



Introduction to “Holding Your Breath”

The sovereignty of God takes multiple forms. I said in a sermon a while back that he both has his hands on all creation, the entire universe and has his ears tuned to the prayers of his children. He is the only being who can do both. Likewise, the images of God in Daniel 5 show us how he can control the rulers and kingdoms of the world, the wars and their results, and simultaneously hold the very breath of an individual in his hands. This is the God we are serving. As you go into your discussion, think about the things God has already done in the book. Our story in chapter 5 takes place about 30 years after the early chapters. There are still people alive who should remember Daniel interpreting the king’s dream, and the three saved from the furnace. There should be a healthy fear of God in Babylon. But a new king brings new pride, new insecurities.

Consider honestly your day-to-day life, in view of what God has already done in your past.

Daniel Series Objectives:

Head: To understand the Book of Daniel.

Heart: To face hardship with courage.

Hands: To make choices that glorify God.

Part 5: Holding Your Breath

Text: Daniel 4

Big Idea: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

From the Sermon (add your own notes here):

1. **1.** God's glory is enjoyed by walking on the paths of his grace.
2. Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote...
3. There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods... because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve problems were found in this Daniel.
4. O King, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty...

Getting Started

Spend a few minutes reflecting on the past week together, what has God clearly done?

How do you identify where and when God is acting, as opposed to just “life” going normally? What characteristics of God help you notice when God is acting in your life?

Do you see any times recently when you have taken credit for something that was clearly God acting through you?

Digging Deeper

Recalling last week’s discussion: How is pride (ego, the flesh, self-conceit) connected to all other sin?

What do we learn from the first four verses about this new king and his view of God?

Describe a time when God dramatically got your attention when you were off track. How did you know it was him and what was the resulting course-correction?

Read v. 10-12. What is the power of reputation? How can God use your existing reputation in work, school, friend circles or elsewhere to open doors to point people to him?

Read v. 13-16. What do Belshazzar’s words tell you about his attitude both towards Daniel and his God?

In contrast, what does a healthy fear of God look like?

Where in the first five chapters have we seen Daniel, his friends, or even King Nebuchadnezzar show a healthy fear of God?

How is God's message for this king different from his message for Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 4? Why do you think it is?

How might God's action against Belshazzar have inspired a more healthy fear of God in Babylon going forward?

Live It Out

Pray: Read 5:22-23. Ask God to reveal in your heart any pride or any areas in which you have lacked proper respect for who he is and what he has done.

Confess: Are there any areas of life, any relationships, where you are filled with pride? Confess it and rest in God's grace through Christ.

Act: How can you use your gifts, talents, and successes to serve God? How does Jesus model how to handle greatness? How has he used his power to serve others?