**WHO IS REALLY IN CONTROL?**

**Daniel 4:1-37**

* **“It was through Pride that devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind.”** (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)
* *“I hate arrogant pride, evil conduct, and perverse speech.”* (Proverbs 8:13)
* “God hates pride because it challenges His sovereignty and questions His will and ways (4:37). It claims a position and power for mere mortals tat rightly belongs to ‘the King of heavens’ (v.37).” – Akin

**GOD WARNS US OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR SIN**

* *“I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace. 5 I had a dream, and it frightened me; while in my bed, the images and visions in my mind alarmed me.”* (Daniel 4:4-5)
* **Our God of grace desires all people to be saved, so His love and compassion can be seen in His repeated warnings regarding the consequences of pride and sin.**
* *“Don’t be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a person sows he will also reap, 8 because the one who sows to his flesh will reap destruction from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit.”* (Galatians 6:7-8)
* *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Romans 6:23)
* **The tendency to blame God for us reaping the consequences of our pride, arrogance, and rebellion are misplaced; the responsibility rests solely on us.**
* *“But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desire. 15 Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death.”* (James 1:14-15)

**WE ALL NEED PEOPLE IN OUR LIVES THAT WILL TELL US THE TRUTH OF GOD’S WORD**

* *“Your Majesty, and this is the decree of the Most High that has been issued against my lord the king: 25 You will be driven away from people to live with the wild animals. You will feed on grass like cattle and be drenched with dew from the sky for seven periods of time, until you acknowledge that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms, and he gives them to anyone he wants. 26 As for the command to leave the tree’s stump with its roots, your kingdom will be restored to you as soon as you acknowledge that Heaven rules. 27 Therefore, may my advice seem good to you my king. Separate yourself from your sins by doing what is right, and from your injustices by showing mercy to the needy. Perhaps there will be an extension of your prosperity.”* (Daniel 4:24-27)
* **Speaking the Truth of God’s word in love to people can be the very thing that turns them from a path of destruction to abundant and everlasting life with the Lord!**
* *“But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ.”* (Ephesians 4:15)
* **One of the most unloving things a Christian can do is withhold Truth from someone who is blinded to the consequences of their sin.**
* *“Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth.”* (1 Corinthians 13:6)
* *“Now the goal of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.”* (1 Timothy 1:5)

**GOD CAN CHANGE EVEN THE HARDEST OF HEARTS AND BLESS THOSE WHO ONCE REJECTED HIM**

* *“But at the end of those days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven, and my sanity returned to me. Then I praised the Most High and honored and glorified him who lives forever: For his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. 35 All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing, and he does what he wants with the army of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can block his hand or say to him, ‘What have you done?’ 36 At that time my sanity returned to me, and my majesty and splendor returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and my nobles sought me out, I was reestablished over my kingdom, and even more greatness came to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt, and glorify the King of the heavens, because all his works are true and his ways are just. He is able to humble those who walk in pride.”* (Daniel 4:34-37)
* **In our world of “self-made” men and women, we all need to be reminded that every person that ever existed has what they have because the God of all creation has allowed it.**
* *“This is so that the living will know that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms. He gives them to anyone he wants and sets the lowliest of people over them.”* (Daniel 4:17)
* **God is still saving and blessing people, and the question you need to answer is what you will do with Jesus.**
* *“This Jesus is* ***the stone rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone****. 12 There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.”* (Acts 4:11-12)

**Connect Group Discussion**

**Understanding:**

* What does Daniel 4:1-37 teach us about God/Jesus?
* What is the main message of Daniel 4?
* What was the dream the king had about? What was it’s meaning?
* What ultimately happened with King Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 4?

**Digging Deeper:**

* What are some ways pride reveals itself in our lives? How do you deal with pride/overcome pride?
* How has God “warned” you when you were heading down the wrong path in life? (i.e. dream, friend, pastor, etc.)
* How did you respond to the “warning” God has given you throughout your life?
* Why do you think God gives warnings of the consequences of choosing to disobey Him?
* Who do you have in your life that will tell you what you ***need***to hear, rather than what you ***want*** to hear? Why is it so hard to speak, and receive, the truth in love
* What do you need to do differently as a result of this study?

**Loving Outward:**

* Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
* Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
* Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?

If you are not in a Connect Group and would like to get connected to grow in your relationship with God and others, contact the church office at 225-272-3740, and we can help find a group that fits your schedule.