

Small Group Guide



Key Takeaways

- Disordered worship -- placing created things above the Creator -- leads to death, dysfunction, and disorder in every area of life.
- Pride is not just arrogance; it is a blinding, sanity-stealing force that can cause us to hear truth and walk away completely unchanged.
- God's sovereignty is not proved by keeping evil people out of power. It is proved by His ability to accomplish His purposes, restrain evil, hold rulers accountable, and preserve his people even when evil people possess enormous power.
- The three words written on the wall -- Mene, Tekel, and Parsin -- are ultimately true of every human being. Our days are numbered, we fall short of God's standard, and everything we accumulate will one day be divided and gone.
- For those who trust in Jesus, the verdict is reversed. In Christ, our days are eternal, we are declared righteous and accepted, and we receive an inheritance as heirs of the kingdom of God.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever received a serious warning -- from a doctor, a friend, a family member -- and initially brushed it off? What made it hard to take it seriously in the moment?
2. Pastor Jeff described Belshazzar as someone who worshipped powerless objects while spitting in the face of God. What are some modern equivalents of the gods of gold, silver, wood, and stone that people -- including followers of Jesus -- are tempted to bow to?
3. The sermon states that when our worship is disordered, our lives become disordered and our humanity gets twisted, distorted, and corrupted. Where have you seen this pattern play out, either in your own life or in the broader culture?
4. Jeff admitted that Daniel's claim -- that God gave Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom despite his arrogance and violence -- was uncomfortable. How do you personally wrestle with the idea that God can use evil or unjust people to accomplish His purposes?

5. The sermon draws a distinction between God reporting something in Scripture and God endorsing it. How does that distinction help you read difficult passages in the Old Testament? Where does it still leave you with questions?
6. Jeff pointed to Habakkuk as a book that directly wrestles with how God can use evil people to accomplish his purposes. If your group has time, briefly discuss what you know about that book. What comfort or challenge does it offer?
7. Jeff asked: Have you ever admired a sermon without repenting and changing your ways? Have you ever had your toes stepped on by Scripture, a song, or worship, but just kept on walking in the same direction? Take a moment to reflect honestly. What makes it easy to appreciate a spiritual experience without actually being changed by it?
8. Belshazzar heard the interpretation of his doom and then rewarded Daniel and went back to the party. What does that tell us about the power of pride? Can you think of a time when pride kept you from responding to something God was clearly saying to you?
9. Pastor Jeff described three words that apply to every human being: our days are numbered, we fall short of God's standard, and everything we have will one day be divided and gone. Which of those three is most difficult for you to sit with personally, and why?
10. The fourth word, drawn from John 3:16, is that there is a way out through Jesus. In Christ, the verdict is reversed -- eternal life, righteousness, and an inheritance replace the judgment. How does that reality change the way you approach your daily life, your priorities, and your fear of death?