

Remnant Life Church
August 4, 2019
What is Written on Your Wall?
Dan 5:1-30

Many people ask, “Does God still speak to people?”

- While the answer to that is a resounding “YES”
- Too many are hung up on the literal definition of “speak” to hear God
- Audible speech is only one way that God communicates with His people and it only happened a few times throughout the Bible
 - Moses and the burning bush
 - Samuel as a boy
- So, yes, God does speak to His people today but perhaps we should call it, “getting our attention”
 - It still comes down to what we have been examining over the last several months – faith!
 - God desires for our faith to be strengthened especially in a world that has turned its back on the Creator and is now welcoming lies as the truth into their hearts and minds
- The book of Daniel contains some of the most fantastic demonstrations of God’s power through many types of situations
 - The overall theme of Daniel – to display the Kingdom of God as victorious over all ages
 - 2 parts – the present (stories in **chaps 1-6**) and future (prophecy **chaps 7-12**)

As we read the following account in **Daniel 5** of the hand writing on the wall, know that God wants us to have faith in every situation in our lives as He is getting our attention

READ – Daniel 5:1-9 – Jeff Beane

- Background - Babylonian history and their rule over Israel
 - The Jewish people were under Babylonian captivity for 70 years
 - It began when King Nebuchadnezzar (who was King of Babylon from 605 to 562 BCE) captured the people in 598
 - The captivity was ended in 528 when the Syrians conquered the Babylonians and their king, Cyrus, gave the people permission to return to Jerusalem
 - You can read of that return and the people rebuilding the walls and temple in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah
 - Notice how God uses everyone and anyone to accomplish His will – even those who don’t worship Him (Cyrus, Darius, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar)
- The first 4 chapters of the book of Daniel are under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar
 - (**Dan 1**) Daniel and his three friends captured and shown to be healthier and wiser through God’s favor

- (Dan 2) Nebuchadnezzar's dream interpreted by Daniel and then his promotion to a position of great power and authority
- (Dan 3) The image of gold and the fiery furnace
- (Dan 4) Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the tree
 - Daniel interprets and foretells Nebuchadnezzar's loss of sanity and punishment (Dan 4:19-27)
 - Becoming like an animal because of his great pride (Dan 4:28-33)
 - Nebuchadnezzar restored giving glory to God – (Dan 4:34-37)
- The time of the 5th chapter is under the rule of King Belshazzar
 - After Nebuchadnezzar died his son ruled for 2 years
 - After him a brother-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar for 3 years
 - Then Nadonidus for 17 years who had a son who co-ruled with him named Belshazzar
 - Approximately 25 years have passed from the end of chapter 4 and the beginning of chapter 5
 - Daniel is now about 80 years old

What about that 25 year period?

- The Bible has many time “gaps” where we have very little or no information
 - Once again the critical importance of context
 - The Bible is not a history book but there is history contained within it
- There is no record of Jesus' life from the age of 12 to the age of 30
- There is nothing recorded between the book of Malachi (the last book of the OT) and the Gospel of Matthew (the first in the NT)
 - Called the Intertestamental Period
 - Approximately 400 years
 - Often called the “400 Years of Silence”
- There is nothing recorded of Daniel's life in the 25 years from Nebuchadnezzar to Belshazzar
 - He did not have the same influence (5:13)
 - As we just heard there were several rulers between Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar
 - Similar to the situation with Joseph and the Pharaoh who came to power not knowing the story of Joseph and his family
 - The circumstances became very different in both
- All we know is that Daniel is still faithful to God

First point: We must be faithful during the times of silence in our lives

- This is what separates true faithfulness from circumstantial faithfulness
- Many Christians fall away or allow doubt to come during these times
 - This is especially true in churches that embrace the gifts of the Holy Spirit as we do here at RLC
 - Prophetic words, words of knowledge, words of wisdom, healing...
 - All of these are given at GOD'S WILL

- There is a great danger is using their occurrences or frequency as an indicator of God's presence
 - God is always present!!!
- Daniel remained faithful, and we see the evidence of that later
- But what we just read is not about silence
 - It is about God doing something that had never been done before and has never occurred again
 - To get people's attention!

READ – Daniel 5:10-16 – Roberta Popp

For those people in your life who know you are a Christian

- You should strive, and desire to maintain daily integrity that is above reproach
- They do not forget who you are (even though at times you might)
- They are always watching and most often with a response of, “So that how a Christian acts, huh?”

What do people see in you solely by your actions?

- “Be a bold witness for Jesus Christ every single day, and occasionally use words
- Who do they know you to be?
 - What does your countenance say when things are not going just the way you want them to?
 - What do your emotions say about your walk with Jesus as a child of God?
 - How do you impact the people around you?
 - Do you bring a sense of peace, confidence, safety, love?
 - Or is it one of anxiety, fear, anger, even sadness?
- Who you are is not about the words you say, but the way you live your life.

As we heard Roberta read, the queen came to the king and told him about Daniel

- She knew who Daniel was
- The time of God's silence in your life never means He has left you, doesn't love you, or has no plans for you!
- It is all in His timing!

Second point: Our faith must be maintained and be seen by others to be a true example of Jesus Christ

READ – Daniel 5:17-24 – Randy Foose

Two things are important in this segment of Scripture

1. Daniel's faithfulness to God
 - a. *Vs 17 - Then Daniel answered the king, “You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means.*
 - i. I believe this verse should be the guide for every Christian teacher, prophet, author, singer, or organization

- ii. This is a different time with a deeply entrenched monetary system
 - iii. But the love of money has corrupted many a ministry
 - 1. Katerina's experience in the elevator in Lancaster
 - 2. Focus on the money and book sales
 - b. Daniel maintained the right heart and his faithfulness to God even through the years of silence
- 2. Daniel's history lesson
 - a. Even though 2 ½ decades has passed, Daniel remembered the powerful works of God
 - b. God not only wants us to remain faithful in the times of silence, He wants us to grow in faith by remembering
 - c. Last week one of the 5 lessons from **Exodus 32** was not to forget who God is and what He has done for you
 - i. Daniel had not been used by God for many years yet he never forgot who God was and still is
 - 1. Belshazzar had everything, but no faith
 - 2. Daniel had comparatively very little, but never lost his faith
 - ii. Would we remain so faithful if something we thought we should have or a position we thought we deserved was suddenly changed or even taken?
 - d. We only live in the moment; God lives in the eternal

That history lesson brought with it the third aspect of faith

- The first – Have faith during the times of silence
- Second – Our faith must be seen by others regardless of the circumstances

Third point: We must hold to our faith in the times of prosperity

- Don't you mean hold to your faith in the deepest and darkest times?
- I believe that faith for most people is easier to walk in when it is neither too hard or too easy
- Keeping a level balance in our lives most often means our faith is level too
- But what about in the times of plenty or the times of stress or want?
 - How available, how steady, how resolute is our faith then?

Daniel made sure they all remembered that Nebuchadnezzar had the whole world at his feet, but he had it taken when it become all about him

Agur is the man credited with authoring the 30th chapter of **Proverbs**. He and his father Jakeh are only mentioned here, and we know nothing else about them

- Look at what he writes in **Prov 30:7-9**
- *Two things I ask of you, LORD; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.*

What is your faith like in the highs and lows of your life?

- The Apostle Paul writes of this very thing to the church in Philippi
- **Phil 4:10-13** - *I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*

When we begin to phase God out when it is all going well for us, we are rushing headlong into a lesson that God will teach every person

- *...those who walk in pride he is able to humble. (Dan 4:37)*
- Who said these words?
 - Nebuchadnezzar after he had learned a hard lesson
 - Belshazzar did not remember what had happened and was headed down the same path

READ – Daniel 5:25-31

What did Daniel say to Belshazzar?

- **Dan 5:23** - *... you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways.*

How did Belshazzar “set himself up” against God?

- Babylon was one of the most impressive cities of its day
- Nebuchadnezzar had built walls at least 75 feet high around the entire city
- They were wide enough for a 4-horse chariot to ride around the top
- The walls surrounded farmland that would allow them to grow their own food in endless supply because the Euphrates River, an endless supply of water, ran right through the city
- Belshazzar had so much faith in what he had that he called for the sacred pieces from Israel because why shouldn't he be drinking out of the goblets fit for a god?!
 - But his faith was tragically misplaced!
 - Their security and comfort was in the idols of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone (5:4)

This attitude, pride, and idolatry is what led to a disembodied hand appearing and writing four words that spelled judgment for Belshazzar and all of Babylon

- Those four words basically mean: numbered, numbered, weighed, divided
- **Dan 5:26-28** – (Daniel said) *Here is what these words mean:*
 - Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end.*
 - Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.*
 - Peres: (the singular tense of Parsin) Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.*

Pride blinds you to what is actually happening in your world:

- Belshazzar is having a feast with 1000 of his nobles (5:1)
 - Add the plus-ones, and you're probably looking at more like 2000
- Look at verses 30-31 - *That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two*
 - If Babylon was overthrown the night of the feast, where was the Medo-Persian army camped prior to the invasion?
 - Right outside the city walls
 - Who throws a party the night before an enemy invasion?
 - Someone who is so blinded by their pride and faith in the things of life that they have lost sight of the reality of their lives

So if the Hand of God were to appear at your house tonight, and begin to write on the wall, what would the words say?

- Would they be like the words of **Matt 25:21** - *Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!*
- Or would they be more like the parable told by Jesus of the rich young fool in **Luke 2:18-21**? The fool said - *This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' Then Jesus said, "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."*
- The thing is church, you determine the words that will be written
 - It begins by giving your life to Jesus Christ
 - It continues by totally surrendering your life to Him
 - And then it is about walking out your life every day in faith
 - Faith during the times of silence
 - Faith that is seen and evident to the people around you
 - And faith that is held to in the times of great want and in great abundance

So again, what would the hand-writing on the wall say if it was written about you?