The Writing on the Wall: When we fail to learn…

Zanesville, OH | June 24, 2018 | Sermon Notes

**Foundational Scripture:** Daniel 5

**Intro**:

* The scene in Daniel 5 is one of festivity and celebration. King Belshazzar is introduced, and his character is revealed through his actions and speeches. A banquet is taking place and the focus then shifts to the holy vessels Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem. No shortage of blasphemy and idolatry is present. Just as suddenly as Belshazzar is introduced, so too we observe a disembodied hand writing a message on the wall. The hand is a reference to God in which His actions are frequently described metaphorically. This is not a drunken hallucination because of the public nature of the writing. The wise men are baffled, but the queen says Daniel can solve this. Whoever this woman is, she has displayed more wisdom so far than the king and all his wise men put together. When Daniel arrives, Belshazzar displays a condescending attitude (aren’t you one of those captives). Daniel first delivers a striking rebuke to the king letting him know who the ultimate King is before interpreting the writing on the wall.

**The Writing on the Wall**

1. **MENE**
   1. Daniel is rushed onto the scene because there is awareness that God is with Him and He can make the vision known (Dan. 2:24-49; 4:8-27; 5:11-12).
   2. The interpretation was: **God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it** (5:26).
   3. We do not know how long Belshazzar has been ruling but everything comes crumbling down on his watch.
   4. Emphasis is placed on the word MENE twice for dramatic, fearful and absolute purposes (5:25).
2. **TEKEL**
   1. The interpretation was: **You have been weighed on scales and found deficient** (5:27).Belshazzar is found lacking, wanting, deficient.
   2. To say someone or something is deficient implies they do not have enough of a particular quality or an ingredient that is of necessity.
   3. Belshazzar was deficient in giving God glory. He was lacking in recognizing God’s sovereignty and power. He committed blasphemy (5:2-3, 23) and idolatry (5:4, 23). He failed to humble himself (5:22-23).

1. **UPHARSIN/PARSIN/PERES**
   1. The interpretation was: **Your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians** (5:28).
   2. Because Belshazzar failed to learn from Nebuchadnezzar, the kingdom is divided, and his temporary reign comes to a tragic end.
   3. He has failed to recognize God and give Him the glory and thus, God gives the kingdom to another whom He has chosen.
   4. Belshazzar died because of his failure to learn and God demonstrates He is the one in control (Dan. 4:25-26).

**When we fail to learn…**

1. **MENE**
   1. Today, we have been given opportunities to learn from the errors and mistakes of others and ourselves (Rom. 15:4).
   2. Belshazzar had Nebuchadnezzar, but he failed to learn. We have them both and many more (1 Cor. 10:6-11). Do we dare reject these opportunities?
   3. If we fail to learn from our errors and the mistakes of others, we will fall prey to God’s great judgment: **our days as children in His kingdom will be numbered** (Matt. 3:10; 7:19; Rev. 2:5).
   4. Those who are not sons and daughters of the King, who come upon the message but reject it and fail to learn from it; their days are also numbered (Lk. 9:26; Jn. 12:48; 2 Thess. 1:8-9).
2. **TEKEL**
   1. The day will come when we have to meet God’s measurement. We will be weighed on His scales. We have no excuse if we are found wanting.
   2. We must ensure that we are consuming our daily vitamins and supplements (2 Pet. 1:5-11). They are readily accessible at the fingertips.
   3. These vitamins and supplements help us to build strong spiritual muscles and it gives the spirit life by which we can indeed bear good fruit (Jn. 15:8).
3. **UPHARSIN/PARSIN/PERES**
   1. After we are weighed, if it be we are found unworthy, God will remove what we have and give it to someone else (Matt. 13:12; 21:41-43; 25:24-30).
   2. We must recognize God is in control and we must serve in humility giving Him all the glory (2 Thess. 1:10-12; 1 Pet. 4:11).
   3. God gives us more than enough opportunities to see His light and to obey His will, so we can avoid everlasting death (Mk. 16:16). God has written on the wall, given us the interpretation and now the rest is up to us.