

Excellence in Exile

Week 1 // Multiply Leaders for the Church

Introduction:

Review: In the next few weeks, we are covering the first two chapters of the Old Testament book of Daniel. The idea of this sermon series (and Bible Study series) is that Daniel gives us a guide or model for being God's people here in Ann Arbor. Over the next few weeks, we will be exploring the book of Daniel and University Lutheran Chapel's mission: "Mobilizing generations to join Jesus on his mission." One way we see this mission statement playing out is that we exist to "Multiply Leaders for the Church."

- 1) What do you think it means to be a leader?
- 2) Where are places that you see yourself having leadership roles?

Scripture:

Read Daniel 1:1-7 and answer the following questions/prompts:

- 3) Summarize what is going on in this passage.
- 4) God allows the Israelites to be conquered, and even allows the Babylonians to take sacred items from His temple in Jerusalem. What does this say about God? What is challenging about this?
- 5) Babylon attempts to subjugate through assimilation. In other words, they take the brightest Israelites, give them new names, and teach them Babylonian culture in an attempt to rule over them. As one of these intelligent people taken by the Babylonians, Daniel grows in his knowledge of Babylonian culture yet remains faithful to the God of Israel in many ways. How do you struggle to remain faithful in your walk with God?
- 6) Daniel refuses to use the Babylonian name given to him (Belteshazzar). He is Daniel, which literally means "God is my Judge," and not Belteshazzar, which in Babylonian means "Bel's prince." Daniel's identity is firmly rooted in his God – the God of Israel – and not the Babylonian god of Bel. Where is your identity? How do you struggle to see this?
 - a. For one identity God gives you, look at 1 John 3:1.

Wrap Up:

- 1) Daniel is a true foreigner – an Israelite captive in Babylon, given a new name, and taught a new culture and new language. Yet at the same time, Daniel remains faithful and becomes widely influential as a leader in Babylon. How does this passage from Daniel challenge your current understanding of leadership?
- 2) After reading Daniel, what areas of leadership (or influence) would you like to work on?