



The Secular Gospel Is Failing | Doug Wekenman | 8.8.21

Weekly Study

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

What is your favorite type of ice cream?

SHARE

Welcome back to Group! This week, Doug preached a necessary message on why we need the *actual* Gospel over the secular gospel. It's a deceptive notion that we can find our happiness and fulfillment apart from God. Time and history continue to show us that we can't, and today's statistics prove that that's true. Before we dive into the sermon, take some time to check in with your Group by answering these questions.

What's one word that would describe how you're feeling today?

What is one thing you feel like God is teaching you right now?

What was the most challenging part of your week?

What was the highlight of your week?

GROW

Read Daniel 1:11-16

What is the biggest conflict Daniel is facing in this passage?

What does Daniel's method of action remind us about having a productive and God-honoring response to secular culture?

In this passage, Daniel was in the midst of Babylon's wicked ways. He found himself in a tough position having to choose between his faithfulness to God versus the king. Sound familiar? We often find ourselves in a similar position in a post Christian culture. Between the media, secularism, and the confusion of what we should use as our daily bread both physically and spiritually, we have become numb to discerning how to have true fulfillment in Christ.

The Babylonian culture attempted to erase Jewish culture in order to keep the people loyal to the king: this included their diet. Daniel's response was "please test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water" (Daniel 1:12). He went on to ask the attendant to re-evaluate his enforcement of their adherence to the king's wishes after comparing the group of men who ate the king's diet and those who ate a clean diet. In the end, obedience to God's way proved the men to look "healthier and better nourished" (Daniel 1:15). Instead of simply defying authority in the culture and causing more dissension or possible harm, Daniel simply put their values to the test so they could see the truth for themselves.

As seen in our own culture, secularism has failed us as we observe the amount of depressed, anxious, and spiritually weary people we are around on a daily basis. As Doug preached this week, just as Babylon tried to find fulfillment on their own, we try to write our own gospel as humans. However, the Gospel of Jesus is the only way we can find ourselves truly whole. Because the Gospel proves true again and again, we can take heart knowing it does not fail when we see a world that is failing around us.

What are some of the current cultural pressures you are facing in your own life?

What are some steps you can take this week to renew your mind on the things of God and not on this world?

M O V E

Daniel 1:17-21

What was the correlation to God giving these men knowledge and understanding?

What can we learn from Daniel's obedience to Yahweh over Babylonian culture in this passage?

While others took the easier path, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah remain committed to the narrow road. Through their obedience to Yahweh, resisting to blend in with Babylonian culture, we see the way to life. In the end, God's way proved healthier and wiser, giving king Nebuchadnezzar zero denial finding no others in better standing than these four men. God blessed their faithfulness by giving them knowledge and understanding of all kinds, including Daniel's gift of understanding dreams and visions.

As Doug's message pointed out on Sunday: the secular gospel is failing. Just as the crowd chose the luxuries of Babylon, so do humans look for the same luxuries to fulfill us. Except the king they chose to worship ended up in the wilderness, and the kingdom they chose to follow ended up falling. The pleasures of this life continue to amount to nothing, and proof is that thousands of years later, we're still searching.

Though Daniel chose the food regimen less pleasing to the eye and flesh, he came out wiser and healthier. Exposing the Babylon flattery and pleasures and proving that God is more for us than we could be for ourselves. As Believers today, we can look to Daniel's example of obedience in a Babylon current pointing others to a better way of life. When the followers of the secular gospel experience its letdown, they can look to the followers of the gospel of Jesus who are experiencing life and abundance outside of the empty pleasures of this life and find their life as well.

In what areas of your life look more like Babylon than Jesus?

What's one way this week you can say yes to Jesus and no to Babylon?

P R A Y

We need prayer now more than ever. Spend some time-sharing prayer requests. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking off into two separate groups (or calls if you are an online group) to share more freely.

T O G O

- *"He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end."*
 - o *Ecclesiastes 3:11*