INTRODUCTION: Easter people in a Good Friday world

Daniel 1:4 (All Verses from the New International Version 2011)

Young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king’s palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. (Adventure Bible, p. 954)

1. Realize we live in a world where bad things happen and good people get caught in the middle.

- Daniel 1:3-4 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king’s service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility— young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king’s palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. (Adventure Bible, p. 954)

- John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (Adventure Bible, p. 1189)
2. Never let go of the person God created you to be.

- Daniel 1:7a *The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Beltshazzar.* (Adventure Bible, p. 954)

- Daniel 1:21 ... *Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.* (Adventure Bible, p. 955)

3. Remember, no event is beyond God’s control.

- Daniel 1:1-2 ¹ *In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.* (Adventure Bible, p. 954)

- Hebrews 12:4 *In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.* (Adventure Bible, p. 1349)

**CONCLUSION:** A Foundation for Overcoming Fear
Things I’d like to remember from this week’s message:

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**Monday:** Read *Daniel 1:3-4*. Where does life feel out of control? Do you see God at work? He is always present. He is always working to bring good even in the worst of situations. In what area of life do you need to ask to sense His presence and work in your life?

**Tuesday:** Read *John 16:33*. Sometimes we find ourselves thrust into Babylon, not by our choice, but because of the actions of others. Jesus predicted such trouble in our world, bad things happening to good people. He faced His own Good Friday. Where in your life do you need to affirm that we are Easter people in a Good Friday world? Where is God calling you to bring His peace in a world filled with trouble?

**Wednesday:** Read *Daniel 1:7a*. Being in Babylon often causes us to question everything about life, and even about ourselves. Daniel even gets a name change, but never forgets his God-given name. What nicknames are you known by? What name has God given you to describe your life and purpose?
**Thursday:** Read Daniel 1:21. When you find yourself in Babylon, don't forget who you are or whose you are. Daniel will remain in exile through multiple regime changes, and will still define himself by his name. What pulls you away from your identity as God's child? Today take time to remember your baptism. You are His child. Thank God for the gift of being in His family.

**Friday:** Read Daniel 1:1-2. God allowed this to happen. He was in control of what seemed to be an out-of-control situation. God had a plan for Daniel, even in the courts of the enemy. Where do you feel life is out of control? Where do you need faith that God is in control?

**Saturday:** Read Hebrews 12:4. We may not have shed blood for our faith, but perhaps you have shed tears or you have faced social pressure. What pressures you to move against your faith in God? What empowers you to live in tough times with faith that God is in control?

**Going Deeper:**

**Series Book:** Thriving in Babylon: Why Hope, Humility, and Wisdom Matter in a Godless Culture by Larry Osborne.

**Next Week:** Daniel 1:8, “Prepared for Babylon: Boot Camp for Life’s Battles”