


**THIS IS WHAT THE LORD SAYS**
**WEEK FOUR**

## Bible Reading

**Daniel 4:19-27**

“Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, 'Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you.' Belteshazzar answered, 'My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries! The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth, with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the wild animals, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds— Your Majesty, you are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the world. Your Majesty saw a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven and saying, "Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live with the wild animals, until seven times pass by for him." This is the interpretation, Your Majesty, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes. The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. Therefore, Your Majesty, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.”

**Philippians 2:3-8**
"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!"

**James 4:6**
"But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: 'God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

## Observation questions

1. In Daniel 4:19–27, what details in Daniel's reaction and choice of words show concern for Nebuchadnezzar, even while he delivers a serious warning?
2. What does Daniel tell Nebuchadnezzar to change in Daniel 4:27? How does his advice address both the king's own behavior and his treatment of others?
3. In Daniel 4:25–26, what must Nebuchadnezzar acknowledge, and what does the remaining stump reveal about the future of his kingdom?
4. In Philippians 2:3–8, what choices show how Jesus uses his position for others rather than for his own advantage?

## Interpretation questions

1. Daniel speaks respectfully to a king whose beliefs and actions he does not share. What distinguishes his respect from approval, and his compassion from avoiding hard truth?
2. Why does Daniel connect turning away from sin with kindness to the oppressed? What would be missing from repentance that focused only on private behavior?
3. How does the promise of restoration in Daniel 4:26 help explain God's opposition to pride in James 4:6? What makes God's humbling work different from simply shaming someone?
4. How does Jesus' example in Philippians 2:3–8 challenge the idea that humility means weakness? What might his example look like for someone who has authority at work or at home?

## Application questions

1. Think of a recent disagreement in which you felt certain you were right. Did your response help the other person see Jesus clearly, or did winning become more important? What might you handle differently now?
2. When a difficult conversation comes up, do you tend to avoid it or react too quickly? What could help you pause, care for the person, and still speak honestly?
3. When has following Jesus led you to change a deeply held opinion or a familiar response? Is there an area now where you may need to listen more carefully to Scripture or receive correction from someone you trust?
4. It is possible to become so focused on what is wrong around us that we overlook what needs changing within us. Is there a habit or attitude you sense God inviting you to address? What might a first step of repentance look like?
5. Who in your everyday path is overlooked or struggling? What time, skill, influence, or resources do you already have that could help you serve that person with dignity this week?
6. Where are you trying to control an outcome or change someone through your own effort? What could it look like to submit that situation to Jesus in prayer while remaining faithful to your own responsibilities?

## Bible Reading

**Acts 2:42-47**
**"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonxders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."**

**Acts 4:13**
**"When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus."**

**Luke 22:19**
**"And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."**

## Observation questions

1. **What four practices were the believers devoted to in Acts 2, and what other shared actions are described as flowing out of that devotion?**
2. **What details in Acts 2 show that the believers' life together happened both in larger gatherings and around tables in homes?**
3. **In Acts 2, who is described as adding people to the church, and what were the believers doing as this happened?**
4. **What did the people observing Peter and John recognize about them in Acts 4:13, even though they were ordinary and unschooled men?**

## Interpretation questions

1. **Why might devotion to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer keep a church's attention on Jesus rather than on its own image or preferences?**
2. **The believers gave to meet needs willingly rather than because they were forced. How does Jesus giving His body and life for others help explain this kind of generosity?**

3. **What is the difference between inviting someone into a home as a person to love and treating that person as a project to manage? Why does that difference matter?**
4. **Acts 2 describes the church faithfully sharing, meeting, eating, praying, and praising, while the Lord added to their number. How does this clarify the church's responsibility and God's responsibility?**

## Application questions

1. **Which of the four practices in Acts 2—learning Jesus' words, fellowship, breaking bread, or prayer—most needs renewed attention in your life right now? What is one simple step you could take this week?**
2. **Where do you see the "cul de sac" temptation in your own life—comfort, privacy, personal preferences, fear of inconvenience, or something else? What might it look like to take one outward-facing step?**
3. **Is there a need in your neighborhood, workplace, school, or church community that you have noticed but have not acted on? What could it look like to help meet that need with the resources, time, or relationships God has given you?**
4. **Who is one person outside your usual circle who may need friendship, encouragement, or a place at the table? What would a genuine invitation or kind next step look like—not as a project, but as an expression of God's welcome to you?**
5. **Think about the people who regularly see your life. If they noticed something different about you, would it be your personality, your accomplishments, or Jesus? What could help your words and actions point more clearly to Him?**