AJ Wilk

Trinity Church – BIG Story

Daniel in Babylon

May 28, 2023

Intro: AJ Wilk Young Adult and Mobilization Pastor – my wife Michaela and I are so grateful for our church.

What a wonderful year going through the Big Story – is anyone else grateful for Mike and our whole team for committing to walk through the Bible. SO SO rich and good for us. Scripture is the north star in a world without direction.

**\*\*\*\*Pentecost. We need the Holy Spirit to do even the basic purposes of God’s Kingdom**

Recap of the Kingdom of Israel – God searches the earth for humble hearts. People who want to live surrendered to him that YAWHEW may be glorified through their lives.

Unfortunately, we see that the enemy leads kings of old, and us today through a path away from God and being in closeness with him.

**FALL OF KINGS Please add this picture Mike has been using on the screen\*\***

What happens when the whole nation takes the evil path of kings? What happens when all of Israel gains affluence and gets comfortable, has amnesia on how much they need God, and chooses arrogant autonomy?

What happens when Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel go throughout the land heartbroken --prophesying that God’s people aren’t living for God? They promised of a coming Messiah, they told God’s people to repent and get back in right relationship with the Lord. They spoke of dry bones coming to life and good plans – but the people didn’t listen.

EXILE.

Historically (bible in context of ancient-Mesopotamia society) this is one of the worst possible things that can happen to a nation during this time!

Romans 8:31 if God is for us who can be against us? Or Exodus God will fight for you, you need only to be still. Battle after battle won. Families healed, the land of milk and honey, flourishing life. Peace in hardship and pain.

The exile represents if God isn’t with us, anyone can be against us and win. You see God didn’t want his people killed, dragged out of their city, and brought into slavery in another land. HE SO BADLY didn’t want this that he sent prophets for years before calling them back to himself.

BUT 🡪

When we as God’s people don’t exercise the beautiful gift of the will he gave us to return our love to him… he lets us. It’s that awe inspiring and yet sometimes defeating reality we live with today. He even lets Israel choose something that would be to their current humiliation and demise. Because he wants his people to choose him, his ways, and life to the full. He will not force their hand.

They wanted a king, wanted wealth, wanted control of their society, they wanted it their way, and began to forget God’s nature and God’s ways.

Personal story on surrender???\*Pause here – we can actually only live one way. There is only one seat on the throne of your life. And if you don’t intentionally make the decision for the LORD to have control you will drift into another way. No choice is a choice.

And this choice led to exile.

CUE DANIEL

Daniel 1:1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim King of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

Daniel 1:3, 6 – Daniel and 3 other men were chosen to serve in the new king’s palace.

Welcome Daniel -- to the hardest season since Israel’s Egyptian captivity. (you could argue the desert was and God’s people did ☺) This is a VITAL time for someone to rise up as an example, model and prophet to call people back to what their purpose as God’s people is.

Let’s see the crucial transition in the text together. Israel needed a reminder of what their lives were meant for. They needed wake up call of purpose – the real way for living that God called them to!!! Unfortunately, and heartbreakingly it took exile, destruction, and defeat for them to wake up to YAWHEW’s way again. Here they are in exile needing someone to look to for how to follow God – and Daniel has a decision like the prophets, kings and people before him to choose God’s purpose, or go with all the people.

What will he decide? We’ll have to wait till chapter 6 ☺

I want to clarify God’s purposes to his people because the prophets said a LOT of things. And the Mosiac law has a lot of laws.

In summary there is a threefold call God put on his people that is fulfilled and made more by Jesus (the coming messiah as Mike talked about last week)

LOVE GOD – Deuteronomy 6:4-14

v. 14 God knows they will be tempted to forget.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR Leviticus 19:18

BE A BLESSING TO ALL NATIONS Leviticus 19:33-34

(Jesus fulfills the law and changes the definition of neighbor from the OT version that would have meant fellow Israelite, to all people which includes the be a blessing to all nations)

🡪

God’s people change locations in a horrible and drastic way. But God’s purposes for his people don’t -- Jeremiah the prophet directly before and during the exile describes this 29:11. The context is destruction and their worst fears coming true. Yet God promises to be with them – his plans and purposes cannot be stopped.

No matter where you are in life-- whether you caused it or someone did something to you to put you in that spot: God is for you, he is calling you back to himself, back to his ways and life abundant. He longs for you recognize his presence and love him because he loves you and is present with you.

Daniel sits here in the Big Story. God’s eyes searched for those who are humble and wanting to follow his ways. 2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the Lord search throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.

From the moment we are introduced to him in chapter 1, we see this kind of life from Daniel and the three. Training and eating different food, community of men faithful to God, not bowing down and being thrown in the fire, interpreting dreams with God’s wisdom and not their own…

DANIEL 6

is the picture and culmination this. Daniel is the kind of person 2 Chronicles depicts. And the person God calls us to today….??

Tell the Lion tamer story

LOVE GOD

v. 5 They could find nothing wrong outside of something concerning God

v. 10 hears about it and loves God.

LOVE NEIGHBOR

Ch. 1 and then 3 Daniel does this in community and for community

BE A BLESSING TO ALL NATIONS

v. 25-28

Daniel 6:26 I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.

Response 🡪 Is there anything pulling you away from God’s purpose in your life?

Jesus says in Matthew 22:38-40 and 28:18-20 – our purpose is Love God, neighbor and make disciples

Circumstances, places, and people in your life might change. Your primary purpose in life does not…. You can be a mom, dad…. Young adult, empty nester, business person or teacher. You can move to Michigan, Ohio, California or South Korea.

Fear, pressure from people, time, priorities,

Greed, sexual sin, seflishess apathy to pray and serve

Tell personal story of surrender.???

Daniel’s greatest works were trust and surrender/faithfulness/consecration. He knew who’s he was, not what he could do. Could he shut lions mouths? No, but he could pray, love God, love his neighbor and bless the nation of Babylon by being an example to almighty God.

Daniel is the same in v. 16 (thrown in the den) and v. 28 (prospering in the most influential country of the time)

**\*\*\*\*Pentecost. We need the Holy Spirit to live into every foundational purpose of God’s Kingdom**

You can’t try harder or work more. Daniel’s greatest works are your greatest works.

Is there anything pulling you away from God’s purpose in your life? Write it on the card and please check pastors only. But we want to pray with you!