



MEETING AGENDA

WELCOME (10 MINUTES)

This week we begin our new series, *Light in the Darkness*. In this first week, we'll talk about how we're living in a type of Babylon—a godless society bent on personal pleasure, power, and exploitation. In Scripture, we're told that ancient Babylon was the worst community ever to exist. Yet, a godly young man, Daniel, learned to thrive in the midst of Babylon.

Please don't forget to take attendance via the attendance reminder email. It's so important!

ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

People often talk about “the good ol days.” As you reflect on your life experience, would you say that society is declining in terms of morality? Are things getting better or worse? In what ways has morality declined?

INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

(Feel free to use one or all of the following introductory questions)

Was there one idea from Pastor David's message that particularly stood out to you? Share that with the group.

Was there anything you saw in Daniel chapter 1 that stood out to you or was new to you?

As David explained the background for the story, i.e. Daniel's new name, his education in astrology and the occult, the pressure to give up his identity, culture and practices- how does that help you to better appreciate the challenge Daniel and his friends faced in Babylon?

INTO THE WORD (25 MINUTES)

Read Jesus' words in John 16:33. How can they encourage us and remind us of the importance of thriving in exile?

How does knowing the truth that pain and trials will be a part of our lives help us face them today? How has knowing that Jesus has overcome the world helped you during your darkest moments?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[We live in a fallen world and among fallen people. Our lives will include pain and trouble, but Jesus has promised to be our overcomer. Either in this life or the next, we will experience God's victory. That is our promise and our hope. Perhaps you've already experienced God's overcoming power in this life? Share that with your group.]

Read Habakkuk 3:16-19. What does this Scripture tell us about the character of God? Does God always promise deliverance? And what did Habakkuk choose to do in the midst of a failed crop, starvation, and deprivation?

How Can Habakkuk's response help you to face your current trials?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[God's character is seen in being with us in the trials, not removing us from the trials. The normal trials of living life in a fallen world still affect all of us. Habakkuk chose to praise and worship God despite his difficult circumstances, and without knowing if they would ever turn around.]

Read Hebrews 11:32-40. There seem to be two categories of faithful people in the section. How would you describe each category? How did God treat each group (v.39), regardless of their circumstances in life? Is this passage meant to encourage us? If so, why?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[The two categories are those who experienced deliverance and victory from their trials and those who had to walk through their darkness. God commends both groups for their faith, which encourages us that whether we experience deliverance or not, God is still with us and will reward our faithfulness.]

APPLICATION (25 MINUTES)

[Hosts: don't feel pressure to cover all the questions below. Pick the one or two questions that might lead to the best conversation, but if discussion fades, include the others.]

David closed with this question, "What is your Babylon?" How would you answer that question? How does knowing that God is in control of people who are in control (v. 1-2)

and that God is in control of situations that seem out of control (v. 3-7) encourage you in your circumstances?

David said that it's hard to live a godly life. In what area of your life have you found that statement to be most true? What idea from the sermon most encourages you to keep pursuing godliness?

Have the trials you've endured in your life caused you to experience any of the following?

Prepared us to be "light in darkness"

Exposed genuine faith from counterfeit faith

Exposed our hidden spiritual weakness

Awakened strengths that were dormant

Is there a "Babylon" situation you are facing, that you could invite your small group to pray over?

PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Father God,

We ask you to give us your divine perspective on the world around us and on any difficult situations we may be facing. Teach us what it means to thrive in difficult times. Grant us the grace to trust that you are working in every situation and that you always have our best interests in mind. Help us to hold onto Jesus, our Light, just as tightly as Daniel held onto God. Awaken the strengths we need for today. Amen.