***The Only Choice***

***34****At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever,*

*for his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
    and his kingdom endures from generation to generation;****35****all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
    and he does according to his will among the host of heaven
    and among the inhabitants of the earth;
and none can stay his hand
    or say to him, “What have you done?”*

***36****At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me.****37****Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble. (Daniel 4:34-37, ESV)*

When we find ourselves suffering, may our only choice be to look up to God. May the Lord bless you dearly beloved as we talk today about the only proper choice we have when we encounter suffering and humiliation. All of us have heard about the story of Nebuchadnezzar and how he became immensely wealthy and powerful, only to be humbled by God at the peak of his pride. Often, we forget God’s power, but in this passage, we see that it cannot just be tangible, but also a directing force for the proud person, to guide them to true knowledge of God. Sometimes God does us a favor and allows a fire within our lives to purify our faith, to have us make a correct decision within that fire and look to Him for our answer and rescue. Our subject today is about that choice or decision. Again, when we are suffering, I hope that the only first choice would be looking to God for answers. So, let’s talk a bit about this specific situation and reality…

 God humbles people so that the pride within them changes into humility and a cultivate God-worshipping life. In the background of the passage above and occurring just before the verses in question, the king had been walking around on the roof of his palace and uttered that the strength of the city of Babylon was his doing. He was having his proudest moment. He was rejoicing in himself that he had personally built up that city. God spoke from heaven at that moment and said that the king had just lost his kingdom and that he would be driven away from the people and would become “like a wild animal”. And, wouldn’t you know it, exactly what God said took place in Nebuchadnezzar’s life. All the way to the very detail of becoming like a beast, not taking care of himself, and forgetting himself for a time. However, the king, at one point, seems to have decided to look “up” to God in the heavens. In other words, he looked at Someone that was higher than him, accepting that he as king was not the Highest ruler in the world. When the king sought God, he regained his sanity and chose well to praise, honor, and bless God. He had learned his lesson; he had accepted that God was eternal, and that he was not. He had accepted that God was absolutely free and powerful. More importantly, he had accepted that no one had any right to question or criticize God for his deeds, or to throw doubt on God’s intentions.

 At that point, almost like the book of Job, even though Job was righteous from the beginning and Nebuchadnezzar was not, the king’s position, wealth, honor, and glory were returned to him in greater measure than he had had before. Again, the king praise God for His fair judgment and works. He especially mentioned God’s ability to humble the proud (which, in this case, was he himself.)

 This is like someone who generally rules by fear over his company. One day, he suddenly begins to have a conscience, and his workers under him begin to take notice the change in the man. Suddenly he was much closer to them, and much kinder and honorable than before. We can even use the example of a schoolteacher for this purpose: the example that comes to mind is the teacher who “rules” over the class with extreme strictness and indifference toward the students. When she has a sudden life-shaking experience, suddenly, she becomes a different person because God humbled her, took her down from her pedestal of pride.

 Today, we also find ourselves in front of a similar decision. Maybe we are not kings or rulers, but perhaps you have an important position in a company or in your family. Perhaps you are someone with great responsibilities over a job or a group of people. What is your decision or choice of action when you find yourself in the middle of difficulties? Let’s say, for a moment, that everything was going well for you work-wise, and suddenly things began going south? To what or to whom are we going to turn our attention? Will we look to our Heavenly Father for answers, or to human or worldly solutions?

 If the proudest king was able to swallow his own pride and worship and praise God after being punished for a time, will we, who are in Christ’s life-journey of salvation, not be able to accept God lessons and instructions? God is drawing our attention toward himself. In all circumstances, but especially when we are humbled, weakened or in difficult straits, let our first choice be to look to God for answers. Let us choose prayer, confession, humble behavior, so that God will lift us up in His time and manner.

 Remember: God humbles people so that the pride within them changes into humility and a cultivate God-worshipping life. When we find ourselves suffering, may our only choice be to look up to God. God bless you All. Amen.