

“What is Your Price?”  
Daniel 5:11-17  
(Preached at Trinity, May 11, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Chapter 5** opens with Belshazzar conducting a party and what a party it was. It was attended by a thousand nobles along with his wives and concubines. The wine was flowing freely and you can imagine the sounds of frolic and enjoyment among all. At the peak of the festivities Belshazzar commanded that they bring in the holy vessels that his grandfather had captured from the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. As they drank from the golden cups they shouted the praises of the gods of silver and gold.
2. One can't help but notice the smallness of this prideful man. We read in Daniel of the accomplishments of Nebuchadnezzar. He built Babylon into a great empire. Daniel said of him: "you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth" (**4:22**). **Daniel 5:18 NAU** - "O king, the Most High God granted sovereignty, grandeur, glory and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father."  
Belshazzar's claim to fame: he held a great feast.
3. Suddenly a hand appears and begins writing on the wall. Belshazzar became terrified. Tonight I want to consider the foolish behavior of Belshazzar in treating the holy vessels of God with disdain; of treating the holy things of God as common and robbing Him of His glory.
4. Belshazzar became terrified. At one moment he was boasting in his own glory, mocking the God of the Hebrew people, and the next moment his legs became as rubber and his knees knocked together.
5. Immediately Belshazzar began searching for an answer to mysterious writing on the wall. None of his diviners were able to interpret the message. This brought even greater fear to Belshazzar and all who were in the room.
6. At this point the queen enters and tells the king about Daniel. Immediately Daniel is brought before the king and promised riches and great authority if he could interpret the handwriting on the wall. Daniel's answer was remarkable: **Daniel 5:17 NAU** - "Keep your gifts for yourself or give your rewards to someone else"
7. Daniel was not about to allow the treasures of this world to influence his service to the One True King – God Most High. Many years have passed since he refused to bow before Nebuchadnezzar's great statue. He had long ago determined whom he would serve.
  - A. It brings to mind Joshua's farewell sermon before Israel:  
**Joshua 24:15 NAS** - "And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

- B. Daniel had made his choice. As for he and his house, he would serve the Lord. His God far exceeded all the treasures of Babylon. His answer to Belshazzar was simply an expression of his unwavering commitment to God Most High.
8. Tonight I want to set this before your consideration. Have you made such a commitment? What reward will you receive to turn your commitment away from God?
- I. We are continually offered the treasures of this world
- A. The influence of this world is great
1. It continually holds its rewards before us. Belshazzar's offer was open and straight forward. The world's treasures are often much more obscure.
  2. They are subtle because it is universal and very accessible. Belshazzar's offer was universal, offered to anyone able to interpret the message, but receiving the reward was difficult.  
The world offers its reward and accessibility is easy.
  3. The "bandwagon" mentality is powerful. There are an endless, ever-changing fads and trends that keep people trying to keep up. People in general tend to fashion their lives just like their peers.  
When the iPhone was first released people camped out and stood in long lines to get this latest device. Certain Nike shoes have produced the same result like the Air Jordan back in the 1980's.  
Certain labels automatically raise the price and prestige of products.
  4. The "reward" is the praise and compliments of men either actual or perceived.
  5. We are commanded to flee the unending influence of the world  
**1 John 2:15-16 NAS** - "Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."
- B. The influence of Satan is constant
1. This is spiritual warfare. He knows our weaknesses. He tempts us with the things we delight in and offers us the things we do not have as he strives to give us new delights.
  2. We can see his tactics in the temptation of Jesus. Satan offers many rewards.  
**Matthew 4:8-10 NAS** - "the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; <sup>9</sup> and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me." <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"
  3. Satan continually seeks to keep us dissatisfied with what we have promising us greater joy in the next earthly object.

## C. The lust of our own flesh

1. Fallen humanity is continually chasing after the next object of desire. The Bible refers to this as lust.  
**Romans 6:12 NAS** - "do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts"  
**Romans 13:14 NAS** - "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts."  
**1 Peter 2:11 NAS** - "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul."
2. Our flesh finds its great reward in being satisfied with earthly desires
3. Often the desire of the flesh is irresistible
  - a. When Israel invaded Jericho God told them that everything was cursed. But Achan was overwhelmed by what he saw  
**Joshua 7:1 NAS** - "Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel."  
**Joshua 7:21 NAS** - " when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it."  
**Joshua 7:24-25 NAS** - "Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor. <sup>25</sup> And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones."
  - b. When Elisha healed Naaman the leper he offered him a gift. Elisha refused but his servant Gehazai was overcome with lust  
**2 Kings 5:14-16 NAS** - "So he went down and dipped *himself* seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. <sup>15</sup> When he returned to the man of God with all his company, and came and stood before him, he said, "Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel; so please take a present from your servant now." <sup>16</sup> But he said, "As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will take nothing." And he urged him to take *it*, but he refused."  
**2 Kings 5:20 NAS** - "But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, thought, "Behold, my master has spared this Naaman the Aramean, by not receiving from his hands what he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him."

**2 Kings 5:26-27 NAS** - "Is it a time to receive money and to receive clothes and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen and male and female servants? <sup>27</sup> "Therefore, the leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to you and to your descendants forever." So he went out from his presence a leper as *white* as snow."

II. What is your price?

- A. The world, Satan, and your flesh continually promise reward if you just compromise
1. Sometimes it comes as very minor concessions
  2. But the end is the same. We have sold out for a lump of clay.
- B. Some sell out for doctrinal reasons
1. There are scores of "Reformed" pastors today who are not actively seeking to reform their churches.
  2. There are scores of Christians who remain in weak churches They stay because it is easier to maintain the status quo It is where their friends are. It is hard to make changes. They justify themselves by claiming to be missionaries of truth.
  3. Still others avoid doctrinal truth because they consider the doctrinal standards of solid churches too demanding
- C. Many sell out to avoid the criticism of others
1. Perhaps the pressure comes from family
    - a. What does God expect when a Christian is married to an unbeliever? He expects faithfulness.
    - b. What does God expect when you are the only one in your extended family that follows Christ? He expects you to live the Christian life before them?
    - c. What does God expect when your children resist your efforts of parenting? You continue to parent.
  2. Perhaps the pressure comes from your circle of friends  
God expects you to follow Christ. Perhaps you need to distance yourself from these friends.  
**2 Corinthians 6:17 NAS** - "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you."
  3. Perhaps the pressure comes from coworkers or classmates  
God expects you to follow Him in every situation
  4. Will you sell out to gain the approval of men?  
**Matthew 10:33-36 NAS** - "But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. <sup>34</sup> "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> "For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; <sup>36</sup> and a man's enemies will be the members of his household."

- D. Many sell out because of divided hearts
1. I have often said, "People will always do what they want to do." What I mean is people will pursue the desire of their heart. They will demonstrate by their actions their true treasure.
  2. Jesus says the problem is an evil eye and divided heart  
**Matthew 6:21-24 NAU** - "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. <sup>22</sup> "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup> "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! <sup>24</sup> "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."
  3. Many Christians today have sold themselves to the idols of our generation. Few in the modern church tithe – Christians average 2.5% per capita. Even during the Great Depression it was 3.3%. And most who don't tithe justify themselves and excuse themselves from the command of God.
- E. Many sell out for the benefit of convenience
1. They disregard the Sabbath because of convenience.
  2. They miss church services because of convenience. They think that things that keep them away on Sunday or Wednesday would never cause them to stay home from work.
  3. They find no problem with being 10 minutes late for Sunday School but would never be 10 minutes late for a doctor's appointment. It is a matter of priority – we sell out for the price of convenience.

#### Conclusion:

1. The examples and illustrations could be unending. Are you living faithfully before Christ?
2. I'm not talking about an artificial life of self-denial. God has blessed us with many comforts and conveniences and has given us nice things to enjoy. God is not dishonored when we take pleasure in His creation.
3. God knows your heart.  
**Titus 1:15-16 NAU** - "To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. <sup>16</sup> They profess to know God, but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed."
4. Daniel was not moved by the things of this world. He certainly was not interested in the gifts of prideful Belshazzar. It is interesting that in the end he was blessed with these things.  
**Daniel 5:29 NAU** - "Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and *put* a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he *now* had authority as the third *ruler* in the kingdom."
5. The one who serves God alone is often advanced by God. By the time Darius is firmly in charge Daniel is advanced to one of the three commissioners in the kingdom.
6. The point is, where is your heart? Whom do you serve?