God, the Revealer of Secrets

Daniel 2:24-30

 This morning we are continuing our study through the book of Daniel. We are in chapter 2 and have just finished looking at the song of Daniel that he sang to God after having the king’s dream revealed and interpreted for him. Daniel was a very humble man and he continually gives God all of the praise and honor for revealing secrets to man. Today we will be looking specifically at verses 24-30 of chapter 2. In this passage Daniel will ask for permission to speak to the king so that he may share with the king what God had revealed to him. Please refer to the bulletin as we read this passage together:

**24 Thereupon, Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to kill the wise men of Babylon; he went and said this to him: “Do not kill the wise men of Babylon! Take me into the king’s presence, and I will declare the interpretation to the king.” 25 Then Arioch hurriedly brought Daniel into the king’s presence and spoke to him as follows: “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can make the interpretation known to the king!” 26 The king said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?” 27 Daniel answered before the king and said, “As for the secret about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, sorcerers, soothsayer priests, nor diviners are able to declare it to the king. 28 However, there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed. 29 As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will take place. 30 But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living person, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind.**

As we begin studying this passage we find Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, in the room with Daniel and his friends. After Daniel tells Arioch not to kill the men and asks for an audience with the king, Arioch wastes no time in allowing Daniel to speak with the king. The reason for Arioch being so hasty is because the order of the king to kill the wise men was a firm order meaning that if it was not followed then Arioch himself would be killed. We can see the motivation behind what Arioch is doing, but on the other side of the issue we find Daniel. In this situation it turns out that Daniel is operating as an intercessor for the other wise men in the kingdom. Rather than use this as an opportunity to destroy his enemies, Daniel asks for their lives to be spared and then he puts himself into a dangerous situation by requesting to go directly into the king’s presence. What was Daniel willing to do such a thing for those who despised him and would eventually try to murder him? He did this because of his confidence in God who had made the dream known to him as well as the interpretation.

 This verse provides us with our first application. When we are surrounded with others who mean us harm and want to destroy us, we need to follow the example of Daniel which was to show them mercy, not hate them. This was the same attitude Jesus showed toward those who were murdering Him on the cross. Rather than ask God to smite them down or destroy them Jesus asked God to forgive them for their sin. This act of love is so countercultural and is very hard for us who have minds that have been flawed by sin. Not only did Jesus show such love and mercy in His actions, but He also taught others to do the same. In **Matthew 5:45**, when He was teaching about forgiveness, Jesus says to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. He says to do this **“so that you may prove yourselves to be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the righteous and the unrighteous.”** Every day that we have the privilege of living in the world God has created He shows grace to all, even those who do nothing but despise Him, blaspheme His name and lead others astray desiring to worship Him. Despite all of the evil that takes place in this world, God still allows those who practice evil to experience the beauty of His creation. Jesus was telling the people that in order for them to be known as followers of God, they need to show mercy to others just like God does.

 As we continue to verse 25 Arioch takes Daniel before the king. He does this very quickly so that his order to kill the wise men might be rescinded. When reading this verse carefully we see that Arioch takes this opportunity to elevate himself in the eyes of the king. He tells the king “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can make the interpretation known to the king.” He makes it sound like he searched the kingdom with a fine-tooth comb searching for someone who could do what the king wanted. That was not the case at all. Arioch only knew about Daniel because Daniel had asked for a favor and time to get an answer for the king. Knowing that the king was so angry and wanted an answer made Arioch want to make the most out of this situation. There is also another advantage to Arioch telling that to the king. If things did not work out and Daniel failed, then the wrath of the king would be taken out on Daniel, not all of the other wise men.

 In verse 26 the king asks Daniel for verification if he is really able to explain the dream and provide an interpretation. This question for clarification is asked because the king was most likely shocked that such a young man would have the ability to do this after all of the older and more experienced wise men failed to do so. He was also surprised because the one telling him he could do it was an exile from Judah. It is understandably surprising to the king that a young man like this could perform the deed, but this should not be as surprising to those who know the God of Israel.

This leads us to our second application in today’s message. There are many times in the history of the Israelite nation when God used someone who was unknown, small, uneducated or an outcast and was able to work through them to accomplish His purpose. The Apostle Paul addresses this point in his first letter to the Corinthian church. In chapter 1 verses 27-28 he writes these words **“but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the insignificant things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are..”** When God worked through Daniel in this situation, He showed the foolishness of the wise men of Babylon and also showed His superiority over all the wisdom of man. The king may have been shocked by the wisdom of Daniel, but what he will come to find out is that through the wisdom and grace of God Daniel was able to do this amazing thing. No matter who you are, where you live, what family you are from or how much education you have, when you place your faith in God and are willing to be used for His glory, He can use you to make an impact in the lives of others.

 The next comment that Daniel makes to the king in verse 27 shows the heart of the prophet and also explains why God favored Daniel in his service to the king. Daniel tells the king that the ability to explain and interpret dreams is a skill that no man has the ability to carry out. By making this statement to the king Daniel also expresses his reason for wanting to spare all of the other wise men from the order of the king. They should not be killed by the king for being unable to perform a deed that they do not have the ability to perform in the first place. The king is holding these other men to a standard that they are unable to live up to.

 We learn from King Nebuchadnezzar our third application from the passage. We learn that we should never put our faith in anything in this world other than God alone. When we place anything else above the Lord and try to have that thing bring us satisfaction or provide us with happiness, we will always find that those things leave us empty craving for more. This is known as idolatry, which is putting anything else in this world in the place of God. In preparation for today’s message, I was reviewing part of a book that addresses the danger of idolatry. While reading I came across an argument being made by the author that I find to be very powerful. The title of the book is *Worship Matters* written by Bob Kauflin. Regarding idolatry this is what the author has written

**Throughout the Scripture, idolatry is the greatest snare the people of God encounter. God condemns idolatry repeatedly in his Word. He hates it when we pursue, serve, or are emotionally drawn to other gods, which are not really gods at all. Idols enslave us and put us to shame (Isaiah 45:16; Psalm 106:36). Idols are powerless to help us and end up making us into their image (Psalm 115:8).**

**When some of us hear the word idolatry, we picture primitive tribesman bowing down to statues of wood, metal or stone. . . But idol worship is a daily ritual in America. too. Only it’s more subtle and therefore more dangerous. Idols are all around us. Can you spot them? They come in different forms. Material comforts. Financial security. Sensual pleasures. . . Things like reputation, power, and control.**

**As Christians we’re sometimes like the people described in 2 Kings 17:33: “they feared the Lord but also served other gods.” We fear the Lord externally, doing all the right things on Sunday morning–singing, strumming a guitar, lifting our hands–yet actively serve false gods throughout the week. We profess to love the true God but actually love false idols. It’s a condition that God, in his mercy, is committed to changing (p. 21,22).**

In this passage of Scripture, we are studying today, the king of Babylon allowed the wisdom of man to become his idol. He was so reliant on the wisdom of his servants that he was blinded by it. If we wish to experience the full peace of God in our lives, we must become totally reliant on God alone and not place our trust in anything else. Daniel had this attitude, which allowed God to use him to make the dream known to the king.

 Daniel continues in his statement making known to the king that it is God who makes these secrets known to man and that the only way to know these things is to trust in God alone. What this allows Daniel to do is provide hope for the king. The king had become so frustrated with the failures of his wise men that he lost all hope in knowing what the dream meant. Daniel gives the king a renewed hope in not only knowing that his dream could be interpreted, but also that God was using this dream to reveal to him the secrets of the future.

God is able to provide these details to the king because only God knows what the future holds. This is our fourth application today. We should never trust in any other source of knowledge but God because only God knows what will happen in the future. Scripture teaches that our God not only knows the future, but He knows everything that has happened or will ever happen in the entirety of human history. The Apostle Paul reminds his readers from the church in Rome of this truth in his epistle to them. In chapter 16 verses 25-27 he writes these words **“Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now has been disclosed, and through the Scriptures of the prophets, in accordance with the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.”** God has made the secrets of the past known through both the prophets and Jesus Christ. We have all of the information provided for us in Scripture that we need to live a life honoring to God. We have all we need and we can thank God for His sharing that with us.

As we approach our final verse today, we once again see the humility of Daniel by him sharing that the king will be told this truth not because Daniel is someone special, but because God is wanting to share the secret of the future with the king. Our final application today is that we need to show appreciation to God because He shares the truth with those whom He loves even though He is not required to do so. God is revealing the future to the king so that his mind can be calmed. In sharing this with the king God is allowing for the lives of the wise men to be saved and also allowing for Daniel and his friends to have a special favor with the king **(Acts 27:22-25).** The men with Paul on the ship were saved and through that they were able to hear the good news of the gospel. God is so gracious because He shares these things with His creation so that we will know Him better and understand the plans He has for us.

 In conclusion, our God is the revealer of secrets. There are so many things that we will never be able to understand in our limited capacity while living on this earth. Thankfully we serve a God who loves us enough that He has given us His Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to provide us with the secrets we need to know. Just like Daniel, if we pray and seek the truth from Him God will reveal His will to us and use us to carry out His work on this earth. When He calls on us may we be willing to do the work He has prepared for us. Amen.