

SHARING SCRIPTURE

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From Pride to Humility

For use: Jan. 26 - Feb. 1

Texts: Daniel 4:1-33, Proverbs 14:31, 2 Kings 20:2-5, Jonah 3:10, Daniel 4:34-37, Philippians 2:1-11

Cath was proud of their beautiful country home. The simple house, built 22 years ago by her partner, Jeff, was surrounded by green lawns, shade trees, a barn, flowers and even included a few dogs and a cat. But then came the fires. [1]

They weren't too worried about the bushfire that ravaged the land in Victoria, east of Melbourne, Australia. They even decided to stand by and defend their home. "We always said we would defend it, because not only are we on the Nicholson River, but we've also put in a very big dam," Cath explained. "We were all prepared."

But the couple was shocked by the "ferocity of the blaze."

"It was like a war. It was a bomb," Cath said. "We couldn't even hear each other talk." They eventually got their dogs and cat, and sought shelter in the dam. They all survived, but they lost everything else, including their home. Fortunately, community organizations stepped in to help Cath and Jeff get back on their feet. "We're incredibly humbled by the support that we've received."

On a much grander scale, another home builder—or shall we say, "palace and kingdom-builder"—lost everything ... for a time. In this week's Sabbath school lesson, we see how King Nebuchadnezzar, leader of the then greatest kingdom on earth, was literally humbled to the point of his face being down to the ground.

After receiving several opportunities to acknowledge the God of heaven as the ultimate

ruler of all earthly kingdoms, the Lord gave the proud monarch another dream. And, once more, when his wise men could not interpret the dream, the ruler called for assistance from a trusted expert on dreams.

Daniel was reluctant to share the meaning of the dream, for it foretold how the proud king, who was insensitive to the needs of his subjects, would be humbled for a period of time. Nebuchadnezzar would lose his sanity, be taken from his court, and live like an animal for seven years. Even so, Daniel honestly revealed the truth.

When the arrogant monarch did not change his ways and instead boasted of his accomplishments and power, he was immediately humbled and the dream came true. The mighty king fell to the ground, just like the tree in his dream was felled.

Pride is like a ferocious fire. We might think, sort of like Cath and Jeff, that we are prepared to fight the blaze of conceit. But when the flames of self-importance turn into an inferno, we suddenly realize we are facing a roaring battle that is beyond our capabilities to handle. Fortunately, Nebuchadnezzar, in the end, turned his heart toward heaven and acknowledged that God alone is sovereign. His admission led to the restoration of the ruler's position.

If you're battling the inferno of vanity, you can run for your life to One who promises to help those who bow in humility. "The Lord lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked to the ground" (Psalm 147:6). Like Nebuchadnezzar, it can lead you to give a tearful thank-you to the God who rules over all.

~Curtis Rittenour

[1] <https://www.3aw.com.au/incredibly-humbled-woman-who-lost-everything-in-bushfire-shares-tearful-thank-you/>

For Reflection

Connecting: Have you ever been close to a fire that was out of control? Have you ever had to run for your life from a blaze? How did you feel as a result of what you experienced?

Sharing: Read through Daniel 4. What do the following major points in this testimony from Nebuchadnezzar teach us about handling pride in our own lives?

1. The king begins by acknowledging the supremacy of God in his life and in the universe (vv. 1-3).
2. Nebuchadnezzar explains the fruitless help he received from his own wise men (vv. 4-9).
3. Truth from heaven is presented to the ruler in a dream (vv. 10-18).
4. A god-fearing person explained the dream to the proud monarch (vv. 19-27).
5. The prophetic dream was carried out in every detail when the king refused to humble his heart (vv. 28-33).
6. Other...

Applying: Using the acronym P.R.I.D.E., create a five-step plan to help someone deal with pride in their own life. For instance, the first step, starting with the letter "P" could be, "Plead guilty."

Valuing: Arrogance is like an uncontrollable fire. Have you struggled with self-importance in any area of your life? Pray with one other person and ask God to assist you in living a truly humble life from this day forward.

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