

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**) The following ice breaker is just a starter for your group. The message comes after the second bar. Please enjoy!)

CROWD BREAKER: Think of something that happened this week that made you smile or surprised you. Share Did anyone receive Richie's word of knowledge at the end of the service? —The scribe

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to fearlessly proclaim the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions raised by Pastor Mark's message from this Sunday. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.**

Brigitte's House of Hope

Help neighbors, family members to escape exploitation. Fifty to seventy-five referrals in NH. How can we help? **What do you know of this ministry? What do you know of the dangers? How important in this day is this work? Looking ahead. Your first thoughts:**

- 1. How do you navigate as a person of faith in a culture that is contrary to the requirements of your faith?**
- 2. How do you lose your freedom? How do you negotiate when your faith is being challenged? (Resist? Fight?)**
- 3. How do you find God's favor in your life? How do you lose your freedoms in the first place?**

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. **2**And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god. **What does it mean "The Lord gave..."? Why would He do that?**

3Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, **4**young men in whom *there was* no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who *had* ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. **5**And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of *that time* they might serve before the king. **What wisdom is shown in this? Why would Nebuchadnezzar do this? What benefits would he reap?**

6Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. **7**To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel *the name* Beltshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego. **Have you ever heard of Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah? Have you ever heard of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? Why are these names more famous? Why were the names changed?** I attached Wikipedia's explanation at the end of the notes.

8But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore, he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. **Foreshadowing: Why is this resolution so important for the rest of the book?** **9**Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs. **What was the result of this resolution? Do you remember another prisoner who had favor in prison? How did that work?** (Look for a moment at Joseph. At Paul and Silas in Philippi.)

10And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and drink. For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who *are* your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king."

11So Daniel said to **12**the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, **12**"Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. **13**Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, *so* deal with your servants." **14**So he consented with them in this matter and tested them ten days. **Talk about the risks of just eating vegetables and only drinking water? How does the request reflect faith? Note: This is the first of Daniel's fasts in this book. Why did he make this choice? What did he fear in the King's foods?**

15 And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies. **Describe why this is a miracle? How would this encourage Daniel and the three? How was this conducive to encouraging each other in the faith? Why is that important?** 16 Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink and gave them vegetables.

17 As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. **How did their education go above and beyond what the others were being taught? Why is it significant that they were given skill "in all literature?" Was it Jewish literature? Why is it often overlooked that they learned everything in the society in which they lived? Where does the knowledge and understanding in visions and dreams come from? How will this become important for Daniel? How important might it become for the church in the days ahead?**

18 Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore, they served before the king. 20 And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers who *were* in all his realm. 21 Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus. **Speak of the competition Daniel and the others faced. How striking is it that these children of Israel, though very young, excelled? What does this show concerning Nebuchadnezzar as a human being, and an observant one? What does this show concerning God's desire to grant wisdom even to those who are not Jewish? Does this surprise you?**

Mark says, "Freedoms get taken when you start turning your heart from God as King Jehoiakim did and receive a heart of rebellion." (**Look again at Romans 1...why did God give people over to a depraved mind? How does this compare?**) "Worldly saints do not capture the world, but instead they become the world's captives. When we start living for the world, the world enslaves us. We say, 'The World has more to offer us than God does.'" **What does this suggest?**

How do you negotiate when our faith is challenged? What did Daniel do? "Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food." Mark asks, "What have you resolved to keep yourself undefiled from the world? **Answer this. What in the world defiles a person? What lines have you drawn? How significant is it that Daniel was a young man, beginning his education...having no mentor?**

Mark says, "We have to resolve what we're not going to do. Next, we have to negotiate instead of holding up picket signs." **Why is that important? How do we stay in the world and not be defiled by the world?** Mark points out, "Daniel was

looking for agreement and found it.” ***How important is that? How significant is it that the children of Israel grew and were in better health?***

Mark points out, “The best of the world does not compare to the best of God.” ***How does this work? How did God supersede what Babylon had offered?***

How do you win God’s favor? Mark says, “When we reject the things of the world and choose the things of God before the things of the world, God’s favor is received in our life.” Daniel says, ‘Ten times greater...’. ***So, how is God’s favor greater?***

Mark says, “Be resolved in what you will seek and what you will not partake of.” What do you is the best of God? What do you look for? What are the limits?

What is your biggest takeaway? Take time to pray for one another. Be blessed.

Follow the Truth wherever He leads you. He has a Name: Jesus. What is your next step? –the scribe

On Shadrach, Mechach and Abednego: The Hebrew names of the three youths were Hananiah (חַנְּנְיָהּ *Hānanyāh*), "Yah is gracious", Mishael (מִישַׁאֵל *Mišā'él*), "Who is what Ei is?" and Azariah (אַזַּרְיָהּ *Āzaryāh*), "Yah has helped", but by the king's decree they were assigned Chaldean names, so that Hananiah became Shadrach (שַׁדְרָךְ *Šadrak*), Mishael became Meshach (מֵשַׁךְ *Mēšaḵ*) and Azariah became Abednego (אַבְדֻנֶגּוֹ *Ābēd-Nəgō*).^[15]

The Chaldean names are related to the Hebrew ones, with the names Ei and Yah replaced by Babylonian theonyms: *Šadrak* may reflect *Šudur Aku* "Command of Aku (the moon god)",^[16] *Mēšaḵ* is probably a variation of *Mi-ša-aku*, meaning "Who is as Aku is?", and *Abednego* is either "Slave of the god Nebo/Nabu" or a variation of *Abednergal*, "Slave of the god Nergal." [Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego - Wikipedia](#)