



WEEKLY STUDY

WEEK 3

In week 3 of the Bring It into the Light message series, Pastor Jacob shared the strange story from Daniel 5 when handwriting on the wall appeared out of nowhere and sent a message to a king who was harming God's people. The prophet Daniel found himself in the position of interpreting the words that were written. The interpretation served to remind the king that his life and rule were limited. Everything was put into context for him, and he was found wanting. His life would soon be over. As we hear these words now, in the context of Jesus' invitation to new life, we can walk through our own limited existence and brokenness with renewed hope towards a deeper relationship with God.

Peace of Christ,
Dr. Mark Youngman
Pastor of Discipleship

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: DANIEL 5.16-17, 24-25

Now I have heard that you are able to give interpretations and to solve difficult problems. If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, you will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around your neck, and you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom."

¹⁷ Then Daniel answered the king, "You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means.

you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. ²⁴ Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription.

²⁵ "This is the inscription that was written:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN

- This passage goes on to explain what these words mean. Mene: numbered—your days of reign are coming to an end. Tekel: weighed—you have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. Peres: divided—the nation will be divided just like human hearts are divided. They were words for King Belshazzar that came right before his own demise. **Is it possible that these same words might be for us a way to return to God and live a life of purpose?**
- *God, I open myself up today to hear from you. Write words of truth and correction before me and lead me to a restored life in you. Amen.*

TUESDAY: JOB 14.1-5

Mortals, born of woman,
are of few days and full of trouble.

² They spring up like flowers and wither away;
like fleeting shadows, they do not endure.

³ Do you fix your eye on them?
Will you bring them before you for judgment?

⁴ Who can bring what is pure from the impure?
No one!

⁵ A person's days are determined;
you have decreed the number of his months
and have set limits he cannot exceed.

- Job had been talking to his friends who came to him after losing everything. In chapter 13, Job made a sudden shift to talking to God instead of about Him. It is possible that his tone here is one of accusation and not praise. He is wishing away his situation, and wondering what God was doing in the midst of his suffering—after all, God has “*decreed the number of his months and set limits he cannot exceed.*” **Have you ever found yourself giving God credit for his attributes and yet pleading for your own desperate situation? Is it possible to praise and to question at the same time?**
- *God, you know the number of my days for you know all things. Please lead me in the path to a purposeful living of the numbered days of my life. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: MATTHEW 10.29-31

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care.³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.³¹ So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

- God knows us so intimately that our hairs are numbered. You are so cared for by God that you don't need to be afraid. As we say at Providence all the time, you are brave, strong, known, and loved. Things that seem to have little value in the world around us (2 sparrows for \$.01?) have great value to God. **How might that truth change your perception of your own value to God and to your community?**
- *God, you have called me and claimed me to live boldly and without fear. Teach my heart to trust in your goodness. Amen.*

THURSDAY: PSALM 90.12-17

*Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

¹³ *Relent, LORD! How long will it be?*

Have compassion on your servants.

¹⁴ *Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love,
that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.*

¹⁵ *Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,
for as many years as we have seen trouble.*

¹⁶ *May your deeds be shown to your servants,
your splendor to their children.*

¹⁷ *May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us;
establish the work of our hands for us—
yes, establish the work of our hands.*

- *Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.* What a teaching! We gain wisdom when we gain perspective of our finite nature. We are designed by God to be limited so that we might rely on Him. When we number our days, we know both that our lives are finite and that our suffering is finite. **Is it possible to worry the day away? What warning signs can you look for in yourself to indicate that your perspective has shifted away from numbered days and therefore away from wisdom?**
- *God, make me glad for the difficult days and satisfy me with your unfailing love. Amen.*

FRIDAY: 1 CORINTHIANS 1.10-13

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. ¹¹ *My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.* ¹² *What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."*

¹³ *Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?*

- We live in a divided world. You could easily name 10 world events that reveal a deep division in various parts of the world. Russia/Ukraine, China/Taiwan, North Korea/South Korea, factions in Sudan, cartels in Mexico, gangs in Haiti. But these divisions are close to home as well. Political and social ideology allow us to remain on opposite sides of line after line after line. That same division takes place in each human heart. It's why we need Jesus to make and keep us whole. **What divisions impact your daily life? How does Paul's plea for unity in 1 Corinthians speak to your life today?**
- *Jesus, come and be the great Uniter in our world, in our nation, in our church, and in my heart. Amen.*

SATURDAY: PSALM 73.28

*But as for me, it is good to be near God.
I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge;
I will tell of all your deeds.*

- We are designed to have intimacy with God. Our hearts are made to love Him and receive His love for us. When we are hiding from God (like Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden) we fear Him and run from intimacy. But He calls us to and invites us to walk with Him in the cool of the morning.
Can you say those words for yourself, “it is good to be near God.”?
- *Loving God, it is good to be near you. Come close, break down any devices I use to hide from your goodness. Amen.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Read all of Daniel 5 together taking turns as you go.

Spend time talking through the implications of Pastor Jacob’s key takeaways from Sunday’s message.

1. The writing on the wall says your days are numbered. Limitations are an opportunity to step into purpose.
 - What limitations have you faced recently?
 - What have they revealed about your purpose in this season of life?
2. The writing on the wall says you are overwhelmed. Being overwhelmed is an invitation to trust.
 - Identify a time when you came to the end of your own rope.
 - Did this situation lead you to accept help from someone else? How did trust grow through this situation?
3. The writing on the wall says your heart is broken. Brokenness is an invitation to deeper intimacy.
 - We spend a lot of our lives running from our own brokenness. Can you name a time when you could no longer run from your brokenness?
 - How has coming to terms with your faults and failures lead you to a closeness with someone else? How has your brokenness brought you closer to God?