

Sun., Aug. 22 - [Baptism of Alyna Grace Kilian]

Memory Verse: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." -1 John 1:9

Message: Living in the Fire: Stand Against

Reading of Scripture & Sermon Scripture: Daniel 5:1-31

Blurb: Daniel chapter 5 tells of the destruction of Babylon and its haughty king. There are ways that we, too, live with little concern for our sin and neglect God. This Sunday we see "the writing on the wall" and are called to repent and turn fully to God. Our destruction can be averted!

[Recorded Worship Beginning]

WELCOME -Pastor Andrew

MEMORY VERSE: -Pastor Andrew

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." -1 John 1:9

WORSHIP MUSIC SET -Sanctify

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Living Hope

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

[Live Worship Beginning]

GATHERING SONG: *Forever Holy* -Sanctify

WELCOME -Pastor David

-Lighting of the altar table flame

MEMORY VERSE: -Pastor David

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." -1 John 1:9

WORSHIP MUSIC SET -Sanctify

Another in the Fire

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Living Hope

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

[Both Recorded & Live Worship]

LOVE MOMENT: End of Summer Bash -Pastor Andrew.

[Live Worship only] THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM of Alyna Grace Kilian -Pastor David

Baptismal vows

The Apostles' Creed

Prayer for the Holy Spirit

Baptism

Congregational Response: *May You Run and Not Grow Weary*

PRAYERS -Pastor David

Baptism and all children - school starting!

Earthquake last Saturday in Haiti, over 2,000 dead, thousands more injured

Afghanistan struggle

Dixie fire in CA, fires on Iron Range

Tropical storm Fred SW

PP Slide: Generational Bridge

Daniel 5

1. What wrote on the wall?

2. Who remembered and recommended Daniel?

3. What color robe was Daniel given?

GENERATIONAL BRIDGE -Pastor David

Addressing the kids:

Come on family, it's time for our radio program. Kids, you're going to love this, too.

It's a long and strange story from the Bible, Daniel chapter 4. It's a story you might not have ever heard before! So, during the program, listen for:

1. In the vision, something appeared and wrote words on the wall. What was it?

2. Who remembers and recommends Daniel?

3. What color robe was Daniel given afterwards?

Listening? Here we go!

[Pastor David "turns on" radio and sits down on the couch.]

WFHC RADIO SHOW Daniel 5:1-31 -Reader: Dramatic Reading Team

Belshazzar's Party

1 King Belshazzar threw a huge party for a thousand of his princes, and he drank a lot of wine in front of them. 2 While he was under the wine's influence, Belshazzar commanded that the gold and silver equipment that his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem's temple be brought to the party so that the king, his princes, his consorts, and his secondary wives could drink wine out of them. 3 So the gold equipment that had been carried out of the temple, God's house in Jerusalem, was brought in; and the king, his princes, his consorts, and his secondary wives drank out of it. 4 They drank a lot of wine; and they praised the gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

Writing on the wall

5 Right then the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the king's palace wall in the light of the lamp. The king saw the hand that wrote. 6 The king's mood changed immediately, and he was deeply disturbed. He felt weak, and his knees were shaking. 7 The king yelled, calling for the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the diviners.

The king told these sages of Babylon: "Anyone who can read this writing and tell me its meaning will wear royal robes, will have a gold chain around his neck, and will rule the kingdom as third in command."

8 Then all the king's sages arrived, but they couldn't read the writing or interpret it for the king. 9 At that point King Belshazzar was really frightened. All the color drained from his face, and his princes were also very worried.

10 Upon hearing the commotion coming from the king and his princes, the queen entered the banqueting hall and declared, "Long live the king! Don't be so disturbed. Don't be so frightened. 11 There is a man in your kingdom who has the breath of holy gods in him! When your father was alive, this man was shown to possess illumination, insight, and wisdom like the very wisdom of the gods. Your father King Nebuchadnezzar appointed this man as chief over the dream interpreters, enchanters, Chaldeans, and diviners. Yes, your father did this 12 because this man—Daniel, the one the king named Belteshazzar—possesses an extraordinary spirit, knowledge, and insight into the meaning of dreams. He can explain ambiguities and resolve mysteries. Now in light of all that, summon Daniel! He will explain the meaning of this thing."

13 So Daniel was brought before the king. The king said to him, "So you are Daniel, the Daniel from the exiles that my father the king brought from Judah? 14 I have heard that the breath of the gods is in you and that you possess illumination, insight, and extraordinary wisdom. 15 Now, the sages and the dream interpreters were brought before me to read this writing and interpret it for me, but they couldn't explain its meaning. 16 But I've heard that you can explain meanings and solve mysteries. So if you can read this writing and interpret it for me, you will wear royal robes, have a gold chain around your neck, and will rule the kingdom as third in command."

Daniel interprets the writing

17 Daniel answered the king: "Keep your gifts. Give the rewards to someone else. But I will still read the writing to the king and interpret it for him. 18 Listen, Your Majesty: The Most High God gave kingship, power, glory, and majesty to your father Nebuchadnezzar. 19 Because of the power God gave Nebuchadnezzar, all peoples, nations, and languages were terrified of him. He did whatever he wanted, whenever he wanted: killing or sparing, exalting or humbling. 20 But when he became arrogant, acting in stubborn pride, he was pulled off his royal throne and the glory was taken from him. 21 He was driven away from other humans, and his mind became like an animal's. He lived with wild donkeys, he ate grass like cattle, and dew from heaven washed his body until he realized that the Most High God dominates human kingship and sets over it anyone he wants.

22 "But you who are his son, Belshazzar, you haven't submitted, even though you've known all this. 23 Instead, you've set yourself up against the Lord of heaven! The equipment of God's house was brought to you; and you, your princes, your consorts, and your secondary wives drank wine out of it, all the while praising the gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood,

and stone—gods who can't see, hear, or know anything. But you didn't glorify the true God who holds your very breath in his hand and who owns every road you take.

24 "That's why this hand was sent from God and why this message was written down. 25 This is what was written down:

mene, mene, tekel, and parsin.

26 "This is the meaning of the word mene: God has numbered the days of your rule. It's over! 27 tekel means that you've been weighed on the scales, and you don't measure up. 28 peres means your kingship is divided and given to the Medes and the Persians."

29 Then Belshazzar commanded that Daniel be dressed in a purple robe, have a gold chain around his neck, and be officially appointed as third in command in the kingdom.

30 That very same night, Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. 31 Darius the Mede received the kingdom at the age of 62.

PP Slide: Generational Bridge
Daniel 5

1. What wrote on the wall?
2. Who remembered and recommended Daniel?
3. What color robe was Daniel given?

GENERATIONAL BRIDGE, CONTINUED -Pastor David

[Pastor David turns off the radio.]

Wasn't that exciting? Thanks for listening.

- So, kids,
1. In the vision, something appeared and wrote words on a wall. What was it? [A human hand]
 2. Who remembers and recommends Daniel? [The queen]
 3. What color robe was Daniel given afterwards? [Purple]

And now, in the sermon, we're going to hear how we can stand faithfully with God, no matter what.

MESSAGE: Strange Fire Series (Daniel) Living in the Fire #5: Stand Against

PP#1: (Daniel) Living in the Fire: Stand Against

"But as for you, child of God, run away from all these things. Instead, pursue righteousness, holy living, faithfulness, love, endurance, and gentleness." -1 Timothy 6:11

Living in the Fire: Stand Against. 1 Timothy 6:11 "But as for you, child of God, run away from all these things. Instead, pursue righteousness, holy living, faithfulness, love, endurance, and gentleness."

PP#2: *Image of a party, with God/Jesus showing up in the middle of it*

Daniel Chapter 5 is frightening! You see, the main Scriptural point is that God crashes the parties you throw! No, I mean it. This is our main takeaway today: God crashes your parties. That's a sobering reality that we normally don't think about, right? And when we do, we realize that like it or not, God is a part of our personal lives! Turn to Daniel 5.

PP#3: King of Neo-Babylonian Empire

Nabopolassar (626-605 BC)
Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC)

Nabonidus (556-539 BC)
Belshazzar (553?-539 BC)
Darius/Cyrus of Persia (d. 530 BC)

Timeline

625 Babylon conquers Assyria
605 Daniel (16?) taken to Babylon
604 Daniel (17?) Chapter 3
580? Daniel (40?) Chapter 4
539 Daniel (80?) Chapter 5
535? Daniel (85?) Chapter 6

King Nebuchadnezzar, who was the main character in Daniel Chapter 4, and who learned humility before the true God the hard way, had died 23 years earlier. After a few years of turmoil in determining the successor, Nebuchadnezzar's son, Nabonidus [na-ba-NIGH-dus], takes the throne. But Cyrus—who seems to be called Darius* in the Book of Daniel—is leading the Persians to power and is conquering the surrounding kingdoms. King Nabonidus [na-ba-NIGH-dus] in Babylon grew weak and lost territories. Clay tablets uncovered reveal that although Nabonidus [na-ba-NIGH-dus] was the last king of Babylonia, he absented himself at Tema in Arabia while his son Belshazzar acted as regent (viceroy) in the capital. The word for “son” in Daniel 5 can also mean “grandson” or “successor.” Anyway, Cyrus finally turns the Persian army on the city of Babylon itself.

[*Note: The ruler called Darius in Daniel 5:31 and 6:1ff is perhaps King Cyrus' throne name in Babylon (Cyrus' mother was a Mede). It could also be another name for the Persian-appointed governor over Babylon, known from Babylonian records as Gubaru. Either way, it is not Darius the Great of Persia, who reigned *after* Cyrus.]

Now, Belshazzar felt pretty confident. He and the people were within the safety of the fabled city walls of Babylon: 40 feet tall, and 85 feet wide! The walls encased a city the area of 200 square miles: they planted crops and raised cattle within it! The Euphrates River even flowed through the city supplying it with fresh water. It was inconceivable that Babylon could ever be breached or sieged. It did not scare him that the Persians gathered around the city.

PP#4: Daniel 5

3 So the gold equipment that had been carried out of the Temple, God's house in Jerusalem, was brought in; and the king, his princes, his consorts, and his secondary wives drank out of it. 4 They drank a lot of wine; and they praised the gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

So, Belshazzare, it seemed, flouted his confidence, and, perhaps to boost morale and snub the Persians, throws a lavish party. A thousand nobles gather in revelry and drinking. Then, after loosening up a bit with wine, Belshazzare calls for the goblets his grandfather had plundered from the Temple in Jerusalem to be brought out for them to use...perhaps he wanted to emphasize how the Babylonians are the mighty conquerors, and to remember how they subdued Judah. The true God's holy vessels, being used for carousing and debauchery! Ouch. But then, verse 4, “As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.”

Uh-oh. God, the One True God, who had crashed the party—as God always does, mind you—had kept in the background quietly observing. But when they lift His holy vessels to toast false gods, He steps out of the shadows.

PP#5: *Image from*

<https://lifehopeandtruth.com/prophecy/understanding-the-book-of-daniel/writing-on-the-wall/>

This, by the way, is where the idiom “the writing on the wall” comes from. A floating *hand* suddenly appears and spells out four words on the banquet hall wall: *mene, mene, tekel, parsin*. Of courses, the king is terrified at the paranormal apparition and is literally scared stiff! Once again, the wise men and diviners are called in to interpret what this is all about. Once again, they cannot make any sense of it. Sounds just like Daniel 2...and 4!

The *queen* speaks up. Perhaps it’s Nebuchadnezzar’s aged wife. Perhaps it is Nabonidus’ [na-ba-NIGH-dus’] wife. Either way, she had seen how God had used Daniel to rightly interpret strange visions before. So, it seems that although Nebuchadnezzar had turned to God and had placed Daniel in high offices, Daniel by now—23 years later—had been forgotten, or was not the new king’s favorite, or had simply retired (he was probably about 80 years old here). But he’s still around, and so once again he’s drug in before the royal court to explain what’s going on.

Now, there are all sorts of word plays going on in this chapter. One is that Daniel’s Babylonian name was Bel-te-shazzar, and the king’s name was Bel-shazzar. Bel is the title of the Babylonian god. So, which name-bearer is more godly? More word plays coming.

PP#6: King Belshazzar’s Three Sins

1. Sinned through pride, not ignorance

2. Defiled God’s vessels

3. Praised idols

Daniel 5:22-23

“But you who are his son, Belshazzar, you haven’t submitted, even though you’ve known all this. Instead, you’ve set yourself up against the Lord of heaven!

The equipment of God’s house was brought to you; and you, your princes, your consorts, and your secondary wives drank wine out of it, all the while praising the gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood, and stone—gods who can’t see, hear, or know anything. But you didn’t glorify the true God who holds in His hand your life and all your ways.”

But did you catch how Daniel told the king he didn’t want the rewards? Daniel was still serving God first and foremost! And Daniel comes out preaching! “You want to know what’s going on? I’ll tell you! Your father/predecessor King Nebuchadnezzar was proud and haughty and flippant before the One True God, and God humbled him and taught him a hard lesson. You know this story! Yet, you, who knows better, do not humble yourself before the One True God. In fact, at this desperate time, rather than turning *to* the One True God, you flaunt your trust in your false security and false gods!”

PP#7: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN

mene (*mina*): number or unit of money

tekel (*shekel*): weight of value

parsin (plural of *peres*): half mina or shekel (divided)

“The words the hand wrote on the wall are from the True God and forecast your doom! *Mene* is a word play on *mina*, a number of money. Giving the word twice means that God has 1. numbered your days, and 2. they are now up! *Tekel* is a word play on *shekel*, a weight, and you have been weighed and found lacking! *Parsin*, meaning divided units, is a word play on *Persia* and means that because of this, your kingdom will be divided and given to the Persians!

Daniel walks away robed *in purple* and gold, promoted again. He's now ranked third, behind King Nabonidus [na-ba-NIGH-dus] and Belshazzar, but he knows it's pointless because it's all soon over. Side note: perhaps this promotion helped put him in Darius' attention in the next chapter.

Anyway, Belshazzar's fate happened that night. History tells us that in a genius move, the Persians, using canals, diverted the river that flowed under the walls into the city, and instead funneled troops in through the dry riverbed. Daniel 5:6 simply reports, "That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of 62." (5:30-31) The party was over.

PP#8: Living in the Fire: Stand Against

1. God forgives the humble
2. God judges the proud
3. God crashes your party!

Daniel Chapter 5 is a hard chapter. We don't preach on this, choosing instead the stories of the fiery furnace and the lion's den. We prefer to hear about how God comes to our rescue and saves us. But these last two chapters, four and five: oof, tough stuff! Here we see that God crashes their parties! And God humbles both Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. When we hear these chapters and read them as Scripture, we are to identify ourselves with these pagan kings who scoff at God. They trust in 1. their own abilities, 2. in their security, and 3. in what they can see.

Both kings shared the same defiant, prideful, self-centered past. Now Nebuchadnezzar repents and turns to God. He is restored. But even knowing all this, Belshazzar stays hardened and self-reliant, flaunts God, and is undone. In this story we learn that 1. God can, and will, completely forgive and restore the lives of those who are humble and truly repent, but also 2. that God can, and will!, judge the proud and arrogant.

Oh, let's go back and talk more about how God saved the three from the fiery furnace! But stay steady here. Don't miss that Daniel also talks a lot about our selfish pride, and arrogance, and trusting in self, and not taking God seriously. This the Bible calls sin. And we see in Daniel that sin brings judgement. Yes, we see grace, like the 4th person in the fire, like the jaws of the lions miraculously staying shut, like Nebuchadnezzar being restored. But we also see on the party's wall the consequences of sin, of flouting evil, of selfishness: 1. God has numbered our days and brings them to an end, 2) we are weighed in the balances and our sin revealed, and 3) our kingdom will be divided and cast down. God's message here is, "Beware! There is no human wall so high, no human fortress so secure, no activity so hidden that it can protect evil from the judgment of God. Know this: God crashes your party!"

PP#9: Standing in the Fire: Stand Against

Stand *against* sin!

So, we are called here, like Daniel, to *stand against* sin...particularly our own sin! This story prompts us to ask ourselves: what are the ways that we live the party life? How do we trust in our own strength? How do we not take God seriously, even flaunting His gifts?

One way is even though we know the works of God, it doesn't affect how we live, what we believe, or what we do. *Information doesn't equal behavior*. Daniel reminds Belshazzar that he knew what God had done through Nebuchadnezzar and still didn't humble himself. For us, perhaps it sounds like, "Beware! Just because you are a Christian, just because you believe in God, that

doesn't mean that you can live a life against God's will and feel secure." God will always love you, but that doesn't mean you can do whatever you want! God knows we're only human, but God is also utterly serious when He calls us to stop sinning! We know better, and we have the Holy Spirit given within us to make us able to resist our sin. We *can* live God's way! When we don't, when we believe that our sin really doesn't matter to God, we are too much like Belshazzar's party! We can't point to Jesus' costly gift of forgiveness earned on the cross and use it to excuse and allow anything we want to continue to do. If we really knew Daniel's True God, we could not so easily abuse His Son's sacrifice this way. We would follow Him more intentionally in our daily lives.

Our lives are, in many ways, filled with so many good things, and comforts, and luxuries, and fun, and food, and friends, and many human securities. And we can begin to trust in ourselves, push God back into the shadows, and focus on what we enjoy.

PP#10: Nebuchadnezzar: How to turn to God and repent.

Belshazzar: What happens when we trust in ourselves.

Daniel: How to live calmly trusting in God at all times.

Today, I want to challenge us to stop and reflect. What can we remember that God has done for us, and in the lives of those we have known? Do we rest too much on the blessings of our predecessors? Just because your parents or grandparents trusted in the True God doesn't mean that you can treat Him casually. God is as your party! How much better would it be to invite Him into the spotlight! Hear His calling to a life of holiness and change your ways. How do you need to repent? How do you need to seek forgiveness? How do you need to make God your One, True God?

Like Nebuchadnezzar, come to your senses and repent. Turn to God and ask Him into the spotlight of your party. Ask God to make you a Daniel, steady and faithful over time. Choose to live for God above all else. The party room for Belshazzar was a facade cloaking impending doom. Same with our lives. It will not last. Stop and see, and repent.

You can do that by naming to God in prayer the ways you are stuck in pride. Confess it all before God in your heart in prayer. Ask for forgiveness. Ask God to step into your spotlight. Ask God to redirect your life.

In a moment we will have our closing song. If you want a partner to pray with you, then during that song, you can come up to the front pew, and a member of our prayer team will pray with you. Or you can pray on your own wherever you are. Your party is between you and God. But don't let this opportunity go by to run to God before the facade comes crashing down.

PP#11: *Image for running to Jesus*

In a couple of weeks it'll be the 20th anniversary of 9/11. On that day, Lieutenant Colonel Brian Birdwell was in the Pentagon. Suddenly the hallway he was walking through exploded as an 80-ton aircraft traveling at 520 miles per hour struck the building. He was knocked off his feet and temporarily knocked out. He awoke surrounded by fire and completely disoriented. He said that he realized he was suddenly facing a ghastly death but didn't know which way to run. So, in his heart he committed himself again to his Lord and Savior Jesus. He chose a direction, ducked his head and ran. He said that as he ran he screamed out loud, "If I live, I am with you, Jesus. If I die, I am with you, Jesus!" When the facade crashed down, he ran to Jesus. He knew that it really didn't matter which direction he picked. Whether he headed toward life or death, he was heading to Jesus.

Today you don't have to wonder what direction to run. In His mercy our God has shown us the consequences of sin and the mercy of Jesus, so that we can run toward Him. Whatever is in your life, whatever bad choices you've made, whatever hurt you have caused, there is a direction to run. Run to Jesus. He will help you and change you. Today He loves you enough to point to the consequences of sin and says, "Read the writing on the wall." And then He calls out, "Don't go that way. Come to me."

Let's duck our heads in prayer, and run to Jesus!

We pray....

[IN-PERSON WORSHIP ONLY] CLOSING SONG: *Stronger* -Sanctify

OFFERING: -Pastor David

-Give of your monies to God's work through this church. You can give in person, mail it in, drop it off or, most conveniently, you can make an electronic transfer or a debit card payment on the church website or by using the "square" on the bulletin.

ANNOUNCEMENTS -Pastor David

After worship: prayers for college students leaving.

Wednesday: End of Summer Bash!

Next Sunday: Message is Daniel 6: Daniel in the Lion's Den!

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." -1 John 1:9

BENEDICTION -Pastor David