

Series - Living For God 24-7 (part 6 of 8)

Date/s - 19 Feb 2017

Topic - Daniel 4 – The Sovereignty of God

Speaker/s - Pastor Ernie Song

Welcome [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

www.thesource4ym.com/games/

www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like “Glorify You Alone” (Gateway) and Our God Reigns”

Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

1. Recognise the Sovereignty of God over their situations.
2. Learn how to appropriate our spiritual authority in our lives.

Word [45 min]

Pastor Ernie related the historical context of the book of Daniel briefly. In chapter 4, we read that although King Nebuchadnezzar was forewarned about the misfortune that would befall him because of his pride, he still did not heed the warning given by Daniel. The message to the original audience (the Jews) can be summed up that God is still sovereign in spite of the suffering, the tough circumstances under the Babylonian empire. During those times, kings were often treated as gods by the people.

To understand the sovereignty of God, we look at if everything is pre-determined. This means that everything is sort of fixed and planned to happen, implying that we can let life be without taking an active approach to our living and choices. It is living life as it is even if it means less than desirable or not according to God's will. For example, when we fall sick we would just accept that it is destined. We would also miss out on opportunities deserving our attention if we are contended as pre-determined. Such a view can be quite problematic. We can start to question God's goodness. How can we understand God as our good Father? What about free will? And why do we need to stand in judgement before God if the way we behaved were already pre-determined too? The result of such a view is passivity.

On other hand, we might think everything that happens is determined by the choices we make. With this view, we live a life being independent from God with a “everything depends on me” mentality. We can be fearful in living since we will be pressurized to always strive to live a ‘better’ life.

What can be the correct approach?

- a) God is a Good Father (1 John 1:5, James 1:17, Psalm 92:15) and that bad things do not originate from Him. It is not His will. So, why do bad things happen?
 - It is the work of the devil, that is, spiritual warfare. From Job 1: 6-12 & 2:1-6, we learnt that the devil cannot do anything to cause harm on believers unless God allows it. God was the one asking Satan to consider Job. This suggests that God has great confidence in Job and it is God's will for Job to stay righteous and to stand firm despite the difficult trials upon him.
 - We live in a fallen world that is filled with sinners like ourselves. People commit sin and affect other people too. For example, it is not God's will when a child got killed by a car. The origin of evil things is

from the devil who came to kill, steal and destroy.

- It is self. Very often, sinful desires, pride, temptation can lead us into bad situations. For example, a person suffering from liver cancer could have resulted from an unhealthy lifestyle. God can use bad situations to mould us:
 - i. In the Old Testament times, the people were under the Old Covenant and God could execute judgment. However, under the New Covenant where Christ has already taken the penalty of sin on the Cross; believers no longer suffer the judgment of sin. However, we still have to take responsibility for the consequences. (2 Corinthians 5:19; Hebrews 8:12; Romans 8:1).
 - ii. From Hebrews 12:6, we know this is discipline for which father will not discipline his own children?
- b) We have free will.
 - i. We have a responsibility to be like Christ as we are called to (2 Corinthians 7:1, 1 Peter 1:17, Romans 12:1).
 - ii. We will be judged for our works (2 Corinthians 5:10).
- c) God through our free will is able to make all things work towards His plans and purposes (Psalm 115:3, Isaiah 40:23, 2 Chronicles 20:6, Proverbs 15:9).
- d) The Mystery of Providence (Job 11:7).

There will be situations of which we cannot explain as we can never understand the workings of the spiritual realm. Though we do not understand, we can still believe that God is good and sovereign.

Let us not be passive in our Christian living. Live the faith-filled life without the wrong understanding of God. Do not blame everything on God; it is not God's will for us to go through bad days. Use our spiritual authority and pray! Secondly, rest in His love. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. God loves us simply for who we are. At the end of the day, God's will be done and you will experience the love of God (Romans 6:28-39).

Discussion Questions

1. **What comes to mind when you hear the phrase that "God is sovereign"?** [5 min]

2. **Daniel 4 tells about the dream of king Nebuchadnezzar. What can you say about God's character in the way He dealt with the king?** [10 min]

3. **Pastor Ernie mentioned evil does not originate from God by using Job as an example. However, why did God 'allow' misfortune to befall him (Job 2:1-6)?** [10 min]

4. **How would we know if we are passive in the way we live our Christian life? How can we get rid of these which affect our faith to grow?** [10 min]

Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. We will constantly live the faith-filled life, having the correct understanding of God. Using our spiritual authority and pray, fully rest in His love.

Announcements**1. Building Prayer Alters Rekindling the Holy Fire****Speaker: Pastor Julius Suubi**

Fri - Sat, 10 - 11 Mar | 9am - 4.30pm | RiverLife Church

Register at the Information Counter by Sun, 5 Mar.