

Finding Courage Part 2

Finding Courage In a Culture of Compromise - The Life and Lessons of Daniel

We began a two part series last week called Finding Courage in a culture of compromise. Let's open in prayer before we begin part 2.

PRAYER - Open our hearts Holy Spirit, help us to interpret scripture properly and live in a culture that's continuing to decay - live like YOU lived JESUS! ...

Again I'm so glad your'e with us today. **At rock of grace we are leading people to follow Jesus together! We're not leading people to follow Jordan** - to follow Dave, Mark or Andrew. We are praying and believing that you put your faith ALL your faith in Jesus Christ, the son of God who came as a son of man to die in your place, give you life, abundant life! and an eternal hope. We're glad you're with us today!

Let's put up that [slide agin from last week so we see the timeline](#). Daniel was taken with all the Hebrew people as King N. Destroyed Jerusalem and it's temple and taken the Israelites into slavery. Like Pharaoh, he was afraid they would continue to grow in numbers and one day be too many to control.

The spirit of anti-christ is that of control and intimidation - fear - control through fear. We'll come back to that in a little bit.

- King Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem
- Took Hebrews back to Babylon as slaves
- Daniel was forced to serve in the palace along with his three friends. *They served for three years
- Daniel respectfully refused to eat King's food

- King N. had a nightmare *Arrogant King afraid of the dark, humbled by God. Prophetic Global Pwr
- Threatened to DISMEMBER every philosopher vs.5
- Daniel (went first) and requested to meet King vs.16

→ FINDING COURAGE IN A WORLD OF COMPROMISE

You see Daniel couldn't control what happened to him on the outside but he could control what happened to him on the inside.

There will always be things outside your control and inside your control.

You can control - to a degree - your health. Sure there are things that are genetic that impact your health outside your control - you didn't pick your genes. BUT you can control how much you exercise, what your diet is and knowing that, we can increase our ability to fight off infections, diseases and viruses. Everybody agrees with that? I hope so. It's been true for a few centuries now. =)

You can not control if someone kidnaps you - like Daniel - he was kidnapped and taken into a foreign land and **while he couldn't control WHERE he was, he could control WHO he was.**

You can't control if a co-worker accuses you of something ridiculous. You can control how you react. You can control whether you choose to love them despite their attitude.

You can't control the culture around you shifting its morals - seemingly every single month, maybe even every day now.

You can control what you believe about scripture and whether you choose to live by it.

Like Daniel, WE ARE TRAVELING THROUGH - FROM A DIFFERENT TIME ZONE

We think of salvation as being from a place— from hell or earth. But Paul speaks of salvation being not from a place but from a time— from this present evil age.

Even though this present age continues, Christians belong to the Age to Come.

We've live in a different time zone if you will.

3 Signs of a Culture in Chaos & Compromise

Govt Leaders without integrity

How many times have we seen our govt officials make the WRONG decisions usually from a place of political correctness - lacking morality - lacking truth.

Pastors without integrity

From Carl Lentz to Ravi Zacharias we have pastors who fall and usually there are warning signs that are ignored, abuse that's hidden and arrogance that's excused.

The New Sexual Revolution

The 70's brought us not only some great music but unfortunately some bad ideas.

People began to have sex outside of marriage on a much greater scale and the very idea of absolute truth began to fade. The 2000s brought more of this post Christian culture in America. Many pastors have used the word "post modern" to describe a world that doesn't recognize truth as absolute but rather relative to one's feelings and opinions. Sadly many ministers even entire denominations have taken this stance.

Because of that - because of the lack of truth coming from the pulpit and I would say also the lack of truth coming from MOM and DAD in the home, we now live an age when sexuality is undefined. In fact, you can now identify however you want.

What used to be called a mental illness is now called bravery and courage.

Remember the verse we read last week from Isaiah "Good will be called evil and evil will be called good."

Let's see if you see anything wrong with these two videos - videos made for CHILDREN.

[VIDEO 1 _ Culture Corrupt Kids](#)

[VIDEO 2 _ Culture Corrupt Kids](#)

Notice the deception in that first video.

The boy, Gonzo, had dressed like a woman and called himself “Gonzorella”

Notice the lie of innovation and bravery.

Every leader will tell you that it’s GOOD to be brave and innovate and do things NEW not just “do things the way they’ve always been done”

So notice how the writer of this scene has Gonzo saying “I didn’t want to just do things the way they’ve always been done. I want to be me.”

I’ve taught on this before - the need for both truth and love and how culture is calling “love” acceptance of lies. It’s calling “love” an approval of immoral behavior. The culture is saying that you show “love” when you tell someone it’s ok to be transgender, to dress like a man or woman, to identify however they want and to celebrate same sex marriage. You can’t watch those videos and not come to that conclusion.

WHY?

Why can’t Childrens show be about CHILDREN topics ONLY?

Because many who are the film creators and educational material creators are being bullied into this. They’re told “this is HUMAN RIGHTS”

In the face of this chaos - of boys saying they’re girls and educators and film creators affirming the lies. **We have to remember what is TIMELESS in changing times. When society is telling you to affirm an outright lie in order to appear moral, go back to the Bible and stay timeless!**

Notice secondly that Gonzo’s friends say “We’re so sorry. It was not nice of us to tell you what to wear to the ball. We love you any way you are.”

So here again, we find what I touched on last week...

As Christians, you will be bullied and shamed into approving same sex, bisexual behaviors being told you are not loving if you dont. When culture tells you what to do to appear loving, you need to know you’re being manipulated.

We said last week that one of satan’s tactics is to re-name you - to get you to question your identity.

You saw in those videos - those cartoons - that kids TODAY are being told NOW at a YOUNG AGE to question their identity - to question even their sexual identity and friend it doesn’t get any more personal than that.

Does this look like what happened to Daniel? I think so. Check this out.

The king renamed Daniel giving him a FEMALE name. Beltshazzar was a female name meaning “Lady, protect the King”

Daniel, the name God gave him, meant “God is my judge”

Hannah means Yahweh has been gracious” his named was changed to Shadrach mean means “I am fearful of God - indicating God is a tyrant to be avoided.

Mishael means “Who can compare to my God? No one!” Those syllables but together formed his NAME and his NAME meant WORSHIP “NO ONE IS LIKE MY GOD!” But what did King N. Rename him? Meshach, which means “I am despised and humiliated”. You see that was the lie of shame - again - a focus on SELF instead of a focus on GOD and his goodness.

Azariah - his name meant Yahweh has helped. His named was changed to Abednego which means “the servant of Nebo”. The shift is son of God to slave of man.

So what are we to do when the world tries to rename us and label us? Let’s first talk through the lens of parents.

So what are we to do?!

Parents,

- 1) You need to remember & recite what is timeless in changing times.
- 2) You need to take a stronger stance and reaffirm your commitment to teach your children the truth of God's Word.
- 3) In particular when it comes to birds and bees talk, don't wait till they're 13 or 16, have it a little earlier than you thought and explain that GOD made man and woman for each other and that we glorify God when remain in that type of relationship and not go outside of it.

Kids, if you're listening to me today and you are struggling with your identity sexually, understand that my heart breaks for you. I don't want you to feel shame, I want you to feel love - only love coming from heart and an invitation to come to Jesus Christ and let HIM define you for HE is your Maker and HE has not made a mistake!
He has made you for

Parents, I also want you to know that in every generation there have been new challenges for young people. God is more than able to give your kids the wisdom and strength they need to survive this culture and it's immoral demands. You don't need to worry or stress that they won't make. You need to teach them the truth, pray for them and simply trust God that GOD will help them in their time of need.

Where do you find the courage to push past these fears and move forward in faith?

Finding courage in a culture of compromise comes from a commitment to prayer.

What do we do in the midst of trials?

1 Peter 1:3-8

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith

—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

***The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2016). (1 Pe 1:3–9). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.**

You and I must remember and do so when we gather on Sundays together as Christians and when you gather around the table with your kids at home and read the Bible together...

—-THE MESSAGE IN A MINUTE - TIM - USE THIS FOR VIDEO CLIP TO SEND ME— —

We must remember and recite what is timeless in a culture that continues to change it's values. We have to remember what is timeless in changing times.

Remember what we said last week **“We find courage to keep our identity in a culture of compromise only through daily prayer and Bible study.”**

Last week, we read from James that a double-minded man can expect NOTHING from the Lord. You see, with each new season and cultural shift, you will have NEW challenges and new tensions. You will have new opportunities to go to the Lord and ask Him for wisdom.

Instead of hiding from the culture we need to influence it.

One of the things I love about Daniel is that he didn't hide from culture, he influenced it.

As Christians we tend to do one of two things and both are wrong.

- 1) We hide in fear and simply compromise - losing our values and therefore losing our identity.
- 2) We rise up in rebellion and anger and we stand on truth WITHOUT love.

INLUENCE

What then does God want? God wants us to stand on truth and walk in love. You don't have to compromise your convictions in order to be loving. You can speak the truth in love and walk in obedience to the Word of God and the ways of Jesus.

When you know your identity as a CHILD of GOD, you won't shift your values and beliefs based on the ever-changing whims of culture. You will stand firm like Daniel did in the face of threats.

What if instead of hiding from culture, you realized that GOD has placed you in this day and age and that you are in your career and students, you are in your school, for such a time as this?! You may feel like I'm in the wrong place at the wrong time but maybe, God has you in the right place at the right time, facing an immoral culture so YOU can realize that YOU are the salt of the earth. YOU are the light of the world. YOU are a city on a hill!

John 17:15-16

Jesus was praying to the Father and said **“My prayer is not that you take them out of this world but that You protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world even as I am not of it.”**

If you know me well or have made Rock of Grace your home church you know that I preach out of this passage - John 15-17 more than any other passage. Why? Because in it, you'll find SO MUCH TRUTH for your life! JESUS prays to the father that you are not REMOVED from culture but that you influence it and change it.

I love what Pastor Chris Hodges says in commenting on this story of Daniel.

He says that Babylon is more of a mentality than a locality.

Yes it was a location. In fact, it's modern day Iraq. It was a land where they chose to elevate themselves. **Babylon is a mentality that needs broken in all of us; it's a me-first mindset.**

He says that Satan's biggest lie (in Genesis) is what “You can't trust God” He questions God and elevates people. Satan's lie is this “I want YOU to have what YOU want.” Satan wants you to question God's goodness. Satan says “I want YOU to look important, to look loving to look cool, to look respected...” Jesus EVEN JESUS deflects all praise to the FATHER (WOW)

So in Babel, they built a tower to reach to the heavens. Why? so “that we can make a name for ourselves” Go to Genesis to read more about it.

The word “Babel” literally means confusion.

Are we living in a state of confusion - Babel - right now? YES!

When you don't follow God's way, I promise you that you will live in chaos in confusion.

Many people who live in that confusion and chaos with changing morals and shifting goal-posts simply haven't put their faith in an unchanging God.

I've got to tell you that walking in obedience to the assignments of heaven on your life will come with a price tag. Ask any man of God or woman of God who has contended for their faith and lived by their convictions. Has there been opposition? YES!

But when that opposition comes, remember that you serve a higher authority and that JESUS will have the final say. You may be fired for speaking the truth in love. For not promoting or celebrating Pride Month, you may be cancelled. They may go through your social media and dig up things that you believe and then use those beliefs against you and accuse you of hate speech. **They may threaten you, fire you or put you in the fire but it is then that you have to remember that there's a FOURTH MAN in the fire with you!** JESUS said that He will never leave you - especially in your times of suffering and suffering will come according to the word of God - JESUS is WITH YOU!

JESUS IS KING AND LORD OF ALL - SUPREME OVER EVERY RULER

Jesus wants you to impact culture - to SET culture - by following Him and living by His unchanging standards.

Dan was a guy with dreams for his future just like you and me. Dan had faults just like you and me. Dan faced a harsh reality though unlike you and I will ever experience. Can you imagine being abducted, removed from everything you know to be normal?

Daniel had this amazing perspective - maybe the most mature perspective there is. He was able to zoom out of his pain and see the will of God and the goodness of God in the midst of his pain.

In the book of Daniel, we see a reoccurring theme of God's sovereignty best summarized in **Daniel 2:20 - 23.**

“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. ²¹ He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; ²² he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. ²³ To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king's matter.”

The whole point of the book of Daniel is to teach us that God is supreme over all rulers and kings and authority. One day EVERY KNEE will BOW to HIM.

Finding courage in a culture of compromise comes only through prayer; in prayer you're reminded of your identity as a child of God. Before you're anything else, you're His child!

DANIEL FOUND COURAGE TO KEEP HIS IDENTITY BY DAILY TALKING TO GOD.

Dan's character was tested on more than one occasion and yours will be too. Somehow Dan, held on. He didn't give in to what was "culturally relevant" or "cool" nor did he compromise his integrity. When given the chance, he knew what he believed and stood by it. Do you know what you believe and why you believe it?

Dr Michael Brown often says "If you don't know what you would die for then you don't know why you're living." Would you risk your life for your confession of knowing Jesus Christ? Many around the world do this every single day. Here in America, our faith is tested but not to the extent that it is in some places of the world where faith in Christ immediately puts you in a hostile environment.

But that day is getting closer and closer and I'm preaching this message to you now, so you're ready for that persecution then.

Isn't it amazing that Daniel was a young man when he was taken into captivity and yet he served three kings who were ruthless and prideful. Daniel's integrity stood in stark contrast to the leaders he served. Despite their religious differences, each king could sense the anointing of God's Spirit upon Daniel. Isn't it amazing that even "the world" could sense "the spirit of wisdom" within him!

In Daniel, chapters five and six, we learn that King Darius was 62 years old when he was crowned king. In just a few short sentences we hear about the the fall of the Babylonian empire and the start of the Medo-Persian empire. The date was the sixteenth of the month Tishri, which most scholars agree would have been October 12, 539 b.c.

We learn from the life and story of Daniel that kings come and go but the Kingdom of God reigns supreme.

When they put Daniel in the lion's den, GOD SHUT THE MOUTHS of the lions!
Hungry lions - who hadn't eaten for days. They only eat when a criminal, a rebel is thrown into their den!
Yet GOD did a miracle!

I wonder how many Christians never see a miracle because they're never in a lions den because they're never standing up for truth.

You want to see a miracle? You first got to have a problem. Sometimes problems come when you have a conviction. When you STAND for truth. Remember though, you can stand in truth and walk in love.

The book of Revelation is quite clear in stating what God things about this Babylon mentality and this Babylon spirit.

It's the spirit of a one-world-government.

I encourage you to read Revelation 17 and 18 this week but I'll point out just a couple verses here.

Rev 17:5

The name written on her forehead was a mystery: Babylon the great. The mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth.”

Isaiah 47:8-10 Now then listen you lover of pleasure (all about me) lounging in your security, saying to yourself “I am, there is none besides me. I will never be a widow or suffer the loss of children”

You take God out of your life, see what happens.

He goes on “Your wisdom” mislead you when you say “I am and there is none besides me.”

Babylon’s motto is “I am there is none besides me.”

I remember preaching to the teens about 10 years ago a message I called Exposing The Enemy and I remember telling them “Satan’s goal is to get you to live for yourself and in doing so, you’re living for him!”

Babylon says I don’t need God.

And this is where America is right now.

Maybe this is where YOU are in life right now. Maybe you’ve rejected God and His Son Jesus Christ. Maybe you’ve said “I don’t need God. I am fine on my own.”

Friend no, you’re not. You NEED God. You NEED JESUS.

Satan wants you to just compromise and if it feels good do it. He wants you to be narcissistic and prioritize your life around what you think is best for you - what you want.

The culture around you will continue to pressure you to compromise. You can’t give in. You can’t back down. You must find the courage you need from prayer - your alone time with God, just like Daniel did.

One of the things that drove Jesus crazy was people judging each other based on something on the outside.

Woman at the well... “Some say *this* temple is the only one we can worship from and others say that is the only righteous temple...”

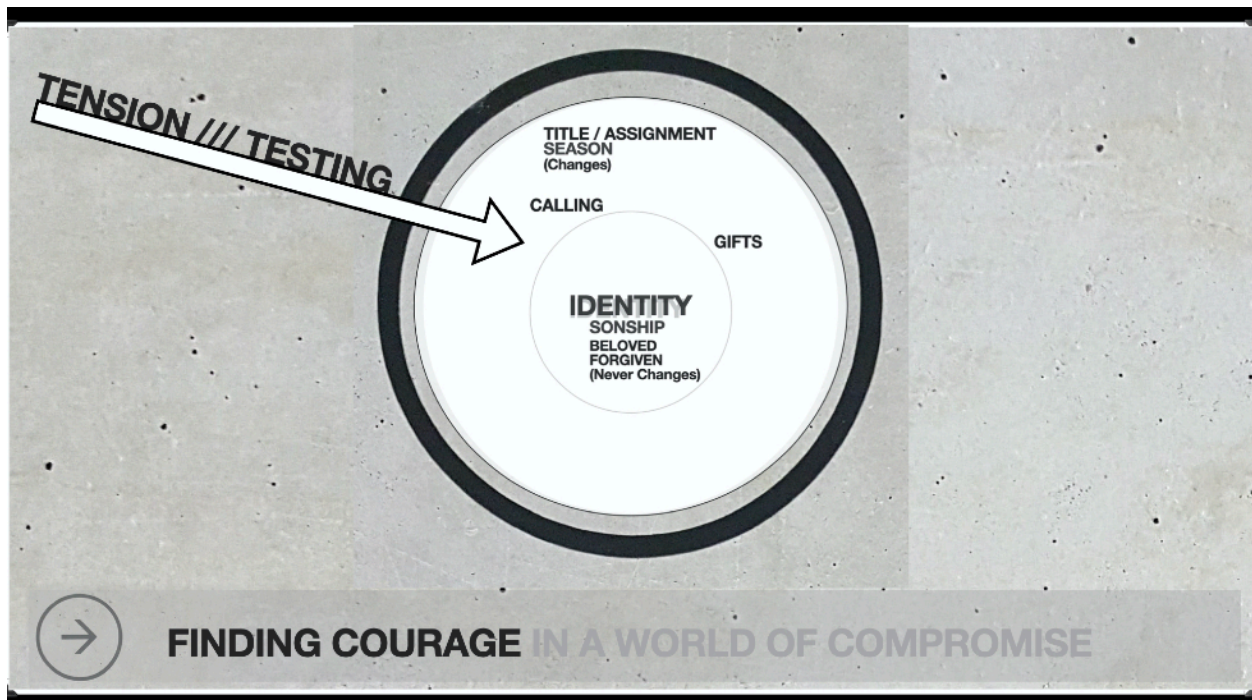
Pharisees... “You can’t go near that leper or touch him! It’s against the law!” Jesus walks up and touches him.

Pharisees... You can’t move your mat on the sabbath!” Jesus “You are healed. Pick up your mat and leave!”

Pharisees... “It’s against the law to eat that grain on the sabbath.” Jesus “David ate the bread of presence when the priest offered it to him - him and his men...” then claims “I am LORD of the sabbath”

There is a lordship of love, a kingdom law, that will always supersede a man-made law. IF you know your IDENTITY, you’ll be able to discern the difference.

What we do often when we’re faced with a faith crisis or a pressure from our culture to do a certain thing or celebrate a certain behavior that the Bible condemns, we do believe one of two things



1 - We'll have to stand firm and be a jerk. I'll go to heaven and they'll go to hell. This approach lacks love and it lacks compassion.

2 - The other mistake is when Christians decide "Well, to influence culture we need to compromise some of the things we believe. We need some more gray in this gray area."

What God wants of you and me when we face cultural demands that go against God's Word is not that you compromise your values or that you isolate and hide from culture. He wants you to stand firm on your convictions and walk in love. He wants you to be the light of the world, not hide the light or diminish the light.

Again, we've got to be **IN NOT OF THE WORLD**

Paul said I become all things to all people in order that I might win some.

He wasn't admitting that he was compromising his values. Rather, he was saying we wasn't going to HIDE from culture. INSTEAD he was going to influence it.

He was going to BE the light that Jesus talked about.

He was unwilling to compromise that. He succeeded because he was faithful. God showed up because Daniel was faithful.

In his most memorable act, Daniel succeeded in being faithful when he refused to bow down to worship an idol. He was successful, not in the eyes of man but in the eyes of God. That is an example we can all aim to follow! He was willing to be the leader and others followed.

Ironically, God granted Daniel favor when he choose to endure persecution and peer pressure and the king himself had a change of heart!

Daniel impacted the lives of at least two world leaders, King Nebuchadnezzar and King Darius! King Darius actually decreed that everyone worship the God of Daniel!

Daniel's integrity changed the moral of government. I want to say that again in case you missed it. Daniel's integrity changed the morals of those leading in government! Here's my question: What will your integrity and faithfulness do for your city and your nation? Imagine the impact you can make on your city and your nation when you refuse to bow down to worthless idols, when you refuse to compromise your character in order to be accepted by the crowd, when you commit to serving Jesus with passion and humility. When you take the lead in that, people will follow!

Daniel knew that before he was a prophet, he was a son. Before he was appointed to the third highest position in the land (Daniel 5:29) before being taken into Babylon, he was a son of Jehovah, a son of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He knew his Jewish roots. He knew His God personally. He knew who he was apart from fame or failure, apart from popular vote or prison. He knew he was a son of God. He was rooted in son-ship. His identity was son-ship.

Do your roots go deep? Do you know, deep in your gut, that before you are a leader, a dad, a mom, an employee, a business owner, a manager... **you are a son or daughter of God?** Are you secure in that? If so, you'll lead well, people will enjoy following you, God will honor your humility and you will endure!

The first goal of your life is to know God personally. You must aim to know Jesus as your brother and Savior, God as your Father and the Holy Spirit as your Comforter. Those who don't know the Lord personally are building their house, their life, on the sand. Those who build their life on the foundation of Christ are those who obey the words of Jesus and aim to know and obey Him above all else.

Holy Spirit thank you for being the voice of God on the earth. Thank You for leading us into all truth, reminding us of what Jesus said and how Jesus lived. Father, thank You that YOU lead us not into temptation, but instead, You DELIVER us from evil. For YOURS is the KINGDOM and the GLORY and THE POWER forever, AMEN.

GUARD YOUR HEART

Guard your heart from becoming callous or crude. You can stand on truth and still walk in love. Daniel did and you can too.

Persecution will come. Accusations will come. Attacks will come—simply because you're a Christian. **When attacks come, and they will, don't let the sin against you become the sin inside you.**

I want to close with a warning

The Babylon mentality can come into any of our lives!

Daniel 4:4

I, King N. Was at home in my palace, contended and prosperous ...
He has a dream about a tree being cut down to the stump.

Daniel is called again.

Daniel had the COURAGE to confront King N. Saying "YOU are the tree. You will be driving away from people and eat like wild animals... 7 years will happen until you acknowledge that GOD, the MOST HIGH is sovereign over you.

He even says "that God leaves the stump so that your kingdom will be restored when you acknowledge that Heaven rules" 25-26

He ignored the prophecy and warning.

Remember BABYLON means confusion and King N went into INSANITY, total confusion, LOST his mind.

He was restored to sanity.

There's so much confusion and chaos in the world, especially in America. Right is wrong and wrong is right and CONFUSION - BABYLON.

After God humbled King N. He finally admitted his need for God.

"Then I praised the most high! His dominion endures!" King N got saved!

"I was restored to my throne and even greater than before." 34-37

"I will praise and exalt and glorify the king of Heaven ... all HIS ways are right. All who walk in pride HE is able to humble."

In a pagan culture, you and I need to find the courage to face the changing culture by going to prayer!

We need to commit to exalting God - out loud, in culture. I said two months ago "Your faith is always personal and never private" Your faith must be public! LOUD. Exalt and praise His name!

Understand that EVERYTHING in your life is a gift of grace!

Me standing here today is an obvious sign of God's grace. I'm not what you need. JESUS IS. This kind of thinking gives you the COURAGE to withstand trials and problems and accusations.

Look at this image again. Because I KNOW my identity as a child of God, it doesn't matter what anyone says to me or accuses me of. "All you have is from God!" 1 Cor. 4:7 I will admit that all that's good in my life is FROM GOD.



ALTAR CALL - RESPONSE

Two things before you go.

1) **There's a life group discussion guide** given to our life group leaders. It's online and printed in the foyer. Discuss today's message with your church family.

2) **Next week there is NO in-person services.** Dave Brock our Executive Pastor and Andrew and myself, we prepared a great message on the power and importance of SABBATH. That's online - on YouTube with of course a link on our Facebook Pages. Please tune in, then apply it. If you're married, talk it over with your spouse.

Life Group Leader Discussion Guide

- Pastor Jordan said that we can be IN, NOT OF the world. How do you all find this difficult at times?
- What happens when we take the time to pray every single day? We get the heart of God and the mind of Christ and we're reminded of our identity. Why do you think Pastor Jordan said that "PRAYER is the key to finding courage in a culture of compromise"?
- Social Media can be an easy way to elevate ourselves and display pride. How can we change that? How we avoid that problem and instead promote JESUS as King - avoiding a me-first mentality ONLINE?
- It's been said "Humility is not thinking less of yourself. It's thinking of yourself less." Using that definition, how have you shown humility in your life or how can we begin to show more humility and move away from a Babylon me-first mentality? How can we grow in this area?
- Think about the accomplishments of your life. Discuss the ways in which GOD has provided for your success. Out loud, deflect the praise from YOU and give it to the Lord in your group. How has GOD blessed you and provided for you? How has GOD helped your marriage and relationships?
- Before we go, let's think about how our relationships can reflect a Babylon mentality or a Christ-like mentality. How can we speak to set a Christ-glorifying culture as opposed to a self-glorifying one?
- One of the signs of a Babylon mentality is someone who is quick to criticize elders instead of honor them. A Babylon me-first spirit will continually elevate themselves by demeaning others, in particular their leaders or pastors. A humble spirit will show honor and give thanks to those who've gone before them to make their salvation a reality.