

Growing Deeper Continued;

- Just like Daniel stood firmly for God even under fear of death, does God desire Christians to stand up for Him in this secular culture? Are you? (Cf. **Matt. 10:32-38**).
- It was God's intention and will for Daniel to be God's mouthpiece (**Hebrew: *Nabiy* – "spokesperson for God; an ambassador"**) in the harsh, pagan nation of Babylon. In what ways did God guide and equip Daniel, Hananiel, Mishael and Azariah to be ambassadors for Him to the pagan nation of Babylon? (**Dan. 1:17-20**). Does God guide & equip Christians today to be His ambassadors throughout the world? Read and Interpret: **John 14:16-17; John 14:26; John 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:11-13; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20; Eph. 4:11-12; 2 Tim. 3:16-17**.

Taking it Home:

- God does not want believers to defile themselves (compromise) in the current American secular culture today? Have you been compromising today because it's easier to blend in with the current culture then it is to stand firmly for God's Word?
- Daniel trusted that God was with Him always even during his captivity in a heathen nation like Babylon. Jesus said "He would never leave us or forsake us" in Hebrews 13:5. Do you trust that Jesus is with you daily, even if you're living in a pagan culture, job, home, environment?
- Are you standing firmly for Jesus in a culture that is hostile towards Jesus, or do you wilt because standing up for Jesus is risky and hard? Jesus loves you and will "never leave you or forsake you." Trust in Jesus Christ and watch Him work in you and through you mightily for His kingdom and glory!

For a restatement of Pastor Matthew's sermon points, visit pastormatthew.net and click on the "Write This Down" tab.

One Man Can Make A Difference

Notes:

For more information about Growth Groups, Growth Group homework, and a podcast of sermons with homework, visit www.bethelfc.com.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of January 2, 2011

Daniel 1:1-21

Quick Review: The powerful Babylonian Empire, ruled by King Nebuchadnezzar from 605 B.C. to 562 B.C., conquered the small nation of Judah in three stages; 605 B.C., expatriating Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah to Babylon; again in 597 B.C. and the last phase was in 586 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar completely destroyed Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. The vanquished nation of Judah and its finest, wisest, and brightest men were taken prisoner to Babylon for the purpose of serving King Nebuchadnezzar and for the affairs of the state of Babylon. While in captivity Daniel and his friends stood firmly for God in a pagan culture which placed them at risk of death. In a hostile environment they demonstrated their tremendous trust and dependency upon the God of Israel, Yahweh.

My Story

- Share a time from your personal history of being immersed into a very difficult, ungodly culture. Share the difficulties you endured while being immersed in the ungodly culture as well as any opportunities that were opened up for you to share your faith while in the hostile environment.

Growing Deeper

- Pastor Matthew mentioned some of the godly characteristics of Daniel, the young man chosen by God to minister in corrupt, evil, pagan Babylonian Empire. Name some of the characteristics.
- Pastor Matthew discussed the evil and harshness of the Babylonian empire. What were some of the harsh ways ancient pagan empires would treat foreign captives entering the king's court? What did Daniel's new Babylonian name, "Belteshazzar" mean?
- Daniel was forcefully taken captive by the Babylonian conquerors and forced to become a eunuch advisor for King Nebuchadnezzar. As a foreigner to Babylon, Daniel was always under threat of death if he did not conform to their pagan ways. What did Pastor Matthew say about the courage and trust in God by Daniel to stand up against the Babylonians by not defiling himself with the food and drinks that had been offered to the Babylonian gods? (**Dan. 1:8; Cf. Lev.11:44-47; Psalm 141:4**).
- Does God expect Christians to trust Him and NOT defile themselves in this current secular pagan culture? Read and interpret **1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Thess. 4:3-5; 1 Peter 1:15-16**.
- In Daniel 1:9, because of Daniel's firm, unwavering stand for God, God honors Daniel's trust and allegiance by sovereignly working favorably for him among the heathen leaders. READ **1 Samuel 2:30 & 2 Chronicles 16:9** and interpret. Is it always important for a Christian to stand up for God regardless of consequences for doing so?