, how in the world could I ever hope to be justified if I'm compared and will be compared to Jesus? And you've got the right picture. You can't, you won't. But God has made wonderful provisions for us, provisions whereby the righteousness of Jesus Christ might be appropriated unto us through our faith in Jesus Christ.

So God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him. And God imputes to you the righteousness of Christ. And that's the only hope that we have is that imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ to our account.

It is rather tragic that the Jews today use these scales in order to justify themselves before God. The day, the holy day of Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, the day when the priest used to go into the temple with the blood of the sacrificial goat and there make atonement for the sins of the people. They don't do that anymore.

The day of atonement is now a day of reflection, where they reflect on their life. They look at the past year. They put on the one scale their good works.

They put on the other scale their evil deeds. And they hope that the good works will overbalance the evil deeds. But they are trusting that weighed in the balances, they won't be found wanting that their good

deeds will overcome the evil that they have done in the previous years.

But we do have the scriptures that tell us that by the works of the law will no man be justified in the eyes of God. In their own scriptures, the prophet Isaiah said to them that their righteousnesses are as filthy rags in the sight of God. Here is Belshazzar, this pagan king of Babylon.

And the Lord is speaking to him. He's saying it's all over. Your days are numbered.

You've been weighed in the balances. You've come up short. You are found wanting.

And then the word Paris. It's a singular word for the word eupharsin. The kingdom is divided to the Medes and the Persians.

It's all over. Belshazzar you're dead. You've been weighed in the balances.

You've been found wanting. And now your kingdom is going to be given to the Medes and the Persians. There in verse 30, we have sort of a postscript.

We read, in that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, who was about 62 years old. And one of the ancient historians, Zeknavon, after describing the draining of the water from the Euphrates river so that the soldiers under the command of Cyrus could come in on the bank of the river and take the city.

Cyrus put his troops under the command of two of his generals, Gadadus and Gobryus. And those who were with Gobryus declared how wonderful it would be if they found the gates of the palace open. And as the whole city that night seemed to be given to revelry.

And he then said how that the host they encountered, some of the people were slain and others retreated and raised a clamor. And so that those that were with Gobryus also raised a clamor as though they were a part of the revelry going on that night. And advancing as fast as they could, they came to the palace of the king.

But they found that the gates of the palace were closed. And so they began to engage the guards in combat who were drunk and they were raising a great cry so that those that were in the palace were commanded to see what the tumult was all about. And when they opened the gates to see what was going on, Gadadus and his troops rushed in pursuing the guards until they came to the king.

And they found him with a drawn saber, but they quickly overpowered him. Some of the guards that were with him were killed, others fled. And this is a record from history of the fall of Babylon.

The amazing thing is that 250 years before this event took place, the prophet Isaiah in chapter 13 beginning with verse 17 said, Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them. They shall not regard silver, and as for gold, they will not delight in it. Their bows also will dash the young men to pieces, and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb, and their eyes will not spare the children.

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah as he prophesied the fall of Babylon. But then even more specific in Isaiah 45.1, the Lord said, Thus saith the Lord to his anointed to Cyrus, whose right hand I've held to subdue the nations before him, I will loose the loins of kings. We read about Nebuchadnezzar's knees smiting against each other.

I will loose the loins of the kings to open before him the two levied gates, and the gates shall not be shut. I will go before him and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass.

I will cut and sunder the bars of iron, and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, the hidden riches of the secret places, that you may know that I, Jehovah, has called you by your name, am the God of Israel. So 250 years before this happened, the prophet Isaiah names Cyrus, the general and co-regent of the Medo-Persian empire, as the one that God would use to conquer the city of Babylon. Naming him, calling him by name, so that he would understand that God is God.

Knows what he's talking about. So, after the captivity in Babylon, 70 years, as prophesied by Jeremiah, we read in Ezra 1.1, now in the first year of Cyrus, the king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled. The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all of the kingdom and put it in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, Jehovah, the God of heaven, has given me all of the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Who is there among you of all of his people? His God be with him. Let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, build a house of the Lord God of Israel, for he is God, which is in Jerusalem. God said it.

History proved it. The Bible, the word of God, is true. You can bet your life on it, and you better bet your life on it.

The question today, with the uncertainty of life, and the certainty of death, if God should weigh you in the balances just now, would God shake his head and say, You're found wanting. You're coming up short. Life is over.

You're found wanting. Your kingdom will be given to others. Whatever you've amassed, whatever you've gained, it's going to be left for others.

It's over for you. The important thing, are you found wanting today, or would God find you prepared? Your faith and trust in Jesus Christ. You're living your life for him.

No last minute preparations. No last minute trying to atone or make up for what might be lacking, because you may not have that chance. Are you ready to stand before God today? You don't know.

You might be. Are you ready? That should be the burning question on every one of our hearts. Am I really ready to meet God today? Weighed in the balances.

Is there a deficit? Am I found wanting? I pray that if in your heart, being totally honest with yourself, you would have to admit, Well, there's unfinished business between the Lord and I that needs taken care of. I pray that you'll take care of it before you leave this place today, so that you can go in confidence saying, Lord, come what may, I'm ready to meet you today. Chances are you won't meet him today, but you never know, do you? We, none of us ever know.

Father, we thank you for the provisions that you have made for us, so that none of us need to question or doubt whether or not we are ready to meet you. Father, we thank you for your love and the provision through Jesus Christ where we can stand before you perfect in him and the righteousness of Christ imputed unto us, so that we can stand there in his righteousness, his righteousness alone. Thank you, Lord, for providing for our sins to be washed, to be cleansed, forgiven, and forgotten.

And that we, Lord, have a righteous standing before you, not our own righteousness, but that which is through faith in Jesus Christ. In his name we pray, amen. Shall we stand? The pastors have come down to the front so that they can minister to you today, who might be lacking a bit on those scales as God is weighing you and your life.

And you realize that you're coming up short, but you want to take care of that today. I would encourage you as soon as we're dismissed, come on down to the front, let them pray for you and pray with you, that you might experience that work of God in your life, the work of the cleansing from all of the sin of the past, and that work of righteousness, because you've put your trust and faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God today. May the Lord be with you.

May he watch over you. May he keep you in his love and strengthen you by his Spirit for the things that you will be facing this week. May you find his overcoming power sufficient for all of the troubles or trials that may come across your path.

In Jesus' name, the Lord bless Thee and keep Thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon Thee and be gracious unto Thee and be gracious unto Thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon Thee and give Thee peace.

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